

Annex V: Summary of 2023 results of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women



A. About the UN Trust Fund

The [United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women](#) (UN Trust Fund) is the only global, multilateral, inter-agency grant-giving mechanism specialized in funding and building the capacities of civil society organizations (CSOs), especially women’s rights organizations (WROs), to: prevent violence against women and girls; improve access to adequate essential, multisectoral services for survivors; and support effective implementation of laws and policies. The UN Trust Fund was established by [General Assembly resolution 50/166](#) in 1996 and is managed by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) on behalf of the United Nations system. Since 1996, the UN Trust Fund has provided grants to 670 initiatives across 140 countries and territories totalling \$225,837,268.

The UN Trust Fund’s *Strategic Plan 2021–2025* vision drives forward Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. The strength of CSOs, especially WROs, and feminist movements as a whole, serves as a cornerstone for driving efforts to end violence against women and girls. The UN Trust Fund also plays a pivotal role in advancing the achievement of UN-Women’s strategic vision by providing dedicated, flexible funding to CSOs/WROs, enabling them to leverage their expertise in ending violence against women and girls and is integral to the achievement of Outcome 5 “Women’s voice, leadership, and agency” and Impact 3 “Ending violence against women and girls” of UN-Women’s *Strategic Plan 2022–2025*. Moreover, UN Trust Fund indirectly contributes to the achievement of a diverse array of SDGs, including reduced inequalities and improved wellbeing and health, through its support for various organizations and interventions.

The UN Trust Fund, strategically positioned within the United Nations system, serves as a catalyst for collaboration. By bringing diverse stakeholders together, it advances knowledge, strategies, and funding approaches to empower CSOs/WROs in their mission to end violence against women and girls.

B. Key results in 2023

In 2023, the UN Trust Fund managed a \$92.1 million grant portfolio, supporting 191 organisations to deliver interventions aimed at preventing and responding to violence against women and girls across 68 countries and territories globally.

In its twenty-sixth grant-giving cycle (2023), the UN Trust Fund awarded 24 civil society organisations (CSOs) new grants spanning 22 countries and territories, totalling \$11.1 million. Notably, 34 per cent of this funding was awarded under the special focus on protracted crises. Additional funding under the general window was also allocated to organizations working across contexts of protracted crises. Of the organizations awarded grants, 75 per

cent identified as WROs, a new record for the Trust Fund. In addition, 92 per cent identified as women-led organizations, with more than 61 per cent of women in leadership positions.

Overall, in 2023, grantee partners reached 15,353,322 people, including 1,312,826 women and girls, through initiatives such as through comprehensive prevention initiatives including a broad range of communications and outreach interventions to prevent and end violence against women and girls. In addition, at least 163,087 women and girls were empowered to exercise agency for transformational change in their own lives – specifically through accessing specialist support services and prevention initiatives as well as engaging in advocacy to improve the effectiveness of legislation, policies and national action plans.

C. UN Trust Fund’s contribution to ending violence against women and girls

The UN Trust Fund supports CSOs/WROs to implement programmes across three outcome areas of its *Strategic Plan 2021–2025*:

- improved access for women and girls to essential, specialist, safe and adequate multisectoral services
- increased effectiveness of legislation, policies, national action plans and accountability
- improved prevention of violence against women and girls through changes in behaviours, practices and attitudes.

In 2023, ***across the portfolio, 48,959 women and girls used specialist services to heal and recover from violence supported by UN Trust Fund grantees.*** For example, in seven regions of **Armenia**, Women’s Support Center provided essential comprehensive domestic violence services to 472 women and girls during 2023. Further, the Women’s Support Center provided psychosocial support, legal aid and shelter to refugee women affected by the 2023 September conflict. The organization was able to pivot to provide comprehensive services to displaced women, reaching 1,184 women and children with humanitarian aid and domestic violence services. Implementing a small grant, the organization also supported service providers to improve their attitudes and sensitivity towards violence against women through training 89 police officers. Further, in collaboration CARE International and with funding from UN-Women, the Women’s Support Center worked to facilitate a comprehensive gender analysis to understand the needs of displaced individuals.

Over the portfolio, ***at least 12,567 women and girls accessed justice services in cases of violence against women and girls through support from UN Trust Fund grantees.*** This outcome was achieved through the ongoing efforts of grantee partners to effectively implement laws and policies to ensure that survivors of violence have appropriate access to justice. In **Nigeria**, operating in the context of economic inflation and political instability, the Greater Women Initiative for Health and Right (GWIHR) adapted its strategies to reach women and transgender self-identified sex workers as the organization strived to reform harmful legislation and provide legal services. For example, the organization has implemented effective tracking mechanisms for the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act – including observing court proceedings to ensure that the law is properly applied – to promote justice for self-identified women sex workers. Implementation of these mechanisms in the Rivers State region has led to a 33 per cent increase in the number of self-identified women sex workers who have accessed justice services in the state. Further, in 2023, GWIHR increased the knowledge of 1,603 women and transgender self-identified sex workers through its peer-driven human rights education sessions.

In 2023, ***a total of 208 practice-based methodologies, approaches or models to advance behaviour and social norms change for ending violence against women and girls were developed or implemented by 80 UN Trust Fund grantee partners.*** For example, in **Cambodia** the Cambodian Women’s Crisis Center and their partner ADD International customized the existing SASA/ methodology tool to incorporate a module on intersectionality and make the materials more user-friendly to sensitize new rights holders and duty bearers. The programme piloted the intersectionality material and revised training guidelines, providing 20 training sessions on intersectionality to 381 participants, including parents and caregivers of young women with disabilities.

The UN Trust Fund’s work remains guided by the principle of leaving no one behind, which is implemented through an intentional and proactive intersectional approach, with nearly 80 per cent of the portfolio working to reach those most likely to be left behind, including women and girls living with disabilities, women and girl refugees and internally displaced persons, lesbian, bisexual and transgender women, Indigenous women and other underserved women and girls.

For example, in 2023, Women Challenged to Challenge implemented an initiative in **Kenya** to engage women and girls with disabilities in preventing and responding to violence and improving responses from service providers. The initiative reached 120 women and girls with disabilities, who were trained as activists and paralegals to support other women and girls with disabilities in their communities in reporting cases of violence to the authorities, thereby improving such reporting. This social learning helped enhance knowledge – and prevention – of violence and equipped the women and girls as activists. By the end of the initiative, 255 perpetrators were facing court proceedings and 11 had been sentenced.

Through long-term and flexible funding, the UN Trust Fund enables CSOs/WROs to implement demand-driven initiatives to end violence against women and girls, supporting both programmatic sustainability and organizational resilience. For instance, the UN Trust Fund’s annual partner survey found that 74 per cent of grantee partners reported being able to mobilize an increased proportion of flexible, core and long-term funding through additional funding sources. In addition, 61 per cent of grantees reported engaging in and creating useful partnerships to advance ending violence against women efforts. These include partnerships with government agencies to build their capacity and develop advocacy campaigns, among other goals.

D. Enhancing the capacity of organizations

All UN Trust Fund grantees received comprehensive capacity-development support to strengthen their organizational operations.

The UN Trust Fund’s provision of capacity-development support to grantees was highlighted as a good practice by UN-Women’s Independent Evaluation and Audit Services. In addition to being a risk management strategy for the UN Trust Fund, this approach proved to be successful in developing the organizational capacities of grantees, which are now better equipped to undertake future programming, even outside the UN Trust Fund.

For instance, one example of organizational capacity development includes the support to develop systems for reporting allegations of sexual harassment, assault, sexual exploitation and abuse. In 2023, significant progress was made in organizational policy development on the prevention of sexual harassment, assault, sexual exploitation and abuse, among organizations supported by the UN Trust Fund. All eight of the organizations that did not have a policy on the prevention of sexual harassment and assault successfully developed one.

E. UN Trust Fund’s midterm review of the *Strategic Plan 2021–2025*

In 2023, the UN Trust Fund initiated a Mid-Term Review (MTR) of its Strategic Plan (2021-2025). Findings from the MTR demonstrated that the UN Trust Fund continues to be relevant and strongly aligns with the broader priorities and trends in the ending violence against women and girls ecosystem. The review found that the UN Trust Fund’s outcomes and outputs are highly pertinent in addressing the evolving challenges of compounded crises, intense backlash to women’s rights, and shrinking spaces. The review found a broad consensus that the UN Trust Fund’s support to CSO and WROs in crises and humanitarian settings fills a critical gap. The MTR recognized that the demand the UN Trust Fund receives significantly exceeded the resources available. In addition, findings from the MTR show that the UN Trust Fund provides excellent value for money with its evidence-based “wraparound service delivery model” and lives up to its ambition of being “more than a donor”.

F. Elevating Practice-based knowledge

In 2023, the UN Trust Fund continued its commitment on promoting practice-based knowledge and learning from grantee partner organizations. As part of these efforts, the Trust Fund co-produced a series of papers focusing on resourcing CSOs/WROs in collaboration with grantee partners. These specifically addressed resourcing intersectionality through the UN Trust Fund’s special funding windows, [ending violence against women and girls who are refugees or forcibly displaced](#); and [ending violence against women and girls with disabilities](#). Further, in 2023, the UN Trust Fund launched a series of papers on its work focused on resourcing organizations, feminist knowledge and building feminist and women’s movements globally.

The findings from the series of papers show that grantee partners play a crucial role in shifting societal norms away from harmful or outdated paradigms related to disabilities. They achieved this by developing disability-specific tools and approaches to address violence, while also championing inclusive movements.

The UN Trust Fund, in partnership with grantees, highlight the criticality of supporting feminist/women’s movement-building approaches, as they are grounded in feminist principles and have the power to transform oppressive ideologies, attitudes, behaviours and practices that perpetuate violence against women and girls. The papers show that using an intentional feminist/women’s movement-building approach has the potential to increase the degree to which civil society’s ending violence against women work is sustainable, empowering and ultimately transformative.

G. The way forward

The UN Trust Fund remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting CSOs, especially women-led organizations and WROs, in leading local, national, regional and global efforts to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls.

In 2023, during the third year of implementing the *Strategic Plan 2021–2025*, the UN Trust Fund and its grantee partners achieved significant milestones. Despite navigating complex landscapes affected by multiple and overlapping crises, the UN Trust Fund and our partners, showed that core and sustained support to CSOs/WROs across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus is indispensable. Further, in response to the findings from the Mid-Term Review, the UN Trust Fund will adjust its work over the course of the next year based on accepted recommendations and will incorporate the conclusions into the development of its next Strategic Plan.

Key insights from 2023 underscore the critical role of the UN Trust Fund in providing core and flexible funding, including options to adapt and pivot funding and approaches when emergencies hit. As part of the UN Trust Fund’s recognition that core, long-term and flexible funding is essential for CSO and WRO to respond effectively to gender-based violence within their communities, the UN Trust Fund will increase its grant duration from three to four years, and increase its threshold for core funding, especially for small organizations applying for small grants in 2024.