



IN BRIEF



LEAVING NO WOMEN BEHIND

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Fund for Gender Equality (FGE)

The Fund is UN Women's global grantmaking mechanism and multi-donor fund, the largest world-wide, dedicated to supporting civil society, to accelerate women's economic and political empowerment. It has one guiding purpose: to support national, women-led civil society organizations (CSOs) in achieving Agenda 2030 for women and girls.

FGE has strengthened the capacities of 131 organizations and delivered US \$66 million in grants to 121 grantees in 80 countries. Projects have directly improved the lives of 570,000 people and benefited millions more through lasting changes to public policy.

Since its inception in 2009, FGE has prioritized interventions closely attuned to women and girls furthest left behind – 97 per cent of its projects work with at least one category of marginalized groups, and 70 per cent involve two or more.

The Fund's unique approach to grantmaking goes beyond simply transferring funds to putting CSOs first by investing in their ideas and abilities. Its three pillar capacity

development model – sustain (financially), support (technically) and strengthen (technically) – emphasizes localized, beneficiary-focused action and flexible programming. With a select group of grantees, FGE is currently experimenting with alternative grantmaking approaches involving up-scaling and **social innovation in various thematic areas of expertise.**

It is at present one of the only global funds designed to address structural inequality between small to medium sized women-led CSOs and other types of sustainable development organizations. Under the UN umbrella, **FGE has been able to access fringe CSOs, issues and beneficiaries more effectively. It leads on a demand-driven and grantee-led approach that ensures that Programmes and interventions are responsive sensitive and relevant to the needs of the beneficiaries and are sustainable.**

The Fund in Lebanon

Since 2011, FGE has supported four women's CSOs in Lebanon working towards greater women's economic and political empowerment through financial and technical capacity development as well as thematic and sub-thematic expertise.

Considering its wealth of experience and knowledge and its value proposition to reach women and girls furthest left behind, FGE stands to continue its successful approach to field programming in remote, challenging and complex settings, through a demand-driven model that is particularly attuned to the systemic barriers and

The opportunity to work with FGE is a privilege. The quality, the flexibility, the warmth. FGE support has allowed us to finally achieve goals that we have been working towards for years.” – one Grantee of the Fund

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limitations faced by CSOs in Lebanon, while working on expanding relationships among individuals and communities to help shift norms, and build vulnerable women agency and collective action.

Together FGE programmes in Lebanon (till date) created over 320 new market opportunities for women, establishing 9 permanent marketing outlets. It supported 18 women cooperatives in partnership with 19 municipalities and facilitated vocational trainings, and gender education for over 2,200 women, local authorities and community members. The Fund's different interventions was able to support total of 36,000 combined beneficiaries, reaching out to furthest behind women and girls.

Strategy for Change

1. Reaches women and girls furthest left behind

Out of 121 supported projects, 97 per cent work with at least one category of marginalized groups, and 70 per cent involve two or more.

FGE has identified 18 categories of vulnerable groups in its supported projects. While rural and young women are largely the most targeted groups, also refugee women in the case of Lebanon, many grantees strategically focus on smaller, yet highly marginalized groups that usually face many forms of discrimination, including widows, single mothers, caregivers, sex workers or LGBTQ women.

2. Three-pillar capacity development model

Sustains CSOs through rigorous and competitive global grant-making that mobilizes large financial resources for the design, development and implementation of dynamic and impactful programming;

Supports CSOs with a package of monitoring and technical activities to enhance their organizational, technical and human resource capacities for them to implement strategic and innovative interventions, amplify their voice and visibility, and

Strengthens the capacities of CSOs to plan, implement, evaluate and track high-impact programmes and results (RBM) training, guidance and reporting with the aim of

enabling them to become global brokers of their own knowledge, experience and results.

3. A beneficiary-centered approach through Social Innovation

Using a beneficiary-centered approach, FGE is working with its grantee in Lebanon and globally to gain a deeper understanding of the needs of the most marginalized women – the 'end users' of their projects.

In a safe space for experimentation and failure, the Fund is supporting a pilot cohort of grantees to explore new approaches, ideate, prototype and test innovative solutions based on stronger evidence and feedback from targeted women and girls that grantee partner are working with. The objective is to come up with tested models that solve challenges for women's empowerment and with potential to catalyze change at scale. This approach is meant to improve their role as service providers for women and girls furthest behind.

Theory of Change

FGE's theory of change is stated as follows:

1. If, CSOs have the capabilities, and opportunities to lead gender equality programming in contexts in which they are embedded;
2. If, these gender equality programmes are implemented in partnership with government, gender equality actors, and non-traditional allies;
3. If, these partnerships amplify the voice of the furthest behind women and girls to articulate their needs and strengthen the capabilities of women and girls to pursue the enjoyment of their human rights;
4. If, local and national duty bearers have the requisite capacities and are held to account by an independent civil society for implementing gender equality commitments in accordance with the needs and capacities of the furthest behind women and girls;
5. **Then, the furthest behind women and girls will have the capabilities and opportunities to exercise their political and economic human rights, and thereby enable the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.**