

FUND FOR GENDER EQUALITY ANNUAL REPORT 2015



“UN Women is working closely with civil society and women’s organizations to ensure women’s meaningful participation in influential spaces of policy-making around fragility, peace and security, economic growth, social cohesion and development, and the implementation of high-impact initiatives. This is what Agenda 2030 actually is about. When we talk about leaving no one behind, this is exactly the constituency that we are talking about. Missing out on this constituency means we are missing the direction to 2030.”

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka

UN Women Executive Director

2015: A YEAR OF LEARNING AND OPPORTUNITY

As the world adopts a new framework to tackle its most acute development problems, UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality (FGE) has a clear vision for its role. Building on high-impact grant-making since 2009, the Fund is poised to directly support civil society's strategic work to propel women's political and economic empowerment across the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2015 was a momentous year for the FGE, UN Women's grant-making mechanism and a vital source of funding for women's organizations around the world. The new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has set 17 Global Goals to eliminate poverty, reduce inequality and combat climate change, and calls for upholding human rights principles for every person—leaving no one behind. In line with its commitment to civil society, the Fund launched a global call for proposals affirming UN Women's resolve to place women's organizations at the forefront of implementation efforts.

The call drew attention from 1,400 organizations, seeking over US\$ 500 million in funding. The Fund awarded US\$ 7.3 million to 24 leading women's organizations. From strengthening rural women's organic farming capacities in Haiti, to promoting women's political participation amid the ongoing conflict in Yemen, these programmes will help localize 11 SDGs in their national contexts, and push forward women's empowerment and gender equality.

In the past seven years, 10 million women and men have been positively affected by FGE programme results. In 2015, the active portfolio impacted 218,000 women, specifically supporting

300 to achieve leadership positions and ensuring sustainable income for 13,000 of them.

Moreover, two powerful learning initiatives helped FGE understand impact and generate evidence-based models. First, a meta-analysis looked at 22 evaluations of completed FGE programmes. It identified partnerships and locally tailored interventions as key conditions for impact and sustainability. Second, a programme-based research generated new data on challenges and opportunities for women's economic empowerment in fragile contexts. The burden of unpaid care work was found to be one of the most pressing barriers for women's financial autonomy. These findings will inform the Fund's future programmatic and grant-making work.

In 2016, the FGE will continue responding to the needs and priorities of women and girls in vulnerable and marginalized situations within the SDG framework. To that end, our efforts will be geared towards re-capitalising the Fund for a new call for proposals in 2017. Sufficient and sustained funding is critical to transform commitments into action, enabling strategic civil society actors on the ground to make Agenda 2030 a reality for all.

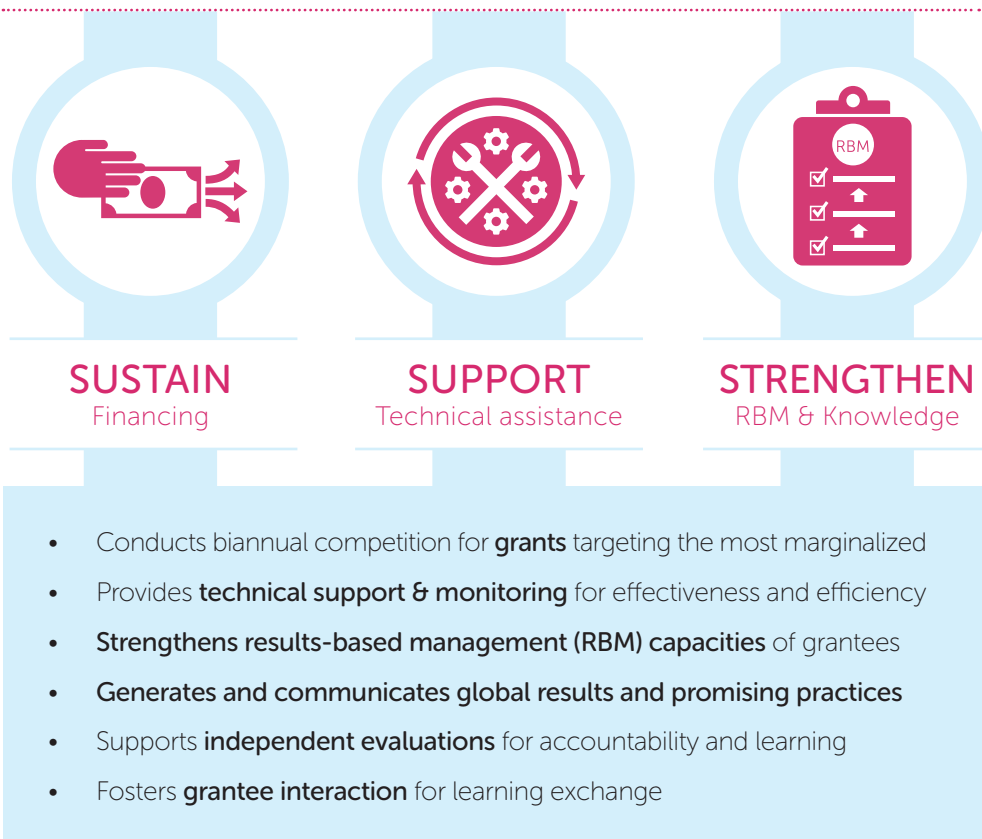
Elisa Fernández

Chief, UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality

MORE THAN A FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT

The FGE is the largest global financial instrument dedicated exclusively to empowering women politically and economically through support for civil society-led programmes.

FGE'S 3-PILLAR APPROACH



Who does all this

A dedicated team of passionate and experienced professionals including **specialists** and focal points deployed in UN Women field offices, and a team in **headquarters coordinating** global processes.

Why what we do matters

Women-led civil society organizations know the realities on the ground. Without their transformational capacity, **women's empowerment** and sustainable development cannot happen.

How we spend the money

At least three-quarters of our resources are invested in **grants**. The rest is devoted to **technical support** to grantees, **knowledge generation and sharing**, management and support costs.

What they say about us

OUR GRANTEES

"The Fund was different. We perceived them more as a partner than a donor. Right at the onset of the project we worked very closely in refining the indicators and this was really helpful. We also appreciated them bringing us together as grantees to learn from each other."

Forum for Women in Democracy,
Uganda

OUR DONORS

"The Fund for Gender Equality is a trustworthy mechanism that not only offers the financial means but also accompanies them in the process, strengthening their capacities and providing technical guidance to ensure effective results on the ground. Germany is proud to support this mechanism. This is one of our best investments."

Government of Germany

EVALUATIONS

"The demand-driven and grantee-led approach of the FGE is a significant comparative advantage and ensured that projects were relevant, responsive to the needs of beneficiaries and sustainable."

Independent meta-analysis of FGE
grantee evaluations (2015)

DEVELOPMENT ACTORS

"Through the grant awarding process and later implementation of the successful projects, an eye is kept on the selection of the highest quality proposals that will actually have an effective impact on society [...]. Thanks to this approach, UN Women's impact on (the) field can be measured and appraised."

European Commission, DEVCO
Pillar Assessment Report of UN
Women (2015)

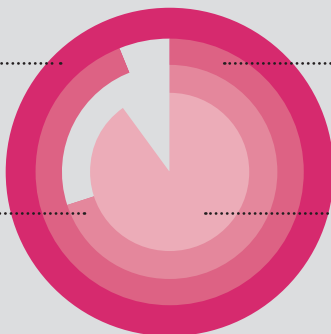
Insights from Grantee Survey

100%

would
recommend
FGE

70%

reported
enhanced ability
to achieve results



94%

are satisfied
with the
collaboration

90%

acknowledged
the Fund's
flexibility

A 2016 online survey asked previous grantees about their FGE experience. The representative sample of respondents from 102 organizations were very satisfied with the collaboration, and all would recommend FGE to other organizations. Other findings include:

- 94 per cent indicated that their programmes resulted in high impact for target women and communities
- 70 per cent found FGE's technical assistance helpful and enhanced their abilities to achieve results
- 90 per cent acknowledged the importance of programmatic flexibility when circumstances required

Additionally, a majority or 77 per cent suggested that the Fund's partnership strengthened their ability to innovate, through regular feedback and programme support and the flexibility to adjust strategies. Almost two-thirds indicated that they were able to "think outside the box" when analysing problems and examining solutions, involving beneficiaries in their design.

Areas for improvement included the simplification of monitoring and reporting processes, and facilitation of interactions between grantees and other potential partners.





01. GEARED UP FOR THE SDGS

In 2015, the Fund launched its third grant-making cycle, awarding 24 grants totaling US\$ 7.3 million for programmes localizing 11 of the 17 SDGs. This section presents the Fund's 2016-2018 portfolio.

GRANT-MAKING CYCLE

“Experience from FGE projects shows that implementing (civil society) organizations are now well-positioned to inform and further contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.”

Independent meta-analysis of the FGE grantee evaluations

In 2015, 193 UN Member States agreed on the 2030 Agenda, with commitments to inclusion and sustainability, and 17 SDGs. The goals guide actions to end poverty, promote equality and human rights, and safeguard the environment. Gender equality and women's empowerment appear across the Agenda and as a standalone Goal 5. Women-led organizations will be critical in accelerating progress for women and girls across the globe.

The FGE contributes to the SDGs by:

1. **Supporting initiatives that directly contribute to the implementation of at least 11 SDGs** by enabling women's participation, leadership and agency; and
2. **Strengthening grantees'**

Proposals in March 2015, with a focus on implementing the SDGs. A rigorous and competitive review process **selected 24 grantees and awarded US\$ 7.3 million to reach over 325,000 direct beneficiaries** over the next three years. The most common beneficiaries include rural and agricultural workers, indigenous women, domestic and informal workers, and young women, among other groups. About 45 per cent of the programmes will be implemented in low-income countries and 53 per cent will target women's economic and/or political empowerment in fragile states.

New programmes will meaningfully contribute to SDG 5 on gender equality and will help advance progress towards 10 additional goals, reflecting the multi dimensional nature of women's empowerment.

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