



General Assembly Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
19 December 2024

Original: English

General Assembly Human Rights Council

Fifty-ninth session

3 June–14 July 2025

Agenda item 2

Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

Economic and Social Council Commission on the Status of Women Sixty-ninth session

10–21 March 2025

Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda*

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: gender mainstreaming, situations and programmatic matters

Report of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on the activities of the United Nations trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women

Note by the Secretary-General

Summary

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith, to the Commission on the Status of Women and the Human Rights Council, the report of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) on the activities of the United Nations trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women, which was prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution [50/166](#).

* [E/CN.6/2025/1](#).



I. Introduction

1. The United Nations trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women is the first and only global, multilateral grant-making mechanism dedicated exclusively to preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls. It was established by the General Assembly in 1996, in its resolution 50/166, and is administered by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) on behalf of the United Nations system. The trust fund supports civil society organizations, in particular women's rights organizations, in implementing multi-year initiatives to address, prevent and ultimately eliminate violence against all women and girls. The trust fund works closely with the broader United Nations system through its inter-agency Programme Advisory Committee.¹

2. The trust fund's vision is a world of global solidarity in which all women and girls live free from all forms of violence and enjoy and exercise their human rights.

3. The trust fund is guided by its strategic plan for the period 2021–2025, which establishes its key outputs as principled, demand-driven grant-giving and capacity development; collaborative and inclusive knowledge production, exchange and learning; and strategic partnerships, advocacy and resource mobilization. As an inter-agency mechanism, the trust fund is well situated to strengthen coordination across the United Nations system and foster partnerships with civil society and feminist movements.

4. The trust fund prioritizes funding to civil society and women's rights organizations, including small organizations, to achieve: (a) improved access for women and girls to essential, specialist, safe and adequate multisectoral services; (b) improved prevention of violence against women and girls through changes in behaviours, practices and attitudes; and (c) increased effectiveness of legislation, policies, national action plans and accountability systems.

5. The trust fund contributes to most of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 5,² and is an integral part of the UN-Women strategic plan for the period 2022–2025, especially its goal to end all forms of violence against women and girls.

¹ In 2024, members of the Programme Advisory Committee at the global and regional levels included representatives from leading civil society organizations and other experts on ending violence against women and girls, as well as staff members from 14 United Nations organs and bodies that provided strategic input to funding decisions and played a vital role in driving forward collective efforts to engage the wider community. This included representatives from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; the International Labour Organization; the International Organization for Migration; the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences; the United Nations Children's Fund; the United Nations Development Programme; the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; the United Nations Office for Project Services; the United Nations Population Fund; and the World Health Organization. The Spotlight Initiative was included as an observer. The Programme Advisory Committee also included intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations and other experts at the global and field levels, including representatives from Equality Now, the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich and the South African Medical Research Council.

² The work of the trust fund supports ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere (target 5.1); eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation (target 5.2); and eliminating all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation (target 5.3).

6. In 2024, the trust fund managed an \$87.5 million grant portfolio across 180 organizations in 74 countries and territories. All grantee partners were civil society organizations, 69 per cent of which were women's rights organizations.

7. As of December 2024, contributors to the trust fund included the Governments of Australia, Austria, Canada, Cyprus, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America; UN-Women national committees in Australia, Finland and Germany; the ACT (Advocacy, Coalition-Building and Transformative Feminist Action to End Violence against Women) partnership between UN-Women and the European Union; private sector and philanthropic partners, including Conscious Step, Global Impact, Soko and the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund; and generous individuals worldwide.

8. The present report, prepared for the sixty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the fifty-ninth session of the Human Rights Council, highlights the impact and achievements of the trust fund and its grantee partners in 2024.

II. Women's organizations and the Beijing vision: three decades of leading change against violence

9. The year 2025 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, recognized as the most progressive blueprint for advancing women's rights.

10. In response to the Declaration, the United Nations established the trust fund in 1996 to accelerate the eradication of all forms of violence against women and girls. Over nearly three decades, the trust fund has awarded \$241,767,742 in grants to 706 initiatives across 140 countries and territories. Data collected annually by the trust fund testify to the profound impact of the work of the civil society organizations behind those initiatives. Their contributions to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action are a fitting cause for recognition on this significant anniversary.

11. Civil society organizations, especially those led by women and focused on women's rights, form the bedrock of efforts to end violence against women and girls. They are embedded in their communities and are often led by those they serve. Their proximity to the most underserved women and girls and the trust they build makes them powerful agents of change, empowering women and girls to claim their rights and transform their lives.³

12. Women's rights organizations are essential in providing specialized services and fill gaps where other safe, survivor-centred services are lacking. They provide information and connect survivors to healthcare, counselling, social protection and justice. At the national level, strong, autonomous feminist movements are the most important factor in securing meaningful action against violence. They address the root

³ Monica Biradavolu, "Learning from practice: mobilizing women as agents of change to prevent violence against women and girls" (New York, United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, 2021).

causes of violence by driving long-term change in policies and the societal norms that perpetuate gender inequality.⁴

13. Women's rights organizations are often the first responders in crises. They are agile in responding to new challenges and emerging needs and adeptly navigate the complexities of violence against women and girls, including its intersections with technology, climate change and political and humanitarian crises. That critical role was starkly illustrated during the shadow pandemic of violence against women and girls that emerged during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Lockdown measures trapped many women with abusers, while economic stress and isolation exacerbated existing risks. Amid severe operational constraints, women's rights organizations continued to provide essential services and were instrumental in exposing the dramatic surge in violence, with some helplines reporting increases of up to 770 per cent in calls for support.⁵

14. Adding to the erosion of previous advances in the fight against gender-based violence during the global pandemic, recent years have seen a surge in opposition to women's rights and a backlash against feminist movements worldwide. That resistance, often spearheaded by conservative groups fearing the loss of traditional power structures and gender roles, is further fuelled by disinformation and political polarization. It manifests both offline and online, with women's rights defenders facing increased political violence and hate speech. Digital spaces have emerged as new frontiers for gender-based abuse and harassment, disproportionately affecting women in public life. The same organizations supported by the trust fund to address violence are often themselves targets of that mounting hostility, creating additional challenges in their life-saving work with survivors and at-risk women and girls.

15. Consequently, despite the aspirations of the Beijing vision and the progress made over the past three decades, women's rights organizations face shrinking spaces, new legal and administrative barriers and increased threats to their safety and operational capacity. Those challenges jeopardize hard-won gains, put women and girls at greater risk and test the resilience of these already underfunded organizations that support the most underserved women and girls.

16. It is in that context that the trust fund experienced a record-breaking 80 per cent surge in the number of applications in the 2023 call for proposals, collectively requesting \$1.5 billion in funding. Notably, 40 per cent of the proposals included interventions in crisis settings, with the proportion of applications targeting sexual and gender-based violence in such contexts rising by 59 per cent compared with the previous year. That significant shift underscores the critical need for the international community to provide timely political support, quality funding and unwavering advocacy to ensure that women's rights organizations can continue their vital work, including in the most challenging environments.

17. The challenges exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular where gaps in government services mean that critical needs must be met by women's rights organizations, continue to be relevant, underscoring the need to maintain sufficient support for those organizations. Their resilience is crucial not only for immediate crisis response but also for achieving sustained progress in ending violence against women and girls.

⁴ Nidal Karim, "Feminist and women's movements in the context of ending violence against women and girls: implications for funders and grant makers – an external literature review" (New York, United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, 2022).

⁵ United Nations, "United Nations comprehensive response to COVID-19: saving lives, protecting societies, recovering better" (New York, 2020).

18. Programming and resourcing must respond to the unique needs, challenges and leadership of civil society and women's rights organizations, including by providing flexible, long-term and core funding; fostering organizational resilience; promoting intersectional approaches to inequality; challenging power hierarchies; and nurturing trust and accountability. Now more than ever, a unified effort is required from Governments, United Nations agencies, bilateral and multilateral organizations, funds, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academia and beyond. Collective knowledge, resources and commitment must be leveraged to help women's organizations respond to, and reverse, the growth of opposition and achieve a world in which every woman and girl lives free from violence.

19. The trust fund is pivotal in uniting actors at all levels, sustaining the spirit of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and driving action towards its strategic goals. As a unique global grant-making mechanism within the United Nations system, it complements and expands the work of other funds and entities through partnerships that reach the most underserved women and girls facing intersecting forms of discrimination, focusing on the resilience of civil society organizations to end violence against women and girls, while curating global practice-based knowledge about their achievements and strategies. The distinctive wrap-around service model of the trust fund combines financial support and technical assistance while fostering a global network of more than 650 civil society organizations across 140 countries, facilitating knowledge-sharing and maintaining high standards of transparency in grant management. Through that comprehensive approach, the trust fund will continue to adapt and respond to emerging challenges while amplifying the voices of women's rights organizations at the forefront of change.

III. Context in 2024

20. Violence against women and girls remains one of the most widespread human rights violations. Over the past year, conflicts and interconnected crises escalated worldwide, putting more women and girls at greater risk of violence and multiplying the threats to their lives, dignity and freedom. Opposition to women's rights and the backlash against feminist movements on a global scale have persisted.

21. Overlapping crises, including climate-related disasters, violent conflicts, economic downturns and food insecurity, have substantially increased demand for humanitarian assistance, including protection from gender-based violence. In 2023, an estimated 308.5 million people required humanitarian assistance,⁶ including in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Somalia, the Sudan, Ukraine and Yemen. Crisis situations intensify various forms of violence against women and girls and heighten their vulnerability.⁷ For example, intimate partner violence is 2.4 times higher in extremely fragile contexts than in non-fragile settings.⁸ According to the report of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, cases of conflict-related sexual violence in 2023 were 50 per cent higher than in 2022 and 95 per cent of the incidents targeted women and girls (S/2024/385, para. 29).

⁶ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Global humanitarian overview 2024, mid-year update (snapshot as of 31 May 2024)" (New York, 2024).

⁷ Alison Barclay, Michelle Higelin and Melissa Bungcaras, "On the frontline: catalysing women's leadership in humanitarian action" (Johannesburg, ActionAid International, 2016).

⁸ Ginette Azcona and others, "Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: the gender snapshot 2023" (New York, UN-Women, 2023).

22. More than 30 per cent of grantee partner initiatives active in 2024, with grants totalling \$28.5 million, delivered crucial interventions in situations of crisis. Those organizations need sustained, core and flexible funding to ensure that they can respond to the greatest needs of communities with life-saving gender-based violence prevention and service provision in such contexts. The trust fund's twenty-seventh call for proposals, launched in December 2023, included a special funding window to address violence against women and girls affected by crisis, given the escalating humanitarian needs globally. More than one in four applications were received under the special window, half of which were from Africa. Of the total funding awarded in the twenty-seventh cycle, 43 per cent (\$5.7 million) was allocated to organizations operating in crisis settings.

23. Grantee partners demonstrated remarkable agility and resilience in evolving and complex situations. For example, the Stars of Hope Society developed data-driven assessments to understand the most urgent needs of women and girls with disabilities affected by the war in Gaza and increased hostilities in the West Bank. In response, the organization pivoted to providing emergency supplies, psychological, economic and social support, and referral services.

24. Amid growing challenges, grantee partners developed and implemented innovative solutions to support some of the most vulnerable women and girls. For example, in Uganda, THRIVEGulu adapted a proven community engagement model from South Africa to work with refugee and host community representatives, resulting in a stronger referral system, increased domestic violence reporting rates and higher women's participation in public discussions.

25. Forcible displacement owing to persecution, conflict, violence and human rights violations rose by 8 per cent in 2023, marking 12 consecutive years of increases. Forcibly displaced people now represent 1.5 per cent of the world's population and that figure is expected to climb, increasing the need for assistance to address growing risks of violence, trafficking, exploitation and abuse against women and girls.⁹ In response to conflict-induced mass displacement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, women-led grantee partner Solidarité féminine pour la paix et le développement intégral is protecting and empowering survivors, including displaced women. The initiative provides survivors with legal, medical, psychological and socioeconomic reintegration services through safe spaces and health centres across 18 health areas in North Kivu. In 2024, the initiative provided holistic support to 34,600 vulnerable people in North Kivu, including specialized services for 220 displaced women survivors.

26. Over the course of 2024, grantee partners faced escalating external challenges to their work and safety, ranging from administrative hurdles such as registration obstacles and arbitrary fines to serious threats such as baseless arrests and staff abductions. That pattern reflects the broader global pushback against women's rights, resulting in dismantled gender equality institutions and eroded protections. Partners reported alarming examples. Following the presidential election in Argentina in December 2023, the Ministry of Women, Genders and Diversity and the National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism were dissolved. In Somalia, the 2023 Rape and Immorality Bill, influenced by religious and conservative groups, threatens to roll back the safeguards for sexual violence survivors established in the 2018 Sexual Offences Bill, which was created through extensive consultations with civil society and women's rights groups.

⁹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Global trends: forced displacement in 2023" (Copenhagen, 2024).

27. Technology-facilitated gender-based violence has emerged as a growing threat in our digital age. Women and girls face disproportionate targeting through social media and digital platforms, with women's rights advocates and those in public life at particular risk. Recognizing that evolving challenge, the trust fund included the category in its 2023 call for proposals, with 8 per cent of applicants focusing their interventions on addressing this form of violence. A grant under the new ACT programme will empower intergenerational feminist movements in Nigeria and Kenya to address technology-facilitated violence against women and girls by fostering solidarity and building capacities to advocate for legal reforms and raise public awareness.

28. Notwithstanding mounting challenges in 2024, grantee partners continued to provide both immediate relief and long-term solutions across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus for transformative impact in the fight to end violence against women and girls.

IV. Impact in 2024

A. Grants awarded

29. In 2024, the trust fund awarded 36 grants across 41 countries and territories, totalling \$15.9 million. Funding was awarded through two routes: the established annual grant-making cycle and the new ACT programme. The twenty-seventh annual cycle awarded 28 grants, totalling \$13.5 million, of which 30 per cent was awarded under the special window on addressing violence against women and girls affected by crises and 70 per cent was allocated under the general funding window. The ACT programme provided \$2.3 million to eight regional and cross-regional initiatives in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa to strengthen networks and movements focused on ending violence against women and girls.

30. All twenty-seventh cycle grant recipients are women-led organizations, with 68 per cent identifying as women's rights organizations and more than half being constituent-led.

31. In Africa, five organizations were awarded grants to address harmful cultural practices and gender stereotypes that perpetuate violence against women, with a particular focus on young women and girls, addressing issues such as early and forced marriage, child sexual abuse and election-related violence. To tackle child sexual abuse and forced marriage, Voice of Encouragement Tanzania will empower adolescent girls and engage communities through "girls chain breaker" clubs, mobile health clinics and arts-based educational campaigns. In rural Ghana, an initiative will counter witchcraft accusations and intimate partner violence through awareness campaigns, legal aid, policy advocacy and support services, with the aim of empowering women at risk and challenging harmful cultural beliefs in high-risk communities.

32. In the Arab States, four new grantees will advance women's economic empowerment to combat violence and will support women and girls in the context of refugee and displacement crises. In Jordan, JoWomenomics will create safer commutes by tackling widespread sexual harassment on public transport in Amman through institutional partnerships, legal reforms and community engagement. The initiative will link bus permit renewals to anti-harassment training and develop a mobile app for reporting incidents. In the Syrian Arab Republic, Women Now for Development will adapt a survivor-led approach to address pervasive gender-based violence against at-risk women, including widows, divorcees and adolescents, by

empowering them to be change agents, thereby fostering and growing sustainable, community-rooted solutions.

33. In Asia and the Pacific, six new grantees will adopt intersectional approaches, with a focus on members of ethnic minority groups and women with disabilities, while integrating violence prevention with broader health initiatives. The Ara Trust in India will enhance protection for refugee women and girls from Myanmar by providing immediate sexual and gender-based violence support services and counselling and building long-term pathways for justice. In the Solomon Islands, the Family Support Centre Trust Board will improve gender-based violence services in rural areas by establishing the family support unit model within provincial committees, enhancing local capacity and improving accessibility in remote areas.

34. In Europe and Central Asia, six new initiatives integrate intersectional approaches with post-conflict recovery strategies, while strengthening institutional and legal frameworks to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. In Ukraine, Insight will provide safe spaces with integrated psychological, legal and empowerment services to address the disproportionate impact of the Russian invasion on women from marginalized groups such as young mothers, displaced and older women, and those living with disabilities. In Serbia, Labris will address partner violence against lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer women through education, training for authorities, awareness campaigns and an emergency hotline, with the aim of increasing reporting and trust in institutions.

35. In Latin America and the Caribbean, seven grants are focused on adolescents and young women, emphasizing prevention through social norm change and community-based approaches. The initiatives address violence against women in marginalized communities such as Indigenous, rural or internally displaced populations and strengthen local capacities. In Guyana, a project of the organization ChildLink will be aimed at preventing and responding to sexual violence against women and girls in isolated hinterland regions by creating multidisciplinary teams, training local volunteers and conducting public education campaigns. In Mexico, Infancia Común will improve the response to child sexual abuse in Chiapas by using experiential methods to educate and empower children, families and officials across schools and Indigenous communities.

B. Grantee partner achievements

36. In 2024, the grantee partners of the trust fund delivered effective interventions to meet the essential needs of women and girls and foster sustainable, transformational change towards a life free from violence. Achievements ranged across the three thematic outcomes of the trust fund's strategic plan for the period 2021–2025.

1. Improved access to multisectoral services

37. Access to essential, specialist, safe and adequate multisectoral services is crucial to women and girl survivors of violence. Required services include long-term psychological counselling, medical care, shelters, legal aid, emergency helplines and more. In 2024, the provision of such services was the primary focus of 72 per cent of the grantee partner initiatives. Strategies included training service providers, building referral networks and ensuring that survivors receive respectful and dignified treatment across sectors and service points.

38. The Jordanian Women's Union's network of emergency hotlines offered immediate psychological support, legal counselling and tailored referrals to 330 women who were survivors or at risk of violence in Jordan, including Syrian and

Palestinian refugees and migrant workers. The organization's shelter in Amman provided safe housing and comprehensive services to 107 survivors. The fostering of advocacy spaces between civil society and government yielded recommendations to address the challenges faced by protection service providers and improve the quality of services.

39. In Albania, the International Association for Maternal and Neonatal Health of Switzerland led a programme to enhance the multisectoral response to violence against women and girls. The organization engaged more than 900 service providers and policymakers through workshops and events and used systems thinking tools to redesign referral mechanisms, leading to the effective management and referral of more than 3,300 cases of violence. The initiative helped to bridge gaps among healthcare professionals, police officers and social workers and refined case management processes. A technical note and policy brief were formulated from the insights gathered to provide strategic guidance to the Government of Albania on improving systemic interventions to prevent and end violence against women.

40. Stand Up Movement Lanka engaged with service providers, government and civil society to improve safety, dignity and justice for sex workers across four districts in Sri Lanka. Stand Up helped sex workers to register with midwives for healthcare access and connect with lawyers. The organization also sensitized police officers to the legal rights of sex workers and their right to respect. As a result, 80 sex workers in Colombo and Gampaha districts improved their financial management and rights awareness, leading to enhanced self-advocacy and more effective engagement with service providers. An advocacy plan created by Stand Up in collaboration with sex workers and key stakeholders has been instrumental in increasing empathy and informing duty bearers about the needs and challenges faced by sex workers, helping to create a more equitable environment.

41. Initiatives pour la protection des droits des femmes identified critical gaps in access to services for victims of gender-based violence in Fez, Morocco, where 57.1 per cent of women experience violence but only 10.5 per cent report it.¹⁰ Transportation issues, safety concerns and a lack of information make it difficult for most women to access such services as hospitals, family courts and police stations. In response, the organization provided legal, psychological and social support to women, with a focus on single mothers. A total of 530 women received support, with 479 receiving legal guidance and 144 benefiting from psychological counselling.

42. In 2024, Medica Kosova provided legal counselling for 72 survivors of intimate partner violence and conflict-related sexual violence in Kosovo,¹¹ resulting in 23 applications or appeals to the national Commission for the Verification and Recognition of Sexual Violence Victim Status. Four survivors obtained the status and qualified for compensation. Medica Kosova also provided trauma-informed training to 58 professionals, including police, healthcare workers and social workers, strengthening case referral mechanisms and partnerships and increasing referrals to Medica Kosova for further support.

2. Preventing violence against women and girls

43. Interventions to prevent violence against women and girls aim to change social norms, attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate gender inequality and discrimination and lead to harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriage. Successful prevention initiatives have involved community facilitators, the

¹⁰ High Commission for Planning of Morocco, "Note on violence against women and girls" (Rabat, 2020).

¹¹ All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in full compliance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

engagement of men and boys, context-specific interventions, survivor-centred design, adaptive strategies and a gender-transformative approach focused on behaviour change. The trust fund prioritizes and supports intersectional approaches to ensure that underserved women and girls are not left behind. The trust fund supports and provides technical guidance to organizations implementing interventions that encourage systemic change to tackle the root causes of violence. In 2024, prevention was a component in 78 per cent of grantee partner interventions, with 21 per cent having it as the primary focus.

44. Medical Services Pacific is engaging communities in Fiji to prevent gender-based violence. In Fiji, 64 per cent of women experience intimate partner violence. Stigma and limited services lead to survivors often not reporting violence. The Medical Services Pacific initiative employs information sessions, demonstrations, case scenarios, group work, empowerment activities, *talanoa* (interactive dialogue) sessions and other approaches. In 2024, it reached 1,645 individuals across 10 communities, including local leaders, faith leaders, law enforcement, teachers, women's groups and community advocates, all of whom committed to preventing violence. Community pledges were displayed on billboards to raise awareness and challenge the culture of silence. As a result, more women are reporting violence. The organization provided 42 women who reported violence with legal assistance and 47 with referrals to service providers.

45. Despite the pushback on women's rights in Iraq, grantee partner interventions in several locations made progress in shifting the cultural and systemic barriers that perpetuate gender-based violence. Workshops for men and boys promoted positive masculinity, encouraging non-violent, supportive behaviours and challenging harmful norms. Anti-harassment policies were developed for 15 workplaces, and safe units were established within three trade unions to provide legal support, fostering safer work environments. Six youth groups and 40 community leaders educated peers to reduce tolerance of gender-based violence. The improved community awareness was reflected in a notable increase in the number of women and girls accessing psychosocial and legal support – more than 1,500 cases were recorded.

46. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Organización de Mujeres Aymaras del Kollasuyo, a constituent-led organization of Aymara women, is seeking to prevent gender-based violence in Indigenous communities through a feminist network of community promoters in El Alto and four other rural municipalities in La Paz. The organization's workshops and mobile interventions reached 500 women to raise awareness on gender-based violence and foster self-empowerment. Restorative circles provided 50 survivors with coping strategies and support to prevent the recurrence of violence. A total of 139 women accessed psychosocial support services and legal assistance offered by the organization, thanks in part to an app that provides essential information on available support.

47. The Women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia and Sister's Hand Liberia have established a network of community members to change attitudes towards female genital mutilation and foster a safer and more empowered environment for women and girls. The network operates in 34 communities across six counties and comprises 678 genital mutilation survivors, Zoes¹² who have pledged to end female genital mutilation practices, schoolteachers, influential women, and youth. Members are equipped with knowledge and skills to advocate locally against female genital mutilation. The initiative has reached more than 1,300 people and contributed to positive shifts in social norms, attitudes and practices. More than 40 per cent of those reached acknowledge the negative impact of genital mutilation on the physical and

¹² Zoes are leaders (typically older women) of the Sande society, a women's secret society that has traditionally performed female genital mutilation as part of initiating girls into womanhood.

psychological well-being of women and girls, representing more than double the initial level of awareness (15 per cent), and have expressed their willingness to promote alternative rites of passage that avoid physical harm. Fourteen traditional and community leaders signed a community memorandum of understanding towards ending female genital mutilation, and one leader formally committed to ending the harmful practice.

48. In Serbia, the Bibija Roma Women's Centre is working to change community attitudes to reduce child marriage and protect girls' rights in Roma settlements, where almost 17 per cent of girls are married before age 15 and 57 per cent before age 18.¹³ In 2024, the organization trained 20 activists in 10 neighbourhoods. These activists then conducted 100 discussions in 20 settlements, engaging 310 adolescent girls. The sessions provided a safe space for dialogue on taboo topics, such as the importance of women's identity and the harmful effects of early marriage. Participants expressed their inclination to delay marriage, pursue education and strive for economic independence. An additional 100 discussions with 395 community members, primarily women, highlighted the negative impacts of some traditional beliefs on community development and motivated them to prioritize their well-being.

3. Strengthening the implementation of laws, policies and national action plans

49. In 2024, 43 per cent of grantee partners' interventions were focused on the implementation of laws and policies. Although only 6 per cent of grantee partners nominated institutional strengthening, accountability mechanisms, laws, policies and budgets as primary objectives, these initiatives are among the most impactful and sustainable. They often catalyse collective action that advances the rights of the most underserved women and girls and shifts the stance of duty bearers from reactive to proactive in violence prevention.

50. In Mexico, the Grupo de Acción por los Derechos Humanos y la Justicia Social has established a network of more than 30 feminist lawyers across 17 states to provide legal aid and represent women and girls in cases of gender-based violence. Building on the organization's experience in strategic litigation, including high-profile femicide cases, the initiative's participatory model encourages survivors to claim their rights and regain control of their lives. The network is also training new lawyers using a gender-focused, specialized pedagogy that is unavailable in traditional law schools, and strengthening local groups of women survivors.

51. The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa forged strategic partnerships among women's and girls' rights organizations in south-central Somalia and "Somaliland" to advocate for stronger legal protections for minority women and girls and those in internally displaced and refugee communities. Advocacy is aimed at ensuring that new legislation protects the rights of women and girls to be free of violence, access effective services and hold perpetrators accountable. The Initiative also developed a research paper on sexual violence against displaced and minority women in Somalia and disseminated it among 130 stakeholders. The organization and its partners will pursue strategic litigation, facilitate survivor-journalist dialogues and improve stakeholder coordination.

¹³ Kosana Beker, "Regional Report on compliance with UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) relating to discrimination of Roma women in the area of healthcare, child marriages and offering support and protection to Roma women in cases of domestic violence" (Belgrade, Bibija Roma Women's Centre, 2019).

52. In Cambodia, the NGO Committee on CEDAW¹⁴ continued to raise awareness of gender equality. The organization's input was included in the final evaluation report on the third national action plan to prevent violence against women. The organization's efforts contributed to influencing the Government's commitment to draft a domestic violence law amendment to improve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The Cambodia Women's Crisis Centre and ADD International¹⁵ participated in technical discussions about the national action plan with the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Disability Action Council. The organizations provided training on gender equality, disability inclusion and referral guidelines to strengthen the capacities of district and provincial working groups, including key government officials, on responding to gender-based violence.

53. The Greater Women Initiative for Health and Rights advocated for gender equality, human rights protection and gender-based violence response services for sex workers in Rivers State, Nigeria. The organization secured the support of the state's human rights commission and together they identified and inaugurated key state actors to serve on the drafting committees for the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill. The initiative successfully advocated for a platform to report violence against sex workers through the state's health ministry and HIV/AIDS agency. It also created mechanisms to hold institutions accountable in promoting justice for sex workers under the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Law, including observing court proceedings and analysing legal publications and decisions. As a result, the number of sex workers accessing justice increased by 33 per cent. However, a recent repeal bill threatens to undermine this critical legal tool, prompting the organization to launch a campaign to preserve the legislation.

C. Trust fund achievements

1. Curating practice-based knowledge for learning

54. Organizations that work directly with underserved women, survivors and communities gain valuable insights into effective strategies for addressing violence against women and girls. The trust fund captures, curates and shares this practice-based knowledge and experience so that all can benefit. This occurs through one-on-one communications with grantee partners, learning exchanges, information hubs and platforms, independent evaluations, thematic knowledge products co-produced with grantee partners, webinars and knowledge cafés.

55. The trust fund's data and analysis continued to support grantee partners and key stakeholders in improving policy, programming and funding decisions. In the trust fund's 2023 grantee survey, 94 per cent of respondents reported accessing trust fund knowledge products and events, and, of those, 100 per cent reported using that knowledge in their work.

56. The trust fund continued to facilitate practitioner-based knowledge-sharing through its online hub, SHINE. By the end of October 2024, there were more than 2,000 registered users, demonstrating an appetite for a safe, diverse, multilingual and dynamic space to exchange observations and practices.

2. Supporting organizational resilience through the wrap-around service model

57. The trust fund improved its wrap-around service and grant-making model in response to grantee partners' feedback. It extended grant durations from three to four

¹⁴ The Cambodian Non-Governmental Organization Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

¹⁵ Action on Disability and Development International.

years. It raised the core funding threshold for small grants to 27 per cent, extended the minimum grant amount from \$50,000 to \$150,000,¹⁶ and increased the self-care and collective care budgets for all new grantee partners. Contingency and capacity-development budgets were allocated within grants to foster organizational resilience and address unforeseen challenges.

58. All grantee partners received comprehensive capacity-development support to strengthen their organizational operations. The trust fund delivered 16 thematic capacity-development webinars in 2024, reaching at least 957 attendees. Topics included reporting, audit preparations, financial planning and programming principles.

59. The trust fund resumed its standard five-day onboarding workshop for grantee partners from its twenty-sixth grant cycle, providing critical operational information, and networking and exchange opportunities for the cohort. It was the first in-person grantee convening since the COVID-19 pandemic.

60. In 2024, the trust fund conducted in-person monitoring visits with 27 per cent of its partners across 14 countries and organized quarterly virtual events, bringing together UN-Women country offices with grantee partners. These fostered collaboration and networking, and created a platform to assess grantee partners' progress, challenges and needs. A visit to Jordan, a country with five civil society organization partners, representing a substantial investment, exemplified the benefits of strategic collaboration between government, civil society and international partners. By partnering with local women's rights organizations and complementing the efforts of UN-Women, the trust fund is catalysing a coordinated humanitarian and development response to gender-based violence in Jordan. Similarly, a trust fund visit to Kosovo brought together United Nations agencies, Kosovo authorities and civil society to discuss violence against women. The grantee partners in Kosovo are two of only four licensed organizations helping survivors of conflict-related sexual violence to claim reparations. The Kosovo authorities acknowledged the challenges and recognized the work of civil society organizations, reinforcing the importance of partnerships in addressing community-level needs and investing in women for long-term peace.

61. Through direct engagement with grantee partners, the trust fund strengthened its ability to provide targeted support while acquiring essential insights to enhance its support mechanisms and strategic grant-making approaches.

62. The trust fund supports organizations in developing essential institutional policies, including those addressing sexual harassment, assault prevention and anti-fraud measures. In 2024, targeted assistance to 10 grantee partners resulted in 96 per cent of active partners (excluding those newly onboarded from the twenty-seventh cycle and the ACT programme) now having these critical safeguards in place.

3. Expanding strategic partnerships within the United Nations system and beyond

63. In 2024, the trust fund leveraged its inter-agency mandate to strengthen collaboration across the United Nations system and beyond. Working alongside United Nations agencies, donors and civil society organizations, it amplified grantee partners' voices and experiences through joint advocacy initiatives and representation at key international forums. This collaborative approach reinforced the importance of increased direct funding for women's organizations' work to end violence against women and girls, while advancing feminist advocacy on a global scale.

¹⁶ Overall, grants awarded by the trust fund range from \$150,000 to \$1 million.

64. A workshop in June 2024 involving civil society and donor representatives explored the trust fund's work with organizations led by displaced or stateless women and girls, while strengthening collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The trust fund presented its efforts to reduce funding barriers for these organizations and those working with refugees and displaced populations on gender-based violence. It also discussed the broader role of donors, including to introduce organizations to their networks.

65. The trust fund intensified its advocacy to drive policy change and increase funding for women's organizations by leading and participating in strategic forums worldwide. It co-hosted the global event Free Future 2024: Preventing Gender Violence Around the World, alongside the Ford Foundation and the Skoll Foundation in September. The trust fund led seven dialogues during the Sexual Violence Research Initiative Forum and the Association for Women's Rights in Development International Forum, at which grantee partners and key actors exchanged knowledge, discussed strategies and showcased experiences, highlighting the innovative approaches of organizations navigating limited resources and shifting contexts. Following the publication by the United Nations Children's Fund of the first global estimate of sexual violence against children, the trust fund participated in the first-ever global ministerial conference on ending violence against children, convened by the Government of Colombia in Bogotá. At the Building Movements Dialogue: Shaping Alliances, Paving Ways conference organized by ELAS+, a women's fund in Brazil, the trust fund shared with donors and activists its feminist grant-making model and its best practices in funding women's organizations. Together with four grantee partners, the trust fund exchanged perspectives on securing financial support for diverse movements and civil society groups defending democracy. The trust fund joined government representatives, philanthropists, civil society organizations and activists, convening at the World Bank, to strengthen global-level collaboration to end female genital mutilation, advocating for financial support for organizations at the forefront of efforts.

66. As part of the ACT programme, the trust fund committed to bolstering advocacy networks at all levels. This involved mobilizing women's rights movements and creating spaces for collaboration and networking. In partnership with UN-Women, the trust fund convened grantee partners and feminist allies in October 2024 to strengthen coalition-building, leadership and resilience, while enhancing advocacy and policymaking.

V. Practice-based analysis and trends

A. Intersectional programming

67. To ensure that no one is left behind, the trust fund utilizes a twin-track approach to intersectionality in relation to violence against women and girls. First, it addresses specific experiences of intersectional marginalization that have been recognized as underfunded. In 2024, over 80 per cent of the trust fund's portfolio was focused on reaching those most at risk, including women refugees; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning and intersex women; and Indigenous women. Second, the trust fund works to mainstream an intersectional approach in the remainder of the portfolio.

68. In 2024, the trust fund published the second and third papers in its practice-based knowledge series on disability inclusion and intersectionality. In the second

paper,¹⁷ it described insights from the 22 organizations funded through the 2018–2023 special window to support projects with the aim of preventing and ending violence against women and girls with disabilities. The grantee partners directly reached more than 50,000 women and girls with disabilities and engaged an additional 190,000 people as service providers, duty bearers and members of the justice system. The benefits extended to nearly 7.7 million individuals. Through the analysis, it was identified that the grantee partners increased the visibility of women and girls with disabilities, transformed mindsets, promoted systems thinking and provided capacitating resources.

69. In the third and final study¹⁸ in the series, which drew on 62 interventions that included women and girls with disabilities as a priority group, it was found that ending violence against women and girls with disabilities requires centring their agency and participation through consultation, visibility, empowerment and inclusion. These two principles constitute the environment within which four key elements can emerge for successful programming: prioritizing collaboration, enabling mindset shifts, engaging legal and policy systems, and flexible adaptation and learning.

70. The trust fund also published a review of key results from 13 interventions funded under the special window on ending violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls between 2016 and 2022.¹⁹ The implementing organizations raised awareness, mobilized communities, trained service providers, improved access to comprehensive services and empowered recipients through economic independence and leadership roles. The initiatives demonstrated the effectiveness of adaptive programming in shifting contexts and highlighted the importance of engaging refugee and displaced women and girls in the design and implementation of interventions. These efforts addressed immediate needs and laid the groundwork for long-term empowerment and protection.

B. Linkages between organizational resilience, movement-building and ending violence against women and girls

71. Civil society organizations and women’s rights organizations are at the forefront of efforts to challenge harmful social norms and empower women as agents of change. Organizational resilience and movement-building are needed to create an environment in which violence against women and girls can be prevented and addressed. In 2024, the trust fund deepened its understanding of effective grant-making to end violence against women and girls through practice-based knowledge, in particular regarding organizational resilience, movement-building and its small grants modality.

72. A collaborative study commissioned by the trust fund has provided insights into the importance of organizational resilience in the field of ending violence against

¹⁷ Selina Palm and Elisabet Le Roux, “Addressing violence against women and girls with disabilities: results from the UN Trust Fund’s special window 2018–2023” (New York, United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, 2023).

¹⁸ Elisabet Le Roux and Selina Palm, “Disability inclusion in programming to end violence against women and girls: lessons from civil society organizations supported by the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women” (New York, United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, 2024).

¹⁹ Erin Stern, “‘A window of hope’: a synthesis review of the UN Trust Fund’s special window on ending violence against women and girls who are refugees and/or forcibly displaced” (New York, United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, 2023).

women and girls. In the study,²⁰ involving 34 organizations across 25 countries, organizational resilience is described as the power of civil society organizations to prepare for, respond to, adapt to and thrive through crises, challenges and changing circumstances while remaining dedicated to their organizational mission and vision and the long-term goal of ending violence against women and girls and sustaining feminist movements.

73. In preliminary research for the study, it was revealed that 80 per cent of grantee partners in 2021 and 2022 reported strengthened resilience thanks to the trust fund's multi-year flexible funding, wrap-around services and positive donor-grantee relationships.

74. The study also contained an outline of a resilience framework focused on five key themes: people and communities, mission and values, networks and partnerships, strategies and systems, and finances and resources. Underpinning principles included long-term vision, solidarity, transparency and continuous learning. In the report, donors were urged to provide flexible funding and long-term support to address the root causes of violence.

75. The trust fund sharpened its focus on movement-building as a critical tool in the fight against violence. A 2024 study,²¹ conducted in collaboration with Spotlight Initiative grantee partners and building upon a 2022 literature review,²² offered a practice-based conceptual framework for feminist and women's movements. These movements, characterized by their strategic and iterative nature, build collective power, amplify marginalized voices and dismantle systems that perpetuate violence. Seven forms of movement power were identified in the research: people, leadership, inner, network, narrative, knowledge and organizational. These elements are essential for advancing sustainable, locally owned efforts to end violence, provide survivor services and drive policy reform.

76. The trust fund's small grants modality has been instrumental in supporting grass-roots women's movements and enhancing organizational resilience. Offering up to \$150,000 in flexible funding,²³ small grants focus on self-care and capacity-building, empowering organizations serving marginalized women and girls. Meta-analyses²⁴ of interventions funded by the trust fund's small grant modality highlighted the critical role of the self-care fund in improving staff well-being and retention, and the role of flexible funding in enabling rapid crisis response and organizational growth. However, the analyses revealed challenges to long-term sustainability, as resource constraints and inflation impact staff retention and project

²⁰ Gemma Wood, "Organizational resilience: what does it mean and why is it important to civil society organizations working to end violence against women? Part one of a study of practice-based knowledge commissioned by the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women" (New York, United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, 2023).

²¹ Jocelyn Lehrer, "Building power in feminist and women's movements to end violence against women and girls: learning from civil society organizations funded by the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women" (New York, United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, 2023).

²² Nidal Karim, "Feminist and women's movements".

²³ Starting at the trust fund's twenty-seventh cycle, the small grant allocations were between \$150,000 and \$250,000. In the period covered by the analysis, small grants ranged between \$50,000 and \$150,000.

²⁴ Sevinc Rende, "Small and mighty! A meta-analysis of 18 projects implemented by grassroots organizations, funded through the small grants modality by the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women" (New York, United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, 2023); and Sevinc Rende, "Small and mighty! A meta-analysis of 9 projects implemented by grassroots organizations, funded through the small grants modality by the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women" (New York, United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, 2023).

continuity. The recommendations contained in the report included increasing flexibility in funding for staff salaries, expanding the self-care fund, fostering collaborative grant applications and raising visibility for partner organizations. In addition, training in proposal writing and resource mobilization was considered crucial for securing future funding.

VI. The way forward: celebrating 30 years of herstory and shaping the next chapter

77. Through almost three decades of dedicated service, the trust fund has maintained an unwavering commitment to ending violence against women and girls. The remarkable impact of its partnerships is evidenced throughout the present report, demonstrating transformative change across communities worldwide. Building upon this foundation while addressing current and emerging challenges, the trust fund will continue to advance its mission guided by extensive field experience and valuable insights from the midterm review of its strategic plan for the period 2021–2025.

78. In the review, it was reaffirmed that the trust fund had a unique role in providing long-term, flexible funding to grass-roots and women’s rights organizations, in particular those operating in high-risk and crisis settings. Its significant achievements were highlighted, including the trust fund’s effective resource mobilization and management. The importance of the trust fund’s wrap-around service model in enhancing the resilience and capacity of grantee partners was emphasized.

79. In the review, it was also noted that stronger communication efforts were needed to ensure that the distinctive role and impact of the trust fund and the achievements of grantee partners were seen, clearly demonstrated and fully recognized.

80. An expanded funding base is needed to meet increasing demand from civil society organizations and women’s rights organizations. Strengthening partnerships within the feminist funding ecosystem will be a key focus, ensuring a coordinated and robust network of support for those leading efforts to end violence against women and girls. The trust fund will continue to learn from insights from grantee partners gained through their direct work to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. It will adapt its grant-making model to enhance programme effectiveness and partner resilience. The grant portfolio will be expanded to reach more beneficiaries while continuing to provide flexible and sustained funding required for long-term impact.

81. In 2025, the trust fund will enhance its strategic positioning as an inter-agency mechanism that effectively delivers substantial resources directly to civil society organizations and women’s rights organizations. It will also explore further decentralization of operations to support and respond to organizations locally.

82. The path ahead requires steadfast dedication and collaborative action. The trust fund remains committed to working with partners, donors and the global community to deliver survivor-centred and demand-driven initiatives to end violence against women, ensuring that no one is left behind across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. The final year of its strategic plan for the period 2021–2025 presents a pivotal opportunity for the trust fund to consolidate its efforts, amplify its impact and continue to build a world in which every woman and girl can live free from violence and fully realize her human rights.