

FUND FOR GENDER EQUALITY
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FOREWORD

With less than 13 years to achieve the high ambitions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we must move quickly, coming together to realize a more peaceful, prosperous, equal and sustainable world. By 2030, the effects could be transformative, particularly for women and girls. This will depend, above all, on realizing our responsibility to reach the most marginalized communities and address the multiple layers of discrimination and inequality they face. They must not fall through the cracks this time. Ensuring that disadvantaged women and girls are not left behind depends fundamentally on translating commitments into concrete, context-driven action, at national and local levels, that tackle the multiple structural causes and manifestations of inequality and marginalization.

One of our main goals at the Fund for Gender Equality is to reach the most vulnerable women and girls, working through close, collaborative partnerships with civil society. In partnering with women's organizations, the Fund backs their own localized initiatives, and helps strengthen their capacities, promote their influence and advance their ability to demand accountability from duty bearers. When we look back at seven years of work and the completion of two grant-making cycles, we can see grantees have sown seeds that have flourished, yielding a rich bounty of fruits.

I was fortunate enough to witness this transformation in Ethiopia, where I recently met one of our previous grantees – the Union of Ethiopian Women Charitable Associations (UEWCA). An influential national women's organization, it works together with local partners to establish self-help groups that have been

life-altering for women who are rural, poor and often illiterate. The groups help women gain basic literacy and build skills in business and agriculture, while providing them with much needed access to land and capital through safe loans. The groups also open vital spaces to spread awareness of women's rights, including to be free from gender-based violence.

Women beneficiaries have explained that the groups have bolstered their self-confidence, and that spouses, families and neighbours appreciate members for making positive contributions to households and the community. Both changes are critical first steps in the pursuit of equality and the realization of rights. UN Women is currently exploring the replication of UEWCA's successful functional literacy model in its work with women refugees from South Sudan, just one of many examples of a seed that, once sprouted, continues to grow.

Looking ahead, we at the Fund believe that many more organizations and their pioneering initiatives must be supported to produce real gains. Towards a world where no woman is left behind, the Fund and its partners will continue to apply a validated grant-making model where women-led civil society catalyses SDG achievements faster and more effectively.

We count on your solidarity and financial support to make it happen. Because it matters. Because it works.

Elisa Fernandez
Chief, Fund for Gender Equality

FIT FOR THE ERA OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

[FGE enables] UN Women to identify and collaborate with emerging civil society organizations, helping UN Women's partnerships not to become hierarchical and closed, and instead creating pathways for inclusion of new partners and voices—especially those of the most marginalized women.

Independent corporate evaluation of the regional architecture of UN Women (2017)

The Fund for Gender Equality (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 (CSOs). The Fund has delivered US\$ 64 million in grants to 121 projects in 80 countries, touching the lives of more than 10 million beneficiaries and strengthening the capacities of over 140 grantee organizations.

Anchored in international commitments to gender equality and aid effectiveness, the FGE is an instrument for feminist philanthropy based on accessibility, trust and women's ownership. Today, it offers a unique grant-making model in the United Nations. It goes beyond simply transferring funds to putting civil society first – investing in their ideas and abilities.

While only 8 per cent of gender-focused aid to civil society organizations goes directly to those in developing countries, evidence shows they are key drivers of policy and social norm change. They pioneer innovative strategies and counteract forces hindering progress.

**UN WOMEN'S FUND FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND ITS
DONORS ARE PROUD TO BE A PART OF A MINORITY
THAT MAKES A MEANINGFUL DIFFERENCE – AND NEEDS
TO GROW.**

Driven by a constant search for improvement, the Fund over the past eight years has adapted some of its features – such as grant amounts and eligibility criteria – to international commitments, priorities and gaps, and donors’ financial resources. It has also remained grounded in a robust set of principles for meaningful grant-making: transparency, demand-orientation, capacity-building, quality, results-based programme design and management. These underpin the Fund’s three-pillar approach.

THE FGE’S 3-PILLAR APPROACH



- Biannual competition for grants targeting the most marginalized
- Technical support & monitoring for effectiveness and efficiency
- Results-based management (RBM) capacities of grantees
- Global results and promising practices
- Independent evaluations for accountability and learning
- Grantee interaction for learning exchange

LOCALIZATION OF THE SDGs

The Fund for Gender Equality complements the work of governments and other UN entities in localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It supports civil society ownership of the 2030 Agenda and participation in its implementation, locally and nationally.

The Fund’s SDG-centred Call for Proposals in 2015 gave women-led organizations from developing countries an opportunity to adapt SDG targets to their local contexts and propose initiatives addressing the goals from the perspectives of women and girls most in need.

FGE grantees propose home-grown solutions to the most acute challenges. They allow grass-roots women to drive the 2030 agenda and hold governments accountable for progress on priority concerns.

THE FGE GLOBAL PORTFOLIO 2009-2017



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