



FGE Thematic Factsheet

# 'LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND' IN ACTION

Observations from FGE's seven-year experience working with civil society

Gender equality is at the forefront of the 2030 Development Agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals include a stand-alone goal to advance equality and gender-related targets mainstreamed across the Global Goals. But if something has opened a door for drastic progress in the lives of women and girls worldwide, it is the principle of leaving no one behind.

Leaving no one behind means prioritizing human beings' dignity and placing the progress of the most marginalized communities first – women and girls being all too often at the top of the list. It urges us to address the structural causes of inequality and marginalization that affect them.

This ambitious undertaking requires a collective effort to identify and share effective strategies to operationalize this concept. This factsheet offers practical insights based on the experience of UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality (FGE) in working with marginalized populations through its support to women-led civil society organizations (CSOs).

Participant from a rural organic farming project implemented by Solidarité Famn Ayisyen (SOFA) in Haiti supported by the Fund for Gender Equality

Photo: UN Women / Maxence Bradley





## FGE & LEAVING NO WOMAN BEHIND

Since its inception in 2009, the Fund for Gender Equality has prioritized reaching vulnerable groups of women thanks to a targeted project selection process: by only supporting local and national women-led organizations proposing initiatives with high relevance and potential for impact in the lives of the most marginalized.

FGE is UN Women's global grant-making mechanism dedicated to the economic and political empowerment of women worldwide through the provision of financial and technical support to civil society organizations. The Fund has delivered US\$ 64 million in grants to 121 projects in 80 countries, touching the lives of more than 10 million direct beneficiaries and strengthening the capacities of over 140 grantee organizations.

*“In their design, a number of FGE projects successfully identified specific obstacles that marginalized and vulnerable groups of women face in accessing their rights and developed specific strategies to overcome such barriers.”*

*Independent meta-analysis of FGE grantee evaluations, 2015*

Domestic worker migrated from Ethiopia and employed in Beirut, Lebanon.  
Photo from FGE knowledge initiative on women's economic empowerment in fragile contexts.

Photo: UN Women / Joe Saade

**70%** of FGE projects involve 2 or more categories of marginalized women as key direct beneficiaries

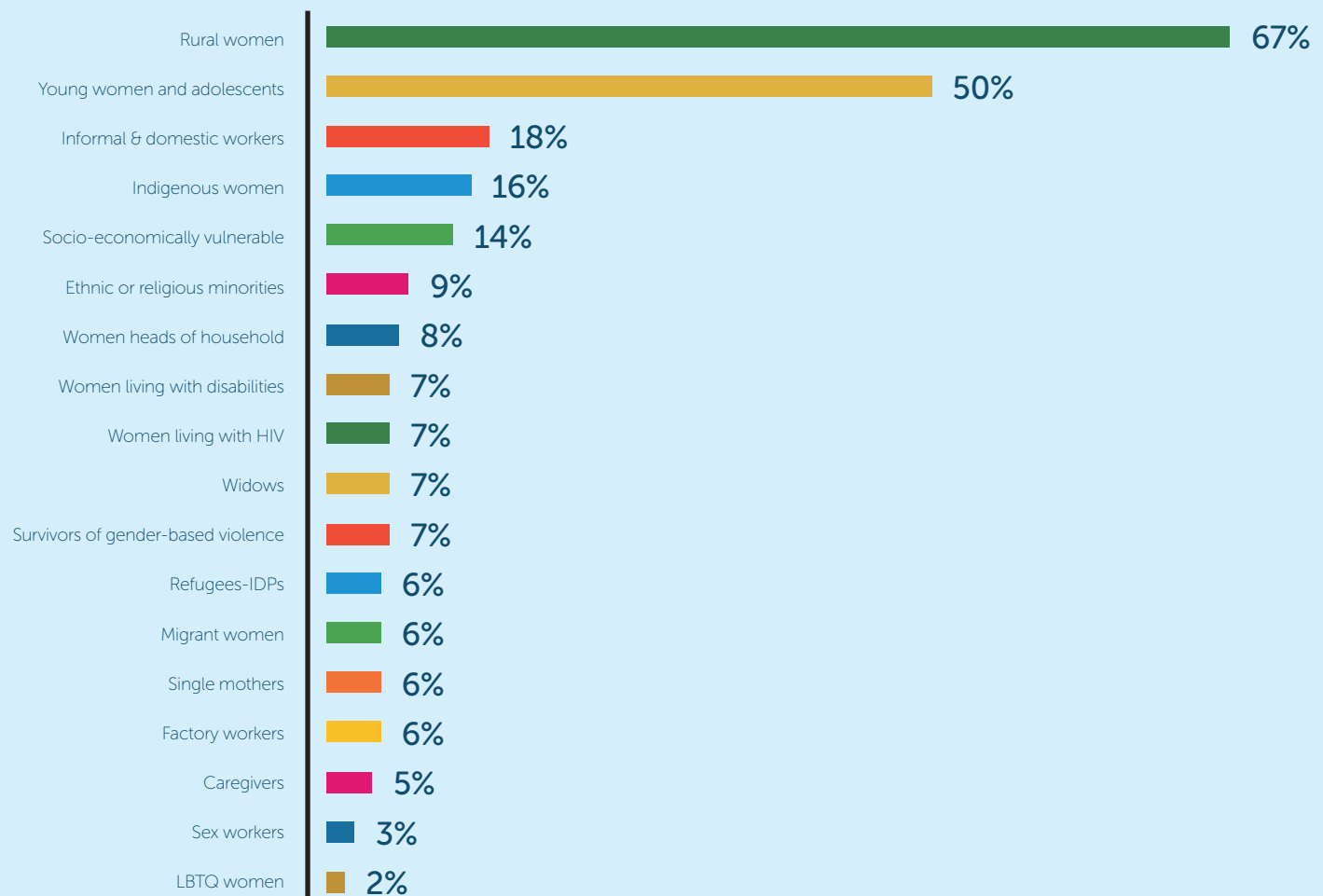
FGE has identified 18 categories of vulnerable groups in its supported projects. While rural and young women are largely the most targeted groups, many grantees strategically focus

on smaller, yet highly vulnerable groups that usually face many forms of discrimination, including widows, single mothers, caregivers, sex workers or LGBTQ women.

Out of 121 supported projects, 97% have targeted marginalized populations as direct beneficiaries. A majority target three or more categories of vulnerable groups, recognizing the need to consider intersectionality and how different identities shape the multiple forms of discrimination these women face.

All projects give women the opportunity to gain the necessary skills and resources to become economically and/or politically empowered and to make a substantive contribution to their families and communities – thus allowing them to be at the forefront of development.

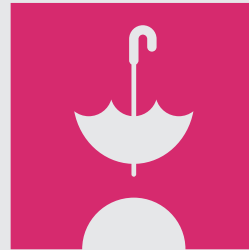
## MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS SUPPORTED BY FGE PROJECTS (% OF PROJECTS INVOLVING THESE GROUPS)



# HOW TO BRING MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS TO THE FOREFRONT

## EFFECTIVE GRANTEE STRATEGIES

*FGE grantees' experience working with marginalized groups offers key insights into effective strategies for operationalizing Agenda 2030 and its commitment to leave no one behind. Below are some examples.*

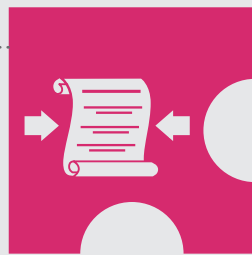


### UNCOVERING VULNERABILITIES

Conducting studies and generating data as a basis for public awareness raising and sensitization of decision-makers about existing discrimination and promote the needs of vulnerable groups through awareness raising and sensitization.

### INFLUENCING POLICIES

Elaboration of common agendas and key messages, opening spaces for beneficiaries to position themselves as relevant actors and leaders helps strengthen grassroots advocacy for more inclusive policies. Connecting decision-makers with their constituencies for more informed policies.

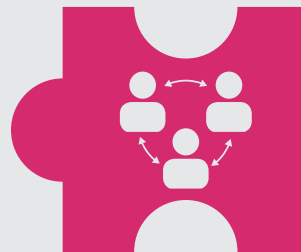
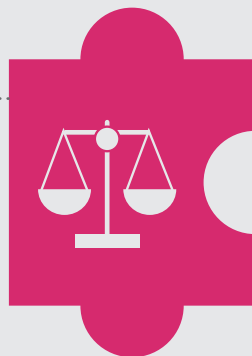


### LITERACY

Promoting alphabetical, numeral and financial literacy skills is highly effective when working with marginalized communities. It enhances their economic opportunities, boosts their confidence to overcome power relations, and erodes stigma.

### RIGHTS APPROACH

Supporting beneficiaries as right holders to know and claim their own rights, and targeting decision-makers as duty bearers. Fostering interconnection among different levels of social, economic and political rights, and allowing marginalized populations to identify their own priorities.



### EFFECTIVE TRAINING

Using culturally relevant content, formats accessible to all, and feminist and participatory approaches that are built from the learners' experiences and knowledge. Utilizing local experts – including beneficiaries – from target communities as facilitators and advisors.

### COLLECTIVE VOICE

Groups with collective identity offer safe spaces and support, foster a sense of belonging, and help the formation of leaderships. Savings and loans groups also enable access to economic resources for the most vulnerable. Voicing concerns as a group facilitates effective policy advocacy. Utilizing informal and formal community structures can guarantee sustainability.



### ENHANCING ACCESSIBILITY

Identifying beneficiaries' barriers and limitations including financial, social, geographical, and time availability, and dedicating resources to ensure access to information, services and activities. Enhanced mobility is an indicator of empowerment.

# OVERALL PROGRAMMING TIPS FROM FGE

## 1. BEING INTENTIONAL



Reaching the most marginalized requires an intentional will to do so at the core of the project goal. Otherwise, their realities are likely to remain invisible and their needs sidelined.

*FGE grant eligibility criteria requires a demonstrated commitment to working with women and girls that are economically, politically, socially, culturally, or otherwise excluded, marginalized, and/or disempowered.*

## 2. KNOWING THE CONTEXT & LOOKING FOR SPECIFICITIES

Identifying non-income-based inequalities that affect an individual's rights and status. Populations impacted by several layers of vulnerability have unique needs. Understanding intersectionalities and power relations among groups, and tailoring project strategies is essential.

*FGE requires proposals to demonstrate a strong understanding of the project context, based on existing knowledge and evidence, including a thorough context analysis from a gender perspective.*



## 3. BENEFICIARY-FOCUSED DESIGN & FLEXIBLE PROCESSES



Beneficiaries are the best positioned experts to help find and test solutions. Feedback mechanisms and flexible programming tools that allow for adjustments lead to more relevant interventions in constantly changing realities.

*FGE projects are implemented organically, and our tools allow grantees to re-direct strategies to respond to emerging needs of beneficiaries and/or changing country dynamics.*

## 4. WORKING WITH LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

The closer an organization is to the beneficiaries, the easier they will identify key changemakers and effective strategies to address real needs on the ground. National-level and self-led organizations have the potential to galvanize support for significant policy changes.

*FGE funds women-led, national organizations who have easy reach to vulnerable populations – either directly or through grassroots organizations– and capacity to influence decision-making.*



## 5. STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONS' CAPACITIES



Complementing financial support with capacity strengthening helps organizations consolidate their role as a relevant actor and advocate for the most disadvantaged groups, while maximizing sustainability – especially when they are themselves part of the vulnerable populations.

*FGE provides technical support and training to all its grantees, which include networks of female domestic workers, women with disabilities and women living with HIV, among others.*

## 6. GENERATING KNOWLEDGE

Working with marginalized communities often implies operating in an area with knowledge gaps about these target groups, and the effective ways to support them. Efforts to document successes and failures are key to implement more impactful interventions.

*FGE creates tools to systematize lessons from projects. In 2015, the Fund undertook a study on empowerment in fragile contexts, surveying rural, displaced and refugee women in Guinea, Lebanon and Sudan.*



# FROM MARGINALIZED GROUPS TO CHANGE AGENTS

CHIRAPAQ's advocacy efforts contributed to the adoption of a local policy in **Peru** recognizing indigenous women's contributions to the economy and facilitating their access to economic rights; and the repeal of a legislative decree undermining indigenous families' food security and sovereignty in Guatemala.

In **Burundi**, UNIPROBA supported 1,000 Batwa women – an indigenous group that lacks legal status – to access identity cards and register to vote in the 2015 local elections. Over 500 young rural and low-middle income Batwa women gained skills to claim their rights in local institutions.

Tebtebba communities enhanced the capacities of 800 members of six indigenous rights organizations in **Nepal** and the **Philippines** to effectively promote indigenous women's rights. More than 270 new documented cases of violation of indigenous women's rights served as a basis for advocacy and evidence in legal cases.

In **Lebanon**, Amel Association trained over 1,000 Lebanese rural women and refugees from Syria, Iraq and Sudan to create, brand and market unique, high-quality household products and handicrafts linked to traditional techniques and cultural heritages. The first national economic network for women created by the project allows more than 300 women producers to sell them under a consolidated brand and shop in Beirut.

At least 880 women and men from rural host and IDP communities in the South Kordofan state in **Sudan** increased their income through the provision of crop seeds and milk goats thanks to the Badya Center. Youth-organized theater groups mobilized locals to undertake community work and fostered awareness of 15,000 people about human rights, conflict prevention, ethnicity and IDP/host community relationships.

The All Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV influenced gender policies in the **Ukraine** to become sensitive to issues faced by women who live with HIV and to the engendering of national HIV policies - by including gender aspects of service provision, sections on other vulnerable groups, women's reproductive rights and sex-disaggregated data. As a result of the project, "Positive Women Network" was created and is now the main driver of gender and HIV issues in the country.

In a new project in **Kyrgyzstan**, AIDS Foundation East-West is enhancing the social and economic capabilities of vulnerable women including single mothers, sex workers, women living with HIV, partners of drug users and former prisoners to help them create alternative livelihood opportunities.

1

## INDIGENOUS WOMEN

16% projects globally

33% projects in Latin America

2

## REFUGEES, IDPS & MIGRANT WOMEN

11% projects globally

21% projects in Arab States

3

## WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV

7% projects globally

17% projects in Europe and Central Asia

16% projects in Africa

## WOMEN LIVING IN RURAL & REMOTE AREAS

4

67% projects globally

74% projects in Africa and Asia & the Pacific

On the **Guinean** Tristao Islands, Partenariat, Recherche, Environnement et Medias (PREM) created four women's cooperatives that allowed 320 members to access a bank account and saving and credit schemes for the first time. The provision of a boat also improved women's access to the mainland and allowed them to sell products worth US\$ 40,000.

In rural **Guatemala**, Asociacion de Mujeres JUNAJIL & ASOPROGAL enhanced indigenous rural women's leadership thanks to the establishment of schools for civil empowerment for young women and assisted 6,800 rural women to register in their municipalities and obtain ID cards, resulting in over 3,700 women able to vote for the first time.

## WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

5

7% projects globally

13% projects in Arab States

Stars of Hope Society has capacitated 18 trainers and 100 activists in **Egypt, Jordan and Palestine** about disability rights, gender, political processes, and the use of media and ICT, and created novel tools to support advocacy. Efforts contributed to a new umbrella institution for disability-related concerns in Palestine, legislated quotas in Egypt, and an advocacy team in Jordan.

In the **Dominican Republic**, Centro de Investigacion para la Accion Femenina (CIPAF) drafted the first Plan for Equality in the Digital Agenda in the world to be based on a consultation with women including women with disabilities. Twenty women with different disabilities received specialized training and are now managing a computer center to train and assist other women in similar situations.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC VULNERABLE GROUPS

6

14% projects globally

25% projects in Africa

22% projects in Asia & the Pacific

In **India**, Jan Sahas liberated over 8,000 Dalit women manual scavengers from this form of slavery thanks to forty-five dignity support centers. Thousands of liberated women are leading advocacy efforts and participating in local governance. More than 60 resolutions have been passed at the local level to stop the practice and ensure entitlements for women and their families. The project has also identified 16,000 additional manual scavengers, shedding light to the extent of this practice.

In rural **Samoa**, Samoa Victim Support Group is supporting "nofotane" women – married to a man from a different village, living with their in-laws and often exposed to exploitation as domestic servants – to understand their rights and by advocating for the formal recognition of their work, while supporting them to access sustainable livelihoods.

## INFORMAL & DOMESTIC WORKERS

7

18% projects globally

30% projects in Asia & the Pacific and Latin America

In **Brazil**, ELAS Fundo de Investimento Social and THEMIS Assessoria Juridica e Estudos de Genero have strengthened the institutional capacity of six main domestic workers' unions resulting in the regulation of labor rights for more than 7 million domestic workers, most of which are Afro-descendent women from disadvantaged social classes. A mobile app provides accessible information on their rights, protection agencies and allows for a social network with domestic workers in their region.

Al-Shehab organization led the first thorough social and economic study on the situation of women domestic workers in **Egypt**, which provided evidence to support awareness and advocacy efforts at national and regional levels to defend their rights – and specifically shed light on the situation of children domestic workers. The training of 25 domestic worker activists led to the creation of a non-governmental organization focused on domestic workers, the first of its kind in the country.

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Shepherd in rural Lebanon, beneficiary from the project implemented by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL).

Photo: UN Women / Joe Saade