

TESTING NEW APPROACHES TO LEAVE NO WOMAN BEHIND

UN WOMEN EXPLORES MORE
EFFECTIVE GRANT-MAKING &
GENDER EQUALITY PROGRAMMING
THROUGH SOCIAL INNOVATION



The world is changing.

Addressing **complex** and highly **interconnected** human development challenges requires **new points of view**.

Joining efforts with new, **non-traditional actors** and exploring **innovative approaches**, are for the Fund for Gender Equality key steps towards the delivery of **efficient** and **effective solutions** to **women's needs** across the globe.



The best aspect of this [research] exercise was to be able to have conversations [with beneficiaries] at such a personal and emotional level. It was a very special moment.

Centro de Documentación y Estudios, Paraguay



Together with the beneficiaries we started to analyze strengths and weaknesses. We discovered so many problems. Things we did not think about before. We have been doing this for a long time but not in a methodological way.

Mother's School Society, Palestine

Are we –grant-makers and project implementers– working in the most effective and efficient ways? Are we responding to the real needs of the furthest behind? What alternative approaches can lead to transformative changes? Are women's organizations tapping on their full potential as changemakers?

These questions are the starting point of UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality (FGE) social innovation initiative 'Re-Think. Experiment'. As part of its 2017-2019 grant cycle supported by the Government of Germany, the FGE is investing in innovation and creating opportunities for grantee experimentation.

Using a beneficiary-centered design approach, 9 FGE grantees are gaining a deeper understanding of the needs of the most marginalized women – the 'end users' of their projects. In a safe space for experimentation and failure, they are exploring new approaches, ideating, prototyping and testing innovative solutions. The objective is to come up with tested models that solve challenges for women's empowerment and with potential to catalyze change at scale. Some will succeed, and some will not. All – including the FGE– will learn from it and improve their role as service providers for women and girls furthest behind.

WHY SOCIAL INNOVATION?

Practicing a user-centered design approach and constant feedback loops ensure focus is on what works for the final beneficiary: thus leading to impactful and sustainable solutions.

IMPACT

Achieving the 2030 Development Agenda requires new approaches to accelerate progress. For the FGE, social innovation should become a habit among practitioners.

SUSTAINABILITY

The use of approaches rooted in **Systems Thinking** and reinforcement of grantees capabilities ensures that strategies are owned by beneficiaries beyond the one-off project.

Nine years of grantees' feedback and independent evaluations reveal successes and areas for improvement in our model. Social innovation offers an excellent opportunity to expand the former and explore the latter.

LESSONS LEARNT

We need to shift from linear "problem-solution" models towards a comprehensive analysis of realities and iterative processes, with room for failure and learning with continuous feedback from beneficiaries.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS

The FGE is exploring new and more efficient ways to work to improve its 'value for money'. Using prototyping is cost-effective due to early testing and limiting potential failure to small scale.

NEW STRATEGIC VISION

WHAT IS SOCIAL INNOVATION?



Solutions and services feel best and are most impactful when they work for everyone involved. For the Fund for Gender Equality, social innovation means putting **beneficiaries at the center** of project design, practicing more **flexible co-creative processes** and using a range of tools such as the ones deriving from **Design Thinking, Systems Thinking** and **Behavioral Insights** - with the ultimate objective of **creating positive impact** in the lives of women and girls.

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT THIS INITIATIVE?

FEMINIST GRANT-MAKING

SOCIAL INNOVATION

CAPACITY BUILDING

KNOWLEDGE

The use of social innovation in women's rights programming is still rather underexplored. As the Fund supports women's organizations who can reach end beneficiaries – especially those furthest behind – and have the capacity to influence at the national level, investing in their innovation capabilities has a powerful catalytic potential. The Fund is also re-thinking its own grant-making model by opening spaces for joint reflection and co-creation with its donors and grantees. Considering the scarcity of initiatives like this one, the Fund will document the process, its failures and successes, and contribute to the global knowledge base on effective approaches to women's empowerment programming.

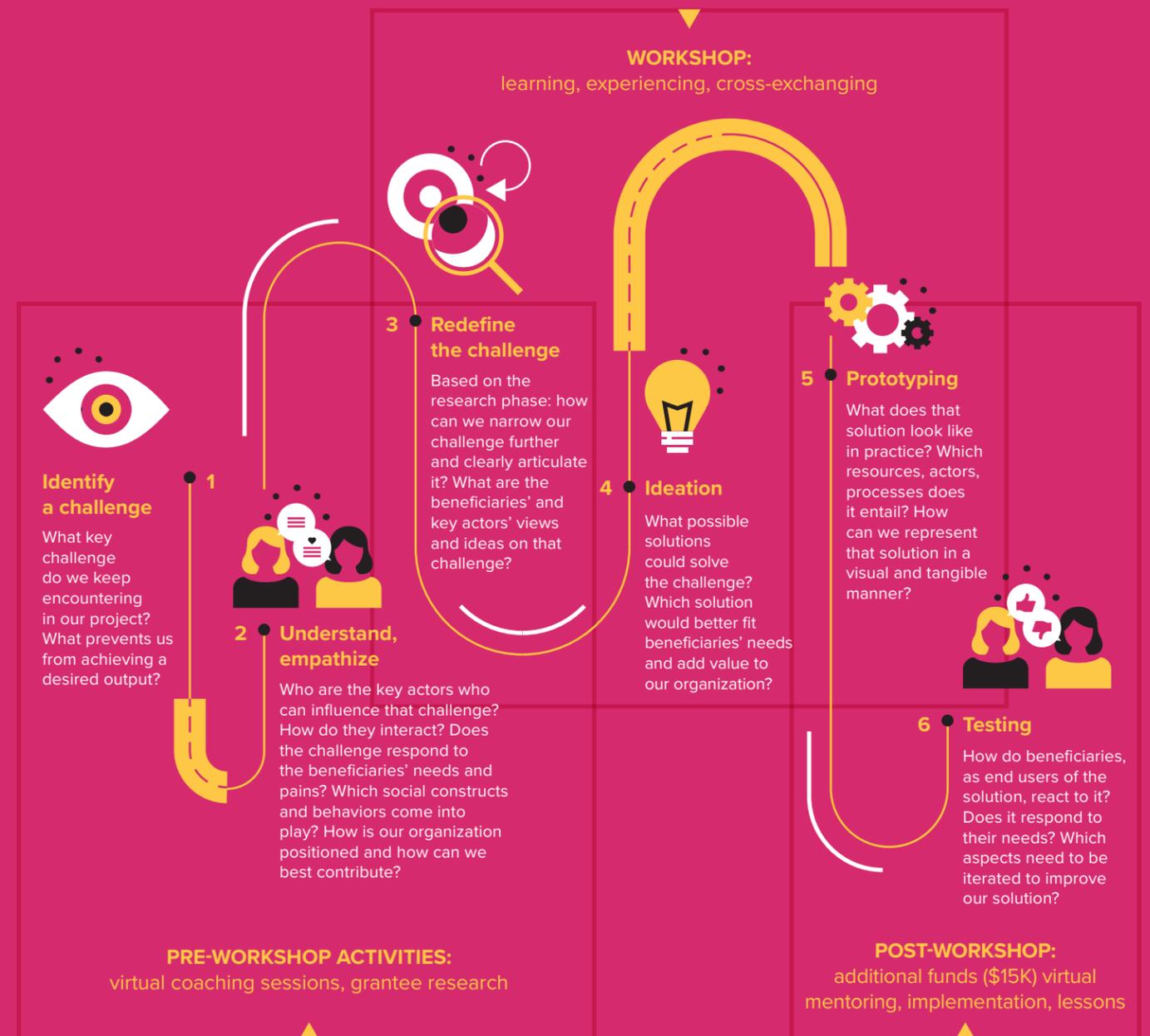


By participating in this workshop, I hope to gain the mindset to bring innovation in everything we do.

Participants' Pre-workshop survey

THE PROCESS

Nine FGE grantees with capacity to absorb additional funds, potential for larger scale impact, and strong reporting skills were selected. With the support of social innovation experts and the FGE team, they are learning about and experiencing the stages and loops of innovation processes thanks to virtual coaching, one face-to-face training, peer exchanges and \$15,000 to test their solutions.





women-led civil society organizations



\$135,000 for testing innovative solutions



challenges



+40h expert coaching support



5 days intensive hands-on workshop



webinars



www.unwomen.org/fge #Fund4GE #SheInnovates

COUNTRIES



Albania | Algeria | Lebanon | Nigeria | Palestine
Paraguay | Philippines | Tanzania | Yemen

'RE-THINK. EXPERIMENT.' AT A GLANCE

UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality is using social innovation for more effective grant-making and gender equality programming. Using a beneficiary-centered approach, 'Re-Think. Experiment' gives women's organizations a space for learning and experimentation to meet the needs of the furthest behind.

Socio-economic empowerment

How can women become financially independent and access services available to them?

Political engagement

How can women become engaged in and make a difference in local and national decision-making to ensure women-centered policies and services?

Labour rights

How can women learn about and access their entitlements and rights around decent work conditions?



We thought we knew everything about the issue, but the interviews showed there are things we had not understood.

Pastoral Women's Council, Tanzania

THEMATIC AREAS AND OVERALL CHALLENGES

HOW WE CONTRIBUTE TO LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND: VULNERABLE POPULATIONS TO BENEFIT FROM THIS INITIATIVE



Indigenous women



Domestic workers



Migrant women



Rural women



Women heads of household



Survivors of gender-based violence



Women affected by conflict



Young women



Socio-economically vulnerable

Do you want to learn more?

**Are you willing to invest in innovators
for gender equality?**

**Are you as excited as we are
about this initiative?**

**Tell us all about it at
fund.genderequality@unwomen.org**

**www.unwomen.org/fge
#Fund4GE
#SheInnovates**