

# VIRTUAL • SKILLS • SCHOOL

ensuring no girl is left behind



## Empowering Girls & Women Through **UN Women's Virtual Skills School (VSS)**

Tens of millions of girls are being denied access to education around the world. According to UNESCO's 2015 Education for All Global Monitoring Report, 48% of out-of-school girls in the world are likely never to enroll in school, depriving them of the necessary knowledge and skills required for obtaining decent work.

Yet, in this age of growing connectedness through ICTs, social networks, and other online resources, the tools to deliver innovative educational programmes have never been more accessible. The VSS will seek to provide an innovative approach to delivering high quality learning programmes that will leverage opportunities for girls and women.

### About **Empower Women**

Launched in 2013 with funding from Canada, UN Women's Empower Women is a growing movement for women's economic empowerment with 1 million users, 18,000+ active members, and 2,500+ crowdsourced learning resources. More than 250 women and men in 60 countries serve as official Empower Women Champions for Change to conceptualize and implement projects in their communities. They have requested 21st century skills development opportunities to prepare for an ICT-based knowledge society.

## Virtual Skills School's Four Learning Journeys

The Virtual Skill School will be an open platform for girls and women, boys and men around the globe. Gender equality and women's rights will be at the heart of all learning paths through four key journeys:

### **VOCATIONAL TRAINING**

For learners seeking to expand their technical and professional skills, particularly in emerging and non-traditional sectors.

### **21ST CENTURY SKILLS**

For those looking to acquire core skills, such as breakthrough technologies, digital and financial literacy, communication, creativity, critical thinking, and life-long character qualities, such as adaptability, leadership and social and gender awareness.

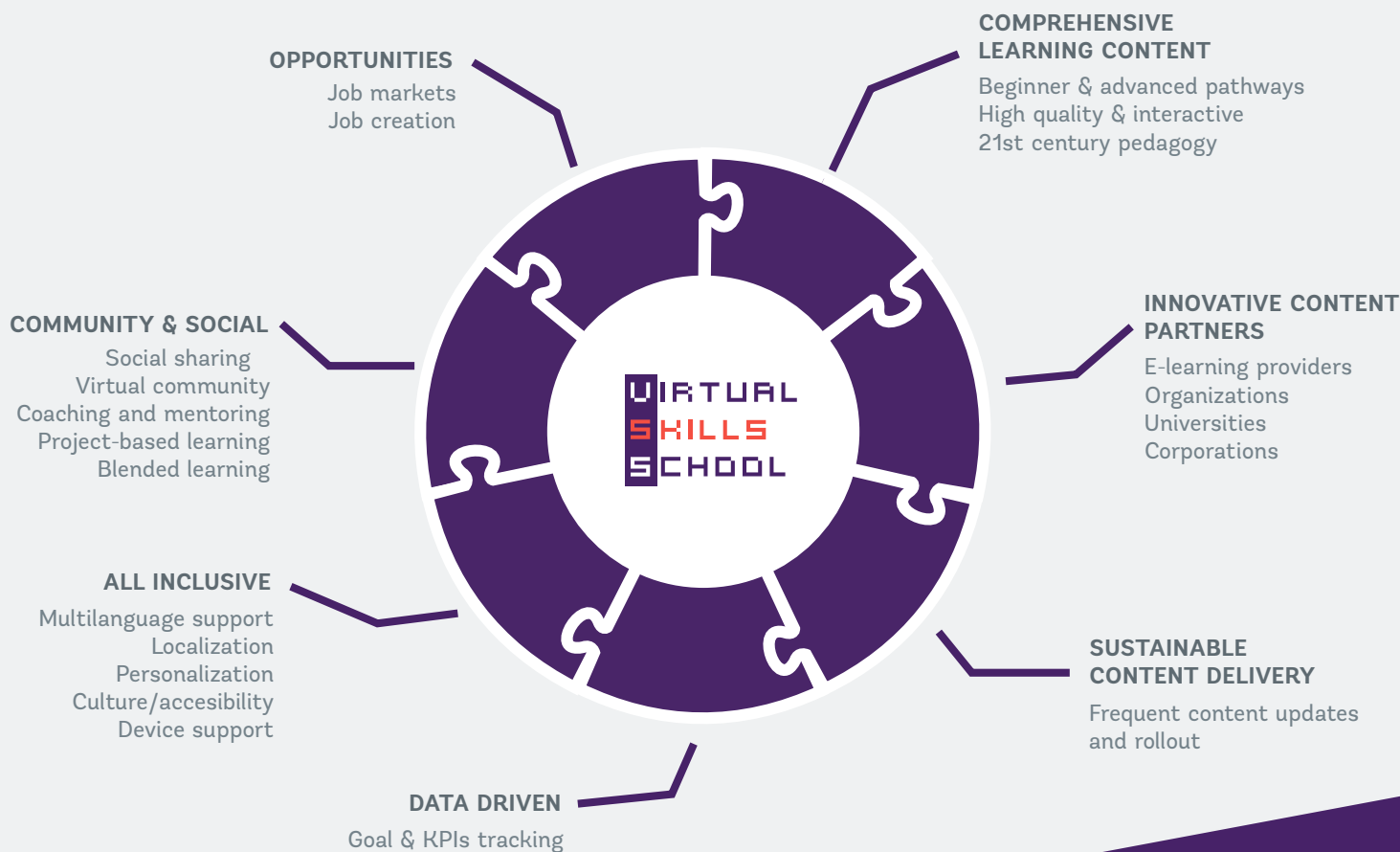
### **SECOND CHANCE EDUCATION**

For girls and women outside the formal education system looking for a "second chance" to get into a path of increased opportunity and continued learning.

### **CHANGE-MAKER ACTIVATION**

For companies implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles, teachers, parents/ family members, community leaders, Empower Women Champions, and many others.

## Our Vision



## Fostering the Next Generation

**Girls and women, boys and men who will:**

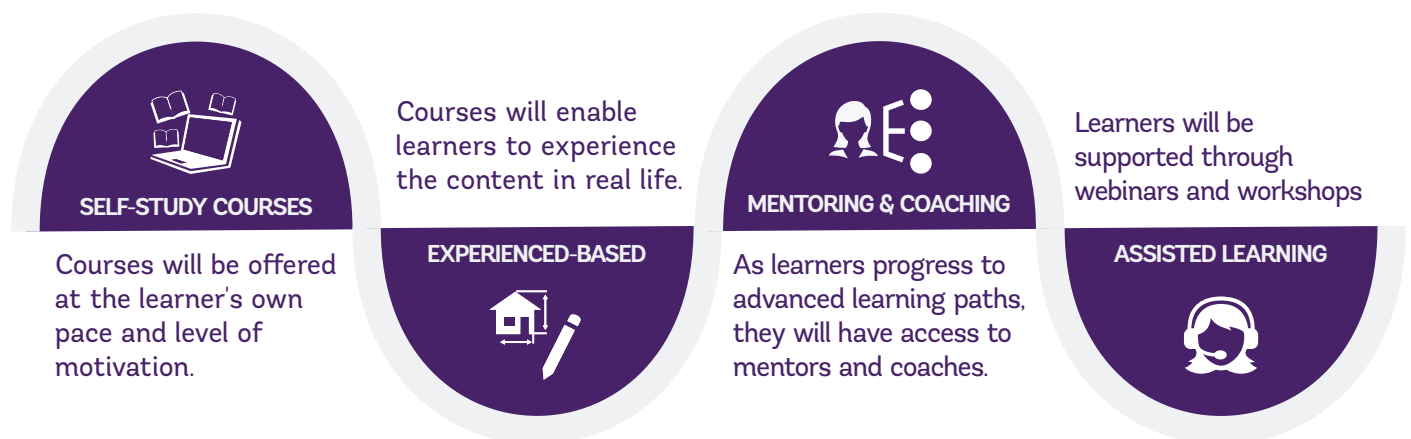
Take action for gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

Enjoy enhanced life opportunities make informed decisions in emerging digital societies and economies.

Acquire jobs and grow businesses, particularly in high value sectors.

## Our Unique Approach

The Virtual Skills School will provide an innovative approach to delivering high-quality learning programmes to support girls and women in overcoming physical, financial, and other learning opportunity barriers. It will go beyond traditional online courseware to incorporate learning pathways, blended (off- and online) and collaborative learning, interdisciplinary curriculum, real-world student projects, mentoring and gamification. Through completion certificates, learners will improve their connections with employment opportunities.

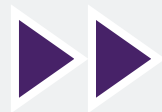


It will build on lessons learned, good practices and feedback from the Empower Women global community, supporting the imperatives and overarching agenda of women's economic empowerment and gender equality. It will provide learners tangible evidence and guidance on how to integrate their newfound skills and knowledge into their everyday lives.

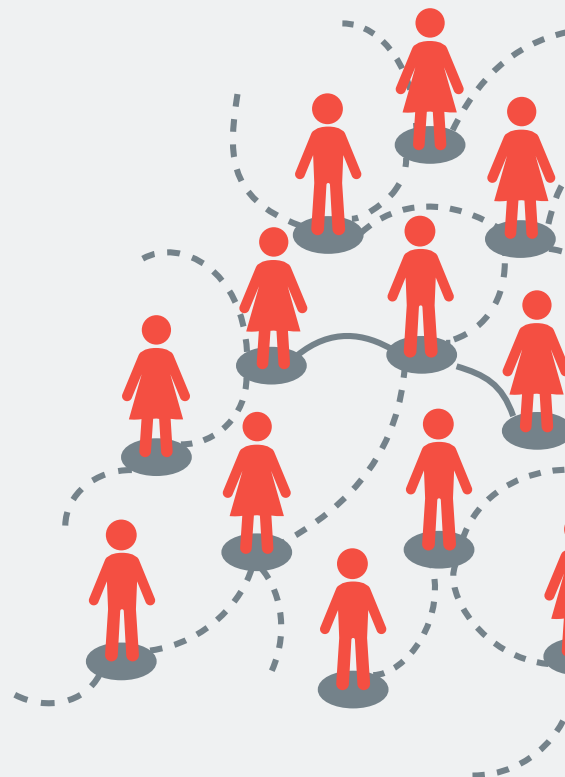
## Virtual Skills School's Theory of Change

The VSS aligns with UN Women's vision of putting girls back to school through three effective exit avenues while directly contribute to closing the education-to-employment skills gap. It will offer second chance education and learning resources matching labour market needs: 21st century professional, technical and vocational skills.

### SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

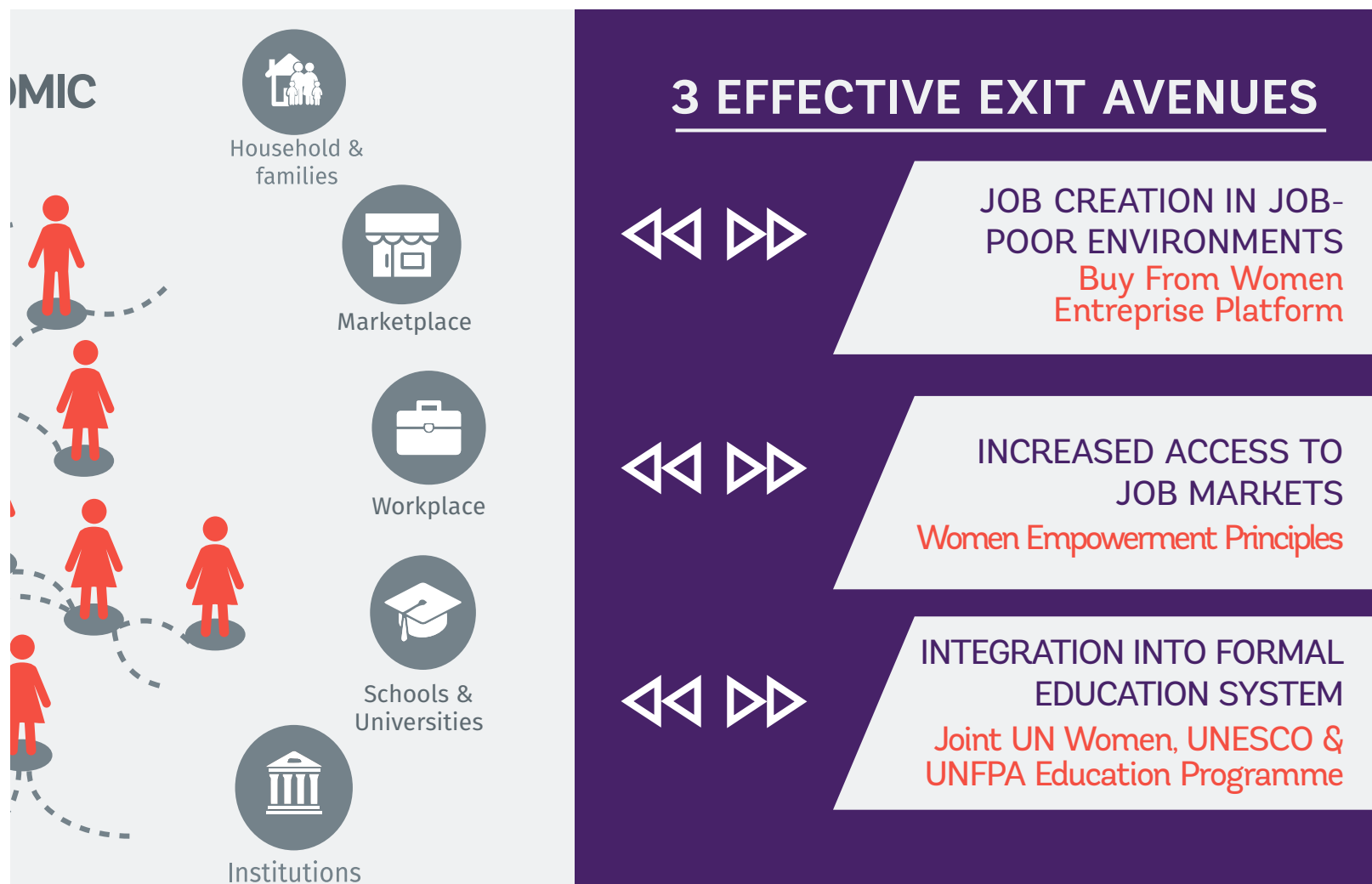


### EDUCATION & ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES



## Our Target Groups

The VSS will also meet the individual girls' and women's learning needs and desires for personal development. Intersectionality across targeted groups of women and girls will be taken into account in curriculum development. Content and pedagogy will be tailored to the different literacy levels of our intended learners.



## Our Roadmap

### PROTOTYPING

In the initial phase of the VSS, a prototype will be developed to illustrate how a learner will interact with the VSS. It will also provide some insight into the user-interface and user-



experience of the learning management system. The prototype will also serve to solicit feedback and inputs from partners. This first phase is expected to be completed in December 2016.

### PILOT

The pilot will be carried out through two main components: (1) development of a minimum viable product (MVP) and (2) targeted pilot testing. The MVP will be developed based on feedback during the prototype phase. The MVP is expected to be finalized in early



January 2017 and be piloted and tested by a small group of users until March 2017. The content will focus on financial literacy and Gender IQ. On the basis of experience and lessons learned from this testing phase, the VSS will be further developed and piloted.

### EXPANSION & ITERATION

Once pilot testing has been completed, the VSS will seek to roll out its global online presence while focusing on expanding its pilots in select countries and contexts. The

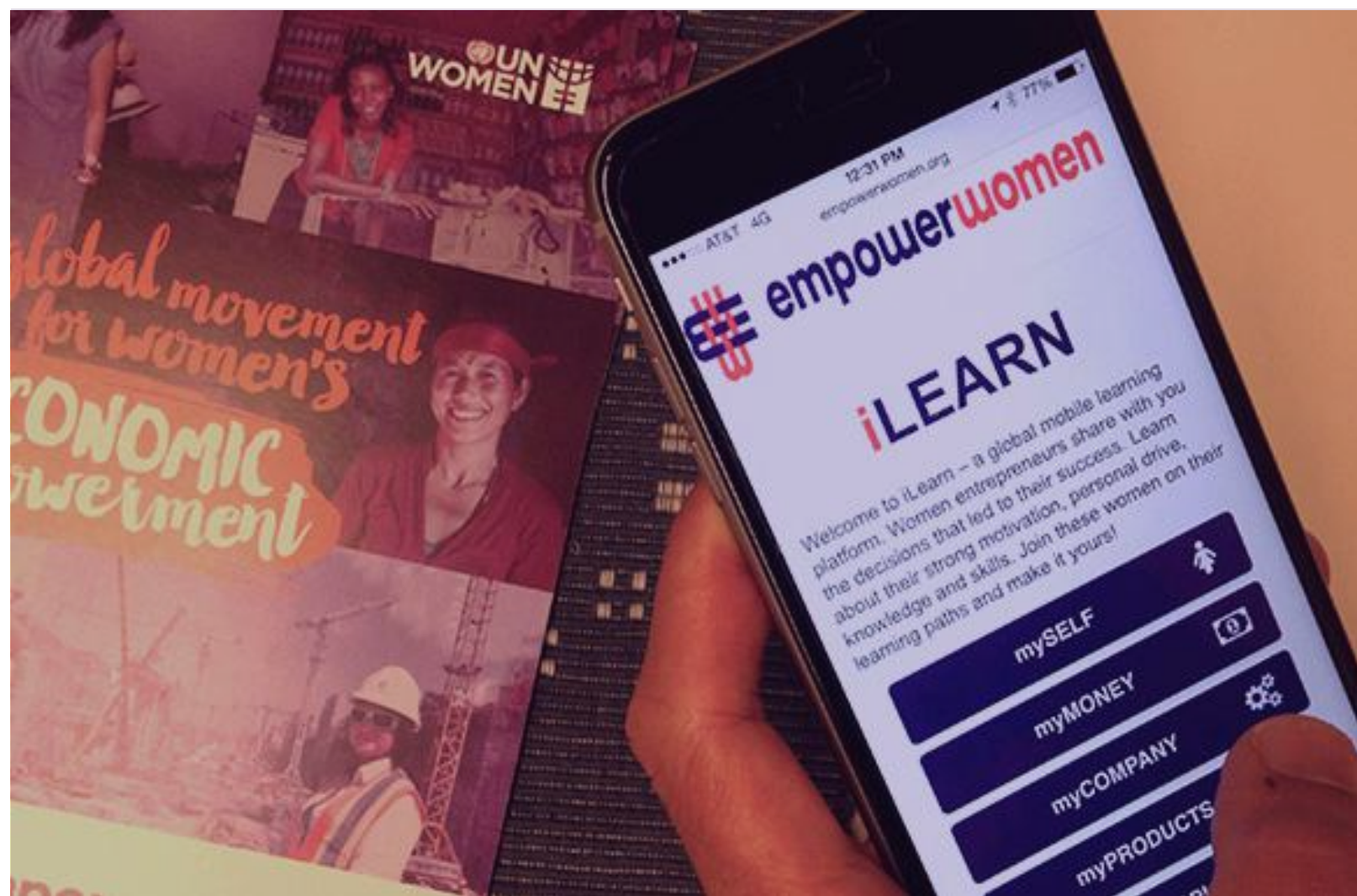


learning path on financial literacy will be further developed and a new learning path on digital literacy will be added along with other content offerings provided by its partners.



## Virtual Skills School's Accessibility

The VSS platform will be available both online and offline through our partners and country offices. It will also have a user friendly interface and will be accessible from computers, tablets and mobile phones.



## Our Strategic Partnership Opportunities

 <p><b>Co-creation</b></p> <p>Co-create and design prototypes and pilots of interdisciplinary learning paths, innovative pedagogy and delivery solutions to accelerate women's job creation, access to decent work and formal education.</p>	 <p><b>Content</b></p> <p>Lead in the development of a practical and hands-on curriculum, with instructional tools that will build relevant skills especially for marginalized women and girls at diverse educational levels.</p>	 <p><b>Operations</b></p> <p>Drive global VSS adoption and usage in communities to ensure that no woman or girl is left behind, including poor, rural, disabled, displaced, refugee and out-of-school women and girls.</p>	 <p><b>Financial</b></p> <p>Demonstrate your commitment to our values of empowering women and girls globally through skills building by financially sponsoring our first phase of the virtual skills school.</p>
---	--	--	---

## Our Stakeholders' Feedback

“

“Girls relate to stories that are practical to them and role models that look like them or have gone through similar things. These should be woven into examples in the classroom.”

“

“The VSS could provide access to a second chance at re-entry or non-formal education (vocational) and skills development.”

“

“Need learning to move away from a one-time event in a central location with a lecture approach, to being something more cost effective, engaging, online and accessible.”

“

“The Virtual Skills School can offer women a new identity through an inclusive, safe and encouraging environment.”

## Leaving No Girl Behind

Ensuring that no girl or women is left behind is our number one priority. The Virtual Skills School is directly aligned to further the goals and targets outlined in the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.



**Target 4.4:** By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.



**Target 5.b:** Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.



**Target 8.6:** By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.



**Target 10.1:** By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average.



**Target 17.17:** Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.



## GET IN TOUCH

✉ [empower.women@unwomen.org](mailto:empower.women@unwomen.org)

🔗 [www.EmpowerWomen.org](http://www.EmpowerWomen.org)

## FOLLOW US

