



**Spotlight
Initiative**
*To eliminate violence
against women and girls*

Global

Final Narrative Progress Report

2017-2023

Initiated by the European Union and the United Nations:





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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

AA	Administrative Agent
APHRC	African Population and Health Research Centre
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BANAVIM	National Bank of Data and Information of Cases of Violence against Women
BNN	Belize Network of Non-Governmental Organizations
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CEJIL	Centro por la Justicia y el Derecho Internacional
CISCA	Centro de Intercambio y Servicios para el Cono Sur Argentina
COP27	27 th UN Climate Change Conference
COSI	Community of the Spotlight Initiative
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DCO	Development Coordination Office
ENVIGMU	National Survey on Family Relations and Gender Violence Against Women
EU	European Union
EVAWG	Ending Violence against Women and Girls
FACT	Family AIDS Caring Trust
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FOCESE	Foundation for Civic Education and Social Empowerment
FOKUPERS	Communication forum for Timorese women
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GALS	Gender Action Learning System
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GES	Gender Equality Strategy
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HIVE JP	High-Impact Joint Programme for Violence Elimination by 2030
InfoSAFE	Grenada Information System for Analysing and Facilitating Empowerment against Family Violence
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersexual and Queer
LOIPEVCM	Comprehensive Organic Law to Prevent and Eradicate Violence against Women

MMAIMVV	Multisectoral Mechanism for Comprehensive Care for Women Victims of Violence
MCGBVPoH	Central Province, the Mashonal and Central Gender-Based Violence Pillar of Hope
MIEFH	Movement for the Integration and Emancipation of Women with Disabilities
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPTFO	Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
NGBWG	Network against Gender-Based Violence against Women and Girls
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSC	Operational Steering Committee
PLE	Esperanza Protocol
PMER	Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
PMU	Programme Management Unit
POWA	Productive Organization for Women in Action
PPAC	Pacific People's Advancing Change
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SMART	Spotlight Initiative Monitoring and Reporting Tool
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UN	United Nations
UN Trust Fund	United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDS	United Nations Development System
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
VAPP	Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act
VAWG	Violence against Women and Girls
VFC	Voice for Change
WHO	World Health Organization
WPHF	Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund



At the conclusion of the Spotlight Initiative Governing Body meeting, Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Shamah Bulangis, Civil Society Representative and Jutta Urpilainen, European Commissioner for International Partnerships take part in a social media moment. © Spotlight Initiative.

FOREWORD

United Nations Deputy
Secretary-General,
Amina Mohammed
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BY UNITED NATIONS DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

Multiple global crises – including the COVID-19 pandemic, violent and protracted conflicts, and the climate crisis – have deepened inequalities and caused unprecedented harm to communities, livelihoods and our social wellbeing. Human rights defenders – often under attack for the critical work they do – have experienced a wave of setbacks in their fight for gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and rights, peace, and justice.

As is so often the case, it is women and girls who suffer the consequences. Today, we see a generation of women and girls facing a world with fewer rights, freedoms and stability.

But ending violence against women and girls is possible. And Spotlight Initiative – the United Nations high-impact initiative to end violence against women and girls – has modelled the way forward.

Leveraging the expertise of the UN System, Spotlight Initiative’s comprehensive approach works to pass progressive laws and policies, strengthen institutions, deepen prevention programming, improve access to services and generate data. Its commitment to meaningful partnerships with government and civil society (particularly local groups and women’s rights organizations) has been shown to be significantly more effective at reducing violence against women and girls than siloed approaches.

In just a few years, the Initiative has changed the lives of millions of women and girls, demonstrating that it’s not only possible to end gender-based violence, but also to accelerate progress across all Sustainable Development Goals. Among its many achievements, Spotlight Initiative helped to double the conviction rates for perpetrators across 13 countries, leading to over 13,000 convictions, and ensured national budgets dedicated to addressing

gender-based violence increased nearly 13-fold across 13 countries. Since its inception, it has also given close to 3 million women access to essential services and educated nearly 6 million men and boys on respectful family relationships, non-violent conflict resolution and positive parenting.

We are halfway towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and we are not on track. Reaching each Sustainable Development Goals requires that every woman and every girl, everywhere, is able to live a life of dignity and security, free from violence. Investing in women and girls is the key to accelerating the full achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

It’s time for action.

Building on its successful first phase, the Initiative will double down on its achievements, scale up to new countries and contexts, and expand its partnerships with governments, civil society, community leaders, the media and other stakeholders. It will also help drive much needed resources to the sector, ensuring that the investment in ending violence against women and girls is commensurate with the magnitude of the problem. And it will continue to align with national and local priorities to address gender-based violence across all communities.

According to the latest data on gender equality in the Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2023, no country is within reach of eradicating intimate partner violence. And we know that less than 1 per cent of aid targets gender-based violence. As we roll out the next phase, Spotlight Initiative is predicted to prevent 21 million women and girls from experiencing gender based violence by 2025. The time to change this is now – and the path to change has never been clearer.

FOREWORD

European Union Commissioner
for International Partnerships
Jutta Urpilainen
© Courtesy of the EU
Commissioner



BY EUROPEAN UNION COMMISSIONER FOR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The world has changed since the Spotlight Initiative was launched in 2017. We face a global backlash on women's rights. Hard-fought gains towards gender equality are at risk. An increasing number of women and girls live in conflict-affected countries.

Despite a continuously changing context, the Spotlight Initiative has proven effective and adaptable to new developments. By working hand in hand with governments and civil society across 5 regions, the Spotlight Initiative has demonstrated that violence against women and girls is preventable. I am proud of how the Initiative has evolved. We have impressive results to show.

Since its inception, by putting the issue of gender-based violence on top of regional and national agendas, 548 gender-equitable laws or policies to address violence against women and girls were developed or strengthened. Through effective advocacy and capacity building, national budget allocations to end violence against women and girls increased nearly thirteen-fold, ensuring sustainability of efforts. We increased and improved access to services for victims of violence: close to 3 million women and girls were able to access relevant services. Prevention campaigns to end violence against women and girls reached nearly 384 million people.

While public sector engagement is essential, civil society organisations are truly at the heart of Spotlight's impact. Over 1750 civil society organisations received financial support through Spotlight, with a large percentage of funding going to national, local and grassroots organisations. Their tireless advocacy, educational work and support to women and girls are driving change on the ground.

This final report of the first phase allows to reflect on the progress achieved since the start of the Spotlight Initiative. Its comprehensive model with a central role for civil society, a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach, makes the Spotlight Initiative 70-90% more effective compared to traditional models of gender-based violence programming.

The Initiative matches the EU's continued commitment to promoting universal values, including gender equality. It is a prime example of our support to multilateralism, and it has laid the foundation for new forms of cooperation between the EU and UN.

Considering the urgency to scale up efforts and build on the results of the Initiative, I am pleased to see that the Spotlight Initiative is selected as one of the 12 High Impact Initiatives within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals. As we enter the second phase of Spotlight, the European Commission is committed to maximise the impact of its initial investment of EUR 500 million through programmes at global, regional and country level that build on results that we have already achieved and encourage knowledge building. The EU support to this new phase of Spotlight already amounts to EUR 85.5 million.

Addressing violence against women and girls is a significant, long-term development challenge that we can tackle only by working together. In this regard, we are delighted that Belgium and USAID now also support the Initiative. Recognising the scale of the challenge, I call on others to join as well. Together we can build a real movement and make a lasting difference in the lives of women and girls around the world.

CHAPTER 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





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1.1 OVERVIEW

This executive summary summarizes Spotlight Initiative's work and the cumulative results from its launch in 2017 to the end of December 2023. A flagship programme of the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, Spotlight Initiative represents the world's largest targeted and funded effort to end all forms of violence against women and girls, with seed investment from the EU. Unique to the Initiative is a whole-of-society approach that places ending violence against women and girls at the heart of national development priorities and gives local communities the tools they need to address violence in their specific context. The model works to address laws and policies, strengthen institutions and data collection, promote gender-equitable attitudes, and provide quality services for survivors of violence and their families. Perhaps most critically, Spotlight Initiative invests deeply in a new way of partnering with civil society and women's movements at every level, driving sustainable, transformative results, and enhancing civic space in the countries in which it works. Spotlight Initiative's work on, and strategies for, ending violence against women and girls could not be more necessary or timely — especially given the global roll-backs on women's rights and gender equality.

This final report of the Initiative's first phase of implementation opens with an overview of the Initiative's comprehensive model, including a description of its Theory of Change in which programming and results are grounded. The report then describes how the Initiative has acted as a demonstration fund for the Development Reforms of the United Nations, and has accelerated progress across all Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Following this, the report details the Initiative's funding allocations, which have focused on shifting critical resources to civil society and changemakers at the global, regional, and country levels, and the results of this investment. The Initiative's cumulative results are presented across the six outcome areas (or pillars) which comprise the Initiative's comprehensive model: changing laws and policies; strengthening institutions; shifting social norms and supporting prevention efforts; enhancing access to quality services; strengthening data systems; and supporting women's rights movements and organizations. Key challenges faced across the Initiative's are also shared, along with the innovative adaptations employed by programmes to address them. The report ends with the Initiative's key lessons learned and knowledge management trends, as well as communication highlights and areas for future investment.

1.2 SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE MODEL AND THEORY OF CHANGE

Spotlight Initiative's Theory of Change is grounded in the evidence that robustly resourced, rights-based, comprehensive programming that centres the work of feminist and women's rights organizations and movements and addresses the root causes of violence is the most effective approach to ending violence against women and girls globally.¹ The evidence base also shaped the dual approach that the Initiative employs, where civil society is engaged as accountability and governance partners through Spotlight Initiative's Civil Society Reference Group mechanism and as partners in efforts to end violence against women and girls through the Initiative's comprehensive model. [Chapter 3](#) provides more information on the Initiative's Theory of Change.

Strong multi-stakeholder partnerships at the global, regional and country levels underpin the Initiative's approach, with meaningful partnerships across UN agencies, government, civil society, and communities. The Spotlight Initiative model of integrated programming is unique as it brings together the whole UN system in a "One UN" approach — under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator in-country — to end violence against women and girls. This approach has helped deepen coordination across United Nations Country Teams, capitalise on existing resources and capacities, and streamline operational processes for strengthened delivery. It has catalysed a shift from disconnected, small-scale projects to national- and regional-scale cohesive programming to end violence against women and girls, bringing the United Nations and others together under a common approach. With deepened coordination and collaboration, programming improves and results for women and girls are more significant. Projections have shown that the Initiative's model can be [70 per cent to 90 per cent more effective](#) at reducing the prevalence of violence against women and girls compared to

traditional project-based or siloed approaches. [Chapter 4](#) has more information on the Initiative's governance and key partnerships.

1.3 FUNDING ALLOCATIONS TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

In total, USD 506.9 million was budgeted over the lifetime of Spotlight Initiative's first portfolio of 26 country programmes, five regional programmes, along with the **Safe and Fair** programme within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and two Civil Society Grant-Giving Programmes (partnering with the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) for programmes in Africa and Latin America, and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) for programmes in Afghanistan, Africa, Haiti and Papua New Guinea).

Overall, Spotlight Initiative has met and exceeded its funding goals for civil society. Spotlight Initiative achieved its commitment of delivering 30-50 per cent of programme funds through civil society organizations (CSOs). Cumulatively, Spotlight Initiative programmes delivered 49 per cent, or around USD 195 million,² of activity funds to civil society organizations. This exceeded the initial allocated funding of USD 192 million for civil society in programme budgets.

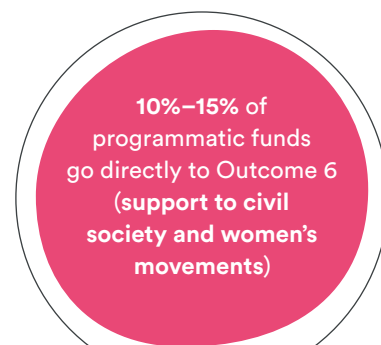
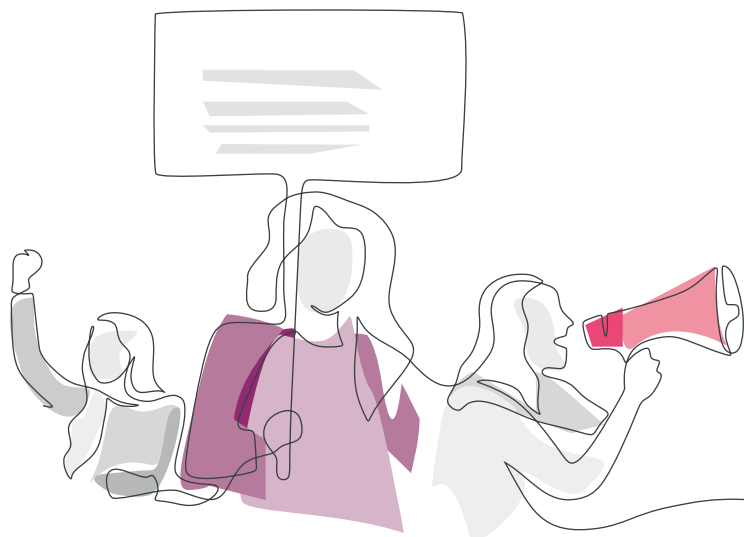
Spotlight Initiative exceeded its target of delivering 50-70 per cent of civil society organization funding to national, local and grassroots organizations. Of the USD 195 million delivered to civil society, 78 per cent of funding went to national, local and grassroots groups.³ Of this, USD 37 million, or 19 per cent of the total awarded amount, supported the work of local and grassroots organisations specifically. Additionally, 33 per cent of all awarded funds went to new partners that had not previously worked with a United Nations agency, diversifying the civil society base.

1. S. Laurel Weldon and Mala Htun "[Feminist mobilisation and progressive policy change: why governments take action to combat violence against women](#)" Gender and Development Vol. 21, No. 2, (July 2013).

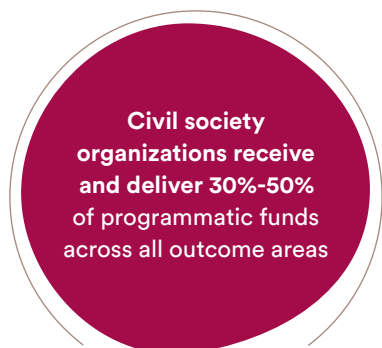
2. This includes USD 36.6 million delivered to CSOs by the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund.

3. In contrast, 7 per cent of the delivered funds were channelled to regional (multi-country) civil society organizations and 14 per cent to international civil society organizations.

Civil Society **Funding Commitments**



Achieved **15%**



Achieved **49%**



Achieved **10%**



Exceeded **78%**

Overall, USD 136 million, or 70 per cent of delivered funds, was invested in women’s organizations, and USD 24 million was invested in core support to civil society. Spotlight Initiative demonstrated its commitment to support the sustainability, resilience, and autonomy of civil society organizations and women’s movements in ways that were both flexible and fundamental.

Funding allocations also supported the principle of “leaving no one behind”: from the Initiative’s inception, across all outcome areas, 35.4 per cent of all financial awards to civil society reached adolescent girls, 28.6 per cent reached rural women, 26.5 per cent reached women and

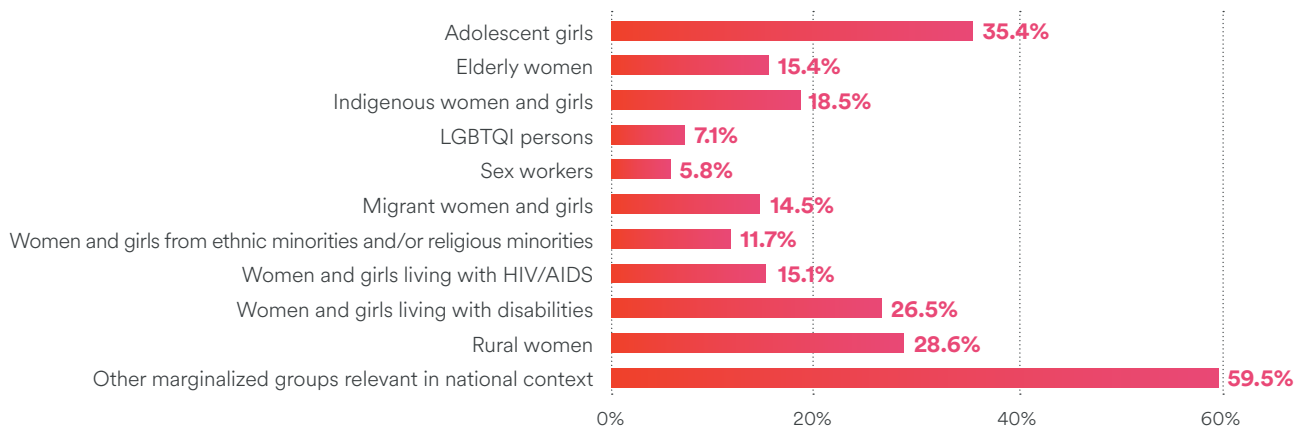
girls living with disabilities, and 59.5 per cent reached other marginalized groups.⁴

Overall, across the Initiative’s first portfolio of programmes, USD 48 million or 14.6 per cent of activity funds⁵ were allocated to Pillar 6, reaching women’s movements and grassroots feminist organizations. Sub-granting and subcontracting modalities have also been used to expand grassroots’ outreach and improve grassroots’ and local groups’ access to funding opportunities they might not otherwise qualify for under standard United Nations procedures. A total of 229 financial awards to civil society organizations included sub-granting or

4. Responding to the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination various groups face, each civil society organization award was able to report having reached multiple marginalized, vulnerable and traditionally left behind populations at the same time. Therefore, the data presented in each category is counted against the total number of civil society organization awards reported, and is not mutually exclusive.

5. This does not include the Safe and Fair programme in the ASEAN region given its different programmatic structure, as well as the UN Trust Fund and Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund programmes. Together with UN Trust Fund and Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund programmes, which allocate their entire activity costs to Pillar 6, the overall amount for Pillar 6 is 85 million USD, or 23.1 per cent of the overall activity costs.

Percentage of awards to CSOs
supporting vulnerable populations
 (as of end of 2023, multiple selections possible)



subcontracting modalities, reaching additional sub-grantees or subcontractors with at least USD 13.4 million. [Chapter 5](#) has more detailed information on funding allocations.

laws or policies to address violence against women and girls have been developed, national budget allocations to end violence against women and girls have increased nearly thirteen-fold, prevention campaigns with messaging to end violence against women and girls reached an audience of nearly 384 million, and nearly three million women and girls accessed high-quality services. The illustration below captures these and other results. For a detailed description of the range of Initiative’s impact over the years, see [Chapter 5](#).

1.4 **OVERARCHING AND PILLAR-SPECIFIC RESULTS: THE IMPORTANCE OF INVESTING IN A COMPREHENSIVE MODEL**

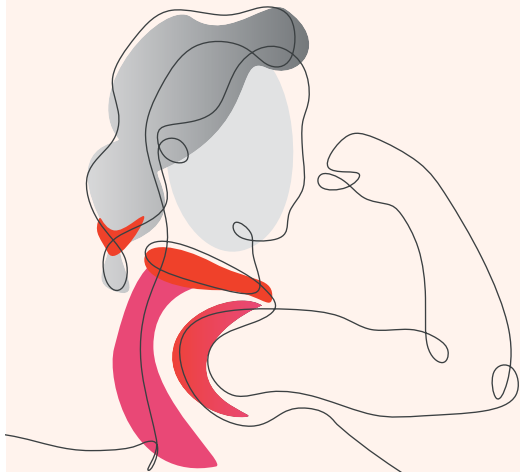
The first phase of implementation of Spotlight Initiative delivered a compelling proof of concept with high impact: with the Initiative’s support, **548 new or strengthened gender-equitable**

A unique aspect of Spotlight Initiative’s comprehensive model has been how results have been deepened through its synergistic approach to pillar implementation, with results in one pillar area positively affecting changes in other pillar areas. For example in **Mozambique,**



© UN/Andrew Hau.

With Spotlight Initiative's support



50 COUNTRIES strengthened their **NATIONAL ACTION PLANS** to eliminate violence against women and girls

Close to **3 MILLION WOMEN AND GIRLS** accessed gender-based violence **SERVICES**, including long term recovery services

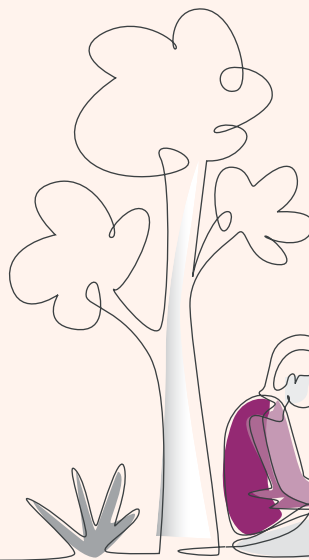
Over **5,000 LOCAL AND GRASSROOTS WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS** reported **GREATER INFLUENCE** and agency to work on eliminating violence against women and girls

CAMPAIGNS to prevent violence against women and girls **REACHED AN AUDIENCE OF** nearly **384 MILLION**



548 LAWS OR POLICIES were signed or strengthened to end violence against women and girls to date

THE CONVICTION RATE for gender-based violence **DOUBLED** across 13 countries

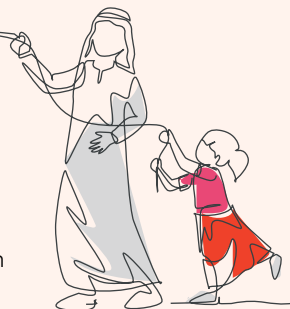


Nearly **8 MILLION YOUNG PEOPLE** participated in in- and out-of-school programmes promoting gender-equitable **attitudes and behaviours**



Close to **6 MILLION MEN AND BOYS** were educated on:

- Positive masculinity**
- Respectful family relationships**
- Non-violent conflict resolution and parenting**



NATIONAL BUDGETS to address gender-based violence increased nearly

13x across 13 countries



USD 195 million delivered to **CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS** (49% of activity funds)

information on laws and policies was shared with diverse stakeholders under Pillar 1. This new legal information helped promote changes in social norms, attitudes, and behaviours and shifted notions of the acceptability of violence at the community and individual levels, thereby generating change under Pillar 3. Targeted campaigns and prevention initiatives — in partnership with civil society — reached over 2 million people and led to increased reporting of gender-based violence cases and an uptick in service use among survivors, thus affecting results in Pillar 4. More examples of how working comprehensively spurred greater change than single pillar efforts are captured in [Chapter 5](#).

Additional cross-cutting results that emerged include: the importance of raising the issue of violence against women and girls on the national political agenda; how a One UN approach supported deepened collaboration and better coordination to drive more sustainable results; how commitment to the principle of leaving no one behind supported reaching the most marginalized; and how a participatory approach to monitoring, evaluation and reporting fostered more meaningful engagement of rights holders, and more responsive programming.

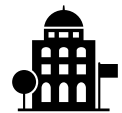
PILLAR 1: POLICIES AND LEGISLATION



Robust gender-equitable legislation and policies are critical to ensuring a legal and normative framework that respects the rights of women and girls. Since its inception, Spotlight Initiative programmes globally have helped develop or strengthen **548 new laws and policies** to address violence against women and girls at the national, regional and local levels, representing a **26 fold increase in gender-equitable law reforms since 2019**. Since the Initiative's launch, Spotlight programmes have worked with partners to help equip them with the skills (and resources) needed to better advocate for legal and policy reforms to end violence against women and girls at grassroots, local, subnational, and national levels. Progress was made across programmes — including in Malawi, Niger, Uganda, Vanuatu, and Zimbabwe — to ensure

protections for survivors exist at subnational and local levels, including through informal and traditional legal structures. For example, through **the Latin America Regional Programme**, Spotlight Initiative supported the creation of the Hope Protocol (*Protocolo La Esperanza*), which established guidelines for government officials, prosecutors, judges, human rights defenders, journalists, and others to investigate threats of violence against women human rights defenders with a special focus on gender. It represents the first international tool with public policy guidelines for rigorous criminal investigation. Women's rights organizations and women's rights and feminist movements have, and continue to be, on the frontlines, demanding rights, justice and an end to gender-based violence while advancing gender equality. In **Liberia**, through Spotlight Initiative, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) collaborated with civil society organizations and engaged with the Government and legislature,⁶ leading to the passage of the landmark legislation, "Domestic Violence Law," and the drafting of the "Female Genital Mutilation Bill". Various training and awareness-raising sessions with government officials were conducted at the national and local levels on the Domestic Violence Law, improving knowledge of the law and supporting its implementation.

PILLAR 2: INSTITUTIONS



Strong institutions help to ensure that laws and policies to end violence against women and girls are adequately funded and implemented and impunity is addressed through accountability. Robust coordination across sectors and at all levels of society also enhances national ownership. With the Initiative's support, **50 countries strengthened their National Action Plans** to eliminate violence against women and girls. Stronger, more accountable institutions positively impacted the lives of women and girls, including by strengthening and improving access to critical and life-saving services for survivors. Some other significant results included creating legal protections for victims of femicide in **Ecuador**, criminalizing violence against women and girls and harmful

6. Among the partners were the Law Reform Commission, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, the Independent Human Rights Commission, Women Solidarity Inc. and local stakeholders in Lofa, Nimba, Montserrado, and Grand Cape Mount Counties.



© UN Women Malawi.

practices, such as female genital mutilation and early marriage in **Mali** (where approximately 40 child marriages were interrupted), and ensuring that women migrant workers had stronger labour rights protections and lived free from violence, intimidation, and sexual harassment in the workplace as advocated for in the **Safe and Fair** programme. Additionally, **national budget allocations to end violence against women and girls increased nearly thirteen-fold across 13 countries** since the start of the Initiative. An excellent example of the power of Spotlight Initiative and civil society work on gender-responsive budgeting was the allocation of the first-ever national budget in 2021 in **Papua New Guinea** (approximately 7.93 million Papua New Guinean Kina or 1.4 million USD) to end violence against women and children. Seeing the importance of attention to gender issues, in 2023, the Government further increased the budget for 2023 by 24 per cent, reaching 9.8 million Papua New Guinean Kina (2.63 million USD).⁷

Further supporting ownership to deepen local efforts to end violence against women and girls, Spotlight Initiative programmes supported decentralization efforts and plans at the subnational, municipal and provincial levels, such as in **Argentina, El Salvador,**

Grenada, Honduras, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste, where local national action plans were strengthened. Since the start of the Initiative, **311 new sectoral strategies, plans or programmes that aim to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls have been developed across 13 countries.**



PILLAR 3: PREVENTION

Violence against women and girls and harmful practices are rooted in harmful social norms, beliefs, and attitudes. To address this, Spotlight Initiative supported prevention strategies that promoted equality and inclusion, including campaigns to end violence against women and transform harmful social norms, beliefs, and attitudes, through its work under Pillar 3. **Over the course of the Initiative, over 800 campaigns — organized through events, social media, TV, newspapers and radio — were launched across 32 countries, reaching an audience of nearly 384 million (more than the population of the United States or Indonesia, and nearly twice as many people as the population of Bangladesh) with locally designed messages and behaviour change methodologies.**

7. The 2022 Papua New Guinea Interim Annual Report, page 7.

Moreover, **since the start of the Initiative, close to 5.7 million women and girl survivors of violence reported increased knowledge of quality essential services and longer-term recovery services**, connected to effective messaging and widely disseminated campaigns.

Engaging men and boys is a critical strategy for changing behaviours and ending violence against women and girls. To date, nearly **6 million men and boys have received information on positive masculinity**, respectful family relationships, and non-violent conflict resolution. **Over 8,000 villages and communities across 17 Spotlight Initiative programmes established advocacy platforms to promote gender-equitable norms, attitudes, and behaviours. Over 6 million people have participated in community dialogues since the start of Spotlight Initiative**, supporting changes in harmful social norms, stereotypes and behaviours. For example in **Honduras**, the Cure Violence model was implemented in areas that had a high prevalence of gang wars and trafficking networks. It focused on changing norms through community dialogues. Within the first six months of its implementation, the Cure Violence model interrupted 662 violent instances and safeguarded the lives of 133 women.⁸ Since then, violence interrupters have averted 1,770 highly volatile incidents involving more than 724 women and girls across 25 neighbourhoods within the Choloma and San Pedro Sula areas.⁹ Out of the total cases managed, nearly 65 per cent¹⁰ of them involved the prevention of femicide. So far, the lives of more than 500 women have been saved, and 52 individuals, primarily women and children, have been relocated to safer, more permanent homes.¹¹ Violence interrupters have cumulatively spent more than 43,402 hours working with various community members to steadily change social and gender norms.



PILLAR 4: SERVICES

Quality services are essential to addressing the impact, and reducing recurrent cycles, of violence. Under Pillar 4, Spotlight Initiative

programmes improved the availability and accessibility of rights-based, survivor-centred essential services that also addressed the needs of marginalized communities. **Since the Initiative began, close to 3 million women and girls accessed services supported by the Initiative.**

Additionally, the Initiative has helped foster accountability of perpetrators, including by strengthening the justice sector. Since 2019, the overall **conviction rate for gender-based violence doubled** across 13 countries, with over 13,000 convictions since the start of the Initiative. Quality service delivery and access to justice also relies upon well-trained duty-bearers. **Across 22 Spotlight Initiative programmes, close to 70,000 women government service providers improved their capacity to deliver quality and coordinated essential services and were able to integrate responses to violence against women and girls into other sectors' services, amounting to more than 100,000 service providers trained since 2019.** For example, in **Mali**, outreach efforts led by non-government organization (NGO) partners made a direct impact on 217,959 individuals, reaching nearly 360 diverse communities within the targeted regions on access to services and one-stop centres. Furthermore, 925 community leaders were trained to report on cases of violence, to get involved in community activities that prioritize women's equitable rights, and to condemn violence of all forms.¹² Community members were encouraged to refer all gender-based violence cases to the one-stop centres. This comprehensive approach led to the establishment of community-level mechanisms and response plans geared towards preventing and combatting gender-based violence, while strengthening citizen accountability.



PILLAR 5: DATA

Spotlight Initiative focused on strengthening the collection and analysis of quality, disaggregated and globally comparable data on different forms of violence against women and girls and harmful practices through work on Pillar 5. The availability of reliable data at the national,

8. [Spotlight Mid-term Assessment Report using ROM review](#) (Spotlight Initiative Honduras), page 66.

9. [Stories of Hope, Courage and Change from Latin America and Africa](#) (Spotlight Initiative, 2021), page 18.

10. Ibid.

11. [Trained violence interrupters avert femicide in Honduras](#) (Spotlight Initiative, October 2021).

12. The 2021 Mali Annual Narrative Progress Report, page 29. (in French).

regional, and community levels to track the prevalence of violence and harmful practices makes it possible to provide more targeted services to survivors and to advocate for greater funding. Country and regional programmes have strengthened the digital infrastructure required to collect, store, analyse, and leverage quality, comparable data, and have supported groundbreaking research and knowledge-sharing initiatives since the Initiative's inception.

Since the Initiative was launched, 1,151 national statistics officers have strengthened their ability to produce quality data on the incidence and prevalence of violence against women and girls and harmful practices. A total of 55 national statistics offices have developed, adapted and contextualized methods and standards to generate national-level prevalence and incidence data on violence against women and girls, with support from Spotlight Initiative. As of December 2023, 78 per cent of target countries have publicly available data, reported on a regular basis, on femicide, 94 per cent have data on intimate partner violence, and 86 per cent have data on female genital mutilation. The “*InfoViolência*” database, tracking gender-based violence supported by Spotlight Initiative in **Mozambique**, saw a three-fold increase from the previous year in the number of sexual and gender-based violence cases registered (approximately 6,000 cases) in 2022.¹³ Spotlight Initiative in Mozambique also invested in quality data collection on sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices by expanding the platform to all target districts and training duty-bearers, including police officers and government officials, on how to use the system.

PILLAR 6: WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS



Diverse feminist, women's rights, and social justice movements are at the forefront of progressive change. Through Pillar 6, Spotlight Initiative made significant investments in increasing the strength and capacity of women's organizations and movements, so that they are able to continue to powerfully advocate for equality and an end violence against women



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and girls. **Over the course of the Initiative, over 5,500 women's rights organizations, autonomous social movements and relevant civil society organizations increased their coordinated efforts to jointly advocate on ending violence against women and girls.** Deepening networks and coalitions across civil society organizations and movements is vital for ending violence against women and girls. Through the **Pacific Regional Programme**, Spotlight Initiative partnered with 39 national, local, and grassroots women's rights organizations across ten countries in the region, establishing new and unique partnerships with communities through the Pacific People's Advancing Change (PPAC) grant-giving programme. These partnerships further enabled civil society organizations to engage with government entities. As an example, the Makefu Women's Council, an organization focusing on the protection of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) rights in Niue, partnered with the public safety and health sector and, through this collaboration, ensured their 24-hour helpline was operational for the LGBTIQ+ community to access services. **Since 2019, over 600 jointly agreed recommendations to end violence against women and girls have been developed through multi-stakeholder dialogues that included representatives of structurally marginalized groups.** Additionally, with the Initiative's support, over **5,000 local and grassroots women's rights organizations reported having greater influence and agency to work to end violence against women and girls.**

13. The 2022 Mozambique Annual Programme Report, page 11.

1.5 CHALLENGES AND MITIGATING MEASURES

While a range of challenges were faced across programmes, the following challenges were consistently identified across the Initiative:

- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and subsequent recovery, increased rates of violence against women and girls in many countries, while also impacting funding for efforts to end violence against women and girls and services.
- The climate crisis and its increasingly severe impacts have had detrimental effects on the livelihoods, safety, and security of people, with women and girls, and structurally marginalised communities disproportionately impacted.
- Ongoing political unrest and security concerns endangered progress toward gender equality and women's and girls' rights.
- Operating as One UN and in line with the UN Reforms, while central to the Initiative's way of working, presented operational challenges (including in sustained inter-agency collaboration and cooperation) in some contexts.
- Consistent and meaningful engagement of civil society (both as partners and members of civil society reference groups) was constrained in some contexts.
- Shifting national priorities and diminished political will in some countries weakened efforts to end violence against women and girls.
- The continued gap in reliable data on all forms of gender-based violence hindered monitoring efforts and targeted action.
- There were challenges across contexts in consistently ensuring the most marginalized were engaged and reached, including with adequate information and services.

Spotlight Initiative programmes engaged in a variety of mitigating measures to address these (and other) challenges, including: streamlining inter-agency collaboration for greater impact;

effectively supporting civil society groups; supporting gender-responsive adaptation to humanitarian disasters, recovery after COVID-19 and conflict; sustaining and further deepening partnerships with government to support increased political prioritization and will; engaging in evidence-based adaptations to technical obstacles and ensuring more resources and training for database development; developing creative and mobile outreach strategies to reach the most marginalized communities; and supporting coalitions and network building for enhanced responsiveness and community reach. Read more about the challenges faced and the adaptive measures developed in [Chapter 5](#).

1.6 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED

Spotlight Initiative prioritised producing, analysing, curating and disseminating knowledge and lessons learned to enhance the quality of programme implementation and expand the global evidence base to end violence against women and girls. A central part of its work over the years has been the production and dissemination of learnings, culminating in the development of a [Global Compendium of Innovative and Good Practices and Lessons Learned](#) and a [Spotlight Initiative Learning Centre](#) to end violence against women and girls, as well as global knowledge exchanges across a range of topics and global communities of practice focused on ending violence against women and girls. The Secretariat has produced more than **50 knowledge briefs** since Spotlight Initiative's inception on strategic themes related to ending violence against women and girls, including: [Integrating gender-based violence prevention into climate action](#), [A Comprehensive Approach to Ending Violence against Women and Girls](#), [Ending Child Marriage](#), [Engaging the private sector to eliminate violence against women and girls](#), and [Lessons and Promising Practices of Spotlight Initiative: Delivery of Quality Essential Services](#). More than **1,000 knowledge products** and tools produced by Spotlight Initiative programmes have been consolidated into a repository, the [Global Knowledge Product Tracker](#), available in the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO) Gateway online portal. Through [SHINE](#),

the Global Compendium, and over 50 monthly newsletters, the Secretariat has delivered a suite of tools, platforms and resources on ending violence against women and girls for use by Spotlight Initiative programmes, policymakers and practitioners. Spotlight Initiative's cutting-edge work on participatory approaches to monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER) has also left positive impressions as it offered concrete ways to operationalize the principles of a human rights-based approach, gender equality, and leaving no one behind.

Spotlight Initiative has also identified cross-pillar and thematic lessons from evidence synthesis and analysis derived from Spotlight Initiative's comprehensive model to end violence against women and girls. These lessons are relevant across diverse programming contexts and serve as critical learning to ensure effective, responsive, contextually driven efforts to end violence against women and girls. A few cross-pillar learnings that emerged appear below:

- A **whole-of-society** approach fosters joint action across diverse stakeholders to work together more effectively to end violence against women and girls.
- Approaching **government partnerships through a One UN interface** — whereby the UN Resident Coordinator leads the United Nations Country Team and coordinates with key partners — enhances efficiency and drives coordinated action and national ownership.
- Strong partnerships — including with the highest level of government and with the **European Union (EU)** — help foster high-level political commitment and widen the base of powerful allies and advocates to make necessary changes in a country and region. Maintaining open communication, strategizing and joint monitoring between United Nations Country Teams and European Union Delegations builds alignment and trust, and enhances coordination.
- **Community-centred approaches and network building** promote local ownership, increase rights holders' engagement with the programme and support outreach and awareness activities. This also creates the conditions for longer-term sustainability of results, including positive changes in attitudes and social norms.

- **Sustainable outcomes** beyond Spotlight Initiative are strengthened through local capacity-building across movements, governments, civil society, activists, and other key stakeholders.
- Implementing the principle of **leaving no one behind** is critical for achieving relevant and equitable outcomes.

More information on lessons learned, good and innovative practices, knowledge exchanges, and the Initiative's evaluation work can be found in [Chapter 6](#).

1.7 COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY RESULTS

An important dimension of Spotlight Initiative is its communication and visibility work. Showcasing real-life stories of efforts to end violence, and the work of champions and global advocates, helps to break stereotypes and raise awareness of the importance of this issue at the community, national, regional, and global levels.

From mid-2019, when Spotlight Initiative launched its website, to the end of 2023, Spotlight Initiative's [global website](#) recorded 496,000 sessions and over a million page views. Spotlight Initiative's social media presence grew continuously from 2018 to 2023. In December 2023, the Initiative had almost 62,000 followers across platforms. The Initiative gained more than 37 million impressions since 2018 through [Facebook](#), X (formerly [Twitter](#)) and [Instagram](#). More than 16,300 Spotlight Initiative-specific articles and stories have been published by approximately 4,100 media outlets across 155 countries, with an estimated annual cumulative reach of 3.6 billion.

At the programme level, diverse communication strategies raised the visibility of violence against women and girls in different countries, including through campaigns and creative arts. For example, in **Ecuador**, the Spotlight Initiative team supported the development of *Flores en el Aire* — a digital mapping tool that aims to highlight and bring humanity to the country's shocking femicide statistics by sharing testimonies from the families of victims in order to create a virtual "memory map".



© Nicoletta Marinelli/Fundación ALDEA 2021.

At a global level, Spotlight Initiative's flagship digital engagement campaign — [#WithHer](#) — focuses on curating online conversations among cultural influencers and providing a platform for the stories of activists and survivors. The campaign has reached more than 224 million users on X (formerly Twitter), Facebook and Instagram since 2021. The [WithHer Fund](#), launched in partnership with the UN Foundation in December 2021, provides resources directly to grassroots women's organizations working to end violence against women and girls. Since November 2021, the WithHer Fund has raised USD 500,000 and approximately 70 per cent of funds have gone directly to grantee organizations as flexible, unrestricted grants enabling grantees to cover core organisational costs, critical for sustained activism and the ability to nimbly adapt.

Other communication highlights include: "[What were you wearing?](#)", a high profile exhibit in the United Nations visitors' centre in New York raising awareness around sexual violence; The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Dubai (COP 28) highlighting [the links between the climate crisis and gender](#); and the partnership with the [Group of Friends for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls](#) (Group of Friends), which, together

with Spotlight Initiative, presented a television-style [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) dialogue](#) "From perpetrators to allies",¹⁴ on the role and responsibility of men and boys in ending gender-based violence, which was published on the United Nations YouTube channel to more than 2.66 million subscribers. In 2021, Spotlight Initiative worked with Recipient UN Organizations (RUNOs) at the global and country level to co-create a series of web stories and videos published during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence. '[A Brighter Future](#)' showed how UN agencies work together through Spotlight Initiative to create real change in the lives of women and girls.

Taken together, the Initiative's communication and visibility work has raised awareness and challenged harmful stereotypes, beliefs, and attitudes that perpetuate violence against women and girls. [Chapter 7](#) details this work further.

1.8 MOVING FORWARD: INVEST BOLDY

Ending violence against women and girls is possible, and Spotlight Initiative — [the United Nations High-Impact Initiative to end violence against women and girls](#) — has modelled the way forward. Spotlight Initiative's approach has demonstrated that significant, large-scale investment in comprehensive programming and whole-of-society partnerships to end violence against women and girls can have a transformative impact.

Looking ahead, Spotlight Initiative is well positioned to consolidate the wealth of knowledge and lessons learned, expand its programming and reach, strengthen its role as a model to drive progress across all Sustainable Development Goals, and further build on its experience responding to contexts as they shift, bridging the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in order to catalyse global efforts to end violence against women and girls and to advance transformative change.

14. It was moderated by UN Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications Melissa Fleming and featured European Union Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta Urpilainen, Head of the EU Delegation to the United Nations Olof Skoog, Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the UN Egriselda Gonzales Lopez, Permanent Representative of Botswana to the United Nations Collen Vixen Kelapile, UNFPA Executive Director Natalia Kanem and UN Global Advocate for the Spotlight Initiative Siya Kolisi.

At the global level, through concrete, coordinated, and transformative actions, Spotlight Initiative aims to scale to a USD 1 billion, further contributing to ending violence against women and girls — one of the most pervasive human rights violations — by 2028, and expanding its portfolio to support more than 60 countries across existing and new regions.

Spotlight Initiative envisions a world where women and girls live free from all forms of violence and enjoy all their human rights. To achieve this, ramped up collective action is essential.

Partnerships and multilateral collaboration and cooperation — coupled with deep investments in holistic and comprehensive programming — are vital to ending violence against women and girls. By continuing to deepen its existing partnerships with government and civil society, and mobilizing new partners to invest in order to scale up this proven model, the Initiative can continue to implement across its current locations and expand its programmes to new contexts, as well.

Toward that end and as we look ahead, the Initiative has been successful in broadening the

donor base and mobilising additional financial support, with new donor partners joining in 2024 — including Belgium and USAID — as well as continued investment from the European Union to further amplify the impact achieved during the first phase of programming. Additionally, the Initiative has provided targeted support to over 20 new countries in their efforts to launch Spotlight Initiative programmes throughout 2024, expanding the scope of the Initiative's work.

In its next phase, the Initiative will drive more and better funding towards women's rights organizations and movements that are leading efforts in their communities and globally. As noted, ending violence against women and girls is essential to drive progress across all Sustainable Development Goals, and supporting the work of partners — particularly progressive women's rights organizations and movements — is one of the most effective, yet under-resourced, pathways toward change.¹⁵ The data are clear: evidence shows that a vibrant civil society — and, specifically, robust feminist and women's rights organizations and movements — is uniquely critical to advancing progressive policies to end violence against women and girls. **The time to invest is now!**

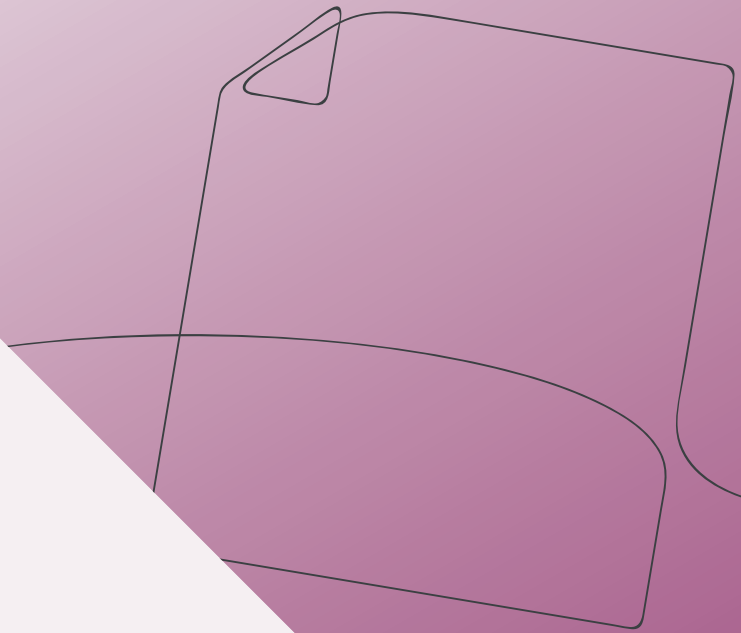


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15. Dalberg (2022) "Imperative to Invest: How addressing violence against women and girls today reduces violence over time, fosters peace & stability, and supports people reach full potential, all of which advances us towards the SDGs".

CHAPTER 2

REPORT STRUCTURE AND SCOPE





© UN Women Uganda.

This is the final global report and covers Spotlight Initiative’s cumulative results from its launch in 2017 to 31 December 2023, the completion of the first generation of Spotlight Initiative programmes funded by the seed EU investment.

This report highlights the Initiative’s unique model, its added value, and the transformative results it has achieved in this relatively short period of time. [Chapter 1](#) comprises the Executive Summary while this Chapter covers the structure and scope of the report. The main body of the report begins with [Chapter 3](#), which provides an overview of the current geopolitical context and the pervasive nature of violence against women and girls, and then discusses how Spotlight Initiative has responded to this through its comprehensive model, rooted in an evidence-based Theory of Change.

[Chapter 4](#) focuses on how Spotlight Initiative works in practice. This chapter details the Initiative’s governance structure, its deep connections with civil society, and its coordinated approach to partnerships, including with the European Union. It also highlights United

Nations inter-agency collaboration in the spirit of UN Reform efforts to deliver more effectively for women and girls, as well as the Initiative’s strategic, whole-of-society approach to programme implementation.

[Chapter 5](#) presents the Initiative’s key results across its 34 programmes. The chapter opens with an overview of resource allocation and how funding has flowed to regions and countries and directly to civil society, including through the partnership with the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund and the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund). The chapter then presents the significant results achieved by the Initiative across regions since its inception. Best practices boxes are woven throughout the results section, capturing meaningful stories of change to showcase impact.





[Chapter 6](#) details Spotlight Initiative's efforts in strengthening the evidence base to end violence against women and girls, and shares important lessons for strengthened programming. [Chapter 7](#) highlights the Initiative's cutting-edge communications and visibility efforts to ensure widespread and effective messaging.

[Chapter 8](#) focuses on the path forward, underscoring the importance of investing boldly and strategically to end violence against women and girls as Spotlight Initiative scales up in its next phase. The main report concludes with [Chapter 9](#), the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office Consolidated Annual Financial Report, in conformity with the requirements specified in the contract with the European Union.

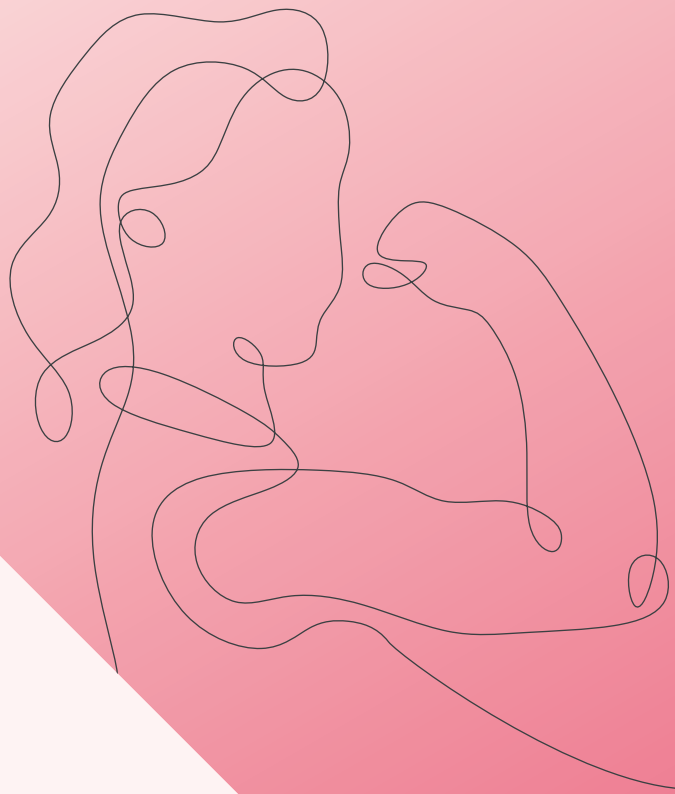
This report also includes four annexes: [Annex A](#), which presents the Initiative's cumulative indicator results; [Annex B](#), which showcases the 2-page summaries of Spotlight programmes' final reports; [Annex C](#), which outlines the methodological approach to the civil society funding analysis presented in [Chapter 5](#); and [Annex D](#), which lists the overall end-handling of assets, equipment, and major supplies acquired under the Initiative's first generation of country, regional and grant-giving programmes.

A woman joined the Spotlight Initiative's partners in the painting of a mural to raise awareness of violence against women and girls during the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence in Honduras.

© Spotlight Initiative.

CHAPTER 3

SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE: A CATALYST FOR ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS





© Women Migrant Workers photography project/UN Women Cambodia.

Spotlight Initiative is the world’s largest targeted effort to end all forms of violence against women and girls. Created in 2017 as an unprecedented global partnership between the United Nations and the European Union, Spotlight Initiative radically changed the existing global landscape to end violence against women and girls. Moving from piecemeal, siloed approaches to a high-impact model that comprehensively addresses the root causes of violence against women and girls, the Initiative brought together governments, civil society, communities, leading experts and practitioners, and donors to drive change together. This chapter provides an overview of the context, detailing current geopolitical trends and rates of violence against women and girls over the past five years. In response, Spotlight Initiative has implemented transformative programming through its comprehensive, whole-of-society model, rooted in an evidence-based Theory of Change. This approach has been shown to drive progress not only on gender equality (SDG 5) but across all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

3.1 THE CONTEXT

Mid-way through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, violence against women and girls remains widespread. Globally, [around 1 in 3 of women worldwide](#) have experienced violence in their lifetime. This figure is likely much higher, as incidences frequently go unreported. Structurally marginalized

women and girls often face higher rates of violence. For example, women with disabilities are at higher risk of experiencing violence, nearly twice as likely than men and women without disabilities,¹⁶ as are indigenous women, with young indigenous women experiencing particularly high rates.¹⁷ [LGBTQI individuals are at higher risk](#), as well, with LGBTQI individuals [nearly four times more likely](#) in some places than non-LGBTQI individuals to experience violence, including rape and sexual assault.

16. [Women with disabilities' experiences of intimate partner violence: a qualitative study from Sweden \(BMC Womens Health, 2023; 23: 38\).](#)

17. [Inter-american commission on Human Rights: Indigenous Women and Their Human Rights in the Americas \(2017\).](#)

Women and girls continued to face the fall-out of the COVID-19 pandemic, which exacerbated existing inequalities and contributed to an increase in violence against women and girls.¹⁸ As a result, women have reported feeling more unsafe than they felt before the pandemic.¹⁹ In addition to the impact of COVID-19, ongoing conflicts and protracted crises, including those in Afghanistan, Haiti, Palestine, South Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen, among others, continue to have a severe and disproportionate impact on women and girls globally.²⁰ The climate crisis disproportionately impacts women and girls, and marginalised communities, as well, contributing to increases in gender-based violence. These factors and others — including ongoing threats to food security and energy poverty — have had devastating impacts on the well-being of women, girls and communities globally, including on the prevalence of various forms of violence against women and girls and its differentiated impact among diverse communities. More information on this can be found across this report, including particularly in [Chapter 5](#).

Previously hard-won rights have seen reversals in some contexts, as well. Data from 2021 noted that it would take 286 years to achieve gender equality, while data for 2023 underscored that it would take 300 years to achieve gender equality.²¹ Anti-democratic policies and actors, including far right movements and supremacist groups across the world, have contributed to a backlash against (and violence toward) peaceful social justice activists, organisations, and movements. There is a strong and growing anti-gender backlash as well, which places the lives and rights of diverse women and girls at risk. Civic space has shrunk as well, rolling back decades of progress.²²

Despite these challenges, women’s rights organizations and women human and environmental rights defenders, feminist and progressive movements, and others have continued to collectively resist (often in the face of harassment and threats to their lives), demanding rights, justice, and peace for all. Inspired and guided by these movements, Spotlight Initiative has, over the years, worked to support global, regional,

and national efforts to end violence against women and girls, with a whole-of-society approach that centres the partnership with civil society and groups at the forefront of efforts to end gender-based violence in their communities and countries as well as globally.

3.2 HOW SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE CONTRIBUTES TO CHANGE: SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE’S THEORY OF CHANGE

Given the global context, increased investment and attention on ending violence against women and girls is needed now more than ever. Spotlight Initiative’s Theory of Change is grounded on the evidence that robustly resourced, rights-based, comprehensive programming — that centres the work of feminist and women’s rights organizations and movements, as well as women and girls themselves and addresses the root causes of violence itself, including through deepened prevention programming — is the most effective approach to ending violence against women and girls globally.²³

While one of the prevalent and pervasive human rights violations globally, violence against women and girls differs across contexts, with differentiated consequences and impacts for specific groups of women and girls and marginalized communities that require context-specific responses. Spotlight Initiative’s whole-of-society approach places ending gender-based violence at the heart of national development priorities and gives local communities the tools they need to address violence in their specific context.

Over the years, Spotlight Initiative’s programmes have delivered integrated interventions to end violence against women and girls, focusing on achieving results across six outcome areas, or pillars, in order to respond to, prevent, and end violence against women and girls.

18. [The Economic Impact on Women of the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

19. [UN Women Report: Measuring the Shadow Pandemic: Violence Against Women during COVID-19](#).

20. [Global Gendered Impacts of the Ukraine Crisis: Measuring: On Energy Access and Food Security and Nutrition](#) (UN Women, 2022).

21. [Without investment, gender equality will take nearly 300 years: UN report](#).

22. [Revenge of the Patriarchs: Why Autocrats Fear Women](#) (Foreign Affairs, March/April 2022).

23. S. Laurel Weldon and Mala Htun “[Feminist mobilisation and progressive policy change: why governments take action to combat violence against women](#)” *Gender and Development* Vol. 21, No. 2, (July 2013).



Spotlight Initiative Theory of Change

Initiative Goal: All women and girls, especially those most



PILLAR 1 **POLICIES AND LEGISLATION**

Legislative and policy frameworks, based on evidence and in line with international human rights standards, on all forms of violence against women and girls and harmful practices are in place and translated into plans.

- 1.1** Partners have strengthened evidence-based knowledge and capacities to assess gaps and draft new and/or strengthen existing legislations on ending VAWG and/or gender equality and non-discrimination.
- 1.2** Partners are better able to develop evidence-based national and/or sub-national action plans on ending VAWG.
- 1.3** Partners have greater knowledge and awareness of human rights obligations and are able to draft laws and/or policies that guarantee the ability of CSOs and women human rights defenders to advance the human rights agenda.



PILLAR 2 **INSTITUTIONS**

National and sub-national systems and institutions plan, fund and deliver evidence-based programmes that prevent and respond to violence against women and girls and harmful practices, including in other sectors.

- 2.1** Officials in relevant institutions are better able to develop and deliver evidence-based programmes that prevent and respond to VAWG.
- 2.2** Multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms established at the highest level that are adequately funded and include multi-sectoral representation and representation from the most marginalized groups.
- 2.3** Partners have greater knowledge, capacities and tools on gender-responsive budgeting to end VAWG.



PILLAR 3 **PREVENTION**

Gender equitable social norms, attitudes and behaviours change at community and individual levels to prevent violence against women and girls and harmful practices.

- 3.1** Evidence-based programmes are developed to promote gender-equitable norms, attitudes and behaviours for in and out of school settings.
- 3.2** Community advocacy platforms are established to promote gender-equitable norms, attitudes and behaviours.
- 3.3** Key decision makers are better able to advocate for implementation of legislation and policies on ending VAWG.



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

vulnerable, live free from violence and harmful practices



PILLAR 4 SERVICES

Women and girls who experience violence and harmful practices use available, accessible, acceptable, and quality essential services including for long term recovery from violence.

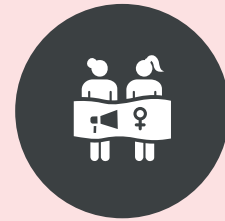
- 4.1** Government authorities and women's rights organisations have better knowledge and capacity to deliver quality and coordinated essential services.
- 4.2** Survivors of violence and their families are informed of and can access quality essential services.



PILLAR 5 DATA

Quality, disaggregated and globally comparable data on different forms of violence against women and girls and harmful practices, collected, analysed and used in line with international standards to inform laws, policies and programmes.

- 5.1** Partners have strengthened capacities to regularly collect data related to VAWG.
- 5.2** Quality prevalence and/or incidence data on VAWG is analysed and made publicly available.



PILLAR 6 WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS

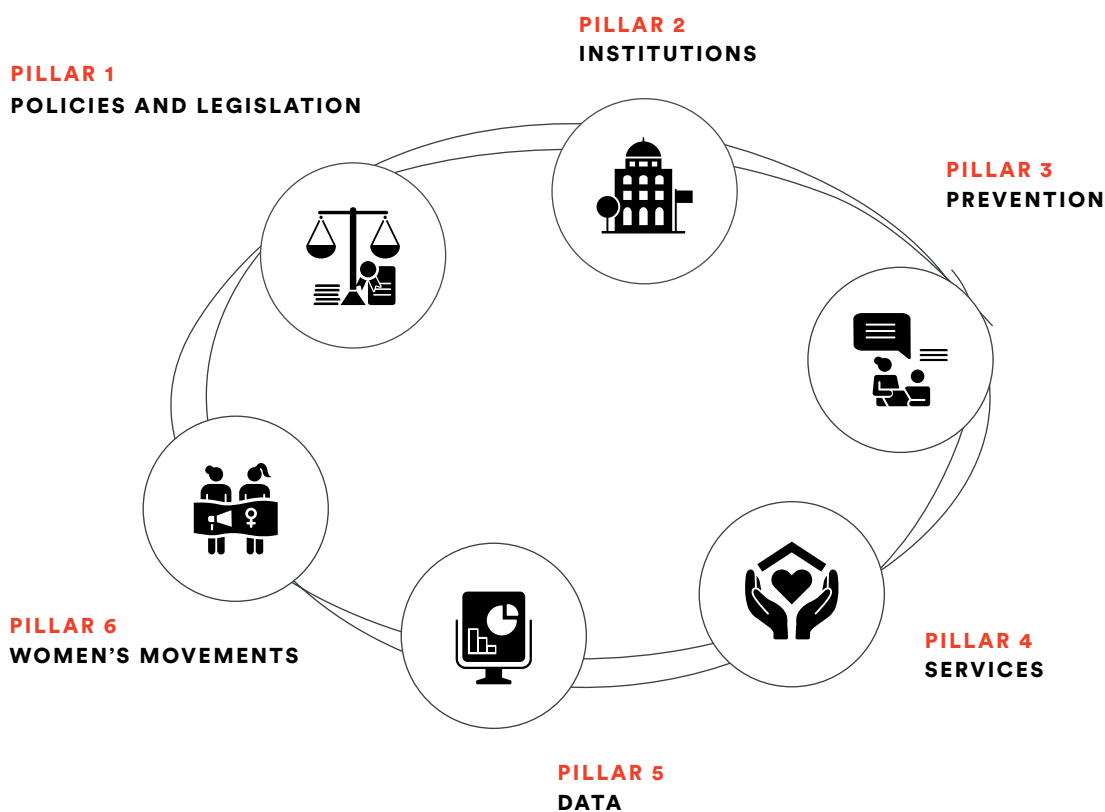
Women's rights groups, autonomous social movements and civil society organisations, including those representing youth and groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination/marginalization, more effectively influence and advance progress on GEWE and ending VAWG.

- 6.1** Women's rights groups and relevant CSOs have increased opportunities and support to share knowledge, network, partner and jointly advocate.
- 6.2** Women's rights groups and relevant CSOs are better supported to use social accountability mechanisms.
- 6.3** Women's rights groups and relevant CSOs have strengthened capacities and support to design, implement and monitor their own programmes on ending VAWG.



Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Spotlight Initiative — working across 6 Pillars



By applying a comprehensive approach — working to help pass progressive laws and policies, strengthen institutions, deepen prevention programming, improve access to services, generate data and build meaningful partnerships (particularly with civil society and women’s movements) — Spotlight Initiative’s model has been shown to be 70 per cent to 90 per cent more effective at reducing the prevalence of violence against women and girls than traditional project-based or siloed approaches.

Partnership with civil society is mainstreamed throughout the Initiative’s work with a specific focus on engaging with local organizations and feminist and women’s rights movements (Pillar 6). Evidence demonstrates that women’s movements are uniquely positioned to drive change toward more democratic and equitable societies. Feminist movements and civil society are at the heart of the Initiative’s Theory of

Change and its model for partnership, funding, and governance. Working in this way also spurs greater change: Spotlight Initiative’s interventions across pillars — implemented collectively by leveraging the expertise of United Nations agencies in countries — are mutually reinforcing, with results in one area of work (laws and policies, for example) often accelerating progress in another (for example, access to quality services). Examples of this can be found in [Chapter 5](#), which presents the results of this comprehensive model, and showcases the progress and impact the Initiative has made towards ending all forms of violence against women and girls.

Ending violence against women and girls is possible. It requires large scale, sustained investment commensurate with the severity of the crisis (particularly in prevention),²⁴ and the Initiative has demonstrated that, when donors invest boldly, transformative results are possible in the lives of women and girls.

24. The Equality Institute & The Accelerator for GBV Prevention (2023) What Counts? The State of Funding for the Prevention of Gender-Based Violence against Women and Girls.

3.3 SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE'S CONTRIBUTIONS AS AN ACCELERATOR OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Intersecting forms of inequality — including gender inequality — and violence against women and girls often slows (or reverses) progress on sustainable development. As UN Women and others underscore in [Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2022](#), the global community has a long way to go to achieve gender equality by 2030.

However, data and [research show](#) that robust investments in gender equality, and efforts to end violence against women and girls,

can contribute to the realisation of the 2030 Agenda as a whole, catalysing progress not only on Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) on gender equality, but across all 17 goals. Investing in women and girls and gender equality — particularly by supporting the work of progressive women's rights organizations and movements — is one of the most effective, yet under-resourced, pathways toward change.²⁵

Spotlight Initiative's approach has been shown to drive progress across these global goals. Honored as [one of 12 High-Impact Initiatives](#) of the United Nations at the 2023 Sustainable Development Goal Summit, the Initiative's model has demonstrated that significant, large-scale investment in comprehensive programming and whole-of-society partnerships to end violence against women and girls can make transformative change across all goals.

Violence Against Women and Girls A Barrier to Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals



25. Dalberg (2022) "Imperative to Invest: How addressing violence against women and girls today reduces violence over time, fosters peace & stability, and supports people reach full potential, all of which advances us towards the SDGs".



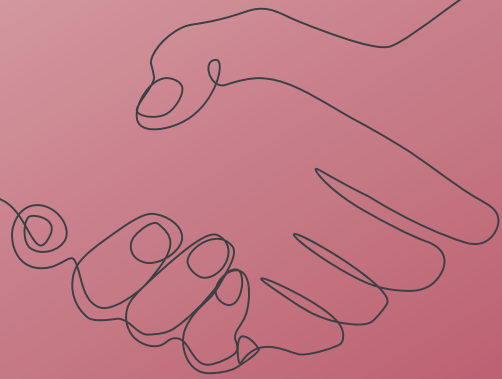


Beyond gender equality and violence elimination (SDG 5), Spotlight Initiative supports progress across multiple other goals. In **Zimbabwe**, for example, developing effective and strong institutions (SDG 16) is exemplified through investments in equipment, such as closed-circuit television to record survivor's statements (protecting victims from re-traumatization and enabling the courts to provide survivor-centred services for child survivors) and infrastructure renovations of victim-friendly courts and police units, which have improved access to justice for survivors of gender-based violence. Additionally, capacity-building of judicial officers contributed to enhanced logistical and support services for survivors and witnesses, who now benefit from transportation arrangements for court proceedings, leading to more case resolutions. Progress on SDG 4, inclusive and equitable quality education, is evident in Spotlight Initiative's Safe Space Mentorship Programme in **Malawi**, where 6,152 girls were returned to school as a result of the influence of the safe spaces. By fostering environments where women and girls can live securely, in both urban settings (SDG 11) and workplaces (SDG 8), by ensuring access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, and other quality essential healthcare services (SDG 3) and by addressing and preventing violence against women and girls, Spotlight Initiative has also contributed to efforts to end poverty (SDG 1) and has promoted inclusive and sustainable economic growth (SDG 8).

Moreover, Spotlight Initiative also contributes to stronger partnerships for sustainable development (SDG 17), calling on the United Nations, governments, civil society, donors, and others to work together to advocate for the elimination of violence against women and girls globally. As a model fund for the UN Reform, Spotlight Initiative's inter-agency, multi-stakeholder approach, under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinators, has promoted efficiency, coherence, and impact. More information on UN Reform can be found in [Chapter 4](#), [Chapter 5](#) and [Chapter 6](#).

CHAPTER 4

SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE: COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE, UN REFORM, AND A DEEP FOCUS ON PARTNERSHIPS



Spotlight Initiative represents the largest targeted global investment to end violence against women and girls to date. This historic initiative, launched as a flagship programme of the United Nations Secretary-General with seed funding from the European Union, has demonstrated that a comprehensive, multi-pillar model can yield remarkable, lasting results to end violence against women and girls. This chapter focuses on how Spotlight Initiative works in practice, detailing the Initiative's innovative governance structure, its coordinated approach to strategic partnerships, including with the European Union, and deep connections with civil society. Global level partnerships — including among United Nations agencies working together in the spirit of UN Reform under the Initiative— are also discussed. Specific examples highlighting the impact of these partnerships on efforts to end violence against women and girls are highlighted in [Chapter 5](#) on results, [Chapter 6](#) on lessons learned and [Chapter 7](#) on the Initiative's communication and visibility efforts.

4.1 FUND OVERVIEW AND GOVERNANCE

4.1.1 Fund Overview

The unprecedented investment of 500 million euros by the European Union²⁶ in Spotlight Initiative ensured that addressing one of the most prevalent human rights violations — violence against women and girls — featured prominently across political agendas and global development priorities.

Under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Initiative's 34 programmes — 26 country programmes, six regional programmes (including the Safe and Fair programme within Southeast Asia), and two Civil Society Grant-Giving Programmes, partnering with United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) for grant-giving in Africa and Latin America, and the United Nations Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) for

grant-giving in Afghanistan, Haiti, Papua New Guinea, and in several African countries— have had a significant impact globally.²⁷

The visual below highlights the total funding allocation for Spotlight Initiative programmes across all years of implementation. A comprehensive funding analysis can be found in [Chapter 5](#).

4.1.2 Global and Programme Governance

Spotlight Initiative's global governance structure offered a unique platform²⁸ for coordinated engagement of multiple stakeholders and streamlined, strategic planning. By establishing an efficient and effective decision-making and oversight framework, the Fund was able to ensure inclusiveness, accountability, and transparency in its operations and interventions. Moreover, multi-tiered, multisector governance and decision-making mechanisms at the global and programme levels have enabled the Fund to leverage the support of actors at various levels and maximize capacities to fulfil its objective of ending violence against women and girls.

26. 465 million EUR dedicated to Spotlight Initiative Fund, implemented by the United Nations, and 35 million EUR reserved for direct grant-making by the European Union.

27. Due to the context in Afghanistan from 2021-2023, this global report does not capture the work of Spotlight Initiative's country programme in Afghanistan, or Spotlight Initiative's partnership with WPHF in Afghanistan, though the contributions of both programmes over the years have been significant and impactful. For more information, please contact the UN Resident Coordinator Office in Afghanistan.

28. Spotlight Initiative is set up as a pooled multi-partner fund. The Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO) is thus the Administrative Agent of the Initiative, using a "pass-through" arrangement. In this role, it provides the Secretary-General and Recipient United Nations Organizations with fund administration and other support services, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Secretary-General and the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office.

122

countries reached by 34

Spotlight Initiative programmes

Latin America Regional Programme

Caribbean Regional Programme

Africa Regional Programme

Africa

Liberia ^{II}	\$22.634.286
Malawi ^{II}	\$28.571.429
Mali ^{II}	\$25.714.286
Mozambique ^{II}	\$28.571.429
Niger ^{II}	\$24.285.715
Nigeria ^{II}	\$35.714.286
Uganda ^{II}	\$31.428.571
Zimbabwe ^{II}	\$30.000.000

Africa RP	\$25.620.000
UN Trust Fund — Africa	\$20.636.792
WPHF — Africa	\$7.075.472

Asia

Safe and Fair	\$29.370.587
Afghanistan	\$16.500.000
Kyrgyzstan ^{II}	\$6.714.286
Tajikistan ^{II}	\$7.000.000
Central Asia and Afghanistan RP ^{II}	\$5.309.298
WPHF — Afghanistan	\$2.000.000

^{II} Phase I and phase II budget included. Other programmes include phase I budget only, or are single-phase. Figures include EU funding only.

26

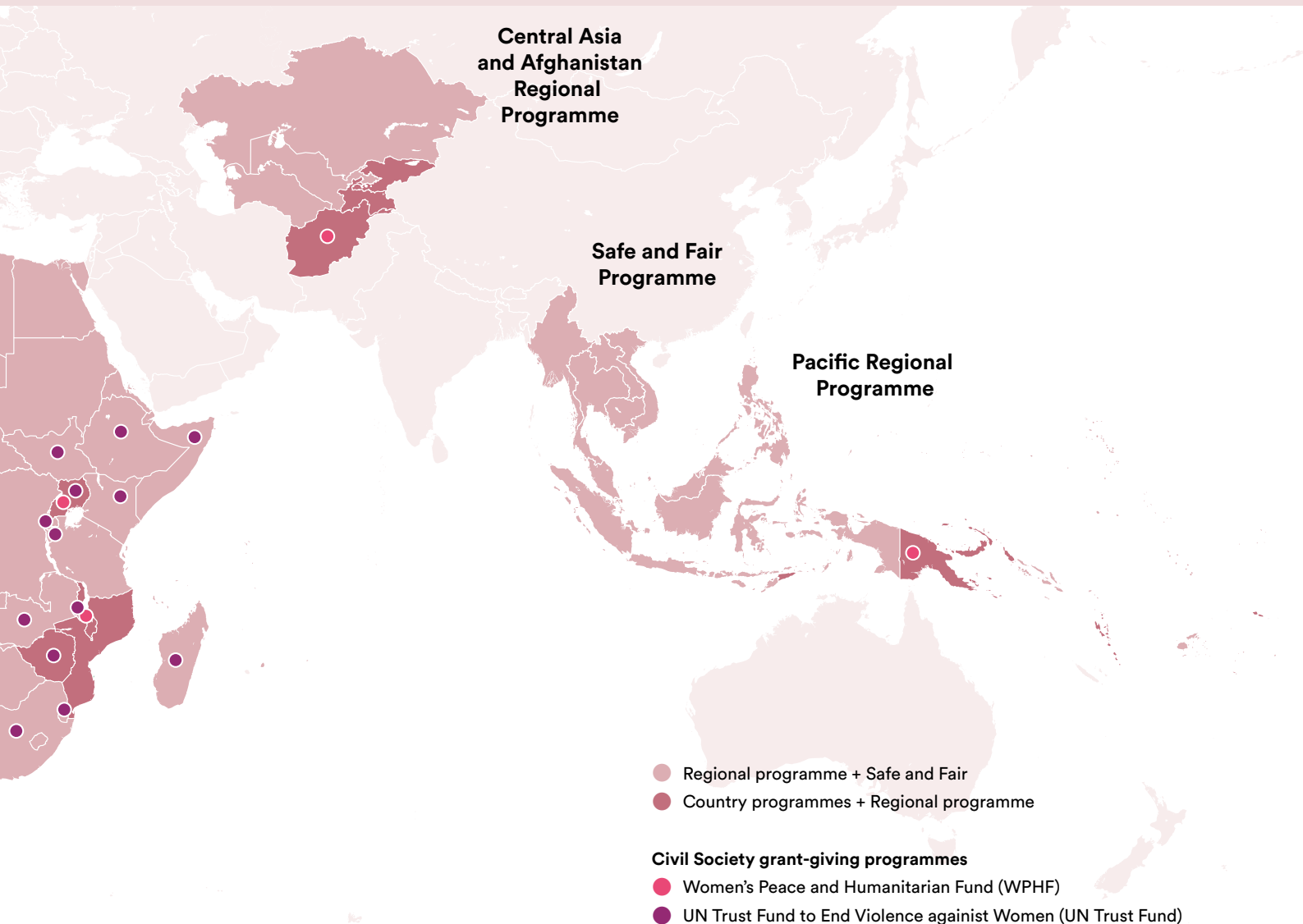
Countries reached through Spotlight Initiative's twenty six country programmes

30

Countries reached through Spotlight Initiative's two civil society grant giving programmes

66

The number of additional countries reached through Spotlight Initiative's five regional programmes + Safe and Fair



Pacific

Papua New Guinea	\$22.400.000
Samoa	\$4.142.857
Timor-Leste	\$14.142.857
Vanuatu	\$3.535.714
Pacific RP	\$8.845.687
WPHF — Papua New Guinea	\$2.000.000

Caribbean

Belize	\$3.535.714
Grenada	\$2.357.143
Guyana	\$5.285.714
Haiti	\$14.142.857
Jamaica	\$9.428.571
Trinidad and Tobago	\$5.285.714
Caribbean RP	\$11.771.548
WPHF — Haiti	\$2.000.000

Latin America

Argentina	\$7.714.286
Ecuador	\$2.900.000
El Salvador	\$10.285.714
Honduras	\$10.285.714
Mexico	\$9.000.000
Latin America RP	\$5.000.000
UN Trust Fund — Latin America	\$5.660.378

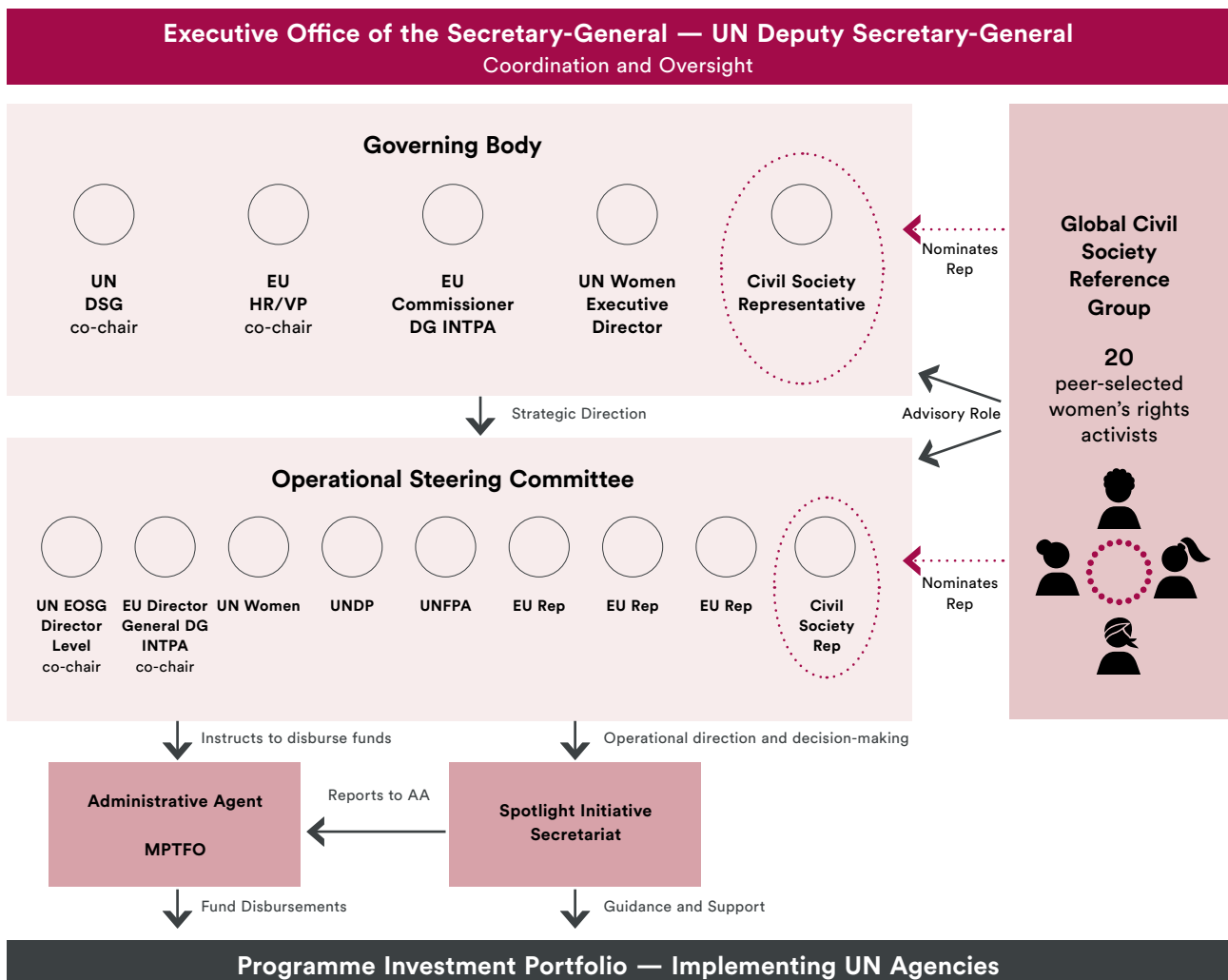
Global governance of the Fund consisted of two complementary tiers where programming and financial allocation decisions were made: the Governing Body and the Operational Steering Committee (OSC) as depicted in the figure below. The Executive Office of the Secretary-General, under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General, oversaw and coordinated Spotlight Initiative, while the Administrative Agent (AA) administered the Fund. The Fund Secretariat facilitates the implementation of the Fund’s programme portfolio across Recipient UN Organisations. Overall, this structure helped ensure effective oversight and decision-making, and allowed for efficient programming and quality assurance.

Civil society, including feminist and women’s rights organizations, maintained meaningful participation and membership in Spotlight Initiative’s global governance bodies (with members nominated to the Governing Body and the Operational Steering Committee from the Civil Society Global Reference Group, as depicted below).²⁹

Over the course of implementation, fostering true, meaningful partnership with civil society remained a key priority. To that end, and in response to demands from feminist and women’s rights groups and the Civil Society Global Reference Group in 2018, civil society’s role within the Governing Body — the Fund’s

29. More information on civil society’s specific role in governance [can be found here](#), while [Spotlight Initiative’s Operations Manual Compendium](#) provides additional details on the Fund’s governance more generally.

Global-Level Governance Structure



Programme-Level Governance Structure



highest tier of governance — shifted from observer to full member, and remained as such throughout implementation. Similarly, members of the Operational Steering Committee of the Fund formally agreed to add a self-nominated representative of the Civil Society Global Reference Group to its membership in December 2019. Following this decision, OSC membership included a civil society representative with full voting rights. The Initiative's flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances, needs and demands, and to continually reassess how to best partner with civil society has been instrumental to achieving sustainable impact and results and building ownership across a variety of stakeholders.

National and Regional Steering Committees — the governance mechanism at programme level — were established to provide strategic direction and oversight, and to help facilitate coordination among stakeholders. National and Regional Steering Committees included civil society representation. Selected through the Civil Society Reference Groups at national and regional levels (as depicted below), this approach to governance helped facilitate more meaningful engagement of civil society in decision-making (and across the programming cycle, more generally). The graphic below provides an overview of the programme-level governance structures, with additional details available [in previous years' Spotlight Initiative Global Annual Reports](#).



© Aboubacar Magagi.

Spotlight Initiative's Global Secretariat has played a critical, cross-functional role in ensuring effective Fund and programme management and implementation, supporting programmes' efforts to drive transformational results. The Fund Secretariat works across complementary and mutually reinforcing areas — including operations, management, coordination, technical coherence, civil society engagement, monitoring, evaluation, reporting, knowledge management, and communications — in order to provide robust support to programme delivery and ensure high-quality interventions.

4.2

DRIVING UN REFORM: CONVENING THE UN SYSTEM TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Multilateral partnerships are at the heart of Spotlight Initiative. Together with its whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach to partnerships (detailed further below), the Initiative's groundbreaking results have been underpinned by its unique model of integrated programming, which brings together the whole UN system in a One UN approach — under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator in-country — to end violence against women and girls. This approach has helped harmonize coordination across United Nations Country Teams, capitalize on existing resources and capacity, and streamline operational processes for strengthened delivery. It has catalysed a shift from disconnected, small-scale projects, towards large-scale, cohesive programming to end violence against women and girls, bringing the United Nations and others together under a common approach. As described further in [Chapter 5](#), deepened collaboration and coherence across the UN in programming helps ensure more coherent, coordinated programmes that generate greater impact for women and girls.

4.2.1

Global-Level Collaboration

Spotlight Initiative ensures regular engagements among key stakeholders to drive progress in ending violence against women and girls at the global and programme level (detailed below). At the highest level globally, the Heads of Agencies of implementing UN organizations met biannually with the Deputy Secretary-General to discuss overall direction, align strategies, assess implementation outcomes, and explore opportunities for sustainable partnerships and resource mobilization. The Deputy Secretary-General also met annually with Resident Coordinators from Spotlight Initiative programme countries and regions to discuss the importance of a responsive, contextualised, UN Wide approach to ending gender-based violence and national-level ownership for sustainability.

As a model fund for UN Reform, Spotlight Initiative promotes a more coordinated way of delivering programmes. For stronger alignment with UN Reform principles, global level coordination with the Development Coordination Office (DCO) also took place. DCO provides guidance, and support to Resident Coordinators and UN country teams more broadly on the implementation of the UN Reform. High level coordination with DCO ensured that Spotlight Initiative country and regional teams leveraged efficiency tools for cost-effectiveness and quality through joint operational processes, mutual recognition between agencies' policies, procedures and operational mechanisms, use of common services in procurement, finance, and information and communication technology, in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Unified programmatic and operational decision-making approaches were ensured across Recipient UN Organizations at the Director's level with frequent meetings that focused on the varied needs and challenges of Spotlight Initiative programmes. Coordination at this level allowed for oversight on implementation (including progress and bottlenecks), quality programming (including as the Initiative's programmes moved into their second phase under the current portfolio), and quick programming and operational adaptations to address evolving socio-political events, and rapidly changing contexts (due to crisis and emergencies).

Working together in the spirit of UN Reform, Spotlight Initiative's agency focal points convened monthly throughout the years, as well. Agency focal points are headquarter-level representatives of each Recipient UN Organization, covering both technical and operational or managerial issues. Frequent inter-agency discussions at global level (through the agency focal points system) has facilitated communication and information management across UN agencies and Spotlight programmes, ensured swift troubleshooting, improved efficiency in implementation, and enhanced the quality of technical programming. This engagement of agency focal points underscores a commitment to knowledge sharing and scaling up best practices to drive success across country and regional programmes.

In addition to regular standing meetings, agency focal points engaged together through



other United Nations groups, including within the United Nations Headquarters Knowledge Management Group on Ending Violence against Women and Girls. Spotlight Initiative leads this group, which identifies opportunities for inter-agency collaboration on knowledge management and improves knowledge and evidence uptake across the whole United Nations system on efforts to end gender-based violence.³⁰ More details on the critical collaboration among UN agencies implementing Spotlight programmes at the country and regional level in the spirit of UN Reform is found in the section just below.

4.2.2 Programme-Level Collaboration

As noted above, under Spotlight Initiative, United Nations agencies work jointly in the spirit of UN Reform, fostering deep inter-

agency coordination at country and regional levels and demonstrating the UN’s efforts to ensure it is fit for purpose and delivers quality programming to end violence against women and girls. By fostering a One UN approach — including by capitalising on the expertise and comparative advantage of each UN agency — Spotlight Initiative has helped catalyse coherent, system-wide support to efforts to end violence against women and girls.

The Initiative places UN Resident Coordinators at the centre of programme leadership and oversight as impartial, independent, and empowered leaders of UN Country Teams championing an integrated way of working that better supports coherence, accountability, and greater impact in efforts to end violence against women and girls. At programme level, Spotlight Initiative is implemented by a context-specific assortment of 11 Recipient UN Organisations, selected by UN Resident Coordinators to

30. While membership of the group has at times changed, knowledge management focal points from the following entities have been involved over the years: International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).



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ensure the right mix of thematic expertise and capacity to address violence against women and girls in each particular country or region. These are: the International Labour Organization (**ILO**), International Organization for Migration (**IOM**), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (**OHCHR**), Pan American Health Organization and World Health Organization (**PAHO/WHO**), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (**UN Women**), United Nations Development Programme (**UNDP**), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**), United Nations Population Fund (**UNFPA**), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (**UNHCR**), United Nations Children’s Fund (**UNICEF**) and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (**UNODC**).

In working with and through **ILO**, for instance, Spotlight Initiative has been able to leverage the agency’s mandate to promote social justice

and international human and labour rights, and champion decent work for women and men equally, to strengthen protections for migrant workers, promote gender-responsive services and advocate for women’s human rights. Similarly, working with **IOM** has allowed the Initiative to uphold the rights of migrants, refugees and displaced persons, while addressing the linkages between migration and economic, social and cultural development. Likewise, **OHCHR’s** work to promote and protect human rights for all and prevent continuation of human rights violations, has added value to the Initiative’s approach and strengthened its impact, while leveraging **PAHO/WHO’s** mandate has buttressed work to strengthen health systems and deliver high-quality essential services.

UN Women’s mandate—to champion women and girls rights and equal participation in all aspects of life, and achieve gender equality—has been at the heart of to the Initiative’s success,

by improving programming, supporting work with governments and civil society to effectively implement inclusion standards, and positioning gender equality as fundamental to achieving the SDGs, including SDG 13 on climate action. This has been similarly pivotal for supporting women's movements across programme countries and regions, as well as placing women's civil society organizations at the centre of efforts. Moreover, by capitalizing on **UNDP's** mandate, Spotlight Initiative has strengthened data collection capacities and availability, built resilient institutions and promoted gender equality, yielding stronger, cross-cutting results across the SDGs. Additionally, **UNESCO's** focus on quality education, respectful dialogue and building a culture of peace and sustainable development has enabled Spotlight Initiative to create and strengthen knowledge exchange forums, address harmful behaviours and practices, raise awareness and support prevention efforts on violence against women and girls that promote healthy social norms and behaviours.

Similarly, **UNFPA's** knowledge and expertise on responding addressing sexual and reproductive health and rights, and responding to data, population and family planning needs have strengthened access to sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls, reinforced comprehensive sexuality education, promoted women's rights and raised awareness of gender based violence across the countries and regions in which the Initiative works. **UNHCR's** established capacities on providing protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees comparably strengthened Spotlight Initiative's work in refugee camps and with groups of forcibly displaced populations, furthering empowerment of survivors, social protection and violence prevention. In parallel, **UNICEF's** expertise in advocating for the protection of children's rights and ensuring their basic needs are met have allowed for expanded access to essential services and education for girls, promoted stronger policies for child survivors, helped efforts to prevent GBV and child marriage, among others. Likewise, capitalizing on **UNODC's** mandate on crime prevention and criminal justice has enabled Spotlight Initiative to strengthen capacities of police and justice

officials to promote access to justice for women survivors of violence, strengthen referral systems, and expand access to essential services.

In addition to the 11 Recipient UN Organisations, Spotlight Initiative brings together any number of 13 associated agencies.³¹ Associated agencies work collaboratively with Recipient UN Organisations in varying combinations to address specific gender-based violence needs within the context of each country or region. Associated agencies include a number of Recipient UN Organisations (specifically, UN Women, UNESCO, UNHCR, OHCHR, PAHO/WHO, and IOM, who partner as associated agencies in certain contexts and as Recipient UN Organisations in others), as well as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (**ECLAC**), the Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (**OCHA**), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (**UNAIDS**), the United Nations Information Centres (**UNIC**), the World Food Programme (**WFP**) and **Global Pulse**. Associated agencies' technical expertise, existing partnerships, and specific mandates are leveraged to advance a whole-of-UN System approach that has been critical to the Initiative's effectiveness and results.

Spotlight Initiative has demonstrated the synergistic effects of a whole-of-UN approach to ending violence against women and girls, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, leveraging UN agencies' comparative advantages and expertise has allowed for leaner, more efficient programming with greater cohesiveness, expanded reach, stronger accountability and deeper, more coordinated work across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace pillars. UN Resident Coordinators also support partners' work and joint, whole-of-society collaboration, including with government leaders, European Union Heads of Delegation, civil society, traditional and religious leaders, the donor community, and the private sector, among others. For specific examples of how aligning to UN Reform has led to strengthened programming over the years, see [Chapter 5](#) on results and [Chapter 6](#) on lessons learned.

31. Recipient UN agencies (RUNOs) and "associated agencies" work collaboratively together in varying combinations to address specific needs within the context of each country or region. Of the 13 associated agencies, UN Women, UNESCO, UNHCR, OHCHR, PAHO/WHO, IOM also act as Recipient United Nations Organizations in some Spotlight Initiative programmes (e.g. UNESCO is an associated agency in some programmes while in others it is a Recipient United Nations Organization).

4.3 WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY APPROACH: PARTNERING MEANINGFULLY ACROSS STAKEHOLDERS TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Spotlight Initiative has brought together a range of stakeholders — government and regional bodies, civil society, community leaders, faith leaders, and media, among others — under a common, locally driven approach to end violence against women and girls. The Initiative’s commitment to a whole-of-society approach has cultivated national ownership and leadership, ensuring that efforts to end gender-based violence are prioritized in all spheres, and programming is responsive to diverse contexts and communities. Additionally, in some programmes, the Initiative helped foster collaborative relationships where none had been previously established. A brief summary below details how Spotlight Initiative has worked with these different partners, and why those partnerships mattered. Additional details on the added value and significance of the Initiative’s strategic partnerships can be found in [Chapter 5](#) on results (including in the Good Practice text boxes featured throughout the chapter).

4.3.1 Global-Level Partnerships

Since its inception, Spotlight Initiative has fostered a wide range of meaningful partnerships at the global level, including with the European Union, the Group of Friends for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls, the Generation Equality Forum, the Initiative’s Global Advocates and Champions, UN Foundation, the Social Good Club, and RISE. A short description of these partnerships appears below, with a more detailed description (inclusive of their strategic significance) appearing in [Chapter 5](#), [Chapter 6](#) and [Chapter 7](#).

The foundational partnership: The United Nations and the European Union

The European Union made a historic investment in Spotlight Initiative and has been a key partner over the years in driving change and supporting efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls. In terms of global governance, the European Union served as a key member of Spotlight Initiative’s Governing Body and Operational Steering Committee. The Deputy Secretary-General and European Union Commissioner’s engaged participation in the Initiative’s Governing Bodies, alongside

UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and former High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy/ Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini at the high-level launch of Spotlight Initiative’s Latin America programmes in New York on 27 September 2018.



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other members, has set a strong foundation and vision for the Initiative. The European Union worked collaboratively with Spotlight Initiative's Secretariat to shape and monitor the strategic direction of the Initiative through the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG-INTPA).

At the programme level, the strong partnership between Spotlight Initiative programmes and EU Delegations fostered more effective, coherent programming and helped to build and deepen political will to end violence against women and girls at the highest levels of government. Spotlight Initiative's programme staff and EU Delegations worked closely on strategic planning, partnerships (including fostering non-traditional partnerships and advocating with governments), monitoring, and communications and visibility. Through this cooperative partnership, the Initiative's programmes were able to better collaborate with other European Union projects and networks, complementing existing initiatives (particularly at the community level) to end violence against women and girls and avoid duplicative efforts.

Group of Friends for Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls (Group of Friends) and Generation Equality Forum (GEF)

The Group of Friends — initiated by the EU in 2020 — was established in response to the

COVID-19 pandemic and the [UN Secretary-General's calls for action](#) to address rising levels of violence against women and girls. The Group of Friends met to share lessons learned, promote collective advocacy, mobilize resources and improve cooperation to end violence against women and girls. Aligned with the [Generation Equality Forum's Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence](#) and, as of December 2023, the Group of Friends counted 96 Member States and Observers among its ranks, up from 78 at its inception. Over the years, Spotlight Initiative has collaborated closely with the Generation Equality Forum (GEF), particularly with the Action Coalition on ending Gender-Based Violence, as well. Spotlight Initiative's partnerships with the Group of Friends and the Generation Equality Forum help raise global awareness and visibility on the importance of ending violence against women and girls in and of itself, and to progress on sustainable development and peace.

Champions

Actor Cecilia Suarez and Rugby Union star Siya Kolisi both raise awareness of violence against women and girls and the Initiative's work as UN Global Advocates for Spotlight Initiative. Other Champions include actors, singers, social media influencers, and celebrities, who use their platforms to speak out against harmful social norms and to challenge gender stereotypes.

UN Foundation

The [WithHer Fund](#) was launched in December 2021 by Spotlight Initiative and the UN Foundation to drive flexible funding to local, grassroots and women-led civil society organizations working to end violence against women and girls in their communities.

Social Good Club

The Social Good Club is a creative impact studio that brings together a network of social media content creators to reimagine the ways influencers tell stories and engage their audience. The Social Good Club has an extensive roster of digital influencers who spark conversations around violence against women and girls with online audiences, significantly expanding the reach of anti-violence messages.

RISE

Spotlight Initiative continued its partnership with RISE, a human rights organization founded by Amanda Nguyen, to host high-profile exhibits in the United Nations visitors' centre in New York and the Salle de Glaces, Brussels Parliament. The exhibition entitled "[What were you wearing?](#)" invited United Nations visitors and diplomats to observe the outfits worn by more than 100 survivors of sexual violence at the time of their attacks to draw attention to the stigma and barriers survivors face in accessing justice.

4.3.2

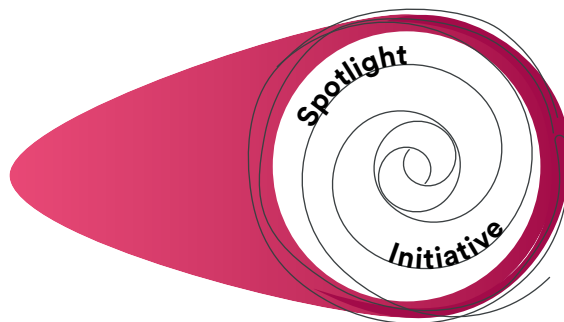
Programme-Level Partnerships

As noted throughout this report, Spotlight Initiative has modelled a whole-of-society approach to ending violence against women and girls, with the Initiative's partnerships driving transformative results. Spotlight Initiative has fostered United Nations collaboration with a wide range of partners, including national (and local and regional) government, ministries, heads of state, national institutions, civil society, the private sector, media, and traditional and faith-based leaders under a common approach aligned to national and local priorities and needs. By increasing the number of people, groups, institutions, and changemakers committed to ending violence against women and girls across all levels of society [through a social ecological model](#), the Initiative has delivered





Collaboratively partnering for outsized impact



- HEAD OF STATE
- GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES
- NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
- LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS
- CIVIL SOCIETY
- TRADITIONAL AND FAITH BASED LEADERS
- THE PRIVATE SECTOR
- MEDIA
- ACADEMIA
- OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

more responsive programming, fostered deeper sustainability, and amplified impact. A description of each partnership's significance is provided below, with concrete examples of the critical role these multi-stakeholder and multisectoral partnerships have played in efforts to end gender-based violence detailed in [Chapter 5](#).

Government

Spotlight Initiative programmes collaborated with government at various levels, facilitating coordination for improved prevention and response at national, district, and local levels. Engagement with government — including at its highest levels — has allowed Spotlight Initiative to raise the political visibility of the issue, build political will, and create opportunities to use national platforms to increase awareness, share key messages, and accelerate social norm change to end violence against women and girls. By working closely with government, the Initiative fostered a more enabling environment to address violence against women and girls, including through the development and implementation of policies, laws, frameworks, and national action plans, and the allocation of national resources in national budgets. Sustained partnership with government has also led to increased civic space for civil society, and has encouraged further dialogue between civil society and government. Across the Initiative's programmes, governments co-chaired the National Steering Committees together with UN Resident Coordinators, and played a pivotal role in ensuring national ownership and long-term sustainability.

Ministries

Spotlight Initiative has engaged at the ministerial level across its programmes, including with

the ministries of Social and Community Development, Housing, Gender Affairs, Legal Affairs, Health, Finance, Budget and Planning, Economic Development, and Central Statistics, among others. By partnering closely with a range of ministries, the Initiative has helped promote inter-sectoral collaboration, strengthen capacity, and support national development planning. Ministry representatives frequently co-chair National Steering Committees on behalf of national governments, and support collaboration and coherence between government partners and UN Country Teams. Spotlight Initiative also assists with coordinating a whole-of-government approach to ending violence against women and girls by, for example, engaging with (or helping to establish) multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms (which include ministerial representatives). By working at the ministerial level, Spotlight Initiative has strengthened the capacity of policymakers and public administration employees to design, implement, and monitor gender-based violence policies and strategies and ensure they are adequately budgeted (through gender-responsive budgeting).

Other national institutions: the legislature, judiciary and parliament

Institutions and legislative bodies play a pivotal role in drafting, amending, adopting, and implementing laws informed by evidence and in line with international human rights standards. The work of national institutions is essential to reforming policies and practices, institutionalizing efforts to end violence against women and girls, protecting survivors and their rights, and addressing impunity. Spotlight Initiative has partnered with a range of national institutions, including with legislatures, parliaments, and

judiciaries to create laws to address gender-based violence, protect the human rights of women and girls, and ensure access to justice for survivors. Working together with national institutions has allowed Spotlight Initiative to contribute to ensuring the adoption and enforcement of gender-responsive policies and programmes, including those focused on child marriage, female genital mutilation, femicide, divorce, labour rights, the rights of migrants, child custody, sexual and reproductive health and rights, access to services, and inheritance, among others.

Private sector

Spotlight Initiative engages with the private sector as a strategic partner to promote gender equality and address gender-based violence (aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 17).³² The private sector, including entrepreneurs and companies, can play an important role in preventing, responding to and ending violence against women and girls and discrimination by, for example, developing organizational evidence-based practices to address and prevent violence against women and girls, labour rights violations, and sexual harassment in the workplace. By engaging with the private sector and in workplaces, Spotlight Initiative has been able to reach more marginalized or isolated women, who may have more restricted contact with others outside of work.

Media

Spotlight Initiative partnered extensively with the media as well as arts and culture organizations to increase awareness of healthy gender norms and broaden knowledge of women's and girls' rights. Working with the media provided the opportunity to amplify messages to raise awareness in preventing and eliminating gender-based violence. By partnering with the media and cultural organizations, Spotlight Initiative campaigns reached a wide audience with targeted messaging on the benefits of gender equality for an entire society. Partnering with the media also provided the opportunity to run targeted behavioural-change campaigns for diverse populations, and strengthen gender-responsive coverage in media outlets, a critical entry point to ensure violence against women and girls is reported through a survivor-centred approach.

Traditional and faith-based leaders

Spotlight Initiative's programmes have frequently partnered with faith-based and traditional leaders who hold a unique position of power and leadership within communities. These leaders are often trusted and highly respected within their communities. They often play a vital role in shaping cultural, social, economic, and political norms and, as such, are powerful agents of social change, able to coordinate

32. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SDG 17 focused on global partnership as critical to the mobilization of diverse financial and in-kind resources from various sources, including the private sector.



and execute large-scale social action. Spotlight Initiative has partnered with traditional, faith and opinion leaders by engaging them in spaces of dialogue to promote gender-equitable norms and attitudes and to raise awareness on the issue of violence against women and girls. By supporting partnerships, coalition building, and joint advocacy among groups of traditional and faith-based leaders, Spotlight Initiative has scaled efforts to address violence against women and girls and end harmful practices, including child marriage and female genital mutilation.

Academia

Spotlight Initiative actively collaborated with academia and research institutes to advocate for the establishment of specialized learning centres, gender-equitable curricula, and public policy programmes focused on training policymakers to develop inclusive and non-discriminatory policies and frameworks. Universities and research bodies play a vital role in driving research and developing evidence-based approaches to eliminate violence against women and girls, by improving the collection, analysis, use and quality of data on violence against women and girls. Spotlight Initiative worked alongside academic institutions to deliver capacity-building workshops and training to other partners to end gender-based violence, improving their knowledge and skills in order to develop effective interventions and response strategies. The Initiative also worked with universities to develop gender-responsive policies on university campuses and other sites of learning, including policies that address sexual harassment and rape. These help to create more inclusive educational environments, provide support to survivors, and foster a culture of respect and nondiscrimination.

Civil society and independent women's funds

Partnerships with civil society, and with local and grassroots organizations and women's and feminist organizations and movements in particular, are at the heart of Spotlight Initiative's model and underpins the Initiative's Theory of Change. This partnership is critical to ensuring the Initiative's programming "leaves no one behind". Since its inception, Spotlight Initiative has worked to centre civil society in all its efforts: civil society

organizations were engaged in the Initiative's governance and decision-making, in programming and implementation, and in monitoring the impact of Spotlight Initiative's programmes to better deliver for women and girls. Evidence also shows that collaborating with independent women's funds — as Spotlight Initiative has — not only ramps up progress but also helps channel vital resources to feminist and women's organizations.³³ This partnership is further detailed below in Section 4.4, with more detailed information on the funding to, and strategic significance of, this critical partnership with civil society in [Chapter 5](#).

4.4

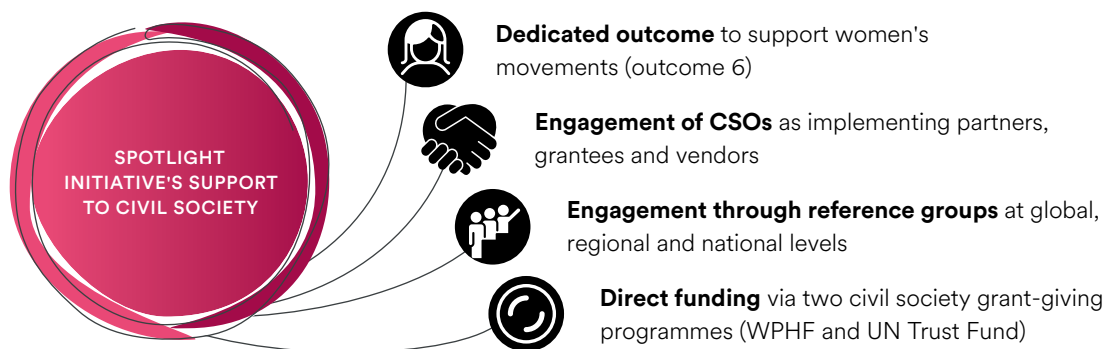
A DEEPER DIVE: THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

Spotlight Initiative's collaboration with civil society, and with local groups and women's rights and feminist organizations in particular, is grounded in robust evidence. [Research](#) and practice have shown that a vibrant civil society — which has, specifically, the presence of autonomous feminist and women's rights organizations and movements within it — is pivotal in driving forward progressive policy changes to end violence against women and girls. Ending violence against women and girls also necessitates that those at the forefront of efforts to end gender-based violence in their communities are at the centre of programming. Intimately familiar with local needs and contexts (and how they evolve), and having developed long-standing, trust-based relationships, these actors are best



© Spotlight Initiative Papua New Guinea.

33. Dalberg (2022) "[Imperative to Invest: How addressing violence against women and girls today reduces violence over time, fosters peace & stability, and supports people reach full potential, all of which advances us towards the SDGs](#)".



placed to address violence against women and girls (in all their diversities) in their communities.

As noted above, Spotlight Initiative has partnered meaningfully with civil society since its inception (across governance, programming, advocacy, and monitoring, for example), recognizing and valuing the expertise and experience of feminist and women's rights organizations and others to place the diverse needs of communities at the forefront of the response. To do this, the Initiative invests in civil society through a twin-track approach: directly through Pillar 6, focused on supporting autonomous women's movements; and through mainstreamed support and partnership across all other pillars of the programme.

rights-based approach to funding. Motivated by [18 feminist recommendations](#),³⁵ Spotlight Initiative set ambitious funding targets to ensure funding reached civil society and, in particular, local women's rights organizations working to end violence against women and girls. Representing a departure from more conventional development paradigms, Spotlight Initiative has worked to disrupt the existing funding landscape, channelling flexible funding (and rebalancing decision-making power) toward grassroots and local women's organizations and movements. Early on, Spotlight Initiative developed the "[Spotlight Grassroots Action Plan](#)," which details why funding these groups matters, and offers Spotlight Initiative country and regional teams concrete strategies to ensure more and better funding to local groups.

4.4.1 Funding to Civil Society

Despite their pivotal role, women's rights organizations and autonomous feminist movements continue to face severe and persistent underfunding. Studies show that [less than 1 per cent of gender-focused aid](#) from governments is directed towards autonomous women's rights organizations and institutions, with a mere 4 per cent of total bilateral aid dedicated to advancing gender equality as a primary objective.³⁴ [Less than 1 per cent of aid spending targets gender-based violence.](#)

Spotlight Initiative is committed to bridging this resource gap by adopting an inclusive and

Spotlight Initiative's funding to civil society has been bolstered through its partnerships with the **United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women** and the **Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund**. As a result, Spotlight Initiative channelled almost half of its programmatic funding to civil society organizations, reaching a diversity of groups, including particularly national and local women's organizations. Tracking this funding has allowed Spotlight Initiative to hold itself accountable, and showcase the transformative impact of robustly funding civil society, including feminist and women's rights groups. A total of 15 per cent of Spotlight Initiative programmes' activity funds³⁶ (USD 48.5 million) have been allocated to Pillar 6, successfully reaching the

34. UN Women report "[Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, the gender snapshot 2023](#)".

35. Developed in 2018 by over 600 feminist and women's rights advocates and shared with Spotlight Initiative by the Count Me In! Consortium (CMI!).

36. This ranges from 18 per cent in Central Asia to 12 per cent in Latin America. This figure does not include the Safe and Fair programme in the ASEAN region given its different programmatic structure, nor the UN Trust Fund and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund programmes. If the UN Trust Fund and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund programmes, which allocate their entire activity costs to Pillar 6, are included, the overall amount for Pillar 6 is USD 85.3 million, or 23 per cent of the overall activity costs.

top end of the Initiative’s target (10-15 per cent). This funding helped strengthen the resilience of organizations, and their ability to continue this important work. A deeper analysis of the funding to civil society and the results of this pivotal partnership are presented in [Chapter 5](#).

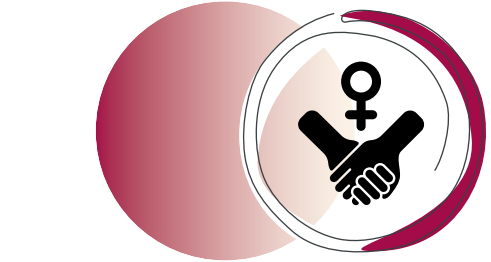
4.4.2

Meaningful Engagement in Governance

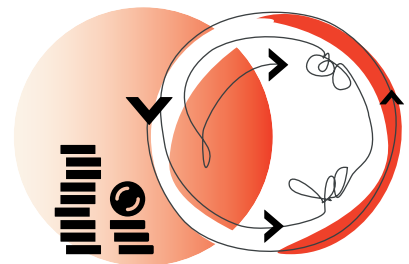
Civil society representatives, including those representing groups facing intersecting forms of discrimination,³⁷ have shaped Spotlight Initiative from its beginning, holding it accountable and advising the Initiative on how to reach its transformative aspirations. To ensure meaningful partnership with civil society and women’s movements, Spotlight Initiative has engaged with civil society through its governance mechanisms and in its monitoring in order to hold the Initiative accountable for its commitments.

Civil Society Reference Groups were established at global, regional, and national levels to ensure civil society engagement throughout the programme cycle. Reference groups engaged diverse women’s rights and feminist activists as well as subject-matter experts and groups representing marginalized communities. The Civil Society Reference Groups had a triple mandate: 1) to advise on programme implementation; 2) to advocate for the realization of the Initiative’s objectives, and 3) to hold the Initiative accountable for its commitments. Civil Society Reference Group members were also represented as full members in governance structures and decision-making bodies on National and Regional Steering Committees and, at the global level, the Global Operational Steering Committee and the Governing Body.

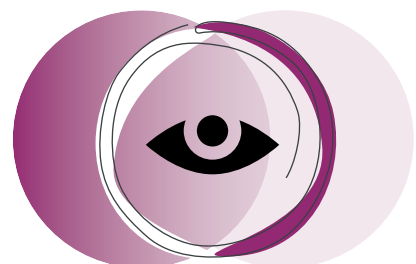
Over the duration of the Initiative, the Secretariat of Spotlight Initiative, together with Civil Society Reference Group members, developed concrete guidance [on engaging Civil Society Reference Group members](#) in governance, as well as in workplan development and budgeting. To fulfill this critical role and ensure meaningful



Participation of civil society and intersectional feminist movements in governance, decision making and programming



Funding mechanisms and the **disbursement of funds** to feminist organizations and networks



Implementation **integrating the perspectives** of feminist activists and constituency-led organizations

engagement, Civil Society Reference Groups (together with the Initiative’s programme staff) developed costed workplans. These workplans helped ensure the autonomy of Civil Society Reference Groups to define their priorities and

37. These include, but are not limited to, women and girls living in rural communities, women and girls from ethnic minorities and indigenous communities, women and girls who are survivors of violence, women and girls living with HIV/AIDS, LGBTIQ+ persons, women and girls living with disabilities, sex workers, domestic and informal workers, women of diverse sexual orientations, and gender diverse people.

“The Civil Society Reference Group structure and the network we have built that connects the National, Regional, and Global Reference Groups is something we are proud of. The implementation and support for such a structure remains to be improved, but having a diverse body of experts from the women’s movements to advise, monitor, and hold a huge UN initiative accountable for its programming is a huge innovation that has come out of Spotlight Initiative.

This deep engagement that includes influence over our own terms of reference, the creation of our own workplans and embedded financial support for these advocacy actions is a radical move — to recognize that our criticisms and recommendations are not a threat, nor a risk, but an opportunity for the Initiative to keep getting better and better should be a standard for how any UN programming should be engaging with civil society; especially in contentious spaces like in climate justice, education, etc.”

Shamah Bulangis,
Civil Society Global Reference Group member and
representative to the Operational Steering Committee



© Spotlight Initiative Latin America Regional Programme.

engage in relevant activities. Since the launch of the Initiative, their supported budgets have totalled USD 2,916,717.³⁸ An additional USD 250,000 was also allocated to the Civil Society Global Reference Group for their budgeted workplan. Over the years, the Global Reference Group engaged in a range of strategic work, including advocacy, attending relevant gatherings (such as Women Deliver, the Commission on the Status of Women, and UN General Assembly), and coordinated the expansive, global Spotlight 2.0 civil society organization co-design process (described further below, and in [Chapter 8](#)).

Spotlight Initiative Secretariat also took stock of the implementation of the [Guidance Note on Civil Society Reference Group Compensation](#) and supported programmes as they embarked on this new and innovative way of compensating civil society partners. As a result of the guidance note, seven Civil Society Reference Groups³⁹ operationalized the compensation modality. A critical learning has emerged: Spotlight Initiative Secretariat found that programmes that compensate reference group members for travel and data costs related to their work on the Civil Society Reference Group, had, on the whole, the most active reference groups. Compensation helped members feel their work and expertise were valued. Members

who were compensated also felt they had sufficient time to deliver the workplan, including time to properly review documents, provide advice, and conduct monitoring visits (critical to fulfilling their advisory role, and their ability to hold the Initiative accountable).

4.4.3 Civil Society Reference Groups: Monitoring for Accountability

As mentioned in [previous Spotlight Initiative global and programme annual reports](#), the [Count Me In! Consortium](#) and several members of Civil Society Reference Groups collectively developed a [Civil Society Monitoring Toolkit](#). This toolkit allows for independent monitoring and reporting by civil society on the Initiative's contributions, which is critical to the legitimacy and relevance of Spotlight Initiative. On the initiative of the Civil Society Global Reference Group, the toolkit was updated and simplified for the Civil Society National Reference Group and the Civil Society Regional Reference Group to allow for adaptability to varied contexts and to implement it more easily. Over the duration of Spotlight Initiative, ten [Advocacy Scorecards](#) were developed and shared by the Civil Society National Reference Group

38. Civil Society Reference Group budget was USD 745,229 in 2021 and USD 2,171,488 in 2022.

39. These are: reference groups in the Caribbean region, Ecuador, Liberia, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uganda.

and the Civil Society Global Reference Group. The scorecards have highlighted how Spotlight Initiative has advanced meaningful engagement of, and funding to, civil society, despite complex United Nations procurement and finance processes, which often limit the accessibility of funds to diverse civil society organizations and constrain their ability to implement sustainability. Additionally, Civil Society Reference Group members across several Spotlight Initiative programmes actively participated in monitoring visits to learn about the work being done, and help ensure it responded to, and was aligned with, local needs. Participatory approaches to monitoring, evaluation and reporting, and the engagement of civil society within these processes, is further discussed in [Chapter 5](#).

4.4.4 Engaging with Civil Society for Future Programming

Civil Society Reference Groups have also been engaged in developing sustainability plans, helping ensure the gains the Initiative made collectively with partners continued, and seven of the Civil Society Reference Groups produced their own plan, with recommendations on how to sustain the reference group

mechanism into the future, including by evolving into an advisory civil society group for all United Nations gender programming.

The Civil Society Global Reference Group held its last in-person retreat in Abuja, Nigeria on 8-10 February 2023 to take stock of the progress made over the years and the accomplishments achieved. Members collectively decided to dedicate their last year of engagement to co-designing the structure of Spotlight Initiative 2.0. Supported by Spotlight Initiative Secretariat and coordinated by the Civil Society Global Reference Group, the co-design process began in March 2023 and engaged over 700 civil society representatives from all regions in monthly workshops and review processes conducted in English, French, and Spanish. At its inception, Spotlight Initiative was criticized by global civil society organizations for not meaningfully involving diverse civil society early enough in the process. This co-design process demonstrated the Initiative's commitment to continuously improving its engagement with civil society: this is important in and of itself (to ensure a rights based approach to programming) and (more meaningful, participatory engagement) fosters better programming and stronger, more sustainable results. More details on the co-design process — along [with the principles and actions it generated](#) — are shared in [Chapter 8](#).



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CHAPTER 5

SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE'S CUMULATIVE RESULTS — SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS MADE TOWARD ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS





© CDFU/Anne Gamurorwa.

This chapter opens with an overview of the funding allocations — including for civil society — for the first generation of Spotlight Initiative programmes. It then details the key results and achievements across each of the Initiative’s six pillars (or outcome areas), with “Good Practice” boxes featured under each pillar, offering a deeper look into specific results. The chapter concludes by describing some of the most significant challenges faced in the work to end violence against women and girls and the creative and adaptive measures Spotlight Initiative has taken to address them.

5.1 SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

5.1.1 Overall Funding Allocations

Overall, for the first generation of Spotlight Initiative programmes (which concluded at the end of 2023), Spotlight Initiative budgeted USD 506.9 million across its 26 country programmes, six regional programmes, including the Safe and Fair programme (within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)), and two Civil Society Grant-Giving Programmes, partnering with the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) for programmes in Africa and Latin America, and the Women’s Peace and

Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) for programmes in Afghanistan, Haiti, Papua New Guinea, and in several African countries.⁴⁰ This is captured in the global map presented in [Chapter 4](#), which highlights Spotlight Initiative’s programme portfolio and reach. Allocations by country and regional programme and other financial information is detailed in [Chapter 9](#) (the Consolidated Annual Financial Report for 2023).

Spotlight Initiative funding by outcome area

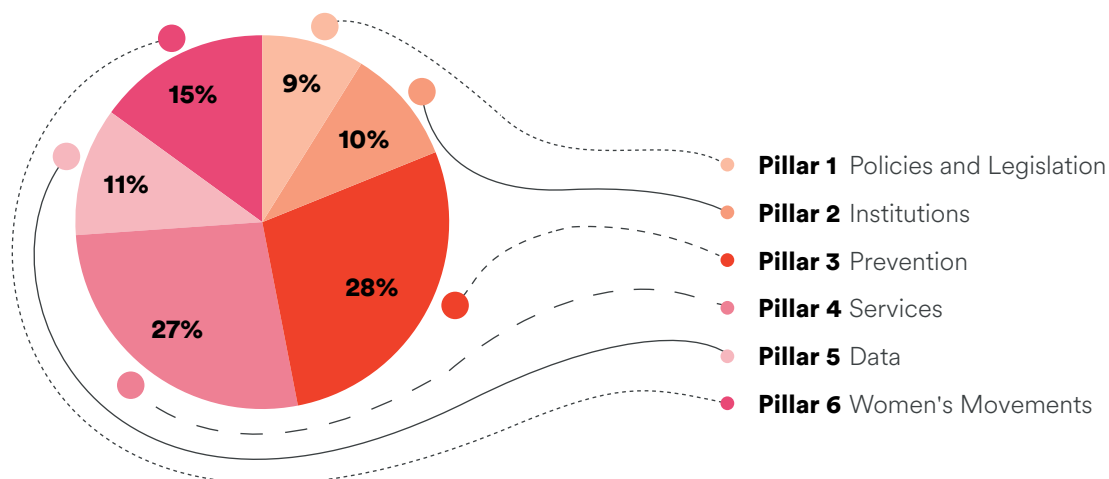
Spotlight Initiative invests across the six pillars of its comprehensive Theory of Change. Cumulatively, until the end of 2023, the Fund allocated the largest share of resources towards work on prevention, to address the underlying causes that perpetuate violence against women and girls, followed by investments in services, accessibility, availability, and quality.

40. Due to the context in Afghanistan from 2021-2023, this global report does not capture the work of Spotlight Initiative’s country programme in Afghanistan, or Spotlight Initiative’s partnership with WPHF in Afghanistan, though the contributions of both programmes over the years have been significant and impactful. For more information, please contact the UN Resident Coordinator Office in Afghanistan.

“I deeply value the vital role you as civil society play in supporting the United Nations. And I am determined to do everything I can to help you secure the resources you need. I am pleased that the Spotlight Initiative, in partnership with the European Union, has allocated USD 190 million to civil society organizations to help eliminate violence against women and girls.”

António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, remarks at the townhall meeting with civil society on the occasion of the 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Spotlight Initiative **global allocated investment by pillar** as of December 2023



The pie chart above illustrates the proportion of allocated investment across all six pillars.⁴¹ The third most significant area of allocation is Pillar 6, investing in civil society and women’s rights movements to amplify the advancements and complement the efforts made across the other five pillars.

5.1.2

Funding for Civil Society and Feminist and Women’s Rights Organizations

Resourcing the key drivers of change: Funding diverse civil society organizations

Since its inception, Spotlight Initiative has worked to fund a diversity of civil society

organizations, including particularly local and grassroots groups, by simplifying and adapting its processes to increase the flexibility and access to funds. Through its first portfolio of programmes, Spotlight Initiative achieved its commitment of delivering 30-50 per cent of programme funds through civil society organizations. Cumulatively, Spotlight Initiative programmes **delivered 49 per cent**, or about **USD 195 million**,⁴² of activity funds to civil society organizations, reaching the very top end of its target and exceeding the amount allocated (USD 192 million) for civil society in programme budgets. The methodology used to analyse Spotlight Initiative’s funding across civil society organizations can be found in [Annex C](#).⁴³

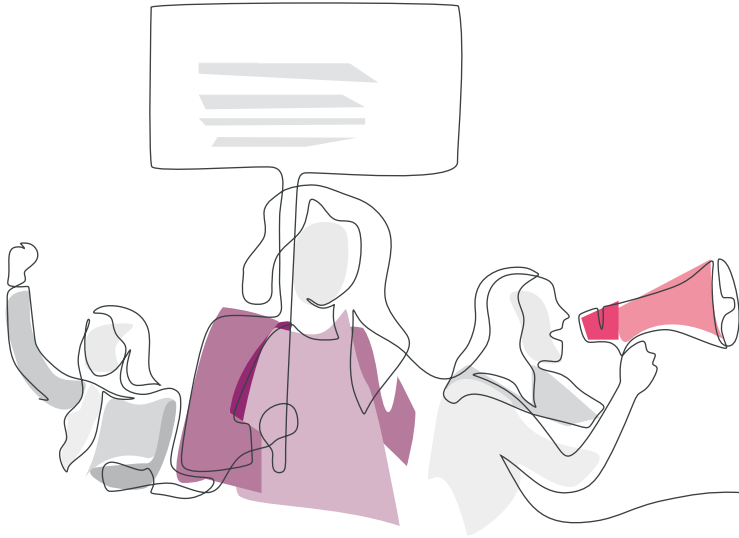
Through robust resourcing, Spotlight Initiative was able to support the work of civil society

41. Data comes from budgeted programme outcome costs (activity costs) in programme budgets. For programmes in Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, Argentina, Honduras, Mexico, Kyrgyzstan, Belize, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Caribbean Regional Programme, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Vanuatu, and Pacific Regional Programme, global OSC-approved phase I-II budgets were used for the analysis. For programmes in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, El Salvador, Latin America Regional Programme, Tajikistan, Central Asia and Afghanistan Regional Programme, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and Timor-Leste, the final phase I-II budgets approved by programme-level national/regional steering committees were used for the analysis. For Africa RP, Ecuador, and Afghanistan programmes, the global OSC-approved single-phase budgets were used for the analysis. The data does not include the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women and the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund, and the Safe and Fair programmes. With the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women and the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund programme activity budgets that are all allocated under Pillar 6, the distribution per programmatic pillar is as follows: Policies and Legislation: 8.2%, Institutions: 9.1%, Prevention: 25.3%, Services: 24.4%, Data: 9.9%, and Women’s Movements: 23.1%.

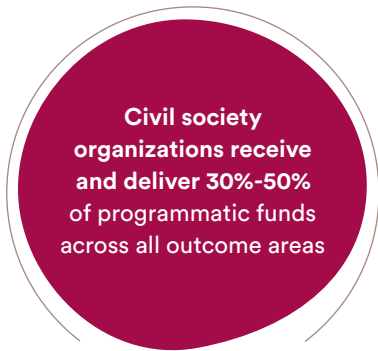
42. This includes USD 36.6 million delivered to CSOs by the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women and the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund.

43. Each year, country and regional programmes submit self-reported data on their formal funding-based partnerships with civil society organizations (that is, the civil society organizations contracted by a Recipient UN Organization as implementing partners, grantees or vendors of services). The reported data enables an analysis of how well the Initiative is meeting its targets on funding civil society, while also showcasing global and regional trends. The funding analysis presented here is cumulative from the start of the Spotlight Initiative to the end of the first portfolio of Spotlight Initiative programmes at the end of 2023, funded by the seed investment by the European Union, underscoring that funding commitments were for the programme as a whole, and in its entirety (and did not necessarily follow a linear or proportional increase year-to-year). The data presented here is as of December 2023, reported by May 2024, and while there may be minor updates in CSO funding reporting information in some programmes thereafter, these would not change the aggregated analysis or figures presented here in any meaningful way. The analysis presents funds “allocated” as funds budgeted and planned for civil society partners in a particular Spotlight Initiative programme and its budget. “Awarded” or “delivered” funds are any financial grant, contract, or partnership agreement legally signed with a civil society organization. The funds that are directly attributable to implementing the programme’s activities and budgeted under each of the 6 programmatic pillars in Spotlight Initiative programmes are referred to as “activity funds/costs” or “programme outcome costs”.

Civil Society **Funding Commitments**



Achieved **15%**



Achieved **49%**



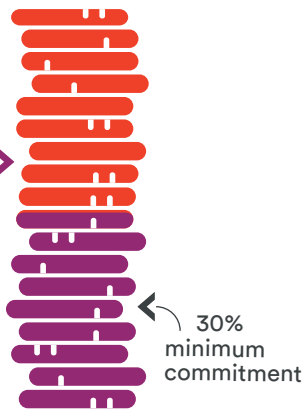
Achieved **10%**



Exceeded **78%**

USD 195 million delivered to **civil society organizations** as of 31 December 2023

(49% of activity funds)



and frontline organisations at the centre of efforts to end violence against women and girls and foster a context-driven approach. [Chapter 5.2](#) (including under Pillar 6) details how work carried out with civil society under the Initiative's mutually-reinforcing, comprehensive theory of change led to increased agency and

influence among civil society organizations, including through the use of social accountability mechanisms, more coordinated action to end violence, amplified impact of women's rights organisations, reinforced capacities of young feminist activists and youth-led networks, and strengthened movements. As a result of Spotlight Initiative interventions and as highlighted below, over **5,000 (5,187) local and grassroots women's rights organizations and relevant civil society organizations reported having more influence and improved ability to work on eliminating violence against women and girls.** Additional examples of the results achieved through this pivotal partnership across regions can be found across outcome areas.

Funding national, local and grassroots organizations

In line with the evidence, Spotlight Initiative recognizes that locally anchored civil society

Spotlight Initiative's **allocations to civil society**, cumulative as of 31 December 2023 (in US Dollars)

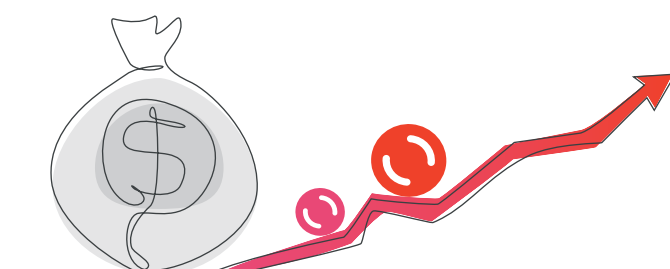
Region ⁴⁴	Overall funds allocated (budgeted) to civil society, in USD	Overall funds delivered (awarded) to civil society, in USD
Africa	\$ 83,729,092	\$ 94,998,905
Latin America	\$ 14,941,813	\$ 15,237,640
Pacific	\$ 16,639,395	\$ 14,455,647
Caribbean	\$ 14,873,317	\$ 14,179,311
Central Asia	\$ 15,084,840	\$ 12,766,314
UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund	\$ 36,796,862	\$ 36,624,526
Safe and Fair	\$ 9,818,535	\$ 6,854,877
Total	\$ 191,883,854	\$ 195,117,220

organizations and movements are best placed to reach marginalized groups and to pursue sustainable solutions to end violence against women and girls in their communities. They are also the most well-placed organizations to deliver relevant, responsive, and innovative programming. Demonstrating the Initiative's commitment to funding these organizations, Spotlight Initiative exceeded its target of delivering 50-70 per cent of civil society organization funding to national, local and grassroots organizations: of the funds delivered to civil society organizations, **78 per cent reached national, local and grassroots organizations**,⁴⁵ of which **USD 37 million, or 19 per cent of the total awarded amount, went**

directly to local and grassroots organizations.⁴⁶ **A total of 70 per cent was invested directly in women's organizations**, contributing to organizational resilience and sustained activism.

Spotlight Initiative intentionally worked at the programme level to simplify grant-making processes and expand its outreach in order to diversify its civil society partners and funding allocations. As a result, over the years, Spotlight Initiative programmes directed **33 per cent⁴⁷ of the delivered civil society funding to new partners that had not previously worked with the respective United Nations agency.**

Support to **grassroots organizations**



USD 37 million

directly awarded to local
and grassroots groups

as implementing partners, grantees
and vendors

44. The Safe and Fair programme within ASEAN is structured differently in its programmatic and budget arrangements, which do not reflect the standard Spotlight Initiative six programmatic pillars. This may affect comparability of data. Therefore, the programme is presented separately. Safe and Fair engages international, regional, and national CSO partners, including grassroots and community groups at the local level across the different countries in which it works.

45. In contrast, 7 per cent of the delivered funds were channelled to regional (multicountry) civil society organizations and 14 per cent to international civil society organizations.

46. See definition in the Methodology note included in Annex C.

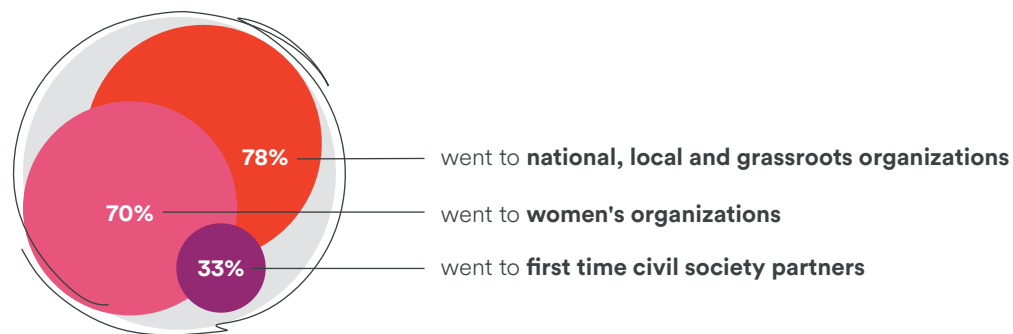
47. The relative decrease compared to previous years' data as presented in previous Spotlight Initiative Global Annual Reports is likely a result of programme teams reporting contractual engagement with CSOs that they have cooperated with in previous years of the Spotlight Initiative programmes as "existing", even though they are "new" in the context of the full programme duration, i.e. the UN has not worked with the CSOs before the Spotlight Initiative programme began.





CSO KUP Women for Peace in attendance at the in-person workshop facilitated by WPHF and support of the Spotlight Initiative, on gender-sensitive and feminist monitoring, evaluation and reporting in PNG in September 2022. All 14 CSOs attended the three day participatory workshop. © 2022 WPHF/Erica Stillo.

Of the
USD 195 million
delivered to CSOs



Sub-granting and subcontracting

Sub-granting and subcontracting are effective ways of expanding grassroots outreach by the United Nations, allowing (often larger) civil society partners to collaborate and channel funding to local and grassroots organizations to allow them to access funding and capacity-development opportunities that they may not otherwise qualify for under United Nations accountability and procedure standards. Local and grassroots groups are often closer to the communities they serve, have deeper expertise and knowledge of local contexts, and are better able to reach marginalized groups (with whom they've built trust-based relationships over the years). Over the course of the Initiative, a total of 229 financial awards to civil society organizations were reported to have used sub-granting or subcontracting modalities, reaching additional organisations and groups (as sub-grantees and subcontractors) with at least USD 13.4 million.

Small grants

In addition to sub-granting or contracting, small grants mechanisms are used by some UN agencies to deepen their reach to national, local and grassroots organizations. As noted above, these organizations often face barriers to partnering with and accessing funding from the United Nations. Spotlight Initiative programmes used this mechanism⁴⁸ as a means to channel core and institutional funding to local organizations. Of the awards to civil society organizations that included a core funding component, **21 per cent provided the entirety of the award as core support** (often through small grants). In **Samoa**, for example, Spotlight Initiative launched a public call for proposals through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This call was

instrumental in expanding support to grassroots organizations through direct access to grants. Four grassroots organizations representing diverse constituencies — including girls and women living with albinism or disability, young women engaged in peer counselling programmes, school-age girls and boys, boys and young men affected by violence, and LGBTQ+ individuals, among others — were funded, helping to ensure groups often left furthest behind were reached.

Funding women-led, women's rights, and feminist organizations

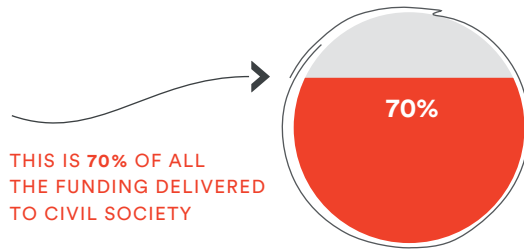
As mentioned above, feminist and women's rights organizations and movements are uniquely pivotal to efforts to end violence against women and girls and advance women's rights. To resource these organizations (and help address the chronic funding gap they face), Spotlight Initiative delivered **70 per cent (USD 136 million) of civil society funding**



© UN Women/Helio Miguel.

48. The small grants have a simplified application process and usually range between USD 2,500 to USD 50,000 (depending on the United Nations agency) and may be applied for in relation to programmatic activities or to support and strengthen the institutional capacities of civil society organizations.

USD 136 million invested in women's organizations



directly to women-led and women's rights organizations.⁴⁹ Deep and quality investment (flexible, long-term and core funding) in women's rights and feminist organizations accelerates change in the lives of women and girls and has a ripple effect across all of society.

Flexible funding — fuelling civil society, feminist and women's movements

Women's rights and feminist organizations (among others) have, for decades, called for core (or institutional),⁵⁰ flexible, and long-term funding to sustain activism and drive transformative results. Flexible funding ensures greater agency and leadership at the community level, applies an intersectional lens to funding, and redistributes power to civil society and communities, allowing local organizations to determine how best to address the challenges they face in their own contexts, ultimately enhancing impact.⁵¹

USD 24 million was delivered in **core support** to civil society

THIS IS 12% OF THE TOTAL AWARDED CSO FUNDING

To drive better funding and support for civil society, Spotlight Initiative scaled up core, institutional and flexible funding to civil society organizations over the years, particularly to women's rights and grassroots organizations. Through its first portfolio of programmes, Spotlight Initiative delivered **USD 24 million in core institutional funding globally**, of which USD 12 million came from country and regional programmes and USD 12 million came through the two Civil Society Grant-Giving Programmes (the partnerships with the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund and the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women). This corresponds to approximately 12 per cent of the total amount delivered to civil society organizations globally. This type of funding is essential to women's organizations' survival, particularly those working in crisis or politically restrictive contexts, where backlashes against women's rights, and attacks on women human rights defenders, threaten their work and existence. Increasingly flexible and locally driven funding ensures a broad diversity of women's rights and feminist organizations and movements are able to sustain their work to advance rights and justice in their contexts.

Investing in core and flexible support demonstrates Spotlight Initiative's dedication to supporting the resilience, autonomy, and leadership of civil society organizations. In the face of global multifaceted crises, this type of funding has never been more critical.



49. See definition in the Methodology note included in Annex C. This number includes awards delivered through the UN Trust Fund and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund grant-giving programmes.

50. Core institutional funding can be defined by what it is not: it is not funding earmarked for specific programmatic activities or overhead costs related to delivering. Rather, the purpose of core institutional funding is to support an organization's overall institutional capacity. Core funding may cover general operations and core costs, such as paying staff salaries and office rent, purchasing equipment and ICT services. Institutional funding also provides psychosocial support and health insurance for staff to put in place new adaptive strategies and systems or even to raise staff awareness and develop their capacities in technical areas.

51. AWID (2013) *Watering the Leaves, Starving the Roots: The Status of Financing for Women's Rights Organizing and Gender Equality*, p. 25.

THE WITHHER FUND: MOBILIZING FLEXIBLE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO FRONTLINE WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

In partnership with Spotlight Initiative, the UN Foundation launched the [WithHer Fund](#) in 2021. Operating under feminist grant-making principles (flexibility, trust and transparency), the WithHer Fund channels flexible core funding to grassroots and women's organizations working to end violence against women and girls in their communities. Since its launch, the WithHer Fund provided funding to its first cohort of six grantees — working in [Argentina](#), [Belize](#), [El Salvador](#), [Malawi](#), [Mali](#), and [Trinidad and Tobago](#). [The grantees are changing the lives of women and girls in their community.](#)

The fund addresses the barriers to funding that small organizations often face by streamlining the application process, simplifying reporting, and offering smaller grants. Flexible grants and maximum trust allow organizations to respond to a changing context with ease, as was the case for the Foundation for Civic Education and Social Empowerment (FOCESE), a grantee organization in [Malawi](#) that pivoted its programming to support girls in displacement camps resulting from the damage caused by Cyclone Freddy in 2023, ensuring that sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) education and gender-based violence (GBV) support was reaching the girls where they were. In [Belize](#), the grant also provided flexibility to the grantee, Haven House.

“We have the flexibility to act [quickly] in emergency situations which sometimes [is the difference] between us providing much needed aid to a woman or her returning to the perpetrator.... This is only possible through the flexibility of the programme to quickly transition the family to independent living rather than waiting for a system which would normally take months to receive approval.”

Dr Sharmayne Saunders, President, Haven House, Belize

The fund also aims to complement existing international grant-making mechanisms by raising money from new or untapped sources. Seed funding for the first cohort of grantees was made possible with initial support from the UN Foundation, as well as The Estée Lauder Companies Charitable Foundation, the H&M Foundation, and the Liberty Latin America and Target Foundation, totalling USD 555,000.

The UN Foundation and Spotlight Initiative will explore broadening partnerships, including with Women's Funds (to deepen support to unregistered organizations), and mobilize additional resources through individual philanthropists, corporate foundations, the private sector, and others.

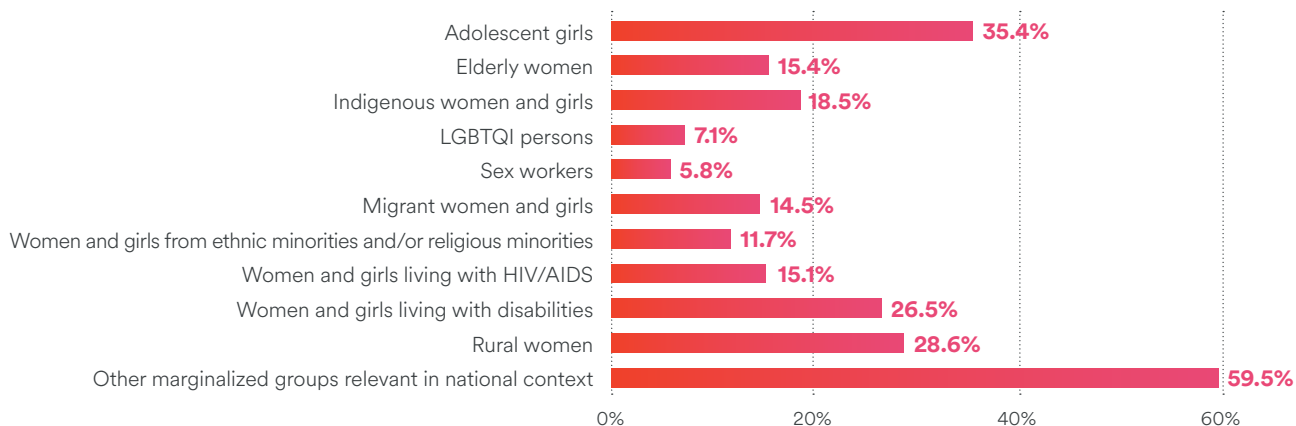
Funding that leaves no one behind

Guided by the principle of leaving no one behind, Spotlight Initiative has worked to build inclusive and transformative partnerships. Partnering meaningfully and inclusively — within and across stakeholders — is necessary to end violence against women and girls and, in turn, achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. From its launch, Spotlight Initiative worked to reach and serve marginalized or left behind populations, as well communities and

individuals facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Through the Initiative's first portfolio of programmes, a significant percentage of awards supported marginalized groups: for example, 35.4 per cent of all financial awards to civil society reached adolescent girls, 28.6 per cent reached rural women, 26.5 per cent reached women and girls living with disabilities, and 59.5 per cent reached other marginalized groups relevant to national contexts (as captured in the chart below).⁵²

52. Responding to the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination various groups face, each CSO award was able to report having reached multiple marginalized, vulnerable and traditionally left behind populations at the same time. Therefore, the data presented in each category is counted against the total number of CSO awards reported, and is not mutually exclusive.

Percentage of awards to CSOs
supporting vulnerable populations
 (as of end of 2023, multiple selections possible)



Grant-giving programmes: The partnership with the UN Trust Fund and the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund

As noted above, beginning in 2019, Spotlight Initiative partnered with the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust

Fund) and the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) to better fund and resource smaller and grassroots feminist organizations and to support women’s rights movements in various countries in Africa and Latin America, as well as in Afghanistan,⁵³ Haiti, and Papua New Guinea.⁵⁴

53. As noted, due to the context in Afghanistan from 2021-2023, this global report does not capture the work of Spotlight Initiative’s country programme in Afghanistan, or Spotlight Initiative’s partnership with WPHF in Afghanistan, though the contributions of both programmes over the years have been significant and impactful. For more information, please contact the UN Resident Coordinator Office in Afghanistan.

54. For the Caribbean, Central Asia and the Pacific, the 10 per cent regional allocations for civil society grants were partly channelled through Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund in Haiti and Papua New Guinea as noted, and partly integrated into the standalone Spotlight Initiative regional programmes by adding a Pillar 6 that focuses on strengthening women’s movements, including both programmatic activities and direct grants.



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The UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund

delivered
USD 36.6 million to
 civil society organizations



Over the years, as noted in the figure above, these two grant-giving programmes have jointly delivered USD 36.6 million in civil society grants to support women's movement-building and address violence against women and girls.⁵⁵ Of this, 82 per cent went to national, local and grassroots organizations and 94 per cent supported women-led, women's rights and feminist organizations. These partnerships also helped reach new civil society organizations: across the UN Trust Fund's cohort of 55 awards, 32 organizations were new partners for the Fund.

Over the duration of the partnership, the UN Trust Fund and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund contributed to significant changes in the lives of women and girls, including those

from marginalized populations. For example, in **Zimbabwe**, the Family AIDS Caring Trust (FACT), a UN Trust Fund grantee, established 28 solidarity groups (nearly twice as many as expected) for self-identified women sex workers and adolescent girls and young women across several districts. These groups offered a safe space for women and girls to speak openly about sexual and gender-based violence and hold duty-bearers accountable.⁵⁶ The project also facilitated the formation of ten networks, comprising four at the district level and six at the national level, involving civil society organizations and women's and girls' groups dedicated to promoting the rights of women and girl sex workers as well as those of adolescents and young women. Such initiatives helped the project to foster unity and empowerment within these underserved communities. They also showcased the importance of women's active civic participation and leadership in fostering community solidarity across groups of women.

The UN Trust Fund's grantees also worked with local communities to reach those at risk. For example, in **Argentina**, *Centro de Intercambio y Servicios para el Cono Sur Argentina* (CISCSA),⁵⁷ helped organize 24 community-level groups of

55. The UN Trust Fund and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund jointly delivered USD 36.6 million, USD 24.06 million by the UN Trust Fund and USD 12.56 million by the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund.

56. The [UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women Final Narrative Programme Report](#) Draft, p. 18.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

feminist activists in three regions in the Córdoba Province of Argentina. Through these groups, 1,180 feminist activists better understood the critical role local and community-based women's rights organizations play in preventing violence against women and girls in public spaces, and improved their awareness of, and ability to advocate for, the right to live free from violence.

Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund grantees also worked to advance the rights of diverse women and girls helping to ensure no one is left behind. In **Haiti**, for example, the Movement for the Integration and Emancipation of Women with Disabilities (MIEFH)⁵⁸ helped build a coalition of 13 organizations that advocated for women's rights, including for the prevention of and response to gender-based violence. Collectively, these organizations helped health providers at local facilities and in nursing colleges develop new skills to better address gender-based violence, supported adolescent-friendly counselling sessions, provided income-generating activities for survivors living with disabilities, and worked with disabled people's organizations to deepen their advocacy work.

58. The [WPHF Final Programme Narrative Report](#), page 17.

In **Papua New Guinea**, Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund grantee Voice for Change (VFC), a provincial women's organization in Jiwaka, improved the ability of its safety committees to advance women's rights and protection. Composed of peace mediators, police, court officials, health workers, local community-based organizations, and youth groups, Voice for Change safety committees worked to provide quality gender-based violence counselling and legal and medical support to survivors, increasing survivors' access to quality services. They also improved referral pathways (through deepened coordination among service providers). Voice for Change was central to influencing peace processes in its community while simultaneously advocating for the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence.

Taken together, the partnerships with the UN Trust Fund and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, underscore Spotlight Initiative's commitment to better resourcing local civil society and women's rights organizations, and fostering more locally owned, sustainable change.

Spotlight Initiative's allocations to civil society, cumulative as of 31 December 2023:

Regional overview of selected data

Regions	Percentage of programme activity funds allocated (budgeted) to CSOs	Percentage of programme activity funds delivered (awarded) to CSOs	Percentage of overall delivered (awarded) funds delivered to national, local and grassroots organizations	Percentage of overall delivered (awarded) funds delivered to local and grassroots organizations	Percentage of overall delivered (awarded) funds delivered to women-led, women's rights and feminist organizations	Percentage of overall delivered (awarded) funds delivered to new partners to the UN agencies
Africa	43%	49%	80%	11%	60%	28%
Latin America	44%	45%	74%	15%	68%	47%
Pacific	41%	35%	76%	19%	66%	24%
Caribbean	39%	37%	81%	40%	76%	27%
Central Asia	58%	49%	70%	12%	72%	28%
UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund	100%	100%	82%	39%	94%	47%
Safe and Fair	36%	25%	65%	0%	63%	34%
Total	48%	49%	78%	19%	70%	33%

5.2

THE IMPACT OF SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE: DRIVING CHANGE TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

5.2.1

Amplifying Impact: The Importance of Investing in a Comprehensive Model

As noted previously, [predictive modeling suggests](#) that Spotlight Initiative’s comprehensive approach is 70 per cent to 90 per cent more effective at reducing the prevalence of violence, compared to single-pillar or siloed approaches. The comprehensive model involves work across mutually reinforcing outcome or intervention areas to pass progressive laws and policies, strengthen institutions, deepen prevention programming, improve access to services, generate quality data, and forge meaningful partnerships, particularly with civil society. By working in this way, Spotlight programmes generate greater impact, with results in one area of work (laws and policies, for example) often accelerating progress in other areas (access to quality services), or generating unexpected positive results. The results indicator data presented in this report is accurate as of 31 March 2024.

As one of [12 High-Impact Initiatives](#) of the United Nations (as noted in [Chapter 3](#)), the Initiative’s approach has shown that significant, large-scale investment in comprehensive programming and whole-of-society partnerships to end violence against women and girls can make transformative progress not only on gender equality, but also across all of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The following section presents a highlight of key results that cut across the Initiative’s outcome areas, demonstrating how the Initiative’s comprehensive approach ultimately leads to amplified impact. The section also includes an in-depth [Good Practice case study](#) in Malawi, further detailing the intersectional nature of Spotlight’s Initiative’s work and how its comprehensive model has yielded significant results.



RESULT:

WORKING COMPREHENSIVELY — ACROSS MUTUALLY REINFORCING PILLARS — HAD A CATALYTIC EFFECT, SPURRING GREATER CHANGE ACROSS EFFORTS TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS.

As seen over the years of programming across countries and regions, a comprehensive, whole-of-society approach offers synergistic effects on ending violence against women and girls, generating more powerful, integrated and sustainable change in the lives of women and girls.

In **Mozambique**, for example, disseminating information on laws and policies to a wide range of stakeholders (under Pillar 1) promoted changes in social norms, attitudes and behaviours at the community and individual levels (generating change under Pillar 3). Targeted campaigns and prevention initiatives — in partnership with civil society — reached over 2 million people and led to increased reporting of gender-based violence cases and an uptick in service use among survivors (Pillar 4).

In **Belize**, Spotlight Initiative promoted the use of gender mainstreaming in policies and sectoral plans (Pillar 1), and helped identify key entry points for institutional strengthening to advance gender equality (under Pillar 2). To do this, the programme conducted the country’s first gender analysis (under Pillar 5) — focused on identifying key gaps, bottlenecks and entry points for promoting gender-sensitive policymaking — and worked within the education, justice, and social sectors to promote the development of gender-responsive, needs-based strategies and programmes. In parallel, in the spirit of leaving no one behind, data collection tools were strengthened to include disaggregated figures on the most vulnerable populations, and to ensure that the experiences of traditionally marginalized groups and survivors of violence informed the development of policies and legislation. This was further complemented by community-level work with civil society organizations on prevention and service delivery programmes under Pillars 3 and 4, better reaching vulnerable populations.





GOOD PRACTICE: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN MALAWI

OVERVIEW

Widespread violence against women and girls is one of Malawi's biggest challenges. Over one third of women (37.5 per cent) will experience physical or sexual intimate partner violence in their lifetime, and one in five girls have been sexually abused before reaching 18 years of age.⁵⁹ In addition, early marriage (a harmful practice) is rampant — nearly 50 per cent of girls are married before the age of 18.⁶⁰

Although important steps have been taken in the country to address this,⁶¹ there is still a long way to go. The Government of Malawi has demonstrated a firm commitment to advancing the gender equality agenda and ending violence against women and girls through its strong ownership of and participation in Spotlight Initiative. National ownership of efforts to end violence, together with strong United Nations inter-agency coordination and the active participation of the Civil Society Reference Group in the National and Regional Steering Committees, were all critical elements that ensured the uptake and effectiveness of the comprehensive approach to ending violence against women and girls in-country. Examples of key Spotlight Initiative interventions and holistic, cross-cutting results are detailed below.

RESULTS

By leveraging — and building on — existing government and community structures and resources,⁶² Spotlight Initiative was able to implement interconnected interventions and programmes that stimulated results under multiple pillars and fostered changes at the individual, family, community, and societal levels. Critical to the programme's success, for instance,

was the strategic engagement of traditional leaders, as custodians of culture and opinion shapers, to enhance legislative frameworks, build gender-responsive communities and institutions, stimulate shifts in harmful social norms and behaviours, strengthen accountability, and safeguard women's and girls' rights.

Under Pillar 1, Spotlight Initiative worked with hundreds of traditional chiefs and community leaders across six districts, to strengthen collective capacities to develop and review by-laws focused on prohibiting violence and harmful practices, as well as prescribing punishment to perpetrators of violence. As a result, over 50 by-laws were developed or reviewed to encourage sexual and reproductive health and rights and address violence against women and girls — including sexual and gender-based violence, child marriage and other harmful practices — that were later adopted across all target districts. These efforts also resulted in a deeper understanding by community members of existing formal and informal legislation, ultimately enhancing their agency and building on their role as change-makers. In addition, as part of their commitment to address gender-based violence, traditional leaders publicly pledged to end violence against women and girls, on community- and national-level media platforms, strengthen advocacy, foster gender-equitable norms and behaviours, and reinforce accountability, enhancing their role as key champions and defenders of women's and girls' rights.⁶³

This work was buttressed by the establishment of the Chiefs' Forums (under Pillar 2), which leveraged the collective power of traditional leaders by establishing a formal space that, among other acts, enabled them to: monitor, in a coordinated manner, implementation of interventions for ending violence against women

59. [EVAWG global database](#) (UN Women).

60. [Child Marriage Factsheet](#) (UNICEF Malawi, July 2018).

61. Malawi is party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and has a set of laws and policies aimed at fighting gender-based violence, including the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act (2014), the Gender Equality Act (2014), the National Gender Policy (2013) and the National Action Plan to Combat Gender-Based Violence in Malawi 2014-2020.

62. Such as the implementation of the Community Fund and Survivor Fund initiatives under the community victim support units and the implementation of the Safe Space Mentorship Programme through community leaders and groups (for example, the mother groups).

63. The 2023 Malawi Final Programme Report Draft, page 23.

and girls within their jurisdiction; strengthen synergies with mentors, mothers' groups and child protection specialists by conducting joint patrols to identify sexual and gender-based violence cases and strengthen survivors' access to justice; and conduct awareness campaigns at the local level. Moreover, as part of this work, chiefs also visited schools in their respective localities to check academic registers and identify absent children. This was followed by the launch of a back-to-school campaign and referrals to mobile and district courts when needed, all of which focused on ensuring the most vulnerable and marginalized women and girls were reached in the spirit of leaving no one behind. As a result, there has been a reduction in the prevalence of child marriage and a rise in the number of girls re-enrolled in schools. Additionally, the establishment of the Chiefs' Forums has played a critical role in educating parents on child marriage, as well as addressing incidents, while championing girls' access and right to education. Together, these interventions have had substantial positive spillover effects on promoting gender-equitable social norms, attitudes and behaviours under Pillar 3, with reports noting increases in the number of people who consider child marriage and violence against women and girls harmful practices.

The Chiefs' Forums have been widely embraced by traditional leaders and communities, evidenced by their proliferation throughout programme implementation, as well as substantial increases in the number of chiefs involved in these spaces. This has further strengthened national ownership of efforts to end violence against women and girls, widely promoted girls' access to education and bolstered sustainability of interventions. To further strengthen and sustain impact, the programme has supported the Chiefs' Policy, a national-level ministerial document that guides and formalizes the involvement of traditional leaders in handling sexual and gender-based violence matters. The policy includes guidelines on integrating gender equality into policymaking (for example, by promoting gender parity in chiefs' appointments) and a monitoring and evaluation framework

aimed at formally recognizing the role of traditional leaders in these spaces, in alignment with national legal frameworks, as well as ensuring quality and accountability.⁶⁴

“Spotlight Initiative has empowered us chiefs. We are able to impart knowledge about the effects of violence against women and girls in our communities; we can see change.”

**Traditional Authority,
Chiloko-Ntchisi District**

As noted, the work of the Chiefs' Forum was critical to advance efforts under Pillars 3 (Prevention) and 4 (Quality essential services), as traditional leaders began to engage in awareness-raising activities in their communities to identify and refer child marriage and harmful practices cases more effectively. In addition to this, as part of its whole-of-society approach, Spotlight Initiative engaged with the wives of traditional leaders and other community structures⁶⁵ in the development of action plans and alliances with broader community members. This work strengthened women's and girls' agency to demand their rights and report gender-based violence incidents. Similarly, the Initiative worked with school officials and police officers to reinforce the protection of children in schools. Through the Safe School Concept and the One School One Police Officer Initiative, Spotlight Initiative created safe academic environments by increasing the presence and visibility of police officers in schools and communities, as a deterrent to violence and a way to strengthen prevention of, and response to, violence against women and girls. To bolster these efforts, the programme also trained members of the parent teacher association and students on preventing and responding

64. The Chiefs' Policy is pending tabling in parliament. Spotlight Initiative's development of the Chiefs' Policy, including related guidelines and a monitoring and evaluation framework, are aimed at ensuring the quality of the work of traditional leaders.

65. Such as parent teacher associations, mothers' groups, and district education managers.

to violence against girls in schools and on the use of available reporting mechanisms.⁶⁶ As a result, 52 child marriage or violence cases were reported by adolescent girls and boys through school complaints boxes placed in 135 schools: of these, 25 were concluded, 17 resulted in convictions, 8 in acquittals and the remaining 12 are still being handled in court.⁶⁷

Central to the Initiative's work is its commitment to promoting change across a wide range of outcome areas, and through addressing drivers of violence and root causes. To that end, Spotlight Initiative launched the Safe Space Mentorship Programme, conceptualized under Pillar 3 on prevention, which had remarkable ripple effects across multiple pillars. The mentorship programme consisted of weekly mentorship sessions with girls, which were focused on teaching life skills, promoting human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, identifying negative behaviours, and strengthening capacities to report violence. As a result, 13,000 gender-based violence cases were referred by girls participating in the programme. In addition, participants strengthened their capacities for advocacy and met with traditional leaders to demand cultures of justice, equality, and accountability. They worked side-by-side in gender-based violence patrols with traditional chiefs from the Chiefs' Forum to contribute to community reporting of child marriage and gender-based violence cases. These meetings, in turn, were conducive to resolving over 4,000 cases of violence. Collectively, these efforts also helped increase women's participation in community and public life, with over 1,000 girls obtaining positions at the community level, including in spaces where there was no precedent of women's participation. Lastly, as a result of this programme, 30,979 girls accessed services that addressed gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health and rights, and 6,152 girls returned to school.

Further, recognizing the critical role that men play in ending violence against women and girls, Spotlight Initiative in Malawi also leveraged existing informal men's groups by developing a toolkit with an empowering training methodology called the Barbershop Toolkit Programme. This programme, which mobilized 3,808 men across all six Spotlight Initiative districts,⁶⁸ fostered attitudinal and behavioural shifts at the individual, family, and community levels (Pillar 3). In collaboration with the gender-based violence patrols, participants started to monitor cases of gender-based violence in their villages, backed by local ordinances and by-laws, and traditional chiefs. This also resulted in important positive shifts in the acceptability of violence in target communities, offering a powerful transformation towards ending violence and promoting gender-equitable norms (Pillar 3).

Throughout programme implementation, movement-building and civil society engagement (Pillar 6) were cross-cutting strategies that underpinned interventions under other pillars. This was evidenced, for instance, in how traditional leaders, a network of men allies, mentors and mentees, mothers' groups, parent teacher associations and several other community structures came together to jointly drive change in their communities. These community networks prevented cases of gender-based violence (Pillar 3) and improved women's and girls' access to essential services (Pillar 4).

Importantly, programme governance and coordination played a crucial role in ensuring the successful implementation of this comprehensive approach, aligning diverse stakeholders' actions and monitoring progress towards achieving the desired outcomes. The creation of the National Steering Committee,⁶⁹ the Inter-Ministerial Taskforce,⁷⁰ and Spotlight Initiative's communities of practice (at the district level),⁷¹ as well as the revitalization of gender technical working groups,⁷² all

66. The 2023 Malawi Final Programme Report Draft.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. Co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and the Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare to discuss implementation as well as Spotlight Initiative progress, challenges and the way forward with key stakeholders, also deciding on the recommendations made by the technical team.

70. The Inter-Ministerial Taskforce was implemented as a national coordination mechanism. Membership included several ministries, quasi-governmental entities, local authorities, the EU, UN and representatives of the Civil Society National Reference Group.

71. Spotlight Initiative communities of practice were implemented at the district level, chaired by District Directors of Planning and Development to ensure local ownership. Communities of practice engaged marginalized and rural communities aligned with the principle of leaving no one behind.

72. Gender technical working groups were existing national and district mechanisms that were revitalized by Spotlight Initiative and were instrumental in generating reports and influencing district- and national-level decisions related to ending violence against women and girls.

strengthened coordination at the national and district levels and ensured the multidimensional nature of Spotlight Initiative, while enhancing national and local ownership in an efficient manner. Additionally, co-locating the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Local Government, as well as UN agencies' staff under Spotlight Initiative at both the capital and district levels, ensured systematic inclusion of the issue of violence against women and girls in regional development plans, and corresponding budget lines, as well as engaging district councils to effectively implement interventions. This strengthened collaboration and contributed to inter-agency coherence and a stronger working relationships with government officials. It also established

national and local buy-in and the adoption of a coordinated, comprehensive approach to ending violence against women and girls.

Further, implementing a participatory approach to monitoring and evaluation, in Malawi, under Pillars 2 and 6, the programme supported programme stakeholders (rights holders) to develop scorecards to assess the performance of sexual and gender-based violence prevention and sexual and reproductive health and rights service providers. Scorecards allowed service providers to collectively identify and resolve challenges that were highlighted and enhanced accountability of duty-bearers to rights holders, ensuring that stakeholders' feedback was captured and integrated, which ultimately led to better programming.



RESULT:

SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE ELEVATED THE ISSUE OF ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS AND HELPED TO PLACE IT HIGH ON POLITICAL AGENDAS.

As part of efforts to promote a whole-of-society approach, Spotlight Initiative programmes worked to ensure that the issue of violence against women and girls remained a high-level national priority. Years of implementation have shown that high-level political support is crucial for securing domestic commitments for ending violence, promoting gender-equitable policymaking, improving and expanding access to services, strengthening prevention work, and ending impunity. Across several programmes, political visibility and momentum have also led to increased funding allocations to address violence against women and girls within national budgets.

In **Papua New Guinea**, Spotlight Initiative organized a Governor's Conference on Gender-Based Violence, convening governors and ministers from several provinces to create an alliance to discuss strategies to end gender-based violence. Following this convening, the Coalition of Parliamentarians held the first National Summit on Ending Gender-Based Violence, supported by Spotlight Initiative. With approximately 750 attendees — including representatives from civil society and the private sector — the summit elevated the position of violence against women and girls on the national agenda, ultimately resulting in the breakthrough establishment of the Special Parliamentary Committee on Gender-Based Violence, an unprecedented national mechanism to address violence against women and girls, monitor government work on the issue, promote evidence-based policy recommendations, and strengthen accountability.

In **Uganda**, Spotlight Initiative worked extensively with women community leaders and organizations to strengthen their advocacy toward the Government to support its work in addressing the marginalization of women in decision-making. Over time, this work resulted in the appointment of women to four of the top six cabinet positions, and set the stage for further engagement with state officials on efforts to end violence against women and girls across the country, including the first-ever Women Leaders Roundtable, co-hosted by Spotlight Initiative and the First Lady of Uganda.

Helping to foster national political commitment to ending violence against women and girls and advance gender equality, the roundtable resulted in the adoption of national guidelines on the prevention of teenage pregnancy and the re-entry of child mothers into school, under the Second Chance Education Programme. This enabled 800 girls and young mothers to return to school, helping set them up for more economic autonomy.

Across a number of programmes, efforts to elevate the position of the issue on national and regional agendas resulted in increased allocation of financial commitments to end gender-based violence. In **Guyana**, for instance, Spotlight Initiative engaged in ongoing strategic advocacy and awareness campaigns with the Government, political leaders, policymakers, and others, ultimately securing funding allocations for gender-based violence prevention and response. Resourcing efforts to end gender-based violence further deepened political commitment to achieve legislative reforms aimed at addressing violence against women and girls, and improved collaborations between the Government and civil society.

Similarly, through the **Central Asia and Afghanistan Regional Programme**, Spotlight Initiative worked with a variety of stakeholders to deepen political awareness on violence against women and girls, and on the need to foster coordinated, multisectoral actions to address gender-based violence more broadly. These efforts — coupled with the programme's work on strengthening the capacity of local actors, civil society, youth organizations, and state agencies — effectively elevated the position of ending violence against women at the regional level, and set the stage for the establishment of the Spotlight Initiative-supported "Central Asian Alliance on Countering Gender-Based Violence", an unprecedented regional mechanism that played a crucial role in policymaking, spurring legislative reforms and coordinating joint responses to address violence against women and girls and harmful practices. In addition to this, the integration of a regional grant-making mechanism into the alliance's work and its commitment to foster evidence-based gender-based violence programming have better supported critical civil society work. The establishment of this platform spurred further political engagement for ending violence against women and girls across the region: in 2023, for instance, the Government of Kazakhstan committed USD 400,000 to support this mechanism, with a similar contribution expected in the following year.



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RESULT:

A “ONE UN” APPROACH SUPPORTED DEEPENED COLLABORATION AMONG UN AGENCIES AND PARTNERS, LED TO MORE COHERENT, COORDINATED PROGRAMMING ACROSS CONTEXTS, AND IMPROVED RESULTS.

Working under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator (RC), in the spirit of [UN Reform](#), Spotlight Initiative programmes were able to better coordinate with United Nations teams on the ground to capitalize on the UN agencies’ comparative advantages and expertise, leverage existing resources, and streamline backend processes. Across programmes, UN Country Teams were able to enhance synergies, foster cost-effectiveness, simplify coordination and achieve more integrated implementation by establishing standing meetings with all implementing agencies, regularly convening

with Resident Coordinators, adopting the UN-wide [Business Operations Strategy](#), engaging in joint procurement processes, developing standard operating procedures, utilizing joint and harmonized templates, and co-locating operations in a common space, among other good practices. This, in turn, allowed for more coordinated and coherent programming, led to increased efficiency and effectiveness (by minimizing duplication), and improved delivery. In addition to the examples shared here, more information on how Spotlight Initiative leveraged the ‘One UN’ approach to streamline programme implementation can be found in previous [Spotlight Initiative Global and Programme Annual Reports](#).

In **Samoa**, the Resident Coordinator’s leadership fostered better coordination among UN agencies, leveraging the agencies’ comparative advantages for strengthened programming to end violence against women and girls. As a result, the Initiative expanded its scope to better



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reach vulnerable populations, including the LGBTIQ+ community and persons living with disabilities. Similarly, in **Mozambique**, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, the Initiative was able to successfully advocate for expanded reach to the conflict-affected province of Cabo Delgado. With improved coordination, Spotlight Initiative provided joint support to local government institutions in Gaza and Manica.

In **Mexico**, the Resident Coordinator's Office and Spotlight Initiative's technical team streamlined inter-agency collaboration (to ensure more efficient delivery) and fostered constructive collaboration with key counterparts at the highest level of the Government, the EU Delegation and the Civil Society Reference Group. Efficient inter-agency collaboration allowed the programme to more quickly identify risks and respond to challenges and deepen joint planning and joint interventions, improving coherence in programming. By leveraging the specific expertise of various Recipient UN Organizations, the Initiative was able to produce the "[Statistical Framework for Measuring the Gender-Related Killing of Women and Girls \(also referred to as 'femicide/feminicide'\)](#)", which was approved in 2022 by the United Nations Statistical Commission.

In **Haiti**, challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, an earthquake in August 2021, and a deteriorating security situation required multiple changes to Spotlight programme's work plan and budget. With robust coordination among UN agencies, the programme effectively adjusted its risk management arrangements to ensure continuity of interventions despite successive crises. Leveraging partnerships allowed for swift collective action by the UN, government and civil society partners, helping to prevent (and better respond to) a potential increase in cases of violence against women and girls following the disaster.⁷³

In **Trinidad and Tobago**, the Initiative promoted strong collaboration between the programme management unit and UN Women (the lead of technical coherence function). Working together closely, a Technical Coherence Matrix was developed to assist all UN agencies implementing the programme in performing a pre-evaluation of nearly 60 deliverables to ensure alignment with

Spotlight Initiative objectives and guidelines, and UN Principles, standards and global conventions. This improved programme coherence, and accelerated the ability of Recipient UN Organizations' to collectively deliver in a more streamlined and efficient way (including by establishing criteria for joint assessments of Terms of Reference, consultancies, and procurement).

In **El Salvador**, by capitalizing on various Recipient UN Organizations' existing operational tools and mechanisms (including the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT)), the Initiative was better able to streamline operational and backend process, including fund transfers to the Government and other partners (by using tools like the business operations strategy, long-term agreements and requests for quotation). This fostered stronger coordination with national counterparts, and as such, the Initiative was better positioned to ensure a whole-of-society approach across diverse implementing partners in El Salvador, better preventing and responding to violence against women and girls. Implementing Spotlight Initiative's comprehensive model, and "Working as One UN" was particularly helpful in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as the Initiative was able to more seamlessly collaborate across stakeholders to revise acceleration plans and ensure targeted support to women and girls in a rapidly changing context.



RESULT:

THE FOCUS ON LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND SUPPORTED REACHING THE MOST MARGINALIZED AND ENHANCED THE DIVERSITY AND REACH OF RESULTS.

Spotlight Initiative's rights-based strategy revolves around the core principle of inclusivity, ensuring that no one is left behind in efforts to address violence against women and girls, especially those from marginalized and vulnerable groups or those facing intersecting forms of discrimination.

Spotlight Initiative's **Safe and Fair** programme has worked closely with women migrant workers, promoting their rights. By enhancing the capacity of government agencies to collect comprehensive data on labour migration, and ensure that data

73. UN System Wide Evaluation Office (2024) "Draft 1: Final Evaluation of the Spotlight Initiative (2017-2023)".

on the prevalence of violence against women includes women migrant workers, **Safe and Fair** helped ensure data and policies reflected the experiences of women migrant workers, who often face multiple, intersecting forms of violence. Recognizing the diverse experiences among women migrant workers, Safe and Fair developed a variety of tailored training manuals, toolkits, standard operating procedures (SOPs) and guidance notes⁷⁴ for service providers to strengthen coordination among various agencies using a survivor-centred approach. Moreover, through pilot programmes in the Philippines and in Malaysia, efforts were directed toward strengthening the capacity of migrant domestic workers to advocate for their rights, resulting in improved coverage under labour protection laws.

In **Belize**, in the spirit of leaving no one behind, Spotlight Initiative partnered with the Ministry of Health and Wellness to establish policies and protocols to guarantee comprehensive service delivery to LGBTIQ+ persons, adolescents and traditionally marginalized communities.

In **Zimbabwe**, strategic support provided to the National Disability Board facilitated the development of key operational guidelines and policy dialogues. This was complemented by training sessions for board members and fostering dialogues among them and key government service providers. Additionally, the programme convened organizations of persons with disabilities to guarantee access to, and enhance the quality of, gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health and rights services for women and girls with disabilities. It also established a platform for consultations with the Government, inclusive of women and girls with disabilities, ultimately resulting in the adoption of the country's first National Disability Policy.

The Initiative's impact over the years extended to emergency settings as well. In **Uganda**, for example, the Initiative produced a policy brief highlighting key gaps in the COVID-19 response for girls and women with disabilities. This subsequently informed the National Development Plan of the Resident Coordinator's

Office and led to improved interventions to address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on girls and women with disabilities. Through additional policy advocacy, training initiatives with women and girls with disabilities, and collaboration with the women's movement, the Initiative facilitated increased reporting of gender-based violence among marginalized groups. Additionally, with the Initiative's support, marginalized groups were better able to influence policy frameworks, including the Sexual Offences Bill and the Universal Health Coverage Strategy, improving these policies' responsiveness and relevance to the needs of marginalized communities, including people living with HIV and women and girl sex workers.



RESULT:

SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE ENGAGED IN A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH TO MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING, FOSTERING MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT OF RIGHTS HOLDERS, AND IMPROVED PROGRAMME RESPONSIVENESS TO DIVERSE NEEDS AND COMMUNITIES.

Participatory monitoring, evaluation and reporting is a participatory approach to programming, focused on engaging a range of individuals and groups in the monitoring, evaluation and reporting phases of the programming cycle. It has a particular emphasis on capturing the perspectives of rights holders, community members, and structurally marginalized groups to inform and adapt programming. Grounded in the evidence that those directly impacted by rights violations — including violence against women and girls — should be centred throughout the programming cycle. Participatory approaches help ensure more responsive interventions and sustainable results.

In **Uganda**, for instance, Spotlight Initiative held joint field coordination and monitoring visits with a wide variety of stakeholders, including national and local government officials, ministry representatives, members of the EU Delegation,

74. [Guidance Note to Develop Migrant-Sensitive National Action Plans on Violence against Women; Training for Malaysian inspectors on forced labour, child labour and gender-based discrimination, violence and harassment in the workplace; 16 Essentials for Quality Multisectoral Service Provision to Women Migrant Workers Subject to Violence; A Practical Guide; Developing Standard Operating Procedures \(SOPs\) for a Coordinated Response to Violence against Women, including women migrant workers; Media-friendly glossary on migration Women migrant workers and ending violence against women \(EVAW\) edition; Organizing women migrant workers; Manual for trade unionists in ASEAN; Safe Technology for the Provision of Services to Women Migrant Workers at Risk of or Subject to Violence; Remote Service Provision for Women Migrant Workers at Risk or Subject to Violence.](#)

Recipient UN Organizations, staff from the Resident Coordinator's Office, community members, political leaders, individuals from cultural and traditional institutions, and members of the Civil Society National Reference Group. As a result, the Initiative was able to gather feedback through these joint monitoring visits directly from women and girls (rights holders) on priority interventions for upcoming programming, thus improving the quality and responsiveness of programming for ending violence against women and girls. As an additional upshot, these visits fostered deeper ownership of the issue among national stakeholders, including among local government personnel, as well as better engagement in the next phase of programming.

Similar joint monitoring missions were carried out in **Zimbabwe**, resulting in comprehensive, multi-stakeholder assessments, inclusive of the perspectives of rights holders. Assessments focused on identifying synergies across interventions to reduce duplication and amplify impact. Participatory monitoring visits helped renew the Government's commitment to ending violence against women and girls, deepening national ownership.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, Spotlight Initiative organized a joint monitoring visit to several regions, bringing together a large group of diverse stakeholders, including representatives from key ministries and departments, the Office of the President, members of the Civil Society Reference Group, Recipient UN Organization representatives, and media. Critical to its success was a jointly designed vision and methodology, which focused on cross-sectoral exchange (rather than more traditional top-down approaches to monitoring) and collectively identified metrics of success (how to capture results). Nearly 30 meetings were held during this visit, with rights holders, community members, civil society, local municipal officials, schools, women's councils, *madrasas* (educational institute) and others participating. Additionally, more than 300 residents of targeted regions attended, allowing the members of the monitoring

mission to hear directly from a wide range of individuals and groups. Discussions resulted in recommendations for improved programming to end violence against women and girls, including on: strengthening intra-family communication (complementing results achieved by the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) and MenEngage);⁷⁵ the participation of women in family financial planning; positive communication among men and their participation in the Initiative's activities; strengthening the Initiative's survivor-centred approach across several interventions; awareness-raising; and women and girls' engagement (through community mobilization and advocacy skills).

Engaging in participatory monitoring, evaluation and reporting underscores the importance of a rights-based approach to programming. By systematically capturing the voices and concerns of rights holders, community members, civil society organizations and others — and reflecting their experience and expertise in programming — Spotlight Initiative has moved away from traditional approaches to monitoring, evaluation and reporting — which can be top down, “extractive” or tokenizing — to ones that foster mutual engagement, learning, and meaningful (more sustainable) change.

5.2.2 Contributing to Changes at the Outcome Level

This section captures Spotlight Initiative's key impacts globally over the course of the Initiative.⁷⁶ Aggregate indicators and illustrative examples of the Initiative's impact are shared (by outcome area), with in-depth Good Practices case study boxes highlighted throughout this section.⁷⁷ To gain more information on the transformative work achieved across programmes, please refer to [Spotlight Initiative's global and programme annual reports](#) over the years, as well as the two-page summaries of the programmes' annual (and final) reports ([Annex B](#)).

75. See [Spotlight Initiative Kyrgyzstan Final Programme Report](#) on the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office gateway.

76. Due to the context in Afghanistan during 2021-2023, this report does not highlight the work of the Spotlight Initiative country programme in Afghanistan, though its contributions over the years have been numerous and significant. For more information, please contact the UN Resident Coordinator Office in Afghanistan.

77. It is important to note that programmes have had different start dates; as such, comparison to “baseline” may include baseline data from different years. This does not, however, affect the assessment of the Initiative's cumulative contribution. All indicator data in this chapter reflects cumulative data between 2019 - 2023, with the exception of the Pacific Regional Programme and the Vanuatu programme, which reported data between 2019-2022. Therefore, any results achieved in 2023 for these two Spotlight programmes is not reflected in the cumulative results reported in Chapter 5.

PILLAR 1: POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

Legislative and policy frameworks, based on evidence and in line with international human rights standards, on all forms of violence against women and girls and harmful practices are in place and translated into plans.



SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE FOLLOWING KEY RESULTS:

Developed new or improved existing laws and policies and strengthened the overall legal infrastructure to **better address (the root causes of) gender-based violence and harmful practices.**

Strengthened the ability of government, civil society, women-led and grassroots organizations to advocate for **national, subnational, grassroots, and local-level legal reforms and policy shifts.**

Improved the legal and human rights protections for **civil society, women's rights groups, and women's human rights defenders** fighting to end violence against women and girls.

CAPTURING CHANGE OVER TIME: A SNAPSHOT OF PROGRESS ACROSS KEY INDICATORS

548 laws or policies were signed or strengthened to **end violence against women and girls.** This is more than double the target and a 26-fold increase since 2019.

57 per cent of targeted countries have subnational, evidence-based, costed, and funded **action plans with monitoring and evaluation frameworks to end violence against women and girls and harmful practices,** compared to just 17 per cent in 2019.

Since 2019,

77 laws and policies have been developed across countries to **protect women's human rights defenders.** Nearly four times the original target.

While countries are obligated under international legal and policy frameworks to address violence against women and girls, numerous gaps remain. Significant progress in developing and implementing laws and policies to address gender-based violence has been made in some countries, while others have fallen short, and implementation (at national and local levels) remains uneven, perpetuating a culture of impunity. Under this outcome, the Initiative has worked to address legal and policy reform and to ensure that robust (evidence-based) legislation and policies are developed and implemented. Since its inception, Spotlight programmes globally have contributed to creating new laws and policies to address violence against women and girls at the national, regional and local levels, enhancing coordination across governments at all levels.

As a first step, at the launch of the Initiative, programmes analysed the existing legal and policy landscape to identify gaps, and provide targeted and relevant support under this outcome, including the development (and implementation) of gender-sensitive laws and policies. See past [Spotlight Initiative Global and Programme Annual Reports](#) for results in this foundational area of work. Legal and policy advancement (based upon these assessments) appear below.

At the end of this outcome a [Good Practice case study](#) detailing policy reform efforts

in **Ecuador** where a reparation policy was developed with survivors of femicide is presented. The case study details the significant collaboration across different partners, including government, civil society, and UN agencies, working together to achieve results, and underscore the centrality of women’s rights organizations and movements in equitable legal and policy reform.



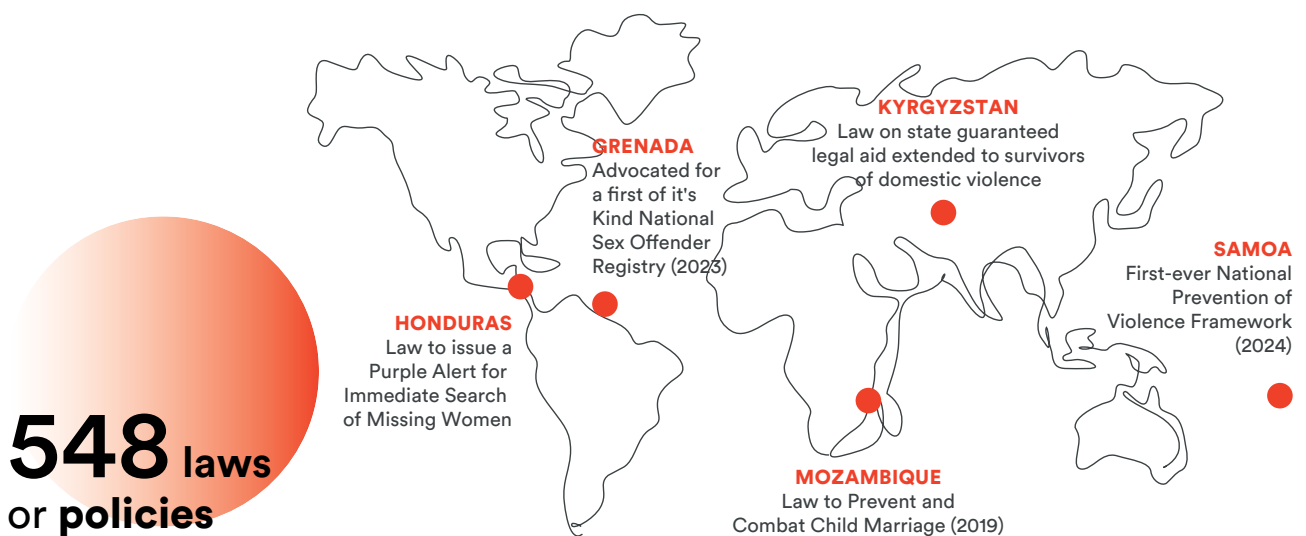
RESULT:

DEVELOPED NEW OR IMPROVED EXISTING LAWS AND POLICIES AND STRENGTHENED THE OVERALL LEGAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO BETTER ADDRESS (THE ROOT CAUSES OF) GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND HARMFUL PRACTICES.

Spotlight Initiative and its partners facilitated the development of legal and policy frameworks to advance gender equality and end gender-based violence, including violence against women and girls. Through interventions implemented by Spotlight Initiative country and regional programmes, **more than 548 laws or policies across the world have been adopted or strengthened.**

Over the course of the Initiative, Spotlight programmes have contributed to historic wins championed together with partners (including

SCALING UP LEGAL PROTECTION



were signed or strengthened **across 48 countries** since the start of the Initiative

EXAMPLES FROM SEVERAL COUNTRIES

particularly civil society and grassroots groups). Policy changes included updating national legal structures to be aligned with international protocols and principles of leaving no one behind. For example, in **Mexico**, Spotlight Initiative’s work to strengthen legal frameworks resulted in a range of reforms, including on prevention, punishment for perpetrators, and reparations for survivors. These reforms impacted 31 federal laws and 49 state laws, with an estimated direct benefit to 35.3 million women in the country. Between 2018 and 2023, the **Safe and Fair** programme supported the development and revision of 55 laws, policies and implementing regulations on gender-sensitive labour migration governance in **Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, and Viet Nam**.

In **Ecuador**, with the support of the Initiative, the country completed its first policy document on femicide reparation measures, a significant milestone. The development of the Femicide Reparation Policy has been instrumental in building a common understanding of, and knowledge about, existing judicial provisions and mechanisms available to respond to the legal needs and rights of survivors and families of victims of violence against women and femicide. [A Good Practice box offers a deeper dive into this example at the end of this pillar.](#)

Across the portfolio (including in **Argentina, Grenada, Honduras, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Papua New Guinea, and Vanuatu**), Spotlight programmes introduced first-of-its-kind laws and policies to protect the rights and freedoms of women and girls. In **Vanuatu**, Spotlight Initiative supported a nationwide consultation to capture the voice of communities, and reflect these perspectives in the first ever Victim’s Charter, a milestone that provides survivors and victims of violence with clear guidance on the support and justice services available to them. The public prosecutor committed to making this policy at a national level and the National Council of Chiefs will implement it provincially. In **Kyrgyzstan**, through Spotlight Initiative’s advocacy and support, the Government pushed through the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy (GES) and took a decision to localize the Gender Equality Strategy at the *oblast* (regional) level, a first for a national strategy in the Kyrgyz Republic. Importantly, the Gender Equality Strategy is nearly fully funded, with a funding gap of less than 10 per cent. Similarly, **Samoa** is set to adopt its first-ever National Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls Framework (NPF) in 2024. Supported by Spotlight Initiative, and in collaboration with women’s rights advocates and government agencies, the NPF is informed by findings of a comprehensive study on family violence, and tailored to Samoa’s needs to ensure that gender-based violence is effectively tackled.



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Critically, Spotlight Initiative also supported the development of laws and policies that specifically address harmful practices. **Mozambique, Niger,** and **Nigeria** are just a few of the countries to advance laws to end child marriage, as did the **Africa Regional Programme**, supporting the development of regional policies. In **Zimbabwe**, based on lessons learned from another Spotlight programme (in **Malawi**), Spotlight Initiative organized a series of dialogues with traditional leaders and chiefs across targeted communities to discuss the prevalence of child marriage. Through these ongoing discussions, a national framework for Traditional Leaders' Strategies on Early Marriages and to End Violence Against Women and Girls was developed, and, critically, the Marriages Act 2022 was enacted. A landmark decision in Zimbabwe, the Marriages Act 2022 sets the minimum age of marriage at 18 years old across the country, a significant step toward eliminating child marriage nationally.

In **Liberia**, through Spotlight Initiative, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) collaborated with civil society organizations and engaged with the Government and legislature,⁷⁸ leading to the passage of the landmark legislation, “Domestic Violence Law,” and the drafting of the “Female Genital Mutilation Bill”. Various training and awareness-raising sessions with government officials were conducted at both national and local levels on the Domestic Violence Law, improving knowledge of the law and supporting its implementation.

Nigeria passed (and began implementing) the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP Act) across all six states that Spotlight Initiative targeted. Importantly, traditional leaders also took an active role in the process (in the Sokoto and Adamawa states) to ensure religious tenets were properly accommodated. This helped promote implementation and sustainability (by improving its relevance). This important achievement represents the fastest bill to be passed at the subnational level in the history of the country, bringing the total number of states with this act to 34. The Nigerian Council for Social Work (Establishment) Act (for the regulation of the social service workforce) was also adopted and passed with the Initiative's support.



RESULT:

STRENGTHENED THE ABILITY OF GOVERNMENT, CIVIL SOCIETY, WOMEN-LED AND GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS TO ADVOCATE FOR NATIONAL, SUBNATIONAL, GRASSROOTS, AND LOCAL LEVEL LEGAL REFORMS AND POLICY SHIFTS.

Since the initiative's launch, Spotlight programmes have worked with partners to help equip them with the skills (and resources) needed to better advocate for legal and policy reforms to end violence against women and girls at grassroots, local, subnational and national levels. Progress was made across programmes — including in Malawi, Niger, Uganda, Vanuatu, and Zimbabwe — to ensure protections for survivors exist at subnational and local levels, including through informal and religious legal structures.

In **Malawi**, Spotlight Initiative contributed to increased participation of women and women's organizations in the formulation of District Development Plans, enabling them to successfully advocate for the inclusion of measures to address GBV, while, in Uganda, women's rights organizations and women's rights defenders were better able to address violence against women and girls through strengthened capacity to strategically advocate for specific legal provisions. As a result of the advocacy of women's rights organizations, together with others, the final version of the Sexual Offences Bill includes protection from sexual harassment and child marriage, issues of consent to sexual acts, the removal of the requirement to corroborate evidence in sexual violence cases, and the establishment of a sex offenders registry. Through these and other efforts, Spotlight Initiative **strengthened the ability of nearly 85,000 women's rights advocates to draft legislation and policies that end violence against women and girls and promote women's human rights and gender equality more broadly.** Moreover, since the beginning of 2019, **312 draft laws or policies across 17 countries** were enhanced through the inputs of women's rights advocates, improving their responsiveness.

78. Among the partners were the Law Reform Commission, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, the Independent Human Rights Commission, Women Solidarity Inc. and local stakeholders in Lofa, Nimba, Montserrado, and Grand Cape Mount Counties.

In Niger, where traditional leaders represent the state in their villages and their advisors are the first point of contact for survivors of violence to file a complaint, Spotlight Initiative supported the Sultan of Tibiri to reform the court and appoint two women as advisors — one in charge of addressing cases of violence against women and girls more broadly, and the other focused on ending child marriage and supporting girls' education. This is a first in the history of traditional chieftaincy in Niger, and it is expected to improve access to justice and better support for survivors.

Importantly, the Initiative has also ensured that key partners have the resiliency required to work across contexts (through a [humanitarian, development, and peace “nexus” approach](#)), enabling partners to continue their vital work advancing women's rights and ending violence against women and girls within emerging crises. Currently, in **Haiti**, the absence of a parliament due to the ongoing political and institutional crisis has delayed votes on critical bills. To ensure the effective enforcement of existing laws, however, and keep momentum up for legal reform (once a parliament is elected), Spotlight Initiative helped strengthen the ability of 162 individuals (including 81 women) from 58 civil society organizations to advocate for legal reforms. Staff from 52 municipalities were also trained to develop policies and programmes to end violence against women and girls, and promote gender equality in line with international norms.

Efforts like these focus on increasing the capacity of government officials as duty-bearers (responsible for respecting, protecting, and fulfilling the rights of women and girls). Since the start of Spotlight Initiative, **over 7,000 government officials — including in Argentina, Belize, Guyana, Honduras, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria and through the Africa Regional Programme — were trained on human rights standards, with over 3,600 (including over 1,200 women) then going on to contribute to legislative and policy processes to advance the rights of women and girls and end violence against women and girls.**

As key stakeholders and influential decision makers, Spotlight programmes also invested in wide-scale training of parliamentarians, particularly women parliamentarians, to



SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE INITIATIVE,

over **12,500**
parliamentarians

across 17 programmes improved their capacity to design laws and policies to end violence against women

champion new or strengthened laws and policies designed to end violence against women and girls and harmful practices. This strategy underpins the sustainability of Spotlight Initiative's interventions, considering that these actors will remain after the end of Spotlight programme activities. For example, the **Grenada** programme facilitated the Women's Parliamentary Caucus to encourage current men and women parliamentarians to take action to prevent and respond to gender-based and family violence. With strengthened capacity to use parliamentary procedures, these members of parliament have committed to taking specific, bipartisan actions to address gender-based and family violence.



RESULT:

IMPROVED THE LEGAL PROTECTIONS AND RIGHTS OF CIVIL SOCIETY, WOMEN'S RIGHTS GROUPS AND WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS FIGHTING TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS.

Women's rights organizations and women's rights and feminist movements have been, and continue to be, on the frontlines, demanding rights, justice and an end to gender-based violence. They have been advancing gender equality (through an intersectional lens), despite harassment and threats, shrinking civic space, and grossly inadequate funding. Spotlight initiative has worked to advance legal provisions for their protection across programmes.

77 laws and policies were developed to **protect women human rights defenders**



With Spotlight initiative support, in **Papua New Guinea**, following years of advocacy, the Constitutional and Legal Reform Commission held extensive consultations to develop a legal framework that recognizes and protects the work of women human rights defenders. The consultations resulted in the drafting of the “Policy on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders” — a first-of-its-kind in Papua New Guinea. The policy establishes sustainable administrative arrangements for the protection of human rights defenders, with specific proven provisions for women human rights defenders.

Through the **Latin America Regional Programme**, Spotlight Initiative supported the creation of the *Protocolo La Esperanza* (Hope Protocol (PLE)), which established guidelines for government officials, prosecutors, judges, human rights defenders, journalists, and others, to investigate threats of violence against women human rights defenders, with a special focus on gender. It represents the first international tool with public policy guidelines for diligent criminal investigation.

Because of these, and similar efforts across other Spotlight programmes, **77 laws and**

policies that protect the ability of women’s rights groups, civil society organizations and women human rights defenders to advocate for and advance human rights have been developed since 2019 and, across programmes, **over 75,000 women human rights defenders were better able to take part in legislative processes, participating directly in drafting laws and policies and ensuring they represent the voices of marginalized groups.**

Unfortunately, the last several years have witnessed a sharp increase in violence against women’s rights defenders, with anti-democratic and patriarchal forces trying to silence advocates and stop their progress towards gender equity and the adoption of positive norms. In response, Spotlight programmes have prioritized the drafting, strengthening, and enforcement of laws that protect women’s rights groups, women’s rights defenders, and civil society to continue to advance women’s human rights agendas. Over the course of the Initiative’s work, Spotlight programmes supported **over 10,000 staff from human rights institutions in multiple countries who were supported to advocate for, draft, strengthen, and implement legislation on ending violence against women and girls, gender equality, and non-discrimination.**

Over 10,000 staff from human rights institutions

improved their ability to advocate for, draft, strengthen and implement legislation to end violence against women and girls, and advance gender equality and non-discrimination





GOOD PRACTICE: **A FEMICIDE REPARATION POLICY FOR SURVIVORS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN ECUADOR**

OVERVIEW

Violence against women and femicide are some of the most serious challenges in Ecuador's gender equality agenda. Statistics show that 65 out of every 100 women in Ecuador have suffered some type of violence throughout their lives. Femicide and other violent deaths of women have significantly increased in the country between 2014 and 2023. While in 2014, 69 violent deaths of women were officially registered (including 26 cases classified as femicide), by 2023, this number had risen to 584 (with 105 cases classified as femicide). The alarming rates indicate the urgent need to prevent and reduce the impact of femicide and other violent deaths of women in Ecuador.

Despite the approval of the “Comprehensive Organic Law to Prevent and Eradicate Violence against Women” in February 2018, survivors of gender-based violence and families of femicide victims still struggle to access and find justice. Measures under this law often fail to acknowledge the severity of damage and distress experienced by the victims, their families and the survivors. There is also limited knowledge and understanding of accessible reparation measures available for survivors of gender-based violence and families of femicide victims.

Recognizing the need for effective implementation of reparation measures aligned with the Comprehensive Organic Law, UNDP, through Spotlight Initiative and the former Secretariat of Human Rights in Ecuador (later replaced by the Ministry of Women and Human Rights that was created in November 2022), developed and proposed the “Public Policy for the Comprehensive Reparation for Survivors and Families of Victims of Violence against Women and Femicide” (hereafter referred to as the “Femicide Reparation Policy”).

The Femicide Reparation Policy aimed to strengthen criminal investigation of femicide in the national context. It also focused on building national capacity to implement reparation measures and ensure that the rights of survivors and families of victims were met.

It provided a comprehensive understanding of reparation measures involving four dimensions: upholding legal and human rights; ensuring compensation, restitution, rehabilitation, and non-repetition; providing comprehensive protection; and strengthening prevention of gender-based violence against women and girls and people of diverse genders.

RESULTS

Led by the former Secretariat of Human Rights, which is now the current Ministry of Women and Human Rights, the Femicide Reparation Policy was the result of a co-creation process. The initial steps were taken in 2021 and involved a stakeholder mapping and analysis of the national legal framework on the subject and its jurisprudence, as well as international standards and jurisprudence. A first draft of the Femicide Reparation Policy was developed and further revised by Spotlight Initiative in collaboration with the Secretariat of National Planning and focal points of 22 government institutions that form the National System for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women. This was followed by a three-month consultative process involving judicial and other institutional actors, such as members of local departments of human rights, survivors and family members of victims, academic specialists, women's social movements, members of the Civil Society Reference Group of Spotlight Initiative and service providers. Through this extensive consultation process, the final Femicide Reparation Policy proposal integrated diverse perspectives and standardized definitions encompassing legal, psychological and social aspects of reparation, thereby providing a comprehensive reparation strategy.

The ultimate goal of this initiative, which was an agreement signed by the President of the Republic, the Attorney General and the President of the Judicial Council establishing the implementation of the Femicide Reparation Policy with adequate resources assigned to it, has not yet been achieved. The approval

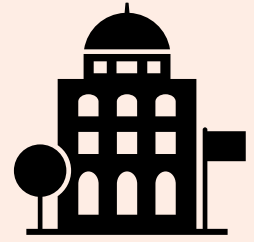
process of the policy has been delayed several times due to ministerial changes that eliminated the Secretariat of Human Rights and created the Ministry of Women and Human Rights in 2022, as well as the President's departure and a premature change of government at the end of 2023. As of November 2023, the document was being reviewed by the new Minister of the Ministry of Women and Human Rights, who assumed the position in November 2023.

Despite delays, the completion of the first policy document on femicide reparation measures in the country was an important milestone. The development of the Femicide Reparation Policy has been instrumental in building a common understanding of, and knowledge about, existing judicial provisions and mechanisms available to respond to the legal needs and rights of survivors and families of victims of violence against women and femicide. The policy socialization strategy, implemented by Spotlight Initiative in

partnership with government counterparts, also facilitated its institutionalization, especially at a local level. For example, two local "councils for the protection of rights" are monitoring the application of the policy, such as the presence of a prosecutor in all investigative procedures, including during forensic medical analysis.

Another success worth mentioning was the strengthening of women's organizations and movements as a result of the policy development and socialization processes, such as *Red de Mujeres Amazónicas* (Amazonian Women's Network). This network brought together more than 50 women to advocate for the implementation of the Femicide Reparation Policy and is currently contributing to other police reform initiatives. *Madres Coraje* ("Brave Mothers") was another movement strengthened during this period, whereby mothers of femicide victims organized, built momentum, and advocated for clear reparation measures in the National Assembly and in the Judicial Council.

PILLAR 2: INSTITUTIONS



National and subnational systems and institutions plan, fund, and deliver evidence-based programmes that prevent and respond to violence against women and girls and harmful practices, including in other sectors.

SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE FOLLOWING KEY RESULTS:

Developed new or strengthened existing regional and national action plans to end violence against women and girls.

Strengthened institutional mechanisms or bodies to better address violence against women and girls and harmful practices.

Improved the use of gender-responsive budgeting to eliminate violence against women and girls and increased budget lines for this work.

Enhanced the capacity of decision makers, including traditional leaders, to better address violence against women and girls at the local and national levels.

CAPTURING CHANGE OVER TIME: A SNAPSHOT OF PROGRESS ACROSS KEY INDICATORS

On average, there has been a

13-fold increase (from 2018 to 2023) in the percentage of **national budgets dedicated to addressing gender-based violence** across 13 countries (from 0.07 per cent in 2018 to 0.88 per cent in 2023).

As of 2023,

all 26 targeted countries now have **functioning coordination or oversight mechanisms** that address violence against women and girls and harmful practices.

There are a total of

280 oversight mechanisms at national, subnational, and regional levels, with 96 per cent including representation from marginalized groups.

Nearly

6,200 key government officials have **strengthened capacities to integrate efforts to combat violence against women and girls into the development plans of other sectors**, such as health, education, justice, security, culture, and social services.

All 15 targeted countries now have **internal and external accountability mechanisms in place** (113 in total) to monitor gender equality and women's rights and violence against women and girls and harmful practices.

50 countries strengthened their **National Action Plans** to eliminate violence against women and girls since 2019



Strong institutions help ensure that laws and policies to end violence against women and girls are adequately funded and implemented and impunity is addressed through accountability. Robust coordination across sectors and institutions at all levels of society also fosters national ownership. Spotlight Initiative prioritized institutional strengthening to ensure that laws and policies that prevent and respond to gender-based violence and harmful practices are implemented, well-funded, effective, and sustainable over time. Results in this area have yielded myriad successes since the Initiative's inception, as institutions play a crucial role in providing the resources, frameworks, and action necessary to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls.



RESULT:

DEVELOPED NEW OR STRENGTHENED EXISTING REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ACTION PLANS TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS.

National and regional action plans that are aligned with regional and international treaties and conventions, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), demonstrate government commitment to gender equality, help align national actions, and strengthen accountability to rights holders. These action plans serve as road maps to guide governments to deliver on their commitments to address violence against women and girls, and can be used by a range of local actors to hold national stakeholders and duty-bearers accountable.

Through the support of the Initiative, **50 countries developed or strengthened their national action plans to eliminate violence against women and girls and advance gender equality.**

In close collaboration with the African Union Commission, Spotlight Initiative's **Africa Regional Programme** mobilized stakeholders across the region to develop the first-ever Regional Action Plan on Eliminating Violence against Women and Girls. In 2021, Spotlight Initiative's Africa Regional Programme supported the first consultative session for the Regional Action Plan with diverse stakeholders participating from the African Union, regional economic communities, Member States and civil society organizations. Conducted virtually, the consultation allowed participants to share their knowledge and experiences and identify priorities, interventions, and strategies. Participants also discussed state budgets, monitoring, and compliance (critical for implementation). These discussions fed directly into the development of the Regional Action Plan. The plan also influenced individual governments, fostering coherence across domestic laws, and guiding governments in the region in the development of their own national action plans.

With the Initiative's support, **Trinidad and Tobago** approved its first National Strategic Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Violence (2023-2027), underscoring national commitment to ending violence against women and girls and family violence through a whole-of-government approach. Similarly, in **Kyrgyzstan**, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted the National Gender Equality Strategy for 2022-2030 and the National Action Plan for 2022-2025. There are 49 focal points in line ministries and agencies in charge



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of implementing the Gender Equality Strategy, driving localization at the *oblast* (regional) level (the first time this level of decentralisation has happened for a national strategy). Demonstrating national commitment to end violence against women and girls, the Gender Equality Strategy is 90 per cent funded as of early 2024.

To help decentralize efforts to end violence against women and girls, Spotlight Initiative supported the development of subnational, municipal, and provincial level plans as well. Spotlight Initiative programmes — including in **Argentina, El Salvador, Grenada, Honduras, Papua New Guinea, Trinidad and Tobago, and Timor-Leste** — strengthened local action plans, by ensuring that diverse stakeholders — including civil society — were engaged in the decentralization processes, helping ensure these plans' responsiveness.

With Spotlight Initiative's support, **Papua New Guinea** developed its first costed children's sector plan. Helping to implement the country's first provincial by-law on the protection of children, a total of 833 cases of domestic violence were addressed in 2022, including 20 cases of child abuse against boys and girls. Additional examples of subnational plans can be found in previous [Spotlight Global and Programme Annual Reports](#), and in the two-page summaries of programmes' reports in this report in [Annex B](#).

In **Honduras**, the Initiative strengthened the capacity of national and local institutions to formulate action plans on femicide, helping to

harmonise them with international human rights standards and the Sustainable Development Goals. Results of these efforts include the formation of various institutional commissions and working groups to tackle sexual exploitation and internal displacement due to violence, and working to deepen their capacity to do so. As a result of these efforts, the Initiative also contributed to the development of a detailed analysis that identified legislative and policy gaps in addressing femicide aligned with the Latin American Protocol Model.⁷⁹

Across countries, Spotlight Initiative also worked to ensure these plans were well-developed: well-developed plans are plans that engage in a consultative process for development, integrate an intersectional analysis (to ensure their responsiveness to the needs of diverse women and girls), are costed and adequately funded, and feature a monitoring and evaluation framework. Results of these efforts are captured in the table below.

Gender mainstreaming was used as a key strategy to create well-developed plans. By promoting the use of gender analysis and mainstreaming, the Initiative helped institutions better **integrate prevention and response to gender-based violence into action plans, including sector development plans**, across, for example, the health, justice, labour, and education sectors. The Initiative also focused on ensuring efforts to end violence against women and girls were integrated into disaster and risk mitigation strategies and plans (through the use of gender analysis and mainstreaming), improving institutional response

79. UN System Wide Evaluation Office (2024) "Draft 1: Final Evaluation of the Spotlight Initiative (2017-2023)".

Countries that have national evidence-based, costed and funded action plans and M&E frameworks on VAWG/HP that respond to the rights of all women and girls and are developed in a participatory manner

Programme	Baseline	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Target
Africa RP	●●●●●●●●	—	—	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●
Argentina	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●
Belize	●●●	—	●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●
Ecuador	●●●●●●●●	—	—	●●●●●●●●	●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●
El Salvador	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	—	●●●●●●●●
Grenada	●●●●	—	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●
Guyana	●●	●●●	●●	●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●
Haiti	●●●	—	—	●●	●●●	●●●	●●●
Honduras	●●	●●	—	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●	●●
Kyrgyzstan	—	—	●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	—
Liberia	●●●●	—	●●●●●●●●	—	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●
Malawi	●●●●●●●●	—	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	—	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●
Mali	●●●●	—	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	—	●●●●●●●●	●●●●
Niger	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●
Nigeria	—	●●	—	—	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●
Pacific Regional Programme	●●●●●●●●	—	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	—	●●●●●●●●
Papua New Guinea	—	—	—	●●●●●●●●	—	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●
Safe and Fair	●●	—	●●●●	●●	—	—	●●
Samoa	—	—	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	—
Tajikistan	—	—	—	●●	●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●
Timor-Leste	●●●●●●●●	—	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●
Trinidad and Tobago	●●●●	—	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●●
Zimbabwe	●●●●	●●●●●●●●	●●●	●●●●●●●●	—	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●

● Evidence-based ● Costed ● Funded ● M&E framework ● Rights of all women & girls ● Participatory Development
 — Does not apply/there is no plan

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE,

311 new sectorial plans, strategies or programmes to address violence against women and girls were developed **across 6 sectors**

HEALTH	EDUCATION	JUSTICE	SECURITY	SOCIAL SERVICES	CULTURE
47	64	56	33	92	19

in crisis contexts. Many Spotlight Initiative programmes focused on this critical area, from the **Caribbean Regional Programme to Haiti**, and **Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan**, and **Uganda**.

In **Tajikistan**, for example, attention to violence against women and girls was embedded into emergency response frameworks to address COVID-19 across the country. This was possible due to the collaboration between Spotlight Initiative and the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan. Through the partnership, over 596,000 people received critical information on COVID-19 prevention and available gender-based violence services, and 3,400 gender-based violence survivors were provided with psychological, legal, and medical assistance.

In **Nigeria**, Spotlight Initiative’s partner, Alliances for Africa, rapidly pivoted to mitigate the surge in violence against women and girls during the COVID-19 pandemic, mobilising support for the inclusion of women in all COVID-19 taskforce committees, and ensuring accountability in the distribution of government relief materials through close monitoring. In addition, they broadcasted messaging on effective and reliable prevention measures. This swift action resulted in strengthened coalitions and increased trust between state and civil society actors to address violence against women and girls in the crisis context.

The **Caribbean Regional Programme** supported the development of the first ever regional guidelines on the integration of violence against women and girls and family violence in the Disaster Risk Reduction/Management (DRR/M).⁸⁰ The Guidelines were then integrated into the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency’s Introduction to Comprehensive

Disaster Management course, which featured a gender and DRR/M module as well as a complete, standalone course on Gender, violence against women and girls, and DRR/M. This was a significant achievement in the region, and helped position gender responsive approaches within the work of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency more broadly. A signed letter of agreement with the Agency ensured a commitment to continue this work in the future, and a training module was developed to further strengthen staff capacities.

With the Initiative’s support, **311 new sectorial strategies, plans or programmes that aim to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls were developed across 13 countries**. These significantly impacted the lives of women and girls, including by increasing access to critical and life-saving services for survivors across all countries in which the Initiative worked, creating protections for victims of femicide (including in **Ecuador**), criminalizing violence against women and girls and harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation and early marriage (in **Mali**, for example), and ensuring that women migrants workers had stronger labour rights protections and lived free from violence, intimidation, and sexual harrasment (through the work of the the **Safe and Fair** programme).



RESULT:

STRENGTHENED INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS OR BODIES TO BETTER ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS AND HARMFUL PRACTICES.

Over the years, Spotlight Initiative has helped create new (or strengthen existing)

80. [Guidelines on the Integration of Violence Against Women and Girls including Family Violence in Disaster Risk Management in the Caribbean](#) (UNDP, 2023).

multi-stakeholder mechanisms to address violence against women and girls through a multisectoral approach aligned with international standards (as shown in the table below).⁸¹

National multi-stakeholder mechanisms help improve coordination across institutions, and ensure effective oversight of programmes and plans to end gender-based violence.

81. To be aligned with international standards means, among other things: to be established at the highest level and be composed of relevant stakeholders; to have a clear mandate and governance structure; and to develop and implement annual workplans.

Status of multi-stakeholder national coordination mechanisms (2023)

	Established at the highest level	Composed of relevant stakeholders	With a clear mandate and governance structure	With annual work plans
Argentina	●	●	●	●
Caribbean Regional Programme	●	●		
El Salvador	●	●	●	●
Grenada		●	●	
Guyana	●	●	●	
Haiti		●	●	
Honduras	●	●	●	●
Jamaica	●	●	●	
Kyrgyzstan	●	●	●	●
Liberia	●	●	●	●
Malawi	●	●	●	
Mali	●	●	●	●
Mexico	●	●	●	●
Mozambique	●	●	●	●
Nigeria	●	●	●	●
Papua New Guinea	●	●	●	●
Tajikistan	●	●	●	●
Timor-Leste	●	●	●	●
Trinidad and Tobago	●	●	●	●
Uganda	●	●	●	●
Zimbabwe	●	●	●	●

“Interestingly, the situation created an opportunity for the advancement of women’s rights as it glaringly exposed [infringements on women’s rights]. It was also an opportunity that is currently changing narratives, as everyone is adding their voices towards holding the government accountable for injustices on women and girls across the country.”

Iheoma Obibi,
Executive Director,
Alliances for Africa, Nigeria

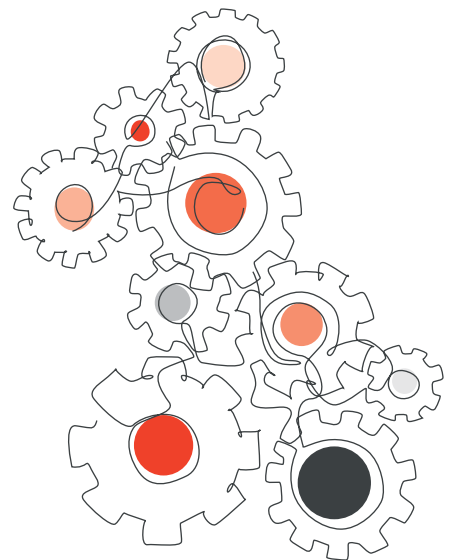
In **Papua New Guinea**, Spotlight Initiative played a crucial role in establishing the first Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, marking a significant political breakthrough. The committee facilitates institutional coordination and multi-stakeholder engagement, including with survivors, the broader public, and civil society, to promote reforms that bolster protections for women and girls. In May 2023, the Parliamentary Committee conducted a three-day inquiry, bringing together NGO representatives, women's rights experts, and institutions and government agencies responsible for advancing gender equality, and addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and sorcery-accusation related violence. Through public hearings, written submissions, and recommendations aimed at effectively addressing violence against women and girls, the committee represents a pivotal moment in efforts to advance gender equality within the Pacific region.

In **El Salvador**, Spotlight Initiative helped further strengthen the leadership and coordination capacity of the Municipal Committees for the Prevention of Violence (CMPV). Developed within the framework of the National Strategy for the Prevention of Violence in El Salvador, the CMPV are critical institutional mechanisms that design and monitor municipal plans to address violence, including violence against women and girls. The CMPV is composed of municipal governments, civil society, survivors, young people, the private sector, and other stakeholders. Training on gender responsive strategic planning led to the development of a Comprehensive Protection Policy for Children and Adolescents with an Action Plan for San Salvador. Equality and Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls Plans were also developed for two other municipalities in El Salvador. The plans are monitored through a technological platform that facilitates tracking and annual reporting and specific elements of the plans have been financed.

In **Mozambique**, Spotlight Initiative helped strengthen the Multisectoral Mechanism for Comprehensive Care for Women Victims of Violence (MMAIMVV), a key national multistakeholder mechanism to address violence against women and girls. Bringing together multiple stakeholders — including the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Welfare, the Ministry

of Health, and the Ministry of Justice, among others, along with civil society organizations, and service providers — the mechanism helps promote cross-sectoral collaboration to better address violence against women and girls across Mozambique. Spotlight initiative provided critical equipment (including more than 10 vehicles, 50 motorcycles, 20 computers, and office supplies), strengthening and streamlining the Mechanism's operations. As a result, the MMAIMVV was able to more quickly establish six Integrated Care Centers (Centros de Atendimento Integrado), which provide quality essential services to survivors of gender-based violence, including medical care, counselling, legal support, and social assistance.

Across **nine countries**, these mechanisms include representatives from groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.⁸² Ensuring diverse representation and perspectives, including particularly survivors' perspectives, on **multi-stakeholder coordination** mechanisms helps to ensure that these mechanisms are better able to effectively respond to the diverse needs of women and girls, and advance women's rights.



Across all **9** targeted countries,

national and sub-national multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms are in place that include **representatives of groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination**

82. The nine countries are: Argentina, El Salvador, Grenada, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mexico, Nigeria, and Papua New Guinea.



Young boys and girls participate to an awareness-raising art workshop on gender-based violence in El Salvador. © Spotlight Initiative.



RESULT:

IMPROVED THE USE OF GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING TO ELIMINATE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS AND INCREASED BUDGET LINES FOR THIS WORK.

Without an adequate budget, the commitment to ending violence against women and girls remains rhetorical. This is why the Initiative prioritized gender-responsive budgeting as a key tool to help ensure policies, programmes and services addressing violence against women and girls are adequately resourced. Over the duration of the Initiative, **14 countries prioritized gender-responsive budgeting and related interventions, including (but not limited to) Guyana, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and Uganda.**

An excellent example of the power of Spotlight Initiative and civil society work on gender-responsive budgeting was the allocation of the first-ever national budget in 2021 for violence against women and children in **Papua New Guinea** (approximately 7.93 million Papua New Guinean Kina or 1.4 million USD). Spotlight Initiative supported this work through technical assistance to key state agencies⁸³ and through deep civil society dialogue and support for aligning the budget with sector needs.⁸⁴ Seeing the importance of attention to gender issues, in 2023, the Government further increased the budget for 2023 by 24 per cent, reaching 9.8 million Papua New Guinean Kina (2.63 million USD).⁸⁵ Another political landmark was achieved after the July 2022 election and during the 11th Parliament when the parliamentary committee was institutionalized and became the permanent Parliamentary Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. This unexpected and positive breakthrough was viewed as an incredible achievement throughout the Pacific region and in the country.

Similarly in **Timor-Leste**, the Initiative's efforts to strengthen gender-responsive budgeting

resulted in increased budget allocation for gender equality and deepened confidence of civil society organizations in overseeing budget implementation. With the Initiative's support, USD 233 million (over 12 per cent of the budget) was allocated to gender equality and social inclusion. [The Good Practice box below details this significant result further.](#) In **Samoa**, a cross-ministerial Gender-Responsive Budgeting Core Group has been established, comprising senior government officials and civil society representatives, including members from the Initiative's civil society reference group. This Core Group leads efforts to institutionalize and formalize gender-responsive budgeting. It advocates for cross-sector capacity-building to deepen the government's ability to ensure gender-responsive budgeting and gender mainstreaming throughout the budget process.

The Spotlight Initiative's **Central Asia and Afghanistan Regional Programme** supported a regional assessment of gender-responsive budgeting in all five Central Asian countries over 10 years. This analysis has been critical in mapping national commitments to gender-based violence and gender equality through budgets, as well as in tracking the effectiveness of that funding. Results from the regional assessment drove the development of specific recommendations on the need for a more equitable distribution of resources across Central Asia.

Since 2019, **1,992 parliamentarians, 9,297 government officials in ministries and 6,508 women's rights advocates** have been trained on gender-responsive budgeting to better advocate for and increase national budgets to end violence against women and girls. This capacity-building work occurred in many Spotlight Initiative programmes including in **Guyana, Honduras, Liberia, Nigeria, and Vanuatu.**

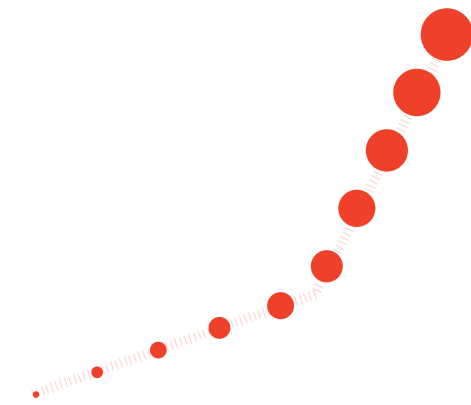
In **Liberia**, for example, the "Anti-SGBV Roadmap" — designed by civil society organizations and government to address gender-based violence in Liberia⁸⁶ — contained specific provisions that authorized an increase in the budget allocated to addressing sexual

83. Ibid, page 10.

84. The 2021 Papua New Guinea Annual Report, page 37.

85. The 2022 Papua New Guinea Interim Annual Report, page 7.

86. [Government of Liberia & Partners' ANTI-SGBV Roadmap \(2020-2022\)](#), page 17.



A NEARLY

13x increase in the amount allocated in national budgets

to address violence against women and girls. **All 18 targeted programmes** have dedicated national budget allocations to end violence against women and girls.

and gender-based violence.⁸⁷ Through gender-responsive planning and budgeting trainings held by the Initiative, key ministry officials were equipped with the skills needed to ensure budget allocations, and gender-responsive planning and budgeting units within key ministries were established. National budget allocation for gender issues increased from

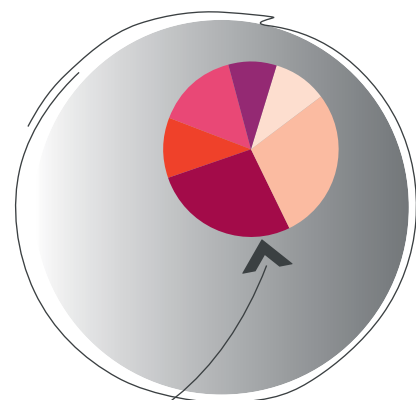
zero in 2020 to USD 380,000 in 2021 and USD 500,000 in 2022. It is expected that there will be more ministries adopting gender-responsive budgeting and more funding will be allocated to sexual and gender-based violence in the next budget years.⁸⁸ The two-page summaries of Spotlight programmes' final reports ([Annex B](#) of this report) include additional details and examples of this work.

These and similar efforts have led to a substantial increase in the portion of national budgets aimed at ending gender-based violence, with a nearly **thirteen-fold increase on average from 2018 to 2023 across 13 countries**. Moreover, all 18 targeted countries now have dedicated national budget allocations to end violence against women and girls. Considering the geopolitical and economic landscapes, and evolving national priorities — along with the growing resistance to women's rights and gender equality in many contexts — this stands out as a particularly significant achievement.

Spotlight Initiative programmes also advocated for dedicated budgets for national plans and programmes to advance gender equality and end violence against women and girls. As a result, since the start of the Initiative, 119 multisectoral programmes, developed with the support of Spotlight Initiative, include proposed allocations by national or local governments for gender equality or ending violence against women and girls.

SINCE 2019,

119 multi-sectoral programmes dedicated to ending violence against women and girls include a proposed allocation of funds



87. [Government of Liberia & Partners' ANTI-SGBV Roadmap \(2020-2022\)](#), page 18.

88. [The 2023 Liberia Draft Annual Report](#), page 18.



GOOD PRACTICE: **GREATER BUDGET ALLOCATION IN TIMOR-LESTE FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

OVERVIEW

Sexual and gender-based violence are critical issues in post-conflict Timor-Leste. Almost 67 per cent of women have experienced intimate partner violence, and more than 74 per cent of women believe that a man is justified in physically beating his wife. Furthermore, 37 per cent of married women who have experienced violence from their partners described domestic violence as normal and, in some cases, noted that violence was a daily occurrence. In order to effectively address domestic violence, national budgets must be in place to support critical and life-saving services and prevention activities.

In Timor-Leste, the percentage of the national budget allocated to the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls became a significant point of concern, following a drastic funding reduction between 2019 and 2020. In 2019, 0.6 per cent of the budget (USD 10.4 million) was allocated to gender equality initiatives. This was reduced to a mere 0.1 per cent of the budget (USD 1.4 million) in 2020. Reductions in budget allocated to gender equality initiatives have adverse consequences that impede the protection of women's rights and safety, the advancement of policies and programmes that address gender-based violence, and equitable access to education, healthcare, employment, and other opportunities.

In order to address this, through Spotlight Initiative, *Forum Komunikaun Ba Feto Timor Loro Sa'e* (FOKUPERS) (the Communication Forum for Timorese Women) actively engaged with different levels of the Government and 23 civil society organizations with the objective of increasing budget allocations for preventing and ending violence against women and girls. This engagement also ensured that stakeholders had a greater understanding of the budget and budgeting process, so that they could actively engage, contribute to, and monitor its implementation.

RESULTS

Spotlight Initiative's efforts to strengthen gender-responsive budgeting in Timor-Leste have resulted in notable outcomes, including increased budget allocation for gender equality and increased confidence of civil society organizations in overseeing budget implementation.

Spotlight Initiative developed a multi-pronged approach to address the decline in funding, involving training in gender-responsive budgeting for ministries, municipalities and civil society, among others. For example, the programme engaged a gender expert to advocate in parliament to increase funding for women's rights and for ending violence against women and girls. In addition, Spotlight Initiative carried out gender-based violence prevention training with the municipal gender working group, sectoral directors at the municipal and post-administrative levels, and the gender working groups from different line ministries. This training included components of gender-responsive budgeting and reached over 300 participants.

Another key activity supported by Spotlight Initiative was capacity development on gender-responsive budgeting for community members, civil society organizations and local governments. The programme employed an innovative method that translated state budget execution and expenditures into simplified information using infographics. This training assisted stakeholders in acquiring the necessary skills to assess the coherence across the state budget, public policies, programmes and projects, and the impact on citizens and monitoring of the budget programmes. These efforts highlighted the important role civil society organizations can play in monitoring government activities, such as comprehensive budget analyses.

“This initiative recognizes the role that CSOs play in overseeing government activities and provides tools to empower CSOs for strengthening the checks and balances systems and enhancing the democratic system.”

Bruno de Lencastre, Chief Technical Advisor of UNDP Parliament Project

“This workshop [has been] very important for how we control the state budget, especially so that civil society could understand the Government’s work that allocates budgets to implemented activities.”

A workshop participant

These strategies were effective and resulted in a 247 per cent increase in the budget between 2021 and 2022, specifically USD 203.78 million. In addition, USD 233 million (over 12 per cent of the budget) was allocated to gender equality and social inclusion. In 2023, USD 259 million was allocated for gender equality and social inclusion programmes. This amount represented the third largest allocation from the total budget (or 8.2 per cent), indicating the importance of gender equality and inclusion in the 2023 budget. The increased budget allocation contributes to better governance, and it is expected that future budgets will be more gender-responsive, transparent and accountable for the prevention of, and response to, violence against women and girls.

Spotlight Initiative’s interventions also contributed to the approval of the new National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence 2022-2032 (hereafter referred to as the “National GBV Action Plan”) by the Council of Ministers in June 2022. This action plan engaged a number of government offices, including the Municipality Authority Planning Unit under the Ministry of State Administration, the gender working group, and the Secretariat of State for Equality and Inclusion. This work has resulted in the incorporation of the National GBV Action Plan into the municipality annual plans for 2022, as well as an assessment

of the municipality’s work on the National GBV Action Plan. Aligning programme objectives with actual budgets is critical for implementation. These efforts facilitated holistic planning and development and help to avoid duplication of efforts and resources.

“It is hard to understand the state budget and especially to analyse it from a gender perspective. The training has increased my understanding to analyse the programme and budget, and I look forward to familiarizing and understanding all the budget books.”

A gender-responsive budget working group member training participant

These results clearly illustrate a renewed government commitment to gender equality, particularly in the case of the Secretariat of State for Equality and Inclusion. It is hoped that these efforts will contribute to sustainable, long-term allocations for gender equality in future budgets, coordination across different levels of government, and increased engagement and oversight of civil society organizations and other stakeholders. However, potential challenges to the sustainability of the new budget allocation may emerge. These include: limited human resource capacity; future changes in government that may require renewed efforts to engage on gender equality issues; and limited resources in the overall budget, which means multiple priorities are competing for funding at the national and local levels. In these cases, gender budgets are often the first to go, hence it is critical to ensure funding allocations for gender equality are sustained through civil society monitoring of budgets.



RESULT:

ENHANCED THE CAPACITY OF DECISION MAKERS, INCLUDING TRADITIONAL LEADERS, TO BETTER ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS AT THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS.

From its inception, Spotlight Initiative and partners placed strategic focus on improving awareness and strengthening the capacity of key decision makers across diverse institutions, including within government ministries, the judiciary, civil society leaders, traditional and community leaders, and local police, to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls, including in **Belize, El Salvador, Nigeria** and through the **Latin America Regional Programme** and **Safe and Fair**.

Over the course of the Initiative, almost **20,000 key government officials (of which nearly**

13,000 were women) were trained on **human rights and gender-equitable norms and attitudes**. Additionally, a range of key decision makers — including nearly 19,000 government officials — strengthened their capacities to develop and deliver programmes to prevent violence against women and girls, including across sectors (for example, the police, judiciary, and secondary and higher education).

In **El Salvador**, for example, the Initiative strengthened the capacity of the justice sector and the public ministry to address cases of femicide by improving criminal investigations and strengthening the tools used in cases of violent deaths of women and girls. In addition, in 2022, a protocol to address femicide cases was approved.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, the Initiative helped ensure the Government prioritized efforts to end violence against women and girls. Spotlight Initiative trained parliamentarians to better advocate for, draft, revise, and implement



© Spotlight Initiative El Salvador.

SINCE 2019,
WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE INITIATIVE,

111 training institutions for public servants

(including for nurses, judges, and police officers)

across 12 countries integrated gender equality and the issue of violence against women and girls in their curriculum.

This represents

84% of targeted national and subnational training institutions for public servants.



legislation to end violence against women and girls, advance gender equality, and promote non-discrimination. As a result, unprecedented parliamentary achievements were made, including the expansion of legal aid modalities, amendments to the law on domestic violence (to better address impunity), and amendments to the labour and criminal code (to better address workplace harassment). As a positive spillover effect, parliamentarians also reported increased interest from their constituents on issues related to ending violence against women and girls.

The Initiative collaborated with traditional, religious, and community leaders across various countries as well, including in **Malawi, Nigeria, and Tajikistan** to equip them with skills to analyse local cultural practices from a gender perspective. This helped bring about substantial changes in access to justice and the enforcement of laws prohibiting harmful practices (including child marriage and female genital mutilation), and violence against women and girls.

In **Malawi**, for example, an effective strategy implemented by the Chiefs' Forums was the inclusion of traditional chiefs in gender-based violence patrols, in collaboration with Safe Space mentors, mothers' groups and

child protection workers. Chiefs conducted awareness campaigns on gender-based violence in their localities, according to action plans, and aligned norms of equality with their by-laws.⁸⁹ Together they identified and referred child marriage and harmful practices cases, and defined and applied penalties in accordance with their by-laws. Gender-based violence patrols were able to identify and refer 1,075 gender-based violence cases, of which 44 per cent were addressed through mobile and district courts.⁹⁰ They also cancelled 1,222 child marriages (98 per cent of registered child marriages within six districts) and then re-enrolled girls in schools, which is expected to help prevent early pregnancies.⁹¹

Spotlight Initiative also worked with training institutions and universities to educate decision makers and civil servants to better advance women's rights and address gender-based violence. **Since 2019, with the support of the Spotlight Initiative, 111 training institutions for public servants (including for nurses, judges, and police officers) across 12 countries have integrated gender equality and the issue of violence against women and girls into their curricula. This represents 84 per cent of targeted national and subnational training institutions for public servants.**

89. The 2022 Malawi Annual Programme Report, page 24. In 2022, 61,427 community members accessed messages on ending violence against women and girls and harmful practices through the Chiefs' Forums.

90. The Malawi Final Programme Report (Cumulative).

91. The 2021 Malawi Annual Programme Report.

PILLAR 3: PREVENTION

Gender-inequitable social norms, attitudes and behaviours change at community and individual levels to prevent violence against women and girls and harmful practices.



SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE FOLLOWING KEY RESULTS:

Helped form influential groups and networks to prevent and address violence against women and girls by promoting gender-equitable norms and attitudes.

Established safe spaces for women and girls to prevent gender-based violence, and promote women's and girls' participation and inclusion.

Collaborated with academia, civil society, government, and rights holders to **develop and implement educational curricula, programmes and strategies that protect and promote gender equality and positive norms.**

Partnered with social and traditional media to **launch effective grassroots, subnational, national, and regional behaviour change campaigns** that directly confront public opinions and norms that condone and lead to gender-based violence.

Galvanized survivors, men and boys, traditional leaders, civil society organisations, parents, youth, and marginalized groups to **transform their communities by nurturing equitable norms, attitudes and behaviours.**

Invested in the socioeconomic rights of women and girls to better address the connections between financial security and violence against women and girls and harmful practices.

CAPTURING CHANGE OVER TIME: A SNAPSHOT OF PROGRESS ACROSS KEY INDICATORS

With the Initiative's support, nearly

85 programmes that promote gender-equitable norms, attitudes, and behaviours have been integrated into formal educational curricula (three times more than planned).

Since 2019,

8,220 communities have established new advocacy platforms to promote gender equality and end violence against women and girls, compared to just 61 communities at baseline.

With support from the Initiative,

80 per cent of targeted countries have developed at least three (evidence-based, transformative, and comprehensive) prevention strategies or programmes that address the underlying drivers of violence against women and girls. This is a four-fold increase over baseline.



COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION EFFORTS
HAVE DIRECTLY REACHED

nearly 6 million community members

through **dialogue** and **conversations**,
since the Initiative began.

The majority of the Initiative's investment has been dedicated to prevention efforts, and the transformation of harmful beliefs, attitudes, and norms that underpin violence against women and girls and harmful practices. Over the years, the work under this pillar has focused on promoting evidence-based prevention strategies and programmes that address harmful norms, beliefs, and practices in order to promote greater equality, inclusion, and safety.

With support from the Initiative, **80 per cent of targeted countries (a four-fold increase over baseline) now have at least three evidence-based, transformative, comprehensive prevention strategies** or programmes that address the underlying causes of violence against women and girls, and nearly 64,000 formal and informal decision makers, including over 30,000 women, increased their ability to advocate for laws and policies that end violence against women and girls and promote gender-equitable norms, attitudes, and behaviours.



RESULT:

HELPED FORM INFLUENTIAL GROUPS AND NETWORKS TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS BY PROMOTING GENDER-EQUITABLE NORMS AND ATTITUDES.

The Initiative helped form influential groups and networks across countries — including in **El Salvador, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Vanuatu, and Zimbabwe** — to promote gender-equitable norms, attitudes, and behaviours. Networks and groups — including men and boys' clubs, child protection committees,

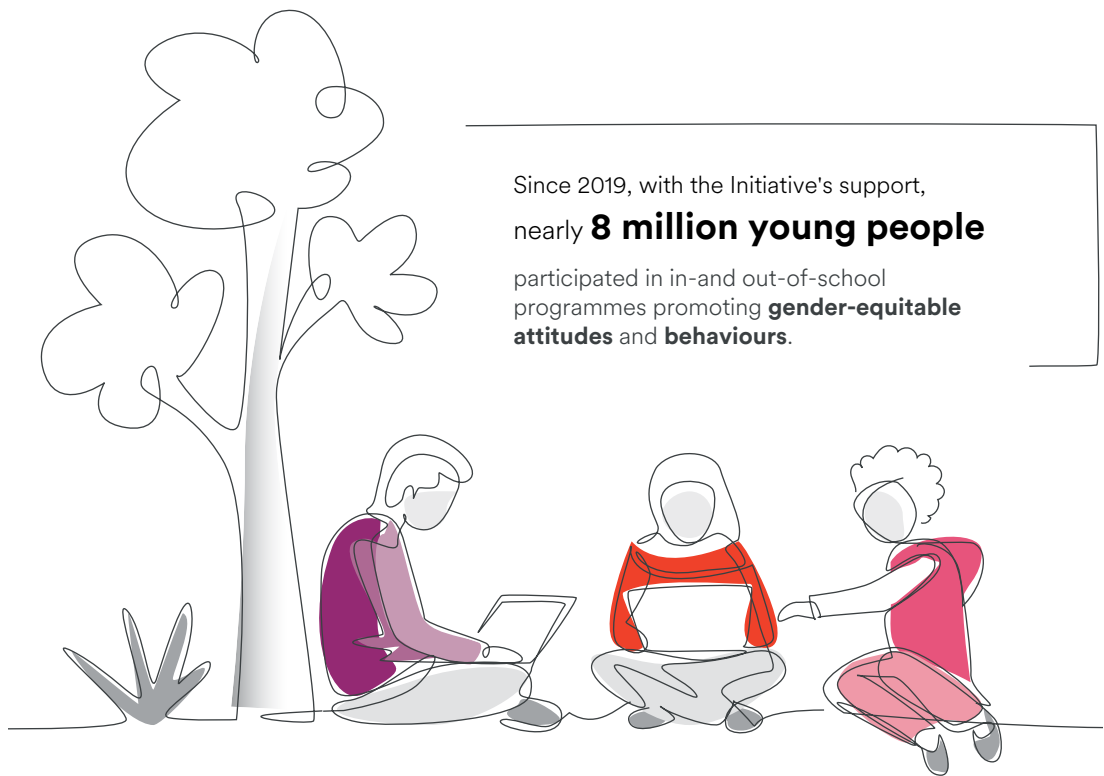
citizen observatories, extracurricular clubs, model workplaces, buddy clubs, and student clubs — engage in a range of work to advance women's rights and address violence, including facilitating awareness-raising dialogues, responding to complaints of women and girls, establishing guidelines and programmes, and facilitating access to services.

In **Ecuador**, for example, three "citizen communication observatories" identified and advocated against sexism and gender-based discrimination in the media. Each observatory is staffed by local, trained civil society organizations to observe, identify, and publicly denounce sexist messages that encourage violence against women and girls and femicide, and to promote the prevention of violence in the media.

In **Niger**, Spotlight Initiative promoted community-based mechanisms for protection against gender-based violence through the establishment of 300 village child protection committees run by trained members. The members have been tasked with continuing awareness-raising, monitoring the implementation of action plans, and managing cases. These committees bridge the gap between non-formal and formal mechanisms, upholding the 2019 government decree institutionalizing child protection committees at all levels. This community-based approach to child protection has engaged 790,291 people (266,927 women, 190,100 girls, 211,069 men and 122,195 boys) from 300 villages. Further, all the target villages made a public declaration to end behaviours that constitute violence against girls and women and other practices harmful to their health and well-being.



© UNFPA Mozambique.



Since 2019, with the Initiative's support, nearly **8 million young people** participated in in- and out-of-school programmes promoting **gender-equitable attitudes and behaviours**.



RESULT:

ESTABLISHED SAFE SPACES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS TO PREVENT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, AND PROMOTE WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION.

The threat of violence and harmful practices has often prevented women and girls from accessing important spaces in society. To enable women's and girls' inclusion, Spotlight Initiative has fostered the development of safe spaces, and related infrastructure, in academia, workplaces, and sporting venues, and within community settings, offering protected access for women and girls.

The Pacific Regional Programme, for example, supported designated safe spaces at key sporting arenas during the 2023 Pacific Games in the Solomon Islands. These mother and child-friendly safe spaces included facilities for breastfeeding, information and educational materials that address early childhood development, maternal health, water, sanitation, and nutrition. All spaces were staffed with dedicated social welfare officers and interns, ensuring a supportive and secure environment.

The Spotlight programme in **Malawi** created the Safe Space Mentorship Programme to deliver weekly mentorship sessions where girls were taught life skills and human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, how to prevent negative social behaviour, and how to report violence. As a result, 13,564 gender-based violence cases were referred by Safe Space mentorship girls. Safe Space girls have collectively raised their voices to advocate for shifts in harmful cultural practices through forums engaging nearly 20,000 traditional and other influential leaders. Additionally, nearly 1,000 Safe Space girls were accepted into various secondary schools, a significant achievement considering the low educational performance of girls in target districts.

Similarly, In **Guyana**, the Initiative invested in creating 11 secure, confidential, and activity-oriented counselling spaces, one in each school district, to provide gender-responsive psychosocial support for both teachers and students. As a result, 150 children and 15 teachers received priority counselling to address trauma, bullying, self-harm, and suicidal tendencies. This programme is now endorsed by the School Welfare Department due to its success.



© UNFPA ESARO.



RESULT:

COLLABORATED WITH ACADEMIA, CIVIL SOCIETY, GOVERNMENT, AND RIGHTS HOLDERS TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT EDUCATIONAL CURRICULA, PROGRAMMES AND STRATEGIES THAT PROTECT AND PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND POSITIVE NORMS.

Since its inception, Spotlight Initiative has worked in partnership with key stakeholders (including education ministries, academia, civil society, feminist movements, rights holders, and communities) to design and disseminate curricula, resources, and tools (and develop educational platforms) that educate and raise awareness on violence against women and girls and harmful practices. These efforts have collectively benefited a wide range of actors, including in- and out-of-school youth, teachers, parents, community leaders, and survivors.

Spotlight Initiative — including in **Argentina, El Salvador, Haiti, Liberia, Papua New Guinea, Uganda, Vanuatu, and through the Caribbean, Central Asia and Afghanistan, and Pacific Regional Programmes** — collaborated with key stakeholders to develop and institutionalize comprehensive sexuality education and family life education. The **Caribbean Regional Programme**, for example, worked to integrate comprehensive sexuality education into formal school curricula across the region, and

developed guidance to reach out-of-school youth, as well. A toolkit was developed for civil society partners to ensure that marginalized youth and those most vulnerable also have access to comprehensive sexuality education.

In **Argentina**, comprehensive sexuality education across different age groups has promoted greater awareness of gender equality and gender-based violence. Spotlight Initiative collaborated with government counterparts and civil society organizations to develop resources that promote the institutionalization and accessibility of comprehensive sexuality education in primary and secondary education. Instructional guides were made available to support teaching comprehensive sexuality education to deaf students, considering their specific needs. Instructional guides were also developed in indigenous languages to ensure inclusivity.

In **Samoa**, Spotlight Initiative helped to finalize the family life education curriculum for grades 1-8 and 9-12, ensuring alignment with international standards, and supported the Samoan Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture to institute the micro-credentialing in family life education for in-service teachers, with family life education now offered as a minor in the B.Ed programme in the National University of Samoa. These efforts contributed to improved institutionalization, strengthening the sustainability of efforts to advance gender equality and end violence against women and girls across the country.

Similarly, in **Vanuatu**, Spotlight Initiative helped advocate for in-school and out-of-school Comprehensive Sexual Education in line with the International Technical and Programmatic Guidance of Out-of-School Comprehensive Sexual Education Guidelines. A total of 37 teachers and government staff members received the Family Life Education master training between 2021-2022. The Ministry of Education and Training targeted both teachers and provincial education officers as master trainers of the in-school Family Life Education curriculum to ensure reach and integration across the approximately 111 secondary schools in Vanuatu.

Adding to the tools available to promote positive social norms, the **Latin America Regional Programme** developed “[Four Steps to prevent Gender Based Violence](#)”, a pedagogical toolkit featuring tools and guidance on addressing harmful social and gender norms through an intersectional perspective. The toolbox serves as a methodological tool for schools and communities across the region to enhance prevention efforts to end gender-based violence. In partnership with academia, a total of five workshops were carried out, reaching a total of 160 stakeholders from across the region with tools to advance prevention strategies.



© Spotlight Initiative Argentina.

The Initiative also used creative ways to educate youth, such as through video games to address violence against women and girls and harmful practices. Spotlight Initiative in **Kyrgyzstan** supported the development of a mobile game called “[Spring in Bishkek](#)”, which was co-funded by Sigrid Rausing Trust and the Soros Foundation Kyrgyzstan. The game helped players gain awareness of gender discrimination and *ala-kachuu*, the harmful practice of bride kidnapping and child marriage. The events in the game were inspired by real-life events and actual cases, with players the sole lifeline for a friend whose family did not intervene after her abduction. The original target group of the game was young girls, however, the strong messaging around seeking assistance when confronted with a difficult situation resonated with all players, including boys. By the end of 2021, the [game was downloaded over 160,000 times](#) by users of diverse age groups in Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine and other countries (outperforming the original target of 25,000 downloads). The average user rating was 4.9 stars, suggesting relevant messaging that resonates across contexts.

One of the major achievements of the game was its ability to transform users’ perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours towards gender equality. Anecdotal evidence collected during evidence review meetings highlighted that three girls were able to prevent forced marriages after playing the game. Girls who played the game expressed a greater sense of autonomy, an increased sense of agency, and a greater ability to express themselves.

In **Tajikistan**, under the umbrella of the Initiative, UNICEF collaborated with the Ministry of Education and Science, and Good Neighbors International, to launch a child protection programme aimed at tackling violence against girls and boys in and out of schools. The programme focused on educating and engaging schools, teachers, children, and parents to address child protection issues and prevent child abuse. A significant component of the programme was the establishment of a complaint mechanism across schools, with nearly 350 schools adopting these. As of 2023, these mechanisms had received 1,437 reports from children (703 boys and 734 girls). The majority of these focused on issues such as corporal punishment by teachers, school bullying, and barriers to girls’ school attendance. By surfacing these, they were better addressed, contributing to safer school environments.



RESULT:

PARTNERED WITH SOCIAL AND TRADITIONAL MEDIA TO LAUNCH EFFECTIVE GRASSROOTS, SUBNATIONAL, NATIONAL, AND REGIONAL BEHAVIOUR CHANGE CAMPAIGNS THAT DIRECTLY CONFRONT PUBLIC OPINIONS AND NORMS THAT CONDONE AND LEAD TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.

To amplify prevention efforts, Spotlight Initiative engaged both traditional and emerging media channels (including social, printed, television, and radio) to deliver behaviour change campaigns. These campaigns were informed by research, partners, and survivors (through active dialogues), to ensure that messages were culturally sensitive and reached a diverse audience, especially marginalized and historically underrepresented groups. **Over the course of the Initiative’s implementation, over 800 campaigns — through social media, TV, newspapers, radio, and events — were launched across 32 countries, reaching an audience of nearly 384 million people (more than the population of the United States or Indonesia, and nearly twice as many people as the population of Bangladesh) with locally designed messages and behaviour change methodologies.**

In the **Central Asia and Afghanistan Regional Programme**, over 15 million people were reached through the “HeForShe” Central Asia campaign,

which raised awareness on masculinity and the importance of mobilizing men and boys as partners and advocates to end all forms of violence against women and girls. This multimedia campaign (including film, TV, and social media) was delivered through the mobilization of USD 1.3 million of in-kind contributions from the biggest chain of creative co-working hubs in Kyrgyzstan, and TV channels and radio stations in Central Asian countries. The **Central Asia and Afghanistan Regional Programme** also reached about 1 million people across the region with critical messaging on GBV services. By promoting 80 human interest stories that showcased access to services for survivors of sexual and gender based violence — including during the COVID-19 pandemic — the Initiative helped improve knowledge of available services, including those offered by crisis centres.

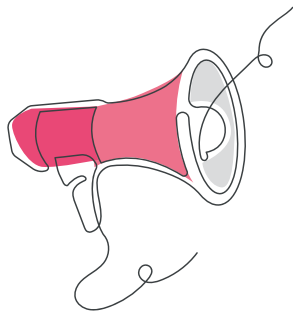
In **Grenada**, large-scale campaigns designed to address the drivers of violence against women and girls were implemented, using evidence-based communication strategies and various media to reach target populations. This increased public dialogue and societal ability to confront the myths and beliefs that enable the perpetuation of violence against women and girls. It also promoted healthy relationships and advanced substantive gender equality at the individual, interpersonal and community levels throughout the country. It is estimated that this multifaceted prevention programme reached the entire population of Grenada and even crossed borders via social media channels.

Campaigns to prevent violence against women and girls reached an audience of nearly

384
million globally



Similarly, in **Mozambique**, the Initiative made critical investments in raising awareness of the rights of women and girls to live free from violence and harmful practices, employing diverse communication channels such as television, radio, social media, door-to-door campaigns, and mentoring sessions. Similarly, the use of media and advocacy campaigns in **Samoa** were an important tool that were especially effective in raising the visibility of the issue in creative ways that were culturally grounded.⁹²



SINCE THE START OF THE INITIATIVE,

679 news outlets

across 7 countries, adopted standards for **ethical and gender-sensitive reporting**.



SINCE THE START OF THE INITIATIVE,

8,770 journalists are better able to sensitively report

on issues related **gender equality violence against women and girls**.

While it is difficult to capture the full impact of these campaigns, and their domino effect (over time), **more than 5.7 million women and girl survivors of violence across 18 countries reported increased knowledge of quality, essential services and longer-term recovery services**, due (at least in part) to effective messaging and widely disseminated campaigns.



RESULT:

GALVANIZED SURVIVORS, MEN AND BOYS, TRADITIONAL LEADERS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS, PARENTS, YOUTH, AND MARGINALIZED GROUPS TO TRANSFORM THEIR COMMUNITIES BY NURTURING EQUITABLE NORMS, ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS.

Spotlight initiative invested in community groups and changemakers, centring influential leaders, peers, and community voices at the forefront of prevention efforts. This strategy is based soundly in behaviour cultural research, which supports engaging representative and influential champions to maximize the effectiveness of community-level behaviour change strategies. With the Initiative's support, and through robust community collaboration, **over 8000 villages and communities across targeted countries established advocacy platforms to bring together individuals in order to promote gender-equitable norms, attitudes, and behaviours**. Aimed at transforming harmful social norms and stereotypes and promoting behaviour change, **nearly 6 million community members participated in community dialogues, strengthening community engagement in efforts to end violence and promote gender equality and women's rights**.

In **Honduras**, the SASA Approach⁹³ (an evidence-based community mobilization approach to prevent violence against women) was used in five Lenca indigenous communities of Intibucá. To date, 3,527 women participated in social transformation activities to collectively use their power to create safe, violence-free communities for women, 40 indigenous leaders carried out

92. UN System Wide Evaluation Office (2024) "Draft 1: Final Evaluation of the Spotlight Initiative (2017-2023)"

93. The SASA approach: "Sasa" means "now" in Kiswahili and the acronym stands for the four phases of the approach: start, awareness, support, and action. The approach was originally developed by Raising Voices to address the links between violence against women and HIV/AIDS. The methodology is meant to inspire, enable, and structure effective community mobilization to prevent violence against women and HIV/AIDS. This method has been adapted to address violence against women and girls and harmful practices.



SINCE THE START OF THE INITIATIVE,

close to
6 million men and boys were educated on:

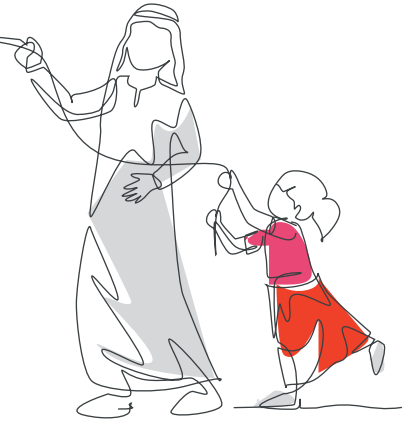
Non-violent
conflict
resolution



Positive
masculinity



Respectful
family relationships



community mapping, identifying the strengths and abilities their community possessed to prevent violence against women and girls, and 21 women survivors of violence were identified and referred to basic care services.

Prevention work is often sidelined in humanitarian contexts as actors work to address immediate response needs. In **Haiti**, while the Initiative continued to support lifesaving work to address the immediate needs of survivors (through services, for example), the Initiative also helped to ensure that, in spite of the ongoing crisis, integrated long-term change efforts continued. In the midst of Haiti's humanitarian emergency, Spotlight Initiative adapted and continued to focus on prevention, supporting civil society organisations, including feminist organisations, to effectively prevent and respond to GBV by directly addressing harmful gender norms and beliefs. These efforts helped communities challenge harmful gender norms and behaviors, and foster attitudes that further promote women's rights and protection in the long-term. The Initiative worked with nearly 130 civil society organisations to reach around 42,300 adolescents with critical information on GBV, strengthening knowledge and prevention efforts. Around 78,000 girls, boys, women and men also participated in community education programmes on GBV prevention, improving their awareness of the issue, while campaigns to promote positive social norms and combat stereotypes reached nearly 277,000 people.

Educating men and boys, who hold traditional roles of power and influence in many communities, is key to the Initiative's strategy to prevent violence against women and girls. Since 2019, **close to 6 million men and boys have been educated on positive masculinity, respectful family relationships, and non-violent conflict resolution.** In **Mali**, for example, Model Husbands' Clubs made a significant contribution to gender equality through men's awareness-raising activities. These activities promoted increased sharing of domestic labour and positive masculinity and, as a result, target communities reported greater involvement of men and boys in certain household tasks previously reserved exclusively for women and girls, such as fetching water, collecting garbage, and caring for children and their education. Programme research indicates



WITH THE SUPPORT OF SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE,

over 8,000 villages and communities

developed advocacy platforms to prevent violence



© UNFPA/Spotlight Initiative/Timothy Webster.

that 80 per cent of the men surveyed looked for firewood for their wives and 50 per cent took care of the children when the mothers were busy cooking. According to a woman leader in the village of Golo: *“In the past, when an infant cried, the men would scold us and force us to come and take him, but nowadays, instead of calling us, they take care of the child themselves so that we can continue our tasks.”*

“Beating women, which used to be common in the community, is much reduced nowadays. Awareness-raising has made it possible to reduce physical aggression against women as well as insults between husbands and wives.”

Technical director of the community health centres in the communes of Sebecoro, Sagabala, Guihoyo and Nonkon

In **Tajikistan**, through Spotlight Initiative, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) worked to form partnerships with religious leaders to eliminate violence against women and girls. In partnership with Tajikistan’s State Agency Committee on Religious Affairs and the Regulation of Traditions, Celebrations and Ceremonies, the “Healthy Lifestyle” programme, which trained *imams* (Muslim religious leaders) on issues related to sexual

and gender-based violence, was implemented. Overall, 540 religious leaders, including religious officials and rural leaders, were trained. After participating in the training programme, religious leaders had greater awareness of sexual and gender-based violence issues. For instance, when speaking in the mosque, the imams involved in the training were more likely to speak on topics related to gender equality. Additionally, religious leaders in rural areas started seeking advice from the Committee on Women and Family Affairs on domestic violence issues. One imam shared that after he participated in the training, he learned how to identify cases of domestic violence and better handle these. Specifically, he began to probe more deeply into women’s accounts and not only consider a situation from the husband’s point of view.

In **Honduras**, the “Cure Violence” model was implemented in areas with a high prevalence of gang wars and trafficking networks. The model focused on changing social and gender norms through community dialogues, youth engagement and mobilizing local communities through “violence interrupters”. The goal was to help diverse communities identify risk factors, challenge negative gender stereotypes, and use collective prevention techniques to stop violence and prevent potential deaths. Violence interrupters have averted 1,770 acts of violence involving more than 724 women and girls since its inception. [The good practice box below offers a deeper dive into this example.](#)



GOOD PRACTICE: **THE CURE VIOLENCE COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION MODEL IN HONDURAS HELPS PREVENT FEMICIDE AND OTHER FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

OVERVIEW

Honduras has the highest femicide rate in Latin America, with 6.2 cases per 100,000 women recorded in 2021.⁹⁴ Between 2020 and 2021, more than 500 women were murdered within the country.⁹⁵ Impunity for these crimes is rampant, with between a 90 per cent and 96 per cent impunity rate when it comes to cases of femicide and sexual violence in the country.⁹⁶

Recognizing this significant challenge and extreme human rights violation, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and Cure Violence Global, as part of Spotlight Initiative in Honduras, developed a violence interrupters programme (hereafter referred to as the “Cure Violence model”) to identify and prevent instances of violence against women and girls through rapid response teams of individuals who attempt to prevent and, if necessary, report on the violent acts being committed against women and children within their communities.⁹⁷

RESULTS

The Cure Violence model was implemented in areas with a high prevalence of gang wars and trafficking networks. These challenging environments were characterized by heightened social tension that disproportionately impacted women and children. The methodology focused on changing social and gender norms through community dialogues,

youth engagement, and mobilizing local communities to facilitate cooperation and interaction amongst stakeholders.⁹⁸ Violence interrupters, as key agents of change, guided discussions and delved into solutions aimed at challenging negative gender stereotypes and addressing discrimination.⁹⁹ The goal was to strengthen the capacities of diverse communities to identify risk factors and use collective prevention techniques to stop violence and prevent potential deaths.¹⁰⁰

Within the first six months of its implementation, the Cure Violence model interrupted 662 violent instances and potentially safeguarded the lives of 133 women.¹⁰¹ Since then, violence interrupters have averted 1,770 highly volatile incidents involving more than 724 women and girls across 25 neighbourhoods within the Choloma and San Pedro Sula areas.¹⁰² Out of the total cases managed, nearly 65 per cent¹⁰³ of them involved the prevention of femicide. So far, the lives of more than 500 women have been saved, and 52 individuals, primarily women and children, have been relocated to safer, more permanent homes.¹⁰⁴ Violence interrupters have cumulatively spent more than 43,402 hours working with various community members to steadily change social and gender norms.

In one particularly noteworthy incident, a woman and her two children were kidnapped and held hostage by a gang that had previously killed her husband. Given the common practice of gang wars and women getting caught in these disputes, a neighbour reported the incident to the

94. [Violence against women, the other pandemic impacting Honduras](#) (UNSDG, December 2021).

95. *Ibid.*

96. [Stories of Hope, Courage and Change from Latin America and Africa](#) (Spotlight Initiative, 2021), page 17.

97. [Trained violence interrupters avert femicide in Honduras](#) (Spotlight Initiative, 2021).

98. [Stories of Hope, Courage and Change from Latin America and Africa](#) (Spotlight Initiative, 2021), page 18.

99. *Ibid.*

100. Reducing violence and preventing femicides in Honduran communities (UNICEF Honduras, May 2021).

101. [Spotlight Mid-term Assessment Report using ROM review](#) (Spotlight Initiative Honduras), page 66.

102. [Stories of Hope, Courage and Change from Latin America and Africa](#) (Spotlight Initiative, 2021), page 18.

103. *Ibid.*

104. [Trained violence interrupters avert femicide in Honduras](#) (Spotlight Initiative, October 2021).

violence interrupter in order to find a way to protect them.¹⁰⁵ A strategy was developed to rescue them from the situation, and once they were found, swift action was taken to find them a new home in a different city.

In addition to preventing instances of violence, the Cure Violence model also reduced reported crimes in the programme area. Previously the area had been known as a “hotspot” for crimes, and in 2019, nearly 38 women had died as a result of violence. This number was reduced by more than half due to the efforts of violence interrupters, who work tirelessly to build community capacity on risk identification and de-escalation tactics to address violent situations.¹⁰⁶

**“I don’t care if it’s 1 am.,
3 am., 5 am.; any time we
get a call, we’re there.”**

A violence interrupter

One of the major achievements of the Cure Violence model has been its ability to engage with and encourage people to reflect on and address “harmful masculinity.” Violence interrupters helped the communities to challenge and overcome these negative stereotypes. They influenced young boys and girls to become agents of change among their peers and within “spheres of influence.” As reflected by another violence interrupter, this was achieved by “*gaining credibility and people’s trust*”.



RESULT:

INVESTED IN THE SOCIOECONOMIC RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS TO BETTER ADDRESS THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN FINANCIAL SECURITY AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS AND HARMFUL PRACTICES.

Socioeconomic rights grant women and girls greater agency, financial independence, improved educational attainment, and increased decision-making power. Access to socioeconomic well-being can shift power dynamics, and disrupt or challenge the negative social norms that lead to violence against women and girls. The Initiative invested in the socioeconomic rights of women and girls across several programmes, including in **Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mexico, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and through Safe and Fair**, providing women and girls with economic, educational, and cultural opportunities.

The United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women and Spotlight Initiative partnership in **Mexico** financed the horticultural training initiative, which directly

105. Ibid.

106. Ibid.



© UN Women.

contributed to the food security, sovereignty, and autonomy of 64 indigenous women and girls and impacted over 300 people in six municipalities in Oaxaca. Implemented in indigenous communities and led by young indigenous women, this project addressed the rising food insecurity driving violence against women and girls and benefited women with little to no access to economic opportunities, including single mothers and domestic workers.

Approximately 3,300 women (gender-based violence survivors, women living with HIV, women with disabilities and women in impoverished rural and urban communities) received knowledge and skills training through Spotlight Initiative's **Zimbabwe Women's Economic Empowerment** model, which led to the creation of 2,920 micro-businesses by women trained in Manicaland and Harare (the two provinces targeted by the Initiative). The women now run micro-businesses in horticulture, poultry production, tailoring, retail, baking, and waste management, among other micro-businesses.

To better address the root causes of violence against women and girls and harmful practices, Spotlight Initiative collaborated with custodians

of cultural traditions to transition from harmful practices as a source of income to embracing alternative livelihoods. In **Liberia**, for instance, Spotlight Initiative contributed to a decrease in the sociocultural acceptability of domestic violence, child marriage, teenage pregnancy and FGM. Consultation sessions facilitated by the Initiative with traditional leaders and government ministries resulted in a consensus to offer alternative income opportunities to traditional practitioners, encouraging the abandonment of female genital mutilation. Additionally, the Initiative engaged women's rights advocates, youth, media practitioners, traditional and religious leaders and grassroots organisations in a series of awareness raising sessions, improving their understanding of the importance of ending harmful practices, and leveraging their critical role in this work. This, coupled with investments in campaigns and messaging to ban FGM, led to the replacement of several bush schools with centres promoting positive norms and behaviours. This approach yielded significant success: 800 traditional practitioners across 11 counties in Liberia pledged to end FGM and participated in initiatives such as village savings and loans associations, climate-smart agriculture, and other income-generating activities.

PILLAR 4: SERVICES



Women and girls who experience violence and harmful practices use available, accessible, acceptable and quality essential services including for long-term recovery from violence.

SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE FOLLOWING KEY RESULTS:

Ensured that **essential quality services to address the needs of women and girls** are accessible, available and affordable.

Expanded the one-stop comprehensive care centre model to further facilitate the delivery of quality, coordinated essential services.

Strengthened the institutional infrastructure that governs and guides the delivery of essential services for improved service provision.

Improved the ability of civil society, government, and service providers to **deliver quality essential services for women and girls**.

CAPTURING CHANGE OVER TIME: A SNAPSHOT OF PROGRESS ACROSS KEY INDICATORS

Nearly

22,000 women government service providers have increased knowledge and capacities to better integrate a response to violence against women and girls into sexual and reproductive health, education, and migration services.

Close to

500 local networks, with representation of women and girls facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, have been established among authorities and communities to prevent and better respond to violence against women and girls.

7 Spotlight Initiative countries,

Argentina, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Jamaica, Mali, and Nigeria, **now have a risk assessment system in place**, bringing together information from the police, health, and justice sectors.

Nearly

29 million women and girls have access to programmes developed to integrate a response to violence against women and girls into sexual and reproductive health, education, and migration services.



HEALTH



JUSTICE AND
POLICING



SOCIAL
SERVICES



WITH THE INITIATIVE'S SUPPORT,

more than **5.7 million** survivors of violence

against women and girls know more about the **essential services** available to them

Over the years, the Initiative has focused significant attention on, and investment in, ensuring access to, and provision of, high-quality essential services. Quality services are critical to addressing the impact of violence and reducing recurring cycles of harm. However, quality and accessibility are often compromised due to inadequate funding, lack of institutional capacity and weak staffing, and coordination challenges.

Since the beginning of Spotlight Initiative, under Pillar 4, the availability and accessibility of rights-based, survivor-centred essential services that adequately addressed the needs of marginalized communities improved. Overall, a significant value of Spotlight Initiative programming has been strengthened access to, and use and availability of, quality essential services that reach marginalized communities and ensure no one is left behind. Ensuring holistic access to services, many Spotlight Initiative programmes took quality service delivery even further and implemented a one-stop comprehensive care centre model.

Showcasing aspects of quality services, [the Good Practice case study box](#) at the end of this outcome section provides a overview of how decentralized one-stop centres in Mali provide integrated essential services to diverse women and girls.

CLOSE TO

3 million

women and girls accessed gender-based violence services since the Initiative began



RESULT:

ENSURED THAT ESSENTIAL QUALITY SERVICES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS ARE ACCESSIBLE, AVAILABLE AND AFFORDABLE.

Spotlight Initiative programmes invested heavily in the provision of essential services, such as: health, psychological, and housing services; access to legal services and access to justice; and access to economic and social services for full social integration. As a result, in 2023, nearly 170,000 women and girls accessed services that were directly funded and supported by Spotlight Initiative, with close to 3 million women and girls reached since the start of the Initiative.¹⁰⁷ Close to 500 local networks, with appropriate representation of women and girls facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, were established among authorities (including service providers) and communities to prevent and better respond to violence against women and girls.

On average, only two in five survivors of violence are able to seek any formal support. By holding perpetrators accountable and strengthening quality services for survivors, the Initiative helped quadruple the number of survivors seeking help since 2019.¹⁰⁸

Spotlight Initiative also ensured that essential services were available and accessible for women and girls living with disabilities, ethnic

107. This number does not include women and girls who accessed services that benefited from Spotlight Initiative-supported protocols and methodologies, or services staffed by providers trained by the Initiative.

108. This was calculated from 2019 to 2022. At baseline (2019), around 105,000 survivors reported cases of GBV, with around 391,000 survivors reporting in 2022.

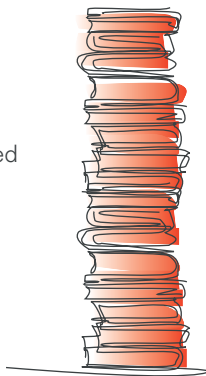
OVER THE COURSE
OF THE INITIATIVE, OVER

970,000

cases of violence against women and girls were reported to **various institutions**.

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF
THE INITIATIVE,

there have been over
half a million cases
reported (to the police).



minorities, remote populations, LGBTIQ+ persons, migrant workers, and refugees and youth, among other populations. **Since the Initiative began, it has supported the design of 170 strategies to better address the needs of women and girls facing intersecting forms of discrimination in service delivery.**

In **Uganda**, for example, 155 refugees in Rhino settlement in Arua district benefited from new information on gender-based violence services and referral pathways for legal aid services.

This was coupled with specialized training for 211 duty-bearers on the application of new and revised laws and policies on violence against women and girls and sexual and reproductive health and rights in refugee settings. As a result of Spotlight Initiative's support to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and the Uganda Human Rights Commission, information was adapted to refugee settings to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable.

In **Guyana**, legal support services were strengthened by operationalising a Legal Pro Bono Initiative in collaboration with the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security and the Guyana Bar Association. This strengthened the provision of legal aid to survivors of gender-based violence, including survivors from lower income and marginalized communities.¹⁰⁹

In **El Salvador**, Spotlight Initiative expanded gender-based violence service provision ensuring access to high-quality services for trans women. The Initiative provided unprecedented, targeted support to transwomen, and the LGBTIQ+ community more broadly, by helping to establish a specialized

clinic delivering medical and psychological services to the trans population in-country. The clinic was successfully registered in the public health system — institutionalizing services and promoting sustainability — and officially recognized as a transgender health and sexual medicine clinic. This helped improve service provision for transwomen and generated new partnerships to support traditionally underserved communities.

At the regional level, the **Latin America Regional Programme** in collaboration with the Specialized Gender Network of the Iberoamerican Association of Public Ministries developed guidelines to address the gendered impact of organized crime on women. The guidelines were collectively approved and adopted, and are now binding for Public Ministries across the region. Deepening the institutional infrastructure for improved services, the guidelines strengthen the capacity of government agencies in the region to better address gender based violence in contexts of organized crime.

The partnership between the **Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund** and Spotlight Initiative partnership helped improve access to critical psychosocial, health and legal services, along with long-term accompaniment services to support rights and justice for survivors across multiple countries. In Uganda, health-seeking behavior of female sex workers increased with WPHF-Spotlight Initiative support, including female sex workers' access to HIV/AIDS testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections.



RESULT:

EXPANDED THE ONE-STOP COMPREHENSIVE CARE CENTRE MODEL TO FURTHER FACILITATE THE DELIVERY OF QUALITY, COORDINATED ESSENTIAL SERVICES.

The one-stop model for comprehensive care helps ensure survivors have access to a diverse range of legal, economic, social, psychosocial, and health services in one place (and facilitates referrals). This approach improved access and service uptake for underserved and marginalized

109. UN System Wide Evaluation Office (2024) "Draft 1: Final Evaluation of the Spotlight Initiative (2017-2023)"



Chantal Mukeshimana advocates for gender equality and helps couples to resolve conflict through dialogue in Kyaka II refugee camp, where she lives. © Spotlight Initiative/Timothy Webster.

communities. Spotlight Initiative programmes, including those in **Jamaica, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe**, delivered essential services through the one-stop model, often in a single location.

Mobile one-stop centres can be effective ways to reach diverse communities in rural and hard to reach locations, supporting the principle of no one being left behind. For example, Spotlight Initiative in **Zimbabwe** promoted an effective mobile one-stop centre and saw nearly 6,000 survivors access gender-based violence services and sexual and reproductive health supplies in 12 target districts. Further supporting access to psychosocial support, digital call centres were established and, since 2020, the Gender-Based Violence Call Centre has received over 20,695 calls.

Similarly, in **Mozambique**, Spotlight Initiative helped establish mobile community clinics to expand access to health services, including to those living in hard-to-reach areas. Mobile clinics offer integrated services, including medical and drug assistance, sexual and reproductive health services, and gender-based violence case management. From 2020 to 2023, around 99,000 women and girls were reached by these clinics (including in hard-to-reach communities). The government of Mozambique is expected to include this work in the state budget, and will continue to expand the mobile clinics' reach (particularly to remote locations).

In **Mali**, outreach efforts led by non-government organization partners made a direct impact on 217,959 individuals, reaching nearly 360 diverse communities within targeted regions with services and one-stop centres. Concurrently, 925 community leaders were trained on how to report cases of violence, get involved in community activities that prioritize women's equitable rights, and condemn violence of all forms.¹¹⁰ Community members were encouraged to refer all gender-based violence cases to the one-stop centres. This comprehensive approach led to the establishment of community-level mechanisms and response plans geared towards preventing and ending gender-based violence, while strengthening citizen accountability. For more on this example, see the Good Practice box below.

In **Jamaica**, Spotlight Initiative complemented ongoing efforts to establish domestic violence intervention centres. Applying a survivor-centred approach, these centres expand access to high-quality recovery services for women and girls, particularly in rural areas, and improve long-term recovery outcomes. The establishment of domestic violence intervention centres, an ongoing effort of the Jamaica Constabulary Force, has helped government agencies improve essential service delivery for gender-based violence survivors through an integrated model, including reproductive and health services, counselling, immediate care, referrals, and access to justice. The domestic violence intervention centres offer a safe space for women and girls to seek support without fear of judgement or reprisal.



RESULT:

STRENGTHENED THE INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE THAT GOVERNS AND GUIDES THE DELIVERY OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES FOR IMPROVED SERVICE PROVISION.

Strong institutions and efficient coordination are crucial to support effective essential services. Spotlight Initiative provided



© UNDP/Ricardo Makyn.

110. The 2021 Mali Annual Narrative Progress Report, page 29. (in French).



© UNESCO/Nigeria.

technical expertise and guidance on essential services by supporting the development of (and outreach around) standard operating procedures, guidelines, protocols, communities of practice, and governance frameworks.

As of 2023, 95 per cent of targeted countries have developed national guidelines and protocols in line with the essential services package.

With the Initiative's support, **Trinidad and Tobago** secured approval for the "National Clinical and Policy Guidelines on Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence," strengthening the provision of quality services and improving support to survivors through evidence based guidelines. Also in **Trinidad and Tobago**, as of 2023, over 400 police officials

were trained in gender analysis through two cohorts involving trainers from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service to improve gender-responsive policing and service referrals. A "training of trainers" approach was used to ensure that the wider police force was receptive to the training and willing to share that knowledge with other colleagues, further institutionalizing the knowledge gained.

In **Uganda**, Spotlight Initiative supported the development of the "National Compendium of Gender-Based Violence, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and Harmful Practices for Service Providers", creating standardized policies to strengthen service providers' knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and rights and the links to violence against women and girls.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, the Initiative completed a comprehensive assessment and participatory mapping of essential services for gender-based violence survivors that identified gaps and opportunities for improved intersectoral coordination in GBV-related service provision. The Initiative promoted coordinated work across stakeholders and institutionalized survivor-centered approaches, evidenced by the adoption of four new Standard Operating Procedures.¹¹¹

Similarly, in **Grenada**, the Initiative contributed to improved access and quality of essential services following a situational analysis to understand the strengths, gaps and needs of service providers across institutions. The analysis informed the development of **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for GBV**, guided by the United Nations Joint Global Programme's Essential Service Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence. The SOPs were approved by the government and are now the framework used for service delivery by health practitioners, social services personnel, law enforcement and justice officials. The SOPs contain matrices and flow charts that capture referral pathways to further clarify the relationships between sectors and address possible gaps or duplications. As a result, service providers are equipped with clear procedural guidelines for support and assistance to victims and survivors.

The **Safe and Fair** programme supported greater access to services during COVID-19 for Indonesian migrants. Recognizing the increase in gender-based violence as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indonesian Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection collaborated with Spotlight Initiative to launch the "Guideline on the Protection of Women Migrant Workers during COVID-19" and the "Protocol for Handling Gender-Based Violence and Trafficking during COVID-19." Utilizing a "victim-centric approach,"¹¹² these guidelines served as a key reference document for the Government, service providers, community-based organizations, and consular services.¹¹³



RESULT:

IMPROVED THE ABILITY OF CIVIL SOCIETY, GOVERNMENT, AND SERVICE PROVIDERS TO DELIVER QUALITY ESSENTIAL SERVICES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS.

In order to deliver quality, essential services, duty-bearers must be well trained. Spotlight Initiative programmes placed dedicated attention on multisectoral capacity-building to ensure the design, delivery, and quality of essential services for women and girl survivors of violence.

With the support of the Initiative, across 22 countries, more than 100,000 service providers have been trained since 2019, improving their knowledge of, and capacity to deliver, quality and coordinated essential services. They have also better integrated a gender-based violence response across essential services.

Strengthening law enforcement's response to violence against women and girls has consistently been cited as one of the most challenging and important issues to address. Ensuring that the first initial contact with police is positive and trauma-informed, supports the victims and survivors and delivers better results and supports greater trust in this essential service. As such, Spotlight Initiative in **Guyana** supported the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security, the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Guyana Police Force to deliver a training course in gender-based violence, reaching approximately 6,000 officers (the entire police service) to ensure continuity and sustainability of access to justice. Officers were accountable for gender-based violence cases reported to them, further supporting accountability and building trust in the community.

In **Uganda**, through the support of Spotlight Initiative and the Embassy of Sweden, the Uganda Police Force built a state-of-the-art and rapid analysis DNA lab to maintain the quality of evidence and strengthen prosecution. Reliable equipment and technology to facilitate forensics and proper DNA collection are critical elements to better investigate crimes. Crime scene vans, for example, are necessary to transport the

111. UN System Wide Evaluation Office (2024) "Draft 1: Final Evaluation of the Spotlight Initiative (2017-2023)"

112. The 2020 ASEAN Region Annual Narrative Programme Report, page 12.

113. Ibid.

DNA samples swiftly and prevent degradation. Through the support of the Initiative, the new equipment in the lab helps preserve and process the evidence at the highest standard, results in greatly reducing the turnaround time on case investigations, and helps provide the evidence necessary to prosecute sexual violence crimes.

Spotlight Initiative in **Jamaica** integrated gender experts and units into police stations, improving access to justice for women and girls. To strengthen the capacities of the officials delivering services at the intervention centres, 21 constables underwent training to address cases of domestic violence, as did centre managers and peer counsellors at domestic violence intervention centres. Training in sign language for staff at intervention centres further ensured that no victim was turned away. These domestic violence intervention centres with well-trained

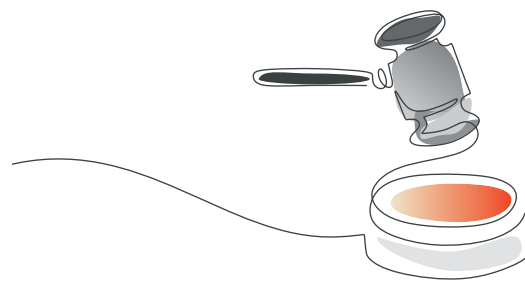
staff and police have positively impacted women, especially those in rural areas, providing greater access to high-quality recovery services. In 2022, the centres across the island documented a total of 1,720 instances of intimate partner violence and 924 cases of family violence. Interestingly, over 650 reports were filed by children. A total of 2,201 women and 740 men demonstrated the courage to report instances of violence to the domestic violence intervention centres.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, Spotlight Initiative significantly enhanced the capacities of direct service providers, including legal aid lawyers, social workers, and police officers, through training, resulting in improved service provision. Well-trained aid lawyers help bring cases to justice, and the Initiative — together with the Ministry of Justice, women's rights organisations, and crisis centres — developed guidelines and



standards for delivery of legal services for sexual and gender-based violence survivors. Approximately 120 lawyers and experts were trained to be gender champions as part of the “Bus of Solidarity”, in addition to government representatives from the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration in 12 target communities of Chui, Osh, Naryn and Batken. Of the trained lawyers, 94 per cent reported a change in their handling of sexual and gender-based violence cases after the training. This resulted in ten cases of domestic violence being identified and referred to proper authorities through the Bus of Solidarity for the first time in 2021. As of 2023, 5,562 individuals (59 per cent women) have accessed free legal aid through the Bus of Solidarity.

As a result of these and other efforts to improve services, the Initiative helped



Since the start of the Initiative, the overall annual **conviction rate** for gender-based violence doubled across 13 countries.

x2

There have been over **13,000 convictions** since the Initiative began.

contribute to improved conviction rates: since 2019, the overall **conviction rate for gender-based violence doubled** across 13 countries. There have been over 13,000 convictions since the start of the Initiative, **a significant achievement**, as conviction rates are incredibly difficult to increase due to a number of factors, including impunity, tampered evidence, intimidation or threats, and side agreements made between victims and perpetrators to avoid trials. This underscores the significance of the figure.

In **Belize**, the Initiative strengthened the capacities of women’s groups to establish and run gender-responsive community programmes. A total of 54 women’s groups and 74 “women community mobilizers” strengthened their abilities to integrate a gender-based violence response into existing programmes, such as economic empowerment, skills building, protection of the environment and HIV/AIDs support through workshop trainings. For example, the Productive Organization for Women in Action (POWA) helped survivors recuperate through information and training sessions covering their human and legal rights, parenting techniques, entrepreneurial skills, and raising awareness of domestic and sexual violence.¹¹⁴



© Spotlight Initiative Guyana.

114. [In Belize, women in transition are finding their POWA](#) (Spotlight Initiative, April 2021).



Damitillah Noh at a mobile women's centre in Belize. © Perla Hinojosa/Spotlight Initiative.



GOOD PRACTICE: **DECENTRALIZED ONE-STOP CENTRES IN MALI PROVIDE INTEGRATED ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO WOMEN AND GIRLS**

OVERVIEW

Mali has one of the highest rates of gender-based violence in West Africa. Nearly 40 per cent of women have experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime.¹¹⁵ Additionally, the prevalence of female genital mutilation remains high, with 88.6 per cent of women in Mali having undergone the practice.¹¹⁶ Female genital mutilation continues to be a common practice amongst several ethnic groups and is predominantly performed by traditional practitioners, with one in ten girls experiencing the most severe form of female genital mutilation.¹¹⁷ This situation is further exacerbated by limited access to essential and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights services that can support both women and girls.

Given this context and the need for holistic care and response strategies, UNICEF through Spotlight Initiative in Mali supported the establishment of one-stop centres across five regions of the country. By the end of 2021, ten one-stop centres had been set up to provide care services to gender-based violence survivors. These services included counselling, medical care and referrals to other appropriate support services. Furthermore, they provided a safe space to encourage women and girls to seek and receive the care they needed. The centres were also set up in communities where access to, and availability of, necessary care was limited. Additionally, the Initiative complemented these efforts with outreach programmes and awareness-raising activities, effectively managed by partnering with non-governmental organizations.

RESULTS

In 2021, as a part of the one-stop centre programme, efforts were undertaken to enhance the skills of service providers. A comprehensive training was carried out to bolster the capacity of 171 service providers in order to improve their knowledge and skills for delivering high-quality services to gender-based violence survivors. Moreover, 185 volunteers from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement underwent specialized training to support community outreach efforts.¹¹⁸ The programme provided services to a total of 5,814 survivors, offering them the necessary integrated support and care.¹¹⁹ The decentralization efforts were essential to securing higher quality care in local communities.

The Spotlight Initiative programme updated and improved the standard operating procedures to better guide and run these one-stop centres. Proactive steps were taken to also develop a referral map and actively facilitate the seamless transition of survivors to support units or one-stop centres.¹²⁰

The outreach efforts led by non-governmental organization partners had a direct impact on 217,959 individuals, reaching nearly 360 diverse communities within the targeted regions. Furthermore, 925 community leaders were trained to report on cases of violence, to get involved in community activities that prioritize women's equitable rights and to condemn violence of all forms.¹²¹ Community members were strongly encouraged to refer all gender-based violence cases to the one-stop centres. One of the strategies

115. [Global database on Violence against Women](#) (UN Women).

116. [Female Genital Mutilation in Mali: Insights from a statistical analysis](#) (UNICEF, 2022).

117. *Ibid.*

118. The 2021 Mali Annual Narrative Progress Report, page 11. (in French).

119. The 2023 Mali Annual Narrative Progress Report Draft, page 29. (in French).

120. *Ibid.*

121. The 2021 Mali Annual Narrative Progress Report, page 29. (in French).



© Adama Bamba/UNFPA/UNICEF.

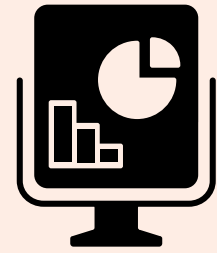
included developing key messages¹²² that conveyed solidarity and support for survivors of gender-based violence (for example, '*Your voice matters, your story matters*'). These messages emphasized the importance of seeking help and affirmed the survivors' rights (for example, '*You have the right to live without violence and rebuild your life*').

This comprehensive approach led to the establishment of community-level mechanisms and response plans geared towards preventing and combatting gender-based violence, while strengthening citizen accountability. This involved necessary sanctions at the local level to hold perpetrators of violence accountable for their actions.¹²³

122. The 2023 Mali Annual Narrative Progress Report Draft, page 44. (in French).

123. Ibid.

PILLAR 5: DATA



Quality, disaggregated and globally comparable data on different forms of violence against women and girls and harmful practices, are collected, analysed and used in line with international standards to inform laws, policies and programmes.

SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE FOLLOWING KEY RESULTS:

Supported the collection, analysis, and use of quality data on gender-based violence by building the capacity of practitioners and improving data capture solutions.

Strengthened existing and launched new platforms to support the production (and use) of comparable, multisectoral data on violence against women and girls, inclusive of marginalized groups.

Developed comprehensive and innovative mechanisms to leverage data to end violence against women and girls.

Promoted high-quality research on the underlying causes and current practices that perpetuate violence against women and girls.

CAPTURING CHANGE OVER TIME: A SNAPSHOT OF PROGRESS ACROSS KEY INDICATORS

From 2019-2023,

55 national statistics offices have developed or adapted and contextualized methods and standards at the national level to produce prevalence and incidence data on violence against women and girls.

As of December 2023,

94 per cent of target countries have publicly available data, reported on a regular basis, on intimate partner violence, an increase of 32 per cent since the initiative began.

Since 2019,

10,389 government personnel have enhanced their capacity on analysis and dissemination of data on violence against women and girls, three times the intended target.

94%

of countries in which
the Initiative works

now have **publicly available data on intimate partner violence, reported on a regular basis.**



Since it launched, Spotlight Initiative has helped countries strengthen the collection, analysis, and use of quality, disaggregated and globally comparable data on different forms of violence against women and girls and harmful practices. The Initiative strengthened existing (and helped develop new) national, regional, and community data collection systems to register and track different forms of violence against women and girls and harmful practices.

This data helped drive evidence-based policies and programmes to end violence against women and girls that was responsive to diverse women and girls, including those from marginalized communities, and ensured targeted services. It has also been used to advocate for more funding and resources to fill gaps in prevention and response, and by women and girls (and civil society organizations) to advocate for their rights. Spotlight Initiative also strengthened the digital infrastructure required to leverage quality, comparable data, and supported groundbreaking research, contributing to knowledge on ending gender-based violence.



RESULT:

SUPPORTED THE COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND USE OF QUALITY DATA ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE BY BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF PRACTITIONERS AND IMPROVING DATA CAPTURE SOLUTIONS.

Addressing violence against women and girls requires high-quality data and information on prevalence, incidence, scope, impact, underlying or contributing causes, and risk factors. To support data generation, Spotlight

Initiative has strengthened data systems and has helped build the capacity of data users to collect, manage, and use data. **Since the start of the Initiative, over 22,000 individuals — including government personnel and women's rights advocates — received training on how to collect, analyse, and disseminate data, with a focus on women and girls facing intersecting forms of discrimination.**

The Spotlight Initiative programme in **Tajikistan** developed a technical strategy for the implementation of a national database on violence against women and girls in line with international standards, which helps identify gaps and better address survivors' needs. The programme supported the national Agency of Statistics with the creation of an electronic administrative database system for regular collection of data on sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices, with unified and common indicators used across all relevant government agencies with the aim of promoting evidence-based policies that can address violence against women and girls.

Spotlight Initiative and the Government of **Jamaica** helped establish a new gender-based violence victim data dashboard geographic information system, improving data visualization and use. This Early Warning Awareness and Response System provides the security, health, and justice sectors with critical, up-to-date information on violence against women and girls, enabling stakeholders, including law enforcement, to map hotspots, conduct risk assessments, and (through heat mapping) develop predictive analysis for all parishes in the country. Captured in this way, the dashboard helps ensure data use to develop evidence-based policies and programmes, improve services, and support effective prevention programmes.



© Erica Stillo, WPHF.

Similarly, in **Nigeria**, the first-ever **National GBV Data Situation Room and Dashboard** was established in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Women’s Affairs. The data situation room collects GBV data from police reports, healthcare facilities, and civil society organisations across the country, and generates real-time data that is widely accessible for programming, and policy making. The ministry of women’s affairs engaged government institutions broadly to promote data-sharing protocols and standards to ensure timely and quality data reports, promoting a multi-sectoral approach to GBV prevention and response.

The **Africa Regional Programme** developed a comprehensive training curriculum, with online courses available in English and French, on data coordination and capacity development in relation to violence against women and girls. The programme strengthened the abilities of 111 government personnel, 52 civil society organizations, and 62 statistical offices. In collaboration with the African Union Commission and African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC), the Africa Regional Programme also rolled out a regional toolkit to support the collection and use of harmonized data and indicators on violence against women and girls. Presented to 112 participants from the African Union Commission, Regional Economic Communities, African Union Member States,

civil society organizations, and UN agencies in March 2023, the toolkit provides first-hand insights into the different methodologies to produce quality and comparable data (including indicator selection) and guidance on the ethical dimensions of research into ending violence against women and girls, contributing to the evidence base on how to improve the adoption of human rights instruments and policies.

The **Central Asia and Afghanistan Regional Programme** and the **Africa Regional Programme** also adapted the kNowVAWdata¹²⁴ curriculum across their respective regional contexts to equip professionals with the skills needed to measure the prevalence of violence against women and girls. Enhancing the capacity of data practitioners studying violence against women and girls, the customized modules have been launched, representing a significant legacy of the two regional programmes.

Similarly, with the Initiative’s support, the **Caribbean** now has regionally agreed Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) “Guidelines and Protocols on the Collection and Use of Administrative Data on Violence against Women and Girls”. The **Caribbean Regional Programme** improved the capacity of national statistical offices and national gender machineries across the region to collect, analyse and disseminate the prevalence and administrative data. Similarly, in **Grenada**, the Initiative, in collaboration with the Central Statistical Office, improved stakeholders’ capacity to collect and enter data in the new Grenada Information System for Analysing and Facilitating Empowerment against Family Violence (Grenada InfoSAFE). This system was co-designed in 2022 with the support of the Initiative, and digitizes the data collection process. It provides a centralized incident reporting system, enabling a comprehensive understanding of gender-based violence in Grenada.

Since the Initiative was launched, a total of 1,151 national statistics officers (555 women, 587 men, and 9 individuals where disaggregated figures are not known) strengthened their ability to produce quality data on the incidence and prevalence of violence against women and girls and

124. The kNowVAWdata training course was initially developed by UNFPA, the University of Melbourne, ANROWS, and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in 2018. This four-week course, available both online and through face-to-face sessions, delves into handling data on violence against women and girls ethically and safely, along with methodologies for both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

harmful practices. To date, 54 national statistics offices have developed, adapted, and contextualized methods and standards to generate national-level prevalence and incidence data on violence against women and girls, with support from Spotlight Initiative.

By building stakeholders' capacity and by ensuring that validated and comparable data on violence against women and girls are available, Spotlight Initiative has fostered a data-driven and result-based management culture among practitioners dedicated to ending violence against women and girls.



RESULT:

STRENGTHENED EXISTING AND LAUNCHED NEW PLATFORMS TO SUPPORT THE PRODUCTION (AND USE) OF COMPARABLE, MULTISECTORAL DATA ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS, INCLUSIVE OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS.

Spotlight Initiative worked with stakeholders to improve data systems and deepen multisectoral coordination to improve the availability (and use) of gender-based violence data, including data on particular forms of violence on women and girls (including those from marginalized communities). As a result of the Initiative's efforts, **78 per cent of target countries now have publicly available data, reported on a regular basis, on femicide. A further 94 per cent have data on intimate partner violence, and 86 per cent have data on female genital mutilation.**

In **Liberia**, for example, improved coordination among data producers — including the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health — helped ensure the use of uniform (standardized) data tools for reporting on gender-based violence. A unified mechanism (a gender-based violence information management system) was developed, ensuring harmonized data collection, analysis and dissemination. To ensure the system was properly used (and sustainable), expertise and information technology (IT) equipment were provided as well as training and capacity-building.

With the Initiative's support, **Ecuador** inaugurated the [National Observatory of Violence against Women](#), a public platform dedicated to providing

high-quality data and information on violence against women and girls, including femicide. Operating under the Ministry of Women and Human Rights, the observatory consolidates data from various sources — such as the National Survey on Family Relations and Gender Violence Against Women (ENVIGMU 2019) and the Single Registry of Violence against Women — enhancing its utility and use. The observatory offers disaggregated statistics, including periodic updates on femicide provided by the Judiciary Council, and provides georeferenced care services. A crucial public space and analytical tool, the platform supports evidence-based decision-making by providing quality data (and analysis) on violence against women and girls, in accordance with the Comprehensive Organic Law to Prevent and Eradicate Violence against Women (LOIPEVCM).

In **Samoa**, the Initiative supported the launch of the Survivor Application. This app digitises the case management process, streamlining existing practices and enhancing reporting capacity. In its second phase, additional features were incorporated to improve efficacy and further enhance case management and referral processes. Staff capacity building and extended support ensure the sustainability of the application to support women and girls facing violence, including domestic or intimate partner violence.

Spotlight Initiative played a crucial role in **Malawi** in establishing a harmonized system for collecting and managing data related to sexual and gender-based violence. After consultations with key stakeholders from 55 institutions, Spotlight Initiative supported the establishment of a National Data Observatory Hub and district observatory hubs under the leadership of the National Statistics Office. The hubs are a repository and reference point for all sexual and gender-based violence, harmful practices and sexual and reproductive health and rights-related information, including internationally comparable data on these issues from the six Spotlight Initiative districts.

Spotlight Initiative in **Mozambique** built *InfoViolência*, a web-based application for the registration and management of gender-based violence cases, with the eventual aim of integrating data collected by all government sectors participating in the response to gender-based violence cases. [A Good Practice box offers a deeper dive into this example at the end of this pillar.](#) In **Trinidad and Tobago**, the



© Mauro Pereira/UNICEF Mozambique.

Initiative helped launch the PRIMERO Child Protection Information Management System to streamline the processing of child protection cases, improving caseworkers ability to serve children victims of violence and abuse.

Through these and other efforts, since 2019, with the support of Spotlight Initiative, **85 per cent of targeted countries have improved systems to collect administrative data**¹²⁵ on violence against women and girls and harmful practices across different sectors, disaggregated to better reflect multiple forms of discrimination in line with international standards.

The following table illustrates the evolution of data collection systems, in regards to how data is disaggregated and reported, in targeted countries from 2020 to 2023.



RESULT:

DEVELOPED COMPREHENSIVE AND INNOVATIVE MECHANISMS TO LEVERAGE DATA TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS.

Translating data into action is an essential component of Pillar 5, and the Initiative identified impactful and innovative channels to leverage

and promote the use of data to key stakeholders in government, civil society (including women-led and grassroots organizations), communities, survivors, and rights holders.

The Spotlight Initiative programme in **Mexico** organized two editions of “Datathon”,¹²⁶ the first in 2021 and the second in 2023. During the first edition, more than 120 data and statistics specialists in the field of ending violence against women and girls participated to discuss data gaps, challenges and opportunities. This was followed by a second colloquium, where 61 young women aged between 16 and 25 participated, in alignment with the principle of leaving no one behind and using an intersectional approach. Leveraging data from the National Bank of Data and Information of Cases of Violence against Women (BANAVIM) — among other sources — participants put forward innovative proposals to contribute to the eradication of gender-based violence through the analysis, use, interpretation, and visualization of data on gender-based violence. These events facilitated dialogue across stakeholders, contributing to shared knowledge, and helped identify gaps and innovative solutions to strengthen gender and data systems on violence against women and girls.

Spotlight Initiative in **Ecuador** launched *Flores en el Aire* (“Flowers in the Air”), a social mapping tool designed with the participatory engagement of mothers and families of femicide victims. The tool uses data on violence against women and girls and it allows users to digitally explore memory routes of 16 victims of femicide in eight cantons of Ecuador.¹²⁷ The narratives are expressed in the form of stories, photographs, texts, and other georeferenced media related to the cities, streets and meaningful places in the lives of the victims. It also shares these families’ routes through (in)justice, reparation initiatives, and community responses to violence.

Flores en el Aire offers a critical source of information on how and from whom to seek support and what the bottlenecks are in the support system. The tool also supported justice for families: due to continued advocacy

125. Some programmes did not report annual data consistently between 2020 and 2023. These include the following programmes: 1) El Salvador: Reported data through 2022, as the programme closed in Q1 2023; 2) Liberia: Reported data in 2020 and 2022, due to challenges in collecting this information at national level; 3) Mali: Reported data through 2021, as the programme dropped this indicator in 2022 to reflect changes in the political climate and their programme strategies.

126. For more information: <https://www.spotlightinitiative.org/es/news/coloquio-de-datos-mesas-de-trabajo-y-2a-ed-de-datathon-con-juvenes-para-erradicar-la-violencia>.

127. Azogues, Cayambe, Cañar, Cuenca, Lago Agrio, Portoviejo, Puyo and Quito.

National-Level Data on Violence Against Women and Girls (2020 - 2023)

Type of Data Disaggregation by Spotlight Programme

	Africa RP				Argentina				Belize				El Salvador				Honduras			
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2020	2021	2022	2023	2020	2021	2022	2023	2020	2021	2022	2023	2020	2021	2022	2023
1) Income		✓	✓	✓	○	○	✓	✓	○	○	○	○	✓	○	○		✓	✓	✓	✓
2) Sex		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
3) Age		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
4) Ethnicity		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	○	○	✓	✓	○	○	○		○	✓	✓	✓
5) Disability		○	○	○	✓	✓	✓	✓	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		○	✓	✓	✓
6) Geographic Location		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
7) Forms of violence		○	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	○	✓	✓	✓	✓	○		✓	✓	✓	✓

	Latin America RP				Liberia				Malawi				Mali				Nigeria			
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2020	2021	2022	2023	2020	2021	2022	2023	2020	2021	2022	2023	2020	2021	2022	2023
1) Income	○	○	○	○			○		○	○	✓	○	○				○	○	○	✓
2) Sex	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
3) Age	✓	○	○	○			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
4) Ethnicity	○	○	○	○			○		○	○	○	○					✓	○	○	○
5) Disability	○	○	○	○			○		○	✓	✓	✓	○				✓	○	○	✓
6) Geographic Location	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
7) Forms of violence	○	○	○	○			✓		○	○	✓	✓	✓				○	✓	✓	✓

	Pacific RP				Papua New Guinea				Uganda				Zimbabwe			
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2020	2021	2022	2023	2020	2021	2022	2023	2020	2021	2022	2023
1) Income	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2) Sex	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3) Age	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4) Ethnicity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	○	○	○	○
5) Disability	✓	✓	✓	✓	○	○	○	○	✓	✓	✓	✓	○	○	○	○
6) Geographic Location	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	○	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7) Forms of violence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	○

- 2020
- 2021
- 2022
- 2023
- 2020-2023 did not achieve Milestone
- No data available

work of civil society organizations and information from *Flores en el Aire*, changes were finally implemented in the orphans' bonus policy in March 2022. All victims' families that had lost a mother were able to access the orphans' bonus,¹²⁸ one of the state reparation measures, for which they had been fighting, in some cases for years.



RESULT:

PROMOTED HIGH-QUALITY RESEARCH ON THE UNDERLYING CAUSES AND CURRENT PRACTICES THAT PERPETUATE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS.

There are significant gaps in the existing data and knowledge related to the factors that lead to violence against women and girls in different contexts, and the prevalence of underlying harmful social norms and attitudes. Recognizing the importance of research, the **Africa Regional Programme** worked to strengthen the existing research to better ground policies and programmes in specific countries. The programme financed a range of research initiatives related to ending violence against women and girls, including on migration, shifting gender norms, and the engagement of men and boys and positive masculinities. The Initiative worked with *Equimundo*, an applied research organization, to create an African edition of the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES), the only comprehensive study that explores men's and women's practices and attitudes related to gender equality.

The **Africa Regional Programme** also supported the roll-out of the African Union Commission's regional data and research Gender Observatory and scorecard to ensure periodic, inclusive and quality reporting. The scorecard supports African Union member states in implementing their commitments to the rights of women and girls by providing a comprehensive assessment of the progress made in securing and protecting women's socioeconomic, civil and political rights. The Africa Regional Programme also organized two annual forums to share research, evidence and best practices to address female genital

mutilation. The first consultation in Banjul in 2022 gathered 100 representatives from 17 countries to discuss programme quality enhancement and report on key indicators. The representatives also discussed the institutionalization of monitoring and evaluation.

In **El Salvador**, Spotlight Initiative has supported the implementation of a research agenda on femicides, working closely with academia and civil society organizations to produce and disseminate results. It began in 2019 with the strengthening of civil society to update indicators of the Observatory on Violence Against Women. By 2021, three studies were completed proposing valuable policy recommendations, which were presented to public officials in leadership positions and executives of civil society organizations working on these issues. By 2022, they were disseminated to universities.

To surface the economic impact of violence against women and girls on society, the **Pacific Regional Programme** conducted a study on the cost of violence against women and girls, with a focus on intimate partner violence, in Fiji, Solomon Islands, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. This study strategically informed the advocacy efforts of national gender ministries to elevate the issue politically, and adequately invest in prevention and response efforts. In the Solomon Islands, for example, the study informed the FY 2023–2024 budget cycle (improving its gender responsiveness) and, in Fiji, the study was used to shape Fiji's National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against All Women and Girls. The study's findings also supported ongoing advocacy by civil society organizations and women's movements calling on governments to concretely act to end violence against women and girls, including through the use of gender-responsive budgeting.

The **Latin America Regional Programme** published eight multidimensional studies on femicide in highly vulnerable contexts — such as structural poverty, human mobility, trafficking, disappearances of women and girls, and organized crime — highlighting the intersectional impacts of new forms of violence. These studies provide guidelines and policy recommendations to generate new actions that respond to the complexity of the phenomenon.

128. The orphans' bonus consists of financial compensation granted by the state to support children whose mothers were victims of femicide.



GOOD PRACTICE: THE INFOVIOLÊNCIA DIGITAL DATABASE FOR REGISTERING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE CASES BY THE POLICE IN MOZAMBIQUE

OVERVIEW

InfoViolência is a web-based application built for the registration and management of gender-based violence cases, with the eventual aim of integrating data collected by all government sectors participating in the response to gender-based violence. Previous to the creation and implementation of this system, national data were entered manually in Mozambique, which entailed limitations and led to delays in the systematization and sharing of data at the Offices for Assistance to Families and Minors, Victims of Domestic Violence. This newly designed system is currently utilized by the police sector and has been heralded as a successful example of a national effort to digitize and systematize gender-based violence data.

Through Spotlight Initiative, UNFPA, in collaboration with the Mozambique Ministry of Interior, developed the database and began its development in 2018. A pre-pilot phase was carried out in 2019, with the pilot phase officially beginning in 2021 after user training and equipment were made available.¹²⁹

Since then, more than 400 police officers have been trained to use the platform and 253 statistical technicians have been trained to better collect data, including qualitative information, on the prevalence of gender-based violence.¹³⁰

“We were afraid in the beginning because we have heard of many digital platforms that are created and do not work. However, we decided to assume this challenge, and today we are realizing that in practice, it is worthwhile because it will improve our work. InfoViolência will facilitate and give credibility to our work, and it will also allow us to carry out more effective follow up of all GBV cases.”

**Dr. Lurdes Mabunda,
Head of the Department of
Family Assistance and Minors,
Victims of Violence of
the Ministry of Interior¹³¹**

129. *InfoViolência* initially suffered from a lack of ICT equipment required to use the software. Spotlight Initiative had to make budget provisions to acquire ICT equipment; however, the quantities delivered remain below the needs.

130. The 2019-2023 Mozambique Cumulative Report Draft.

131. [InfoViolência in action](#) (UNFPA, June 2019).

The *InfoViolência* system is installed on the Ministry of the Interior's server. A separate server is installed at the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action to harmonize the data coming from integrated care centres and collected through a new single digitized form (referred to as *Ficha Única*), which is used to register medical, psychosocial, and legal support to gender-based violence cases.

RESULTS

With the new system deployed and operational in five provinces, including the three Spotlight Initiative target provinces and the capital, data can be captured digitally (offline or online), summarized at the central level and shared in a timely manner. The system collects a wide range of information about the survivor's characteristics, the type of violence used, the relationship with the aggressor, any history of cases of violence, and the actions taken by the justice sector in the follow-up of a case. Moreover, this information can be shared, anonymized or not, with relevant sectors working in gender-based violence response and in compliance with the principles of safeguarding survivors' rights.

Winner of the global Spotlight Initiative Innovation Award, the platform "*brings huge benefits, as we will have reliable data on gender-based violence in the shortest possible time*", commented Trindade João, Head of the Statistics, Studies and Dissemination Office at the Provincial Command of the Police in Nampula.¹³²

“InfoViolência is a gain not only in terms of the quality of the data collected, but also in reducing the response time for survivors of violence... with a responsive and integrated system, cases will be better attended to, response time will decrease, and women and girls will feel more confident that their cases of GBV will be resolved.”

Tonecas Manhiça, Head of the Department of Statistics, Studies and Dissemination in the Ministry of the Interior

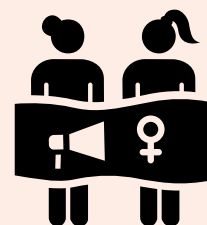
Notably, as of 2022, more than 6,000 sexual and gender-based violence cases have been registered in *InfoViolência*, a threefold increase from the amount of new cases registered the previous year.¹³³ This significant increase is an important outcome representing greater uptake of the tool.

Relevant stakeholders have already expressed interest in expanding the initiative and actions are underway to mobilize resources to implement the use of the application across the country. Funding permitted, the application will eventually allow referral of survivors to other institutions participating in the response to gender-based violence, such as health units (Ministry of Health) and justice administration (prosecutors and courts).

132. [Innovative data tool strengthens services for gender-based violence survivors in Mozambique](#) (Spotlight Initiative, April 2023).

133. The 2022 Mozambique Annual Programme Report, page 11.

PILLAR 6: WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY



Women's rights groups, autonomous social movements and civil society organizations, including those representing youth and groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination or marginalization, more effectively influence, and advance progress on, gender equality and women's rights and ending violence against women and girls.

SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE FOLLOWING KEY RESULTS:

Increased agency and influence among civil society organizations in their efforts to end violence against women and girls, particularly through strengthened engagement with social accountability mechanisms and in legislative and policy processes.

Promoted coalition-building and collaboration among civil society organizations for stronger networks and more coordinated action to end violence against women and girls.

Amplified the capacity and impact of women's rights organizations, including at the local level, to end violence against women and girls in their communities.

Resourced and strengthened the capacity of young feminist activists and youth-led networks.

CAPTURING CHANGE OVER TIME: A SNAPSHOT OF PROGRESS ACROSS KEY INDICATORS

Over the course of Spotlight initiative, **5,500 women's rights organizations, autonomous social movements, and relevant civil society organizations have increased their coordinated efforts** to jointly advocate for ending violence against women and girls.

Since 2019, over **600 jointly agreed recommendations to end violence against women and girls have been developed**, through multi-stakeholder dialogues, which included representatives of groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

Close to **5,000 women's organizations reported strengthened ability to design, implement, monitor and evaluate their own programmes** on eliminating violence against women and girls.

More than

5,000 local and grassroots women's rights organizations

reported having **greater influence and agency** through the Initiative's investment



Diverse feminist, women's rights, and social justice movements are (and have been) at the forefront of progressive change. The significant (and pivotal) role these movements play in advancing national efforts to end gender-based violence, advance women's rights, and promote justice is well-documented. Rooted in this evidence, the Initiative has prioritized investments in women's organizations and movements, helping to sustain their critical work. High-level results achieved since Spotlight Initiative's inception are detailed below, including contributions from the important partnership with the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund.



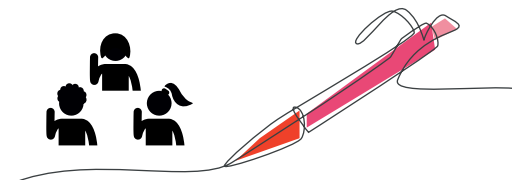
RESULT:

INCREASED AGENCY AND INFLUENCE AMONG CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS, PARTICULARLY THROUGH STRENGTHENED ENGAGEMENT WITH SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS AND IN LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY PROCESSES.

The Initiative deepened civil society's engagement with accountability mechanisms and supported their participation in official policy processes and dialogues. Through Spotlight Initiative-supported training on accountability mechanisms, women's rights groups and others are now better able to engage with accountability mechanisms and influence political processes, including in **Argentina, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Mali, Mexico, Niger, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and through the Africa Regional Programme.**

In **El Salvador**, for example, the Initiative partnered with *El Instituto de Estudios de la Mujer* (CEMUJER) (the Institute for Women's Studies) — a prominent women's rights organization — to produce a shadow report on the Salvadoran state's compliance with the recommendations of the UN Treaty Bodies on violence against women and girls. Participatory mechanisms for women's engagement were established in three municipalities. Following extensive consultations and a comprehensive mapping of existing work to address sexual violence, the shadow report was drafted. It features concrete recommendations for state compliance, and serves as an advocacy tool to hold the state accountable for its commitments.

The partnership between the **Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF)** and Spotlight Initiative helped establish and strengthen a range of social accountability mechanisms as well, including community-based monitoring systems, victim support units and gender rights early warning committees across multiple countries. This strengthened the ability of civil society to plan, monitor and engage in prevention and policy



SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE INITIATIVE,

over 600 jointly agreed recommendations to end violence against women and girls were developed,

through **multi-stakeholder dialogues** which included representatives of groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

interventions to end violence against women and girls across multiple countries. Through the support of the WPHF - Spotlight Initiative's partnership, civil society organisations engaged with over 84 different community, district or regional social accountability mechanisms.

In **Liberia**, the Initiative's support enabled women's rights groups and civil society organizations to effectively engage with accountability mechanisms. By producing shadow reports for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), actively engaging in the Universal Periodic Review under the UN Human Rights Council, and implementing community scorecards, these groups improved their ability to influence policy and normative frameworks, and help hold the Government and institutions accountable for their commitments.

As a result of these and other efforts, **3,000 women's rights groups and other relevant civil society organizations have increased their use of citizen audits, shadow reporting, and other accountability mechanisms** to demand an end to violence against women and girls since Spotlight Initiative launched.

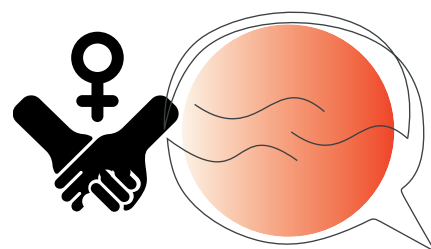
The initiative also supported feminist and women's rights organizations — and civil society more broadly — to engage in policy and legislative processes. In **Kyrgyzstan**, for example, the Initiative helped expand opportunities for women's civil society organizations to influence decision-making processes in Parliament. The Initiative helped strengthen Parliament's Council on Women's Rights and Prevention of Gender-Based Violence — a key interface between women's rights civil society organizations and state actors. These efforts, alongside others, deepened women's civic engagement and ensured the voices of women's rights groups, survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, and activists were reflected in policies and programmes, improving their responsiveness and reach. This also helped drive gender-sensitive policy making and streamline coordination among government partners, civil society, and international organizations, as well as foster equal opportunities for women and men in economic, social, political and cultural life, and better monitor implementation of legal acts related to gender-based violence.

Through the **Pacific Regional Programme**, Spotlight Initiative partnered with 39 national, local, and grassroots women's rights

organizations across ten countries in the region, establishing new partnerships through the Pacific People's Advancing Change (PPAC) grant-giving programme. These partnerships further enabled civil society organizations to engage with government entities. As an example, the Makefu Women's Council, an organization focusing on the protection of LGBTIQ+ rights in Niue, partnered with the Public Safety and Health sector and, through this collaboration, ensured their 24-hour helpline was operational for the LGBTIQ+ community to access services.

As noted above, civil society organizations in **Liberia** improved their ability to engage with various social accountability mechanisms. By engaging in these processes, these civil society organizations also reported having enhanced capacity to influence sexual and gender-based violence policies at the national level in Liberia. For example, these groups advocated for the appointment of a special judge in each county dedicated to adjudicating sexual and gender-based violence cases to expedite case resolution and alleviate backlog. They also intensified advocacy efforts to extend court terms from two to a minimum of four. This extension is crucial, as shorter court terms can impede justice for survivors by prolonging legal proceedings and straining the court's capacity to fairly adjudicate.

By supporting the use of social accountability mechanisms and engagement in policy processes, the Initiative helped strengthen civil society influence. With the Initiative's support, **5,187 local and grassroots women's rights organizations and relevant civil society organizations reported having more influence and a greater**



SINCE 2019,

over 4,000 official dialogues

were held **across 19 countries** with **meaningful participation** of governments, women's rights groups, and other civil society organizations (including those representing structurally marginalized communities)

ability to work on eliminating violence against women and girls. [The Good Practice box below describes the development of the Esperanza Protocol \(PLE\).](#) Led by women's human rights defenders, through a deeply consultative process, the protocol is hailed as the first international standard for the investigation of, and response to, threats and attacks against rights defenders.



RESULT:

PROMOTED COALITION-BUILDING AND COLLABORATION AMONG CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS FOR STRONGER NETWORKS AND MORE COORDINATED ACTION TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS.

Strengthening and supporting coordination across civil society organizations and movements is vital for ending violence against women and girls. Spotlight Initiative — including in **Argentina, Belize, Honduras, Malawi, Nigeria, Zimbabwe** and through **Safe and Fair, the Africa Regional Programme** and **the Pacific Regional Programme** — played a key role in these efforts, supporting communities of practice, fostering coalitions, and increasing opportunities for knowledge exchange.

In **Zimbabwe**, the Initiative supported the first coalition between the women's movement and organizations of persons with disabilities. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the two to address intersectional forms of discrimination, including through joint advocacy for disability rights and gender equality. At the same time, at the provincial level in Mashonaland Central Province, the Mashonal and Central Gender-

Based Violence Pillar of Hope — a coalition to strengthen community response and capacity to advocate for an end to gender-based violence and harmful practices — was formed. The coalition includes 11 community-based organizations that work across target districts. The Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe, the umbrella organization for gender equality and women rights activists — provided training to this budding coalition on the roles and responsibilities of coalition members, agenda setting, resource mobilization, and on how to drive membership, deepening its reach.

Through the **UN Trust Fund-Spotlight Initiative partnership**, in Cameroon, a project run by the Rural Women Center for Education and Development (RuWCED) facilitated the establishment of three large networks of women's groups across the country including within Cameroon's 10 semi-autonomous regions. The networks work with traditional leaders, religious leaders and youth groups, advocating for an end to gender-based violence and supporting survivors, including by referring cases to counselling centres, the traditional justice system and the RuWCED. Network groups also responded to cases of gender-based violence through sanctions against perpetrators. RuWCED's establishment of local networks for women's groups created a sustainable platform for women to come together and promoted broader community commitment to ending gender-based violence, contributing to grassroots movement-building.

To foster coalition-building and collaboration among civil society groups, Spotlight Initiative programmes — including those in **Grenada, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Liberia, Tajikistan, and Timor-Leste** — also supported extensive mappings of the existing civil society landscape. These mappings were jointly developed with civil society, helping organizations connect and identify existing initiatives across the sector (to complement work and avoid duplication). In **Honduras**, for example, a mapping and analysis of the self-reported needs of a range of civil society organizations working to end gender-based violence was conducted. This improved the visibility of these organizations and improved the organizations' understanding of the variety of impactful work being done. It also helped deepen networking among groups, facilitated through a sociogram (a visual representation or map of the relationships among individuals in a group or among groups), and laid the foundation for coalition-building.



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GOOD PRACTICE: THE ESPERANZA PROTOCOL FOR THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN LATIN AMERICA

OVERVIEW

According to the Front Line Defenders' Global Analysis 2019, Latin America is the most dangerous region in the world for human rights defenders.¹³⁴ This alarming and lamentable statistic remained the same in 2022.¹³⁵ Women human rights defenders in Latin American countries have long played a central role in the fight against violence against women and girls, such as the [Mesoamerican Initiative of Women Human Rights Defenders](#), a collective founded in 2010 of nearly 3,000 activists and 300 organizations across El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico and Nicaragua. As human rights defenders, women defenders are disproportionately exposed to sexual and other forms of gender-based violence, and their safety, as well as that of their families, is often jeopardized as a consequence of their work and advocacy.

Despite the prevalence and gravity of threats, 67 per cent of human rights defenders reported that they would still persevere with their work.¹³⁶ Recognizing that women human rights defenders face particular risks in calling for change and accountability in their communities, Spotlight Initiative's Latin America Regional Programme steadfastly supported the work of human rights defenders across the region and provided the funding that enabled the finalization of the [Esperanza Protocol](#) (referred to as "PLE").¹³⁷ This work was coordinated by UN Women, UNDP and UNFPA, with the active participation of intergovernmental mechanisms, civil society organizations, and other UN agencies.

“The Protocol invokes hope (Esperanza in Spanish) for two reasons: first, because its primary aim is to ensure a hopeful future for human rights defenders. The second is in honour of La Esperanza, a town in western Honduras that is the hometown of Berta Cáceres, indigenous-rights activist, feminist, and environmentalist, who was murdered in 2016 after 33 uninvestigated threats.”

Ms. Cáceres's murder is unfortunately not an isolated case. Approximately 75 per cent of documented cases in the region involve a murder that followed a series of repeated extreme threats or security incidents. The Esperanza Protocol honours the memory of Ms Cáceres and is designed to support states and civil society to demand measures that protect human rights defenders and ensure justice for the victims.

134. [Global Analysis 2019](#) (Front Line Defenders).

135. [Global Analysis 2022](#) (Front Line Defenders).

136. Survey findings: Towards an Effective Investigation of Threats against Human Rights Defenders (CEJIL and UN Women, 2022), page 22.

137. [Better protection for women human rights defenders in Latin America](#) (Spotlight Initiative, November 2020).

RESULTS

The Esperanza Protocol took five years to develop and publish, which happened in December 2021, but it is now hailed as the first international standard for the investigation of, and response to, threats and attacks against human rights defenders, where few concrete guidelines existed before this time beyond general standards of due diligence.

In order to develop the Esperanza Protocol, various broad consultations were held with more than 100 women human rights defenders in different countries and regions to ensure that their experiences were included in the working drafts. A coalition of more than 20 civil society organizations and women's and feminist organizations, spearheaded by the Centre for Justice and International Law, worked towards developing public policy guidelines for a systematic and diligent criminal investigation.¹³⁸ A specific focus on the security needs of women human rights defenders was included, highlighting their vital contribution to strengthening democracy.

“Human rights defenders are a network, and each one of us is a knot within that network. Our protection must be seen as a collective responsibility.”

Jéssica Isla, Honduran human rights defender

“With the protocol, we want to change how threats are treated, they are a key weapon in intimidating women human rights defenders. We must improve the response of institutions [to women’s complaints] to be able to stop the cycle of pain and silence.”

Viviana Krsticevic, Executive Director of CEJIL, explains why a special focus on gender within the PLE matters

The protocol is a critical step forward. Next, state protection and justice for women human rights defenders require attention, as the report from the Esperanza Protocol survey findings underscores: *“States need to do more to protect the lives and integrity of human rights defenders around the world. States must recognize the importance of the work of human rights defenders and must take action to eliminate threats against human rights defenders from state actors. States must set forth policies that would improve trust in their institutions and conduct full investigations into all threats against human rights defenders. Human rights defenders should be able to feel confident in reporting threats to authorities and be assured that the state will do everything within its power to protect them.”*¹³⁹

While the first step of developing the protocol is in place, the next step that needs considerable attention and support is on ensuring the implementation of the protocol and on eliminating the high levels of state impunity that exist now.

138. The full list of [supporters and contributors](#) can be found on the PLE website.

139. [Survey findings: Towards an Effective Investigation of Threats against Human Rights Defenders](#) (Centro por la Justicia y el Derecho Internacional (CEJIL) and UN Women, 2022), page 38.

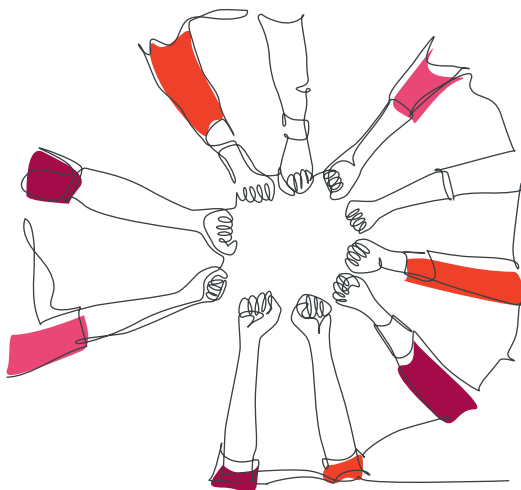


RESULT:

AMPLIFIED THE CAPACITY AND IMPACT OF WOMEN’S RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

Through the Initiative’s capacity-building efforts globally, **over 3,500 women’s rights groups, networks and relevant civil society organizations engaged in capacity-strengthening activities.**

In **Mozambique**, Spotlight Initiative provided support to local organizations to improve community-based coalition and movement-building. This support resulted in 25 local civil society organizations and community-based organizations exchanging experiences on best practices and challenges to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights, and prevent sexual and gender-based violence and child marriage. District platforms were created, in alignment with the country’s policy of decentralization, to promote the human rights of women and girls. These platforms led to 285 people being trained, and to the development of 18 community women’s and girls’ associations in four key districts, amplifying their impact.



WITH THE INITIATIVE’S SUPPORT,

over 4,912 local and grassroots women’s organisations

expanded their work and activities to end violence against women and girls.

In **Tajikistan**, the Initiative bolstered community advocacy and action to end sexual and gender-based violence at the grassroots level through a community norms mapping. The mapping provided an ethnographic review of sexual and gender-based violence, identifying key community leaders and influencers (those who help shape and communicate social norms). The ethnographic review was a first-of-its-kind on efforts to end violence against women and girls in Tajikistan, providing critical information to strengthen civil society organizational work at the local level. The review also helped civil society organizations, gender experts, and others craft effective messaging to transform social norms.

In **Papua New Guinea**, a local civil society partner provided institutional capacity-building support to six community-based organizations working with safe houses and women living with disabilities, and supported them to implement key community interventions. The support included: development of strategic workplans and by-laws; organizational restructuring; basic financial management; and defining basic personnel duties to ensure growth and sustainability. As a result of this support, the community-based entities were formalized and strengthened to better respond to violence against women and girls. The local organization further established advocacy networks and worked with local communities to change negative behaviours and norms.

With the Initiative’s support, **nearly 5,000 women’s organizations reported a strengthened ability to design, implement, monitor, and evaluate their own programmes to end gender-based violence.**



RESULT:

RESOURCED AND STRENGTHENED THE CAPACITY OF YOUNG FEMINIST ACTIVISTS AND YOUTH-LED NETWORKS.

Young feminist activists and youth-led networks are innovative leaders, and at the forefront of cutting-edge activism. Despite this, however, they are often underfunded and under-resourced, and excluded from critical policy processes and spaces to push for change.

Globally, Spotlight Initiative supported the work of young activists to foster sustainable impact

and lasting social change, including in **Haiti, Kyrgyzstan, Mali** and **Trinidad and Tobago** and through **the Africa Regional Programme**.

Across ten countries and two regions, a total of 657 youth civil society organizations and 822 civil society organizations representing other groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination joined coalitions and networks of women's rights groups and other civil society organizations to better coordinate and amplify the work to end violence against women and girls.

In partnership with UNICEF and the Youth Division of the African Union Commission, **the Africa Regional Programme** created a Youth Reference Group. From across the continent 200 youths were convened to reimagine an Africa without harmful practices and test innovative ideas to promote the mental health of children and young people as part of efforts to end child marriage. Through the Youth Innovation Challenge, 20 youth groups with outstanding innovative applications from 13 countries across the continent were each provided USD 2,000 in seed funding to: empower girls and support those affected by harmful practices and mental health; enable them to work directly with peers in the communities; and advocate for laws and policies concerning girls. In addition, 30 youth advocates convened a side-event during the Third African Peer Review Mechanism in July to consolidate youth voices directed at transforming harmful practices and behaviours across the continent.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, girls increased their leadership skills, implemented their own activities, and engaged in intergenerational dialogue. Over 650 girls are now members of 12 girls' leadership clubs established by Spotlight Initiative. Each club has held a school debate on the topic of girls' rights and girls' leadership and organized workshops with the participation of local council members introducing girls to feminism, gender stereotypes, women's rights movements, and activism. Intergenerational linkages between women activists and girls

were strengthened through these workshops and, as a result, women local council members have identified priority issues related to girls for advocacy in their communities.

Through the **UN Trust Fund**, in Liberia, the Episcopal Relief & Development organization engaged faith and youth leaders in violence against women and girls prevention and response efforts. To enhance survivors' access to services in Grand Cape Mount, River Cess, Bong, and Grand Gedeh counties, the project supported youth leaders and Christian and Muslim faith leaders to drive community-level changes by addressing attitudes and beliefs around violence (including their own). Over time, communities witnessed a decrease in the proportion of women reporting intimate partner violence. Project participants also demonstrated improved attitudes around ending VAWG and promoting gender equality (including among adolescent boys, the percentage of which rejecting rape myths rose from 47 per cent to 75 per cent).

Funding is critical for robust movements and groups to end violence against women and girls, including for youth-led organizations and movements, as discussed further above in this chapter. Across Spotlight Initiative, programmes resourced organisations, including grassroots groups, supporting their ongoing efforts toward transformative change. Through the **Central Asia and Afghanistan Regional Programme**, **for example**, a total of \$544,228 reached 31 civil society organisations in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Often underfunded, these small grants supported grassroots organizations working to end sexual and gender based violence, strengthening their institutional capacity to sustain and scale their critical work. The Good Practice box below further highlights the importance of funding grassroots civil society organizations and women's and feminist organizations and movements in particular through [the Initiative's partnership with the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund.](#)



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GOOD PRACTICE: FUNDING CIVIL SOCIETY AND GRASSROOTS COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE UNITED NATIONS TRUST FUND TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THE WOMEN'S PEACE AND HUMANITARIAN FUND

OVERVIEW

In order to ensure that a significant proportion of funding reaches grassroots communities, Spotlight Initiative partnered with two global funds, the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund.

The UN Trust Fund provides multi-year grants that prioritize funding to smaller and grassroots organizations and to initiatives that address, reduce or eliminate violence against women and girls. The UN Trust Fund also places prioritization on capacity development. The Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund gives grants to support women and women's rights organizations that prevent conflict and crises, support the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, and promote peace in their communities. Both of these funds were chosen as Spotlight Initiative partners because of their unique access and networks to grassroots feminist civil society organizations in countries all over the world. There have also been special funding windows rolled out by these two funds, particularly during COVID-19, that facilitated quick access to core resources for civil society organizations.

RESULTS

Since the beginning of Spotlight Initiative in 2017, a total of USD 36.8 million in grants has gone to support women's movements and address violence against women and girls. Remarkably, nearly all of this funding has reached community

organizations, with 82 per cent of it going to local groups and 94 per cent supporting women-led organizations that are working on women's rights and feminism.¹⁴⁰ This is the power of working through intermediary funds, such as the UN Trust Fund and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund. Both already had direct and established access to local organizations, which would otherwise have been challenging to reach due to administrative and logistical barriers.

Over the five years, these grants have reached over 32 million people, making a significant difference in the lives of women and girls. For example, in **Zimbabwe**, the UN Trust Fund worked with a women-led group called Family AIDS Caring Trust. The project, "Voices from the Fringes," focused on increasing sexual and reproductive health knowledge and aimed to reduce violence against girls and young women, including women and girl sex workers. Results from a study showed that 98 per cent of the women and girl sex workers who had been involved in this project felt an increase in their sense of safety. Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund grantees in Uganda supported several civil society organizations that came together to manage cases of violence against women and girls, helping to settle over 2,600 domestic cases through mediation and reconciliation. This collective work helped to move cases forward quicker and supported faster resolutions. These are just two brief examples of success from many grants over the years. Together, these partnerships demonstrate the power of Spotlight Initiative's model of supporting local civil society and women's organizations in order to foster lasting and meaningful change.

140. [The 2022 Global Annual Narrative Progress Report](#), page 53.

5.2.3

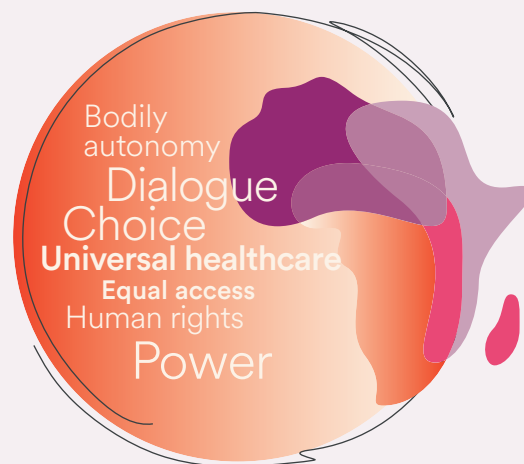
Spotlight Initiative Programmes in Africa: Promoting and Funding Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Over the course of Spotlight Initiative, advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights and bodily autonomy has been a critical area of intervention in ending violence against women and girls. With a USD 100 million commitment to advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights across the Initiative's programmes in Africa, Spotlight Initiative surpassed this target by allocating a total of **USD 117 million**¹⁴¹ and demonstrated sustainable, innovative and inclusive approaches. Spotlight Initiative over the years has advocated for data-driven approaches to influence policies on sexual and reproductive health and rights. It has fostered the agency of youth to create safe spaces and utilized peer mentors and education. It has also worked through the school system, employed innovative approaches, provided specialized and integrated care for women and girl survivors, garnered community support, strengthened capacity, and embedded sexual and reproductive health and rights in laws, policies, and plans to ensure sustainable outcomes.

The majority of funding for sexual and reproductive health and rights was allocated under Pillar 4 on services (32 per cent), strengthening integrated services for sexual and reproductive health and rights, and Pillar 3 on prevention (29 per cent), supporting raising awareness and information through various community-wide channels.

Advocating for data-driven and knowledge-centred approaches to influence policies on sexual and reproductive health and rights

Over the implementation of Spotlight Initiative, programmes including the Spotlight Initiative's **Africa Regional Programme**, and the programmes in **Malawi**, and **Uganda** supported efforts to include data in existing data systems



Funding for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Africa

Allocated USD 117 million

TARGET: USD 100 MILLION

and disaggregate data to include sexual and reproductive health and rights indicators to influence policymaking. For example, Spotlight Initiative's **Africa Regional Programme** advocated for the inclusion of sexual and reproductive health and rights indicators in data collection tools to better inform regional policies related to sexual and reproductive health and rights. In close partnership with the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, Spotlight Initiative in **Uganda** lobbied for the Uganda Demographic and Health Survey to include sexual and reproductive health and rights indicators and it supported training and pre-testing of the survey. Similarly, Spotlight Initiative in **Malawi** worked closely with the National Observatory Hub and district hubs to support the availability of data on sexual and reproductive health and rights. The Spotlight Initiative programme in **Uganda** integrated sexual and reproductive health and rights and equitable access to services for women and girl sex workers into the Universal Health Coverage in Uganda. Spotlight programmes supported approaches to sustain the knowledge base on sexual and reproductive health and rights; for

141. USD 117 million was budgeted in total, out of which USD 111 million came from EU funding and USD 6 million came from UN funding. For Africa country programmes, global OSC-approved Phase I+II budgets were used for the analysis. For the Africa Regional Programme, the global OSC-approved single-phase budget was used for the analysis. No information is available on SRHR allocations for the UN Trust Fund and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund grant-giving programmes in Africa.

example, Spotlight Initiative **Uganda** produced and widely distributed a national compendium of service providers that provide services to address sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence, and harmful practices.

Fostering the agency of young people to create safe spaces and utilizing peer mentors to engage in constructive conversations on sexual and reproductive health and rights

Young people were identified as strategic stakeholders who engaged in advancing and generating innovative approaches to promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights. Spotlight Initiative's **Africa Regional Programme** supported the development of a gender-transformative accelerator tool that was tested across various countries, including in **Mozambique**. The tool facilitated conversation surrounding bodily autonomy and sexuality, which unearthed the harmful impacts of agency and the pervading biases of service providers, while providing youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health and rights services. This tool will become pivotal in influencing policymaking to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights. The **Africa Regional Programme** supported the engagement of youth initiatives such as the Global Youth Consortium against Female Genital Mutilation and the End Female Genital

Mutilation Innovation Initiative at the African Federation for Sexual Health and Rights. The focus on young people in the implementation of sexual and reproductive health and rights was evident across Spotlight Initiative programmes. For example, Spotlight Initiative in **Mali** provided safe spaces for young people to learn about reproductive health. Similarly, Spotlight Initiative in **Zimbabwe**, through its mobile services, supported the creation of "Safe Spaces for Women and Girls", managed by trained mentors, providing girls with a space to learn more about sexual and reproductive health and rights, share their needs and express themselves without the fear of judgement. Spotlight Initiative in **Mali** supported the engagement of youth groups to increase knowledge of, and capacity to advance, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the Initiative in **Nigeria** supported boys' clubs to provide spaces to engage in productive conversations on shifting attitudes on sexual and gender-based violence.

An emphasis on education and working through the school system as a means to further sexual and reproductive health and rights

Schools proved to be a strategic and conducive space to promote education and awareness on sexual and reproductive health and rights. Through the support of the Spotlight Initiative



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Innovative approaches supported the implementation of sexual and reproductive health and rights activities to raise awareness

Over the implementation period, **the Africa Regional Programme** promoted sexual and reproductive health and rights education in various ways, one of which was through the support of *Afyatoons*, a recipient of the “FGM HackLab”. *Afyatoons* used educational visual arts, including animated characters, to share the impact of harmful practices. *Afyatoon’s* approach was human-centred and community-collaborative, and it reached young people from diverse backgrounds. Throughout the programming, Spotlight Initiative sought to integrate technological tools in the advancement of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Spotlight Initiative **Uganda** supported an educational online platform targeting young people to learn more about sensitive topics like sexual and reproductive health and rights and HIV and enhanced their knowledge.

programme in **Liberia**, the level of retention of girls in school increased because of the menstrual hygiene management initiative and the “peer educators” who were responsible for having peer-to-peer conversations on sexual and reproductive health and rights. Other similar groups included school health clubs, which were used as spaces to raise awareness and improve communication skills on the importance of sexual and reproductive health and rights among young people. In **Niger**, the availability of restrooms enabled girls at school to better handle menstrual hygiene management and improved the girls’ school attendance rates. The Initiative in Niger supported the integration of comprehensive sexual education to train teachers in enhancing students’ knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and rights along with life skills. In **Uganda**, the programmes supported the training of students in topics such as menstrual hygiene, early pregnancy, sexuality, gender, and forced marriage. Spotlight programmes adopted a holistic approach to integrating sexual and reproductive health and rights in the broader programming to end violence against women and girls. For example, Spotlight Initiative in **Nigeria** included sexual and reproductive health and rights into an entrepreneurship programme and a social and behavioural change programme for religious leaders.

Providing specialized and integrated care for women and girl survivors

Spotlight Initiative programmes worked to ensure that sexual and reproductive health and rights were part of integrated services provided for women and girls. Spotlight Initiative in **Liberia** supported the delivery of integrated services by supporting the development of the “essential services package” and bringing together the Ministries of Health, Justice and Gender. This approach can be sustained for years to come. In **Mali, Niger** and **Nigeria**, Spotlight Initiative also supported integrated care for survivors of sexual violence to access medical care, fistula recovery, and maternity clinics for younger mothers through integrated services. In **Mali**, for example, one-stop centres supported by Spotlight Initiative provided integrated assistance to abused women and girls through the provision of medical, sexual, and reproductive health and rights, as well as psychosocial and legal support, all in one place. The services created increased confidence in the community, demonstrating that it was safe to report and seek help on violence, including sexual violence, family abuse, and sexual and reproductive health and rights issues. For example, a mother in Bamako acted when her 6-year-old daughter told her that she had been sexually assaulted by her uncle. Despite pressure

from her family who wished to avoid stigma, she decided to get help. The local one-stop centre provided her and her daughter with the physical, legal, and psychological care they needed. The case was reported to the police, and she received legal counsel to bring the perpetrator to justice. A campaign focused on ending gender-based violence was televised and broadcast over the radio, reaching an audience of millions and sparking increased dialogue and awareness in the community. In the weeks following the news, the number of people visiting the one-stop centre in Bamako increased by more than 65 per cent.

Garnering community support and strengthening capacity on sexual and reproductive health and rights

The buy-in of the community proved to be one of the most critical strategies in advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights. For example, Spotlight Initiative in **Niger** found that the support of the community in setting procedures to ensure men would be responsible for women not giving birth in risky conditions increased the number of women accessing maternity services by over 90 per cent. By working together with the Council for Traditional Leaders in **Uganda**, traditional leaders better engaged with and addressed violence against women and girls, harmful practices, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. This level of support also resulted in an overall increase in young girls' self-esteem and willingness to access sexual and reproductive health and rights services.

Spotlight Initiative programmes like the **Africa Regional Programme** and the programme in **Mali** supported capacity-building activities

that included training parliamentarians on lobbying for the development of sexual and reproductive health policies, training health care workers on clinical management of cases of sexual violence, and training other types of stakeholders, for example, watch committees, domestic helpers, and model husband clubs.

Embedding sexual and reproductive health and rights in laws, policies, and plans to ensure sustainable outcomes

By enshrining sexual and reproductive health and rights into laws, policies, and plans, Spotlight Initiative programmes, throughout implementation, made efforts to ensure sustainable outcomes for women and girls across African countries. Spotlight programmes like **Malawi, Niger, and Uganda** supported national frameworks and policies to ensure that sexual reproductive health and rights were prioritized. At a regional level, the **Africa Regional Programme** supported the African Union in adopting an accountability framework to end harmful practices. In an effort to change the perceptions and attitudes surrounding certain aspects of sexual and reproductive health and rights, Spotlight Initiative in **Zimbabwe** formed multi-stakeholder partnerships and supported consultations on developing terms of reference for the termination of pregnancy and standards of operating principles within the Termination of Pregnancy Act. The consultation brought together civil society organizations and government ministries. In line with the principle of leaving no one behind, women with disabilities were also consulted on their experiences accessing services to have legal abortions. Similarly, Spotlight Initiative in **Uganda** supported the integration of sexual and reproductive health and rights into the Sexuality Education and Disability Policy. Spotlight Initiative's commitment to further sexual and reproductive health and rights also illustrates a dedication to the principle of leaving no one behind.

Since the Initiative's inception, women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights have been increasingly protected. [A detailed Good Practice from Malawi where safe spaces were used to address sexual and reproductive health and rights issues of girls, as well as issues related to harmful practices such as early child marriage is presented below.](#)



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GOOD PRACTICE: **THE SAFE SPACE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME IN MALAWI EMPOWERS WOMEN AND GIRLS TO RAISE THEIR VOICES AND CHALLENGE SOCIAL NORMS**

OVERVIEW

In Malawi, the high prevalence of gender-based violence and traditional practices, such as child marriage and sexual initiation rituals, is a reflection of entrenched patriarchal social norms and belief systems. Malawi is among the top 20 countries with the highest percentage of women aged 20-24 who were married before they reached the ages of 15 and 18 (47 per cent), and more than 80 per cent of the villages in the southern region still practice harmful initiation rituals.¹⁴² Of women aged 15-49, 34 per cent have experienced physical violence, and 21 per cent have experienced sexual violence at some point.¹⁴³

To address the high rates of violence against women and harmful practices in the country, UNFPA through Spotlight Initiative developed the Safe Space Mentorship Programme (“Safe Spaces”), a good example of inter-agency cooperation and engagement of civil society. Through a training of trainers model in collaboration with civil society organizations, the programme trained young women as mentors to implement a community-building approach in order to empower girls and other young women to challenge harmful social norms and behaviours that perpetuate violence against women and girls. Launched in 2019, Safe Spaces is a six-month programme with weekly mentorship sessions, where girls and young women (aged 10-24) learn life skills, increase their awareness of sexual and reproductive health and rights, and strengthen their capacity to report violence and promote positive social norms.

RESULTS

Since its implementation, Safe Spaces has supported 435 women to become mentors across the six districts in the country.¹⁴⁴ Through 473 Safe Spaces, the programme has directly reached 37,292 young women and girls as mentees, who are now agents of change in their communities.¹⁴⁵ Results from this approach are significant and diverse, ranging from: strengthened awareness of women’s and girls’ rights; greater access to justice after abuse; improved women’s and girls’ physical and mental health and well-being; and more leaders and decision makers protecting women’s and girls’ rights.

One of the most significant impacts of the programme was ending child marriage. This occurred through an emphasis on promoting mindset shifts among mentees. These efforts have resulted in zero teenage pregnancies and child marriages during COVID-19 among mentees.

Safe Spaces yielded other important impacts. Overall, 6,152 girls returned to school as a result of the influence of the Safe Spaces, including 3,836 girls who were mentees. This was achieved through regular awareness campaigns led by mentors and mentees and by engaging school principals to join forces in their advocacy efforts. Some mentees improved their academic results while being part of the programme, while 968 girls sought secondary education. Mentors and mentees identified and referred 13,564 cases of gender-based violence, ranging from sexual, physical, and emotional abuse through to economic abuse. In the Traditional

142. Initiation rituals or puberty rites are ceremonies of transition from childhood into adulthood. Some of them include harmful practices such as: genital operation (female genital mutilation or cutting for girls, circumcision for boys); genital manipulations; learning adolescent and adulthood skills; enforcing social norms (for instance, obedience of wives to husbands); and being forced or encouraged into heterosexual intercourse.

143. [Ending violence against women and girls in Malawi: What do we know?](#) (UNICEF Malawi, 2020).

144. The 2020 Malawi Annual Programme Report. The six districts where Spotlight Initiative was implemented are: Dowa, Machinga, Mzimba, Nkhatabay, Nsanje and Ntchis.

145. The 2020 Malawi Annual Programme Report.

Authority Sitola, of the 270 gender-based violence cases identified through 15 Safe Spaces, 5 perpetrators were convicted, and 72 cases of child marriage were stopped.

These spaces also facilitated girls' access to services. A total of 30,979 girls have accessed various gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health and rights services since the programme's inception.¹⁴⁶ Successful elements that contributed to this result included the fact that the programme was part of the service referral pathway, and that there was a strong collaboration with the police, the community victim support units, one-stop centres, and community groups, such as mothers' groups. This ensured coordination across the gender-based violence support pathway from end-to-end.

The Safe Spaces' empowerment approach was another key element that strengthened results. In 2021, public outcry and advocacy by mentees led to the successful arrest and prosecution of an abusive traditional chief in the Mzimba

district who sexually assaulted a 16-year-old girl. The Traditional Authorities attempted to cover up the incident, but mentors and mentees sought justice and worked together with other community structures until the village chief was convicted with a prison sentence. The programme also provided advocacy opportunities for young women and girls to engage with traditional leaders and community members and gain their support on ending violence against women and girls and promoting gender equality. Overall, 3,406 meetings were conducted with 17,998 leaders and influential persons, which helped resolve 4,285 gender-based violence cases emanating from Safe Spaces. More than 1,455 young girls and women took on leadership roles as a result of the programme, underscoring an important mindset shift in communities.¹⁴⁷

The successful results of the Safe Space Mentorship Programme approach have been recognized by civil society organizations who have replicated the programme in other communities, contributing to its sustainability beyond Spotlight Initiative.¹⁴⁸

5.3 RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES TO ADVANCE RESULTS

Spotlight Initiative has made meaningful — and often unprecedented — contributions to efforts to end violence against women and girls over the years, deftly navigating a range of challenges to continue to deliver for women, girls and marginalized communities. The following section outlines key challenges faced by the Initiative since its launch, together with how Spotlight programmes were able to adapt to deliver results for women and girls. This section is divided into three sub-sections focused on: contextual challenges; operational and programmatic challenges; and technical challenges. Adaptive or mitigating measures follow.

146. The 2023 Malawi Final Programme Report Draft.

147. Ibid.

148. The 2023 Malawi Final Programme Report Draft.

5.3.1 Contextual Challenges and Adaptive Responses

While not exhaustive, this subsection provides a glimpse into several significant contextual challenges encountered since the Initiative launched, along with key actions taken by the Initiative's programmes to adapt and sustain support for women and girls. For a more comprehensive understanding of the range of challenges faced and responses implemented, readers are directed to previous years' [Spotlight Initiative Global and Programme Annual Reports](#).

The following contextual challenges were commonly faced by Spotlight Initiative:

- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent recovery, and the ensuing increase in violence against women and girls, led to significant challenges.
- The increasing severity of the climate crisis and the resultant effects on the livelihoods, safety, and security of women and girls posed ongoing obstacles.
- Ongoing political unrest and security concerns endangered the progress of women's and girls' rights.
- Intensifying anti-gender backlash threatened the lives and rights of diverse women and girls, women human rights defenders, and the work of women's rights organisations. It also posed challenges to advancing a rights based approach to ending gender-based violence programming.

The actions taken to mitigate and/or adapt to the contextual challenges are set out below.

The impact of COVID-19 and the shadow pandemic

The impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath had grave repercussions for every aspect of society, including healthcare systems, livelihoods, mental health, and education. The pandemic affected the delivery of Spotlight Initiative, hindering it due to restrictions in movement, school closures, social distancing, and competing government priorities. It also exacerbated levels violence against women

and girls: COVID-19 spurred the “shadow pandemic,” which was characterized by a surge in violence against women and girls, deepened gender inequality, and discrimination against marginalized communities.¹⁴⁹ **Malawi, Mali, and Uganda** were just a few of the programmes in which school closures led to increases in teenage pregnancy, child marriage, and setbacks in girls' education and, post-COVID-19, an increase in pregnancy-related dropouts and low school re-entry. Movement restrictions were universal, with some challenging consequences. In **Mozambique**, activists for the Initiative were viewed as conduits for spreading disease and so faced opposition, and in **Belize, Guyana, and Jamaica**, civil society and grassroots organizations lacked the technological infrastructure and skills needed to adapt to COVID-19 lockdowns and movement restrictions.

The impact of the climate crisis

The persistent risk of the climate crisis, including severe weather phenomena and natural disasters, posed ongoing obstacles to the implementation of Spotlight programmes, and further amplified pre-existing economic, social, and gender disparities. **Belize, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Tonga, and Uganda** were just a few of the countries to experience severe weather phenomena including hurricanes, tropical storms, droughts, typhoons, floods, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. These crises led to detrimental consequences for communities, disrupting livelihoods, well-being, and security. Such impacts are often disproportionately felt by women and girls, intensifying their susceptibility to violence, discrimination, and exploitation.

Ongoing political unrest and security threats

Reflecting the trends observed in previous annual reports, ongoing political instability and security threats presented significant impediments for Spotlight Initiative implementation. Programmes, including in **Niger** and elsewhere, had to navigate challenging changes in government (achieved through force), resulting in humanitarian crises and increased isolation from the international



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149. United Nations: Meetings Coverage and Press Release “[COVID-19 Has Led to ‘Shadow Pandemic’ of Violence against Women, Girls, Says Secretary-General, in Anniversary Message for United Nations Trust Fund](#)” 25 October 2021.

community. Other countries, such as **Haiti**, **Mali**, **Mozambique**, and **Papua New Guinea** have seen a rise in armed groups and armed conflict, resulting in deteriorating security situations in many of Spotlight Initiative's target districts, and further elevating the risk of gender-based violence. Further, protracted election processes resulted in the delayed launch of programme activities, for example, in **Guyana**, where the country lacked a functioning government for over five months.

Intensifying anti-gender backlash

Intensifying anti-gender backlash has threatened the lives and rights of women, girls, transgender, and gender-diverse individuals, particularly those from structurally marginalized communities.

This backlash has severely impacted access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, the right to education, and the ability to participate politically, economically, and socially. It has also affected freedom of movement.

The anti-gender backlash has endangered the lives and work of women human rights defenders, feminists, LGBTQIA+ activists and communities, and women's rights organizations. It has posed challenges to advancing a rights-based approach to addressing gender-based violence, as well. As a thematic assessment of the Initiative's work with civil society has noted, "the Initiative has found it difficult to navigate these dynamics in some settings, despite its commitment to ending violence against women and girls through a human rights-based approach."¹⁵⁰

150. Social Development Direct (2024) "Thematic Assessment: Assessing Spotlight Initiative's contribution to the engagement of civil society, the implementation of 'Leave no one behind', and movement building."

MITIGATING THE CHALLENGES: ADAPTIVE PROGRAMMING

Spotlight Initiative programmes implemented strategies to mitigate the long-term social, economic, health, and political repercussions of the pandemic, particularly its impact on gender equality and violence against women and girls. Notable adaptive approaches included:

- **Gender-responsive and inclusive COVID-19 plans:** Spotlight programmes identified, and quickly filled, the gap between prevention of violence against women and girls and COVID-19 response strategies. For example, programmes supported the integration of prevention approaches and essential services for women and girls into national, subnational, and local COVID-19 response plans and task forces.
- **Harnessing technology and building partner capacity:** Spotlight programmes creatively utilized existing innovative technology to implement programme activities, including: social media; teleconferencing; digital data collection methods; and mobile cash and networking apps. This was coupled with an investment in civil society and

grassroot organizational partners' technological infrastructure and capacity, in order to ensure sustainability. In this way, programmes continued to deliver for women and girls. The measures included: using virtual counselling services; leveraging media to amplify behaviour change messaging and promote positive norms; funding helplines setting up direct assistance programmes; and delivering essential services via mobile and online platforms.

- **Addressing evolving service needs post-COVID-19:** To mitigate against the fallout of the pandemic, which was largely borne by women, required programmes to adapt their responses to violence against women and girls by focusing on emerging issues. Services were adapted (including to mobile and remote services) to ensure continued provision, new activities designed to address girls' educational gaps and re-entry post-COVID-19 were introduced, funding was reallocated for frontline partners to address the impact of the pandemic, and interventions to advance women's economic rights activities were introduced.

MITIGATING THE CHALLENGES: GENDER-SENSITIVE EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Recognizing that climate change disasters are no longer sporadic occurrences but integral components of a more volatile climate change-induced environment, Spotlight programmes have swiftly adjusted to crises and humanitarian scenarios. Operating seamlessly across the development-humanitarian-peace (triple) nexus, Spotlight initiative has consistently championed gender-sensitive approaches to the disaster response to humanitarian crises. Moreover, they have demonstrated flexibility in addressing the specific needs of women and girls impacted by climate-related and other crises (an example is set out in the box above for gender-responsive programming related to COVID-19). Some of these adaptations include:

- Transforming humanitarian systems to become gender-responsive: Spotlight Initiative successfully advocated for the integration of gender considerations into governments' responses to humanitarian crises. It also captured opportunities to integrate gender-equitable norms, prevention strategies, and services to address gender-based violence into such contexts. For example, Spotlight programmes worked with humanitarian actors to form guidelines on managing gender-based violence in humanitarian crises, established safe spaces in internally displaced person camps, and developed remote and mobile essential services in areas frequently hit by climate disasters.
- Adaptable resource allocation: Responsive funding mechanisms enabled programmes to swiftly redirect resources to address the urgent needs of women and girls impacted by disasters. This ensured their safety, rights, and livelihoods, through the provision of shelter, food, menstrual hygiene kits, counselling, education, and other essential services.

MITIGATING THE CHALLENGES: STRENGTHENING GRASSROOTS PARTNERSHIPS

In situations marked by political instability and insecurity, the threat to vulnerable groups, particularly women and girls facing multiple forms of discrimination, intensifies. This heightened risk extends to women human rights defenders. Compounded by movement restrictions and threats to personnel, partners, and rights holders, these factors pose significant obstacles to programme delivery and monitoring. To fulfil its commitment to combat violence against women and girls, Spotlight Initiative programmes focused on building partnerships with grassroots, community, and civil society organizations, traditional and religious leaders, and frontline workers to reach those most affected by political insecurity and ensure that no one was left behind. These partnerships provided the necessary flexibility to address the diverse challenges stemming from instability. Key components of this responsive partnership approach included:

- Leveraging partnerships to increase access: In cases where access was hindered, Spotlight programmes redoubled their efforts to build effective partnerships with civil society and grassroots organizations. Positioned as frontline providers, these entities conducted community-level essential services and prevention activities using technology, funding mechanisms, guides, tools, and training provided by Spotlight Initiative.
- Leveraging partnerships to increase the safety and security of women and girls: In cases where political insecurity introduced a new wave of discrimination against women and girls and threatened their security, Spotlight Initiative partnered with local leaders to provide new forms of protections for women. For example, allocating men chaperones to allow women to safely move around, or partnering with traditional leaders to promote positive norms, and vouch for women rights defenders and frontline workers.

MITIGATING THE CHALLENGES: STRENGTHENING MOVEMENTS, EXPANDING CIVIC SPACE, AND IMPROVING PROTECTION

From its launch, Spotlight Initiative has championed the human rights of women and girls and has pushed back against the anti-gender backlash by strengthening protections for women human rights defenders, advocating for the most vulnerable communities, and working with traditional leaders, governments, local bodies, and, critically, civil society and movements. These efforts aim to expand civic space, build resilient and responsive organisations and institutions, and prevent further erosion of hard-won gains.

Collaborating with WPHF and the UN Trust Fund — as well as the [WithHer Fund](#) — has also driven much-needed resources to frontline organizations, strengthening their resilience and supporting movement building in the face of this backlash.

To mitigate against this challenge, Spotlight initiative has produced a number of guidance notes to advance protections and support, as well, including particularly the [Spotlight Specific Integrated Protection Approach](#) and the [Grassroots Action Plan](#).

The Initiative has also [developed guidance](#) on working with men and boys (and has worked extensively across its programmes with men and boys, traditional leaders and other community leaders) to underscore the importance of their involvement in efforts to end violence. However, further addressing this issue in Spotlight 2.0 is crucial to ensure that the approach remains rights-based and helps to effectively counter the backlash.

Across its programmes, Spotlight Initiative has also provided targeted support to strengthen movements. This support included direct funding, as well as convenings and networking events for various women's rights organizations and civil society, and advocacy activities that help these groups access decision-makers at different levels (among other work).

For example, in the context of a local backlash against gender justice and women's human rights in the Pacific Region in 2021, Spotlight Initiative

Pacific Regional Programme launched the Pacific Feminist Community of Practice. Moderated by DIVA for Equality, the Community of Practice provided a critical forum for connection and solidarity between 45 civil society organisations and approximately 95 activists and diverse movements from across 14 Island States and territories. Through a co-creation and co-design approach deeply rooted in feminist values, the forum gathered activists together around key issues such as violence against women and girls, climate crisis, economic insecurity and other issues, resulting in the robust documentation of best practices in feminist discourse and movement building in the Pacific Island region, and deepened community-based organising, networking and thought partnership.

Through this mechanism, Pacific feminist activists informed inputs into the 66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference. A range of other examples can be found throughout this report, including in [Chapter 5.1](#) and [Chapter 5.2](#) above.

As the thematic assessment of the Initiative's work with civil society recently noted, "structurally marginalised individuals and constituency-led groups were consulted and involved in decision making across Spotlight Initiative...[and] partnerships with constituency-led CSOs - including as implementing partners and grantees - emerged as an important approach for engaging structurally marginalised women and groups in implementation. Small grant schemes, in particular, enabled constituency-led CSOs to access UN funding and address violence against structurally marginalised women and groups, although the grants tended to be short-term." Ensuring that the principle of leaving no one behind was integrated into all programming and across governance mechanisms helped address the structural discrimination faced by marginalised groups (often targeted by anti-gender backlash), drive support and protections, and facilitate their active participation in countering backlash and advancing efforts to end gender-based violence.

5.3.2

Operational and Programmatic Challenges and Adaptive Responses

This section explores the prevalent operational and programmatic obstacles encountered throughout the implementation of Spotlight Initiative programmes, along with the measures taken to address them. While this is not an exhaustive list, it provides insight into some of the key challenges faced during the overall implementation period of Spotlight Initiative. For more details of the operational challenges and the actions taken to mitigate them, refer to the Initiative's [programme and global reports from previous years](#).

The following are the notable operational and programmatic challenges experienced by Spotlight Initiative programmes:

- Reduced technical capacities and expertise in ending violence against women and girls at the national level generated delays in the roll-out of activities.
- Operating as One UN and delivering under the UN Reform presented operational challenges in sustained inter-agency collaboration and cooperation.
- Consistent and meaningful engagement of civil society, both as partners and as Civil Society Reference Group members across programmes and contexts was an important challenge to overcome.



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The actions taken to mitigate and/or adapt to the operational and programmatic challenges faced are set out below.

Reduced technical capacities and expertise in ending violence against women and girls at the national level generated delays in the roll-out of activities

The Spotlight Initiative model features multisectoral partnerships and collaboration to effectively address gender equality and violence against women and girls. In particular, Spotlight Initiative draws on the expertise of civil society to guide the design, implementation, and monitoring of activities for national ownership and sustainable change. Additionally, the inter-agency approach, aligned with the UN Reform, leverages agencies' comparative advantages and expertise to provide a more tailored response anchored in national priorities. Yet, some programmes encountered challenges due to limited technical skills and expertise in ending violence against women and girls at the national level, resulting in heightened programmatic risks and process delays. Despite this, Spotlight Initiative programme teams assessed the challenges, and mitigated the circumstances through traditional and non-traditional mitigation measures.

Operating as One UN and delivering under the UN Reform presented operational challenges in sustained inter-agency collaboration and cooperation

Spotlight Initiative is driven by an integrated One UN approach, leveraging the leadership of the Resident Coordinator and the expertise of agencies to address national priorities and optimize resources, as well as streamlining backend processes to increase effectiveness and efficiency of programme delivery. However, operationalizing the UN Reform can present challenges, particularly with administration, logistics, and procurement processes. Hence, Spotlight Initiative programmes have encountered challenges streamlining operational processes due to Recipient UN Organization-specific rules and regulations. Through extensive consultations and collaboration across UN agencies, programmes have adapted and continued to refine coordination efforts to enhance joint processes and operating strategies. Some specific examples of this adaptation are described below. For further details on how the Initiative has promoted inter-agency collaboration and advanced UN Reform, refer to [Chapter 4](#) on governance and partnerships, and [Chapter 6](#) on lessons learned.

Consistent and meaningful engagement of civil society, both as partners and as Civil Society Reference Group members, across programmes and contexts was an important challenge to overcome

A key principle of Spotlight Initiative is the meaningful engagement of civil society organizations, particularly feminists and women's rights groups in all phases of programming and at all levels (in design, implementation, monitoring, governance and decision-making,

as described in further detail in [Chapter 4](#) and throughout the report). To this end, Civil Society Reference Groups are engaged at global, regional, and national levels fulfilling a triple mandate: to advocate; to advise for the realization of objectives; and to hold Spotlight Initiative accountable for its commitments. Throughout the implementation of programmes, Spotlight Initiative teams proactively identified gaps and bottlenecks that hindered the meaningful engagement of civil society, and also designed mitigation strategies.

MITIGATING THE CHALLENGES: FINDING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO BUILD CAPACITIES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE EXPERTS

Tajikistan's Spotlight Initiative programme reported facing hurdles due to limited availability of gender-based violence and sexual and gender-based violence experts at the national level. The limited availability of experts necessitated a lengthy and resource-intensive process to train individuals to function as fully-fledged prevention experts in the field of gender-based violence. To address this challenge, the programme implemented the School of Gender Activists initiative. The School of Gender Activists offered multiple rounds of non-traditional training on gender-based violence issues to nearly 60 potential gender experts in Tajikistan. This innovative programme served as a platform for individuals with limited experience to acquire knowledge and skills, empowering them to evolve into experts in the field. Moreover, the school extended training to existing and emerging experts through various capacity-building activities. By establishing the School of Gender Activists, the programme not only tackled the immediate issue of limited expertise in the country, but also nurtured a sustainable solution. This measure equipped individuals in the gender-based violence field with essential knowledge and expertise and fostered the development of a robust pipeline of gender experts.

Timor-Leste also faced limitations in the availability of national technical experts to manage and implement the programme, frequent rotations of volunteers, and difficulties with the recruitment of external technical consultants. To mitigate this challenge, international consultants were hired to fill national technical capacity

gaps and Recipient United Nations Organizations collaborated to share rosters of consultants and UN volunteers as backups to overcome recruitment challenges. Furthermore, all team members had access to results-based management, and monitoring and evaluation training to strengthen and develop technical capacities.

The shortage of gender experts in **Grenada** and the broader Caribbean region presented challenges in the recruitment of staff and consultants for programme implementation. The narrow selection pool led to repeated calls for applications and resource constraints, as several experts were engaged with multiple UN agencies to deliver both Spotlight Initiative and non-Spotlight Initiative work in Grenada and across other countries, resulting in disruptions to planned activity timelines due to multiple project commitments. To address these challenges, the programme made a concerted effort to increase and diversify the pool of gender equality and gender-based violence experts to reduce reliance on a small group of individuals. For example, at least 22 government personnel and representatives from civil society organizations completed an intensive professional development course titled "Gender Analysis and Mainstreaming for Development Professionals." Capacity-building increased knowledge and expertise in the field of ending violence against women and girls and gender equality and women's rights, expanding the human resource pool and enhancing the programme's capacity to effectively address gender-based violence in Grenada.

MITIGATING THE CHALLENGES: STREAMLINING INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION FOR SMOOTH IMPLEMENTATION

In the spirit of streamlining inter-agency coordination, Recipient UN Organizations established standing meetings with operations and finance teams to jointly identify priorities and ways to maximize collaboration for more harmonized interventions. For example, in **Timor-Leste**, the team established regular meetings with the Resident Coordinator, UN agency representatives (at both technical and senior levels), and implementing partners to discuss overall implementation progress and to find solutions for bottlenecks. Implementing partners were engaged to ensure that administrative and financial reporting was on time and well tracked. Additionally, the Resident Coordinator's Office and Recipient UN Organizations established technical task forces to review coherence in the implementation and governance units in order to ensure effective programme management and delivery.

Spotlight Initiative in **Mozambique** has also created various structures and mechanisms to promote inter-

agency coordination aimed at increasing synergies and facilitating joint work and decision-making processes at all programmatic levels. To mitigate delays in implementation and to address communication gaps among UN agencies, the Spotlight programme team appointed technical focal points from the implementing agencies and from central and provincial levels. These focal points convene in monthly meetings to exchange information, tackle potential implementation obstacles, and enhance technical coherence within the programme. Moreover, the creation of the Programme Coordination Unit for Spotlight Initiative and regular meetings between the Programme Coordination Unit and the lead agency of each pillar provided a platform for exchanging ideas and creating synergies within and across pillars. Through these meetings, Recipient UN Organizations working under Outcome 3 identified gaps in their work with implementing partners and exchanged effective approaches to promptly address the gaps, thereby ensuring uninterrupted progress in programme implementation.

MITIGATING THE CHALLENGES: EFFECTIVELY SUPPORTING CIVIL SOCIETY REFERENCE GROUPS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AS IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS TO ADVANCE THEIR CRITICAL ROLE

Spotlight Initiative has significantly contributed to strengthening civil society organization (CSO) networks and movement-building. It has consistently noted that individual CSOs have demonstrated a strong capacity to innovate, adapt, and deliver, but also that strong CSO networks are critical for the sustainability of interventions. In **Belize**, the number of CSOs with a mandate for responding to violence against women and girls is limited and not effectively represented in existing national networks, like the Belize Network of Non-Governmental Organizations (BNN). Strengthening women's rights groups and CSO networks and autonomous social networks was critical to ensure cohesiveness and coordinated actions that reached constituents. Spotlight Initiative partnered with a CSO with a track record for networking and movement-building to mobilize over 50 CSOs, including grassroots organizations, resulting in an increased capacity for joint advocacy and the development of additional

smaller networks across the country. These smaller networks are now partnered with BNN, and benefiting from direct support in organizational strengthening.

Other Spotlight Initiative programmes like **Malawi**, **Papua New Guinea**, and **Vanuatu** encountered overstretched CSO implementing partners and limited absorption capacities delayed some programme deliverables. Additionally, CSO partners encountered challenges in programme management, report production, and overall operational and administrative functions. To address these challenges, Recipient UN Organizations facilitated capacity-building sessions, and mentoring opportunities to strengthen strategic planning, results-based management, report writing, and oversight and financial management. As a result of these sessions, implementing partners enhanced their skills and knowledge to deliver services more effectively, through a coordinated, result-oriented approach.

As far as the meaningful engagement of Civil Society National Reference Groups, costed workplans provided compensation, capacity-building opportunities, access to field visits for monitoring work, community outreach, and advocacy and campaign support, as per feminist recommendations. For example, in **Mexico** the Civil Society National Reference Group had access to technological equipment and network services to ensure meaningful participation throughout the programme's implementation. The workplans for the reference groups in **Mexico** and **Trinidad and Tobago** also facilitated capacity-building opportunities in programme management, feminist ethics, and self-care.

Taken together, these actions and mitigating measures help Spotlight Initiative better engage civil society, feminist groups and women's rights groups at all levels of the programme. This is critical for relevant and responsive programming and for programming that leaves no one behind. Civil society partnerships were fundamental to Spotlight Initiative's setup, governance, and implementation, and will remain engaged through the implementation of sustainability and transition plans.

5.3.3 Technical Challenges and Adaptive Responses

Over the implementation years, Spotlight Initiative programmes have navigated distinct technical challenges and adopted mitigating measures to ensure continued programming to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. The following are high-level reflections on some of the technical challenges. Previous [programme annual reports and global annual reports](#) provide further details on approaches adopted by programmes to address technical challenges.

The following technical challenges were identified throughout the implementation of Spotlight Initiative programmes:

- Shifting contexts and multiple and intersecting crises — including COVID-19, economic, social, and political crises, and the impact of the climate crisis — affected the pace at which and ability of Spotlight programmes to implement a comprehensive, whole of society model to end violence against women and girls.
- Low political will and varied levels of community involvement also impacted the pace of implementation and change.
- Lack of reliable gender-based violence data affected efforts to advocate for more evidence-based policymaking.

- Capacity constraints among some implementing partners required additional support and time to deliver.
- Ensuring alignment with the principle of leaving no one behind consistently and expansively proved challenging in some contexts.

The actions taken to mitigate and/or adapt to the technical challenges faced are set out in the box below.

Adaptability of programmes to respond to shifting contexts

Throughout the five years of implementation, Spotlight Initiative programmes have sought to coherently address women's and girls' needs, especially amidst uncertainty. All Spotlight Initiative programmes faced the challenge of implementing programming during a global pandemic. With no in-person gatherings and with limited movement, it was extremely difficult for programmes to access rights holders. Other than COVID-19, programmes like the **Caribbean Regional Programme**, and those in **Mozambique, Vanuatu**, and **Uganda** had to be implemented while facing different challenges such as conflict and weather-related disasters like cyclones.

Enhancing community and national commitment and political will

Over the implementation years, Spotlight Initiative programmes navigated challenges around low political will and commitment.

Spotlight Initiative in **Argentina**, for example, faced challenges such as difficulty coordinating various government institutions to implement in a comprehensive manner. Another issue was the human resources capacity to implement various components of the programme: Spotlight Initiative in **Mozambique, Niger, Timor-Leste** and in the **Africa Regional Programme** cited that there were human resources staff cuts that affected the ability of the government institutions to effectively partner with the Initiative. Spotlight programmes like **Honduras** also cited how the change in different governments resulted in delays in decision-making and problems in retaining institutional knowledge. Furthermore, Spotlight Initiative in **Liberia** faced challenges while lobbying for the descriminalization of certain harmful practices like female genital mutilation. At the community level, challenges included shifting people's mindset and raising awareness on advancing the rights of women and girls and eliminating harmful practices.

Addressing the gap on gender-based violence data for monitoring and reporting

Throughout the duration of the Initiative, Spotlight Initiative programmes have noted the lack of available data on gender-based violence, which restricted the availability of baseline data to accurately track the progress and impact of programme activities. In some cases, data capacity — including particularly data disaggregation — was also limited, which

affected the overall quality of data generated. Furthermore, programmes cited that there was limited knowledge and documentation across different stakeholders, which meant that lessons learned were not documented.

Strengthening capacity to ensure sustained impact and the uptake of learnings

Over the past few years, Spotlight Initiative programmes often faced challenges related to capacity limitations among stakeholders and partners. Spotlight Initiative in **Mozambique**, for example, faced challenges with the referral system for survivors of gender-based violence and harmful practices, from collecting forensic evidence to the lack of referral protocols or low awareness of the system.

Ensuring alignment with the principle of leaving no one behind

Throughout the years of implementation, Spotlight Initiative programmes experienced difficulties in accessing: hard-to-reach communities in remote areas; communities in areas affected by conflict; those with disabilities; those from underrepresented ethnicities; and members of the LGBTIQ+ community. Spotlight programmes like the **Latin America Regional Programme** recognized that barriers such as language, geographic location, and a lack of economic independence can impede women and girls from accessing essential services.

MITIGATING THE CHALLENGES: EVIDENCE-BASED ADAPTATIONS TO TECHNICAL OBSTACLES

MITIGATING THE CHALLENGES: ADAPTABILITY OF PROGRAMMES TO RESPOND WITHIN THE HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT NEXUS

To address challenges that arose while implementing activities within the context of humanitarian conflicts, natural disasters, political instability, and the COVID-19 pandemic, several Spotlight Initiative programmes made adaptations to their programming. Recognizing that the multiplicity of crises exacerbates gender-based violence and harmful practices, Spotlight Initiative programmes provided survivors of violence with safe spaces for shelter, psychosocial services, and other essential services. By leveraging technological approaches, programmes were able to utilize non-traditional communication channels to raise awareness around the risk of violence, create online campaign groups, facilitate advocacy efforts and conduct critical virtual convenings. For example, Spotlight Initiative in **El Salvador** worked to set up temporary shelters for survivors, while simultaneously collaborating with the National Humanitarian Response Team to develop procedures for the management of gender-based violence cases in emergency contexts.

MITIGATING THE CHALLENGES: ENHANCING COMMUNITY AND NATIONAL COMMITMENT AND POLITICAL WILL

To circumvent this low level of engagement, and in some cases the outright exclusion of women's voices and deeply entrenched negative social norms and beliefs, Spotlight Initiative programmes invested heavily in activities that focused on generational transformations, awareness-raising, and advocacy-building across change actors, community leaders, key institutions, and broader communities. Spotlight Initiative programmes worked to align outcomes under the Initiative with national policies and plans to garner more support. To ensure sustained commitment among communities and institutions, Spotlight Initiative programmes also embedded monitoring mechanisms and joint-advocacy approaches. For example, Spotlight Initiative in **Timor-Leste** and **Zimbabwe** advocated for their respective national governments to institute mechanisms to better monitor the level of resources allocated to gender and gender-based violence outcomes.

MITIGATING THE CHALLENGES: ADDRESSING THE GAP ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE DATA MONITORING AND REPORTING

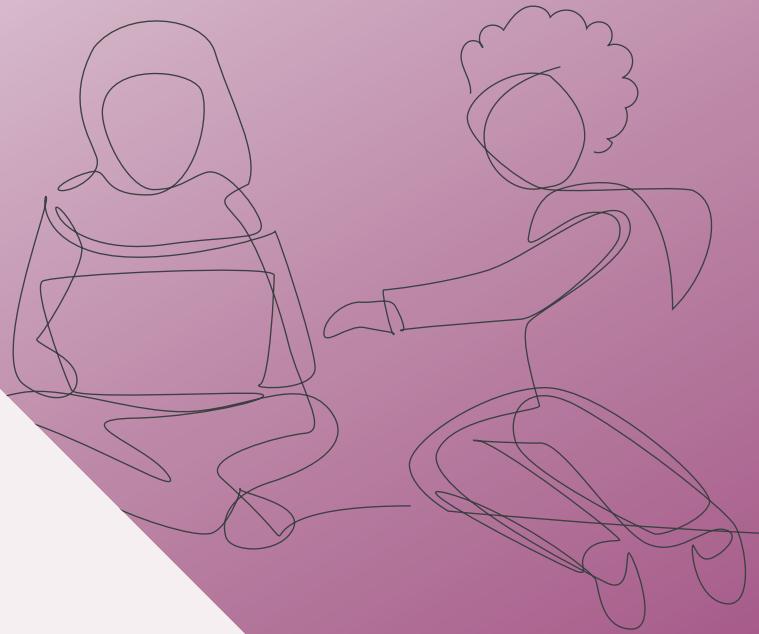
Spotlight Initiative programmes like **Kyrgyzstan**, **Liberia**, **Mozambique**, and **Nigeria** addressed these limitations by developing digital data platforms to easily report on gender-based violence indicators, supporting more informed decision-making. In addition to developing data platforms, Spotlight Initiative programmes also produced qualitative data to better capture the impact of programme activities. In **Samoa**, for example, the Initiative successfully advocated for the inclusion of the domestic violence module in the National Demographic Health Survey (DHS) for 2019/2020, generating crucial insights into national rates of violence against women and girls. Overall, across Spotlight programmes, efforts were made to harmonize all data collection tools and platforms, and to ensure close coordination with relevant stakeholders, to ensure a concerted approach to collecting data on gender-based violence.

MITIGATING THE CHALLENGES: STRENGTHENING CAPACITY TO ENSURE SUSTAINED IMPACT AND THE UPTAKE OF LEARNINGS

To mitigate this challenge, programme teams found that facilitating capacity-strengthening sessions and sharing concrete guidance, resources, and tools were successful in enhancing the effectiveness of programme activities. As part of these efforts, Spotlight Initiative programmes ensured the adoption of standard operating procedures, and developed monitoring mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of capacity-strengthening interventions. Spotlight Initiative programmes also invested in documenting and sharing the learnings and successes generated by capacity-strengthening work, to enable other new partners or stakeholders to learn from these. In **Malawi**, for example, the Spotlight Initiative programme supported the set-up of a community fund to provide monetary funds for survivors of violence to allow them to access essential services. However, following the ineffective management of the fund, the programme worked closely with the district council to strengthen standard monitoring mechanisms, which were then put in place to avoid future mismanagement.

CHAPTER 6

STRENGTHENING THE EVIDENCE BASE AND LESSONS LEARNED



Spotlight Initiative has focused significant attention on, and substantial investment into, ensuring that knowledge gained, evidence generated, and lessons learned are well documented and shared. The chapter begins with an overview of global knowledge management activities, including contributions from evaluations and studies, and then details key lessons learned throughout the Initiative. Taken together, this work has contributed to and complemented the existing knowledge base on what works (and why) in order to scale up and further strengthen evidence-based programming and accelerate efforts to end gender-based violence.

6.1 STRENGTHENING LEARNING AND EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMMING

Spotlight Initiative has a deep focus on producing, analysing, curating and disseminating knowledge and lessons learned as part of its commitment to enhancing the quality of programme implementation and expanding the global evidence base. A central part of its work over the years has been the production and dissemination of learnings, culminating in the development of a Global Compendium of Innovative and Good Practices and Lessons Learned, and a Spotlight Initiative Learning Centre to end violence against women and girls, as well as the generation of global communities of practice around ending violence against women and girls.

6.1.1 Knowledge Management for Learning and Evidence- Based Programming

Strengthening knowledge management integration into programming to end violence against women and girls

Over the duration of the Initiative, the Secretariat invested deeply in knowledge management to enhance the quality of programme implementation and to curate and share good practices and lessons learned, building a broader evidence base to end violence against women and girls.

Over the years, the Secretariat has enhanced the capacity of programmes to integrate knowledge management as a key function, issuing regular

guidance and updates on the latest resources to inform and support evidence-based programme implementation, including recommendations on approaches to research and knowledge production. Since the Initiative's inception, a knowledge management focal point network has been in place, encompassing more than **50 members**, with at least one representative for each Spotlight Initiative programme. Meeting quarterly, the network has helped to strengthen the integration of knowledge management at the programme level, to identify areas of synergy across programmes' knowledge management initiatives, and to foster a continuous learning journey amongst Spotlight Initiative stakeholders.

At the global level, the Secretariat led the coordination of the Knowledge Management Group on Ending Violence against Women and Girls, providing a platform for focal points at headquarters to streamline knowledge management activities on ending violence against women and girls across different funds and initiatives, including the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) and UN Women. Taking place quarterly, the forum has been a pivotal mechanism for identifying collaboration opportunities and fostering a cohesive approach to knowledge curation in alignment with the principles of UN Reform. Further details on the group are available in [Chapter 4](#).

Strategic convenings and knowledge exchange on ending violence against women and girls

Throughout the duration of the Initiative, the Secretariat has placed a significant focus on **peer, cross-regional, and intra-regional exchanges** to enhance the quality of programme

implementation and contribute to the exchange of expertise among a broader network of practitioners working to end violence against women and girls. Since the Initiative's inception, the Secretariat has convened over **20 global knowledge exchanges**, reaching over **3,300 people**, including stakeholders from the United Nations, civil society, governments, and donors. The thematic focus of each knowledge exchange has been demand-driven, encompassing diverse topics such as sustaining civil society engagement, addressing harmful practices, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and innovative coordination in the spirit of UN Reform. Feedback surveys following these exchanges have captured the various impacts of the sessions, which have included enhancing stakeholders' knowledge and expertise on the core topics and expanding connections within the Initiative's global community.

At the end of Spotlight Initiative's first phase of implementation, an abundance of knowledge, lessons and best practices on ending violence against women and girls had been documented. The Secretariat began to implement the Global Platform project from 2021 onwards to ensure the dissemination and uptake of the wealth of expertise gathered over the years and insights gained on the comprehensive model for ending violence against women and girls. Offering the combined power of a knowledge hub, a community of practice, and an advocacy platform on ending violence against women and girls, the objective of the Global Platform has been to amplify knowledge, lessons and good practices generated by Spotlight Initiative in order to inform global policy, programming and advocacy. Throughout its duration, the Global Platform has strengthened a coalition of key actors working on ending violence against women and girls across the United Nations, the European Union, civil society, donors, the private sector, practitioners, academia and others, facilitating diverse connections and fostering direct links among stakeholders, including local civil society groups and governments (duty-bearers). These efforts have moved beyond Spotlight Initiative's traditional stakeholder base to engage the wider global community for increased decision-making power and impact on ending violence against women and girls. Seeing the importance of the Global Platform for the sector, the European Union has invested additional resources to advance this critical area of work. This additional investment will support Spotlight

Initiative's High-Impact Programme for Violence Elimination by 2030 (HIVE Joint Programme).

In 2022, the Secretariat launched **SHINE**, a multi-stakeholder online hub for global exchange on ending violence against women and girls, produced by the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, in collaboration with Spotlight Initiative. A key tenet of the Global Platform, SHINE is the first online knowledge exchange hub to bring together government, civil society, the United Nations, the European Union, and other practitioners to actively engage on ending violence against women and girls and to co-create knowledge. Accessible in more than 50 languages, SHINE presents a strategic online space for exchange on key thematic areas, access to tailored resources in service of global policy, programming, and advocacy on ending violence against women and girls, and groups to connect with for shared learning and action. Demonstrations of the hub have been conducted with over **100 Civil Society Reference Group members** from Argentina, the Africa Regional Programme, and the Latin America and Caribbean regions, as well as for European Union gender focal points, technical agency focal points, and participants of Spotlight Initiative's Global Learning Symposium, in order to raise awareness of and engagement with SHINE among a wider audience. Global and regional platforms across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific and the Caribbean have been linked to SHINE to increase the accessibility of knowledge and good practices related to ending violence against women and girls, to reduce duplications of data and support data sharing across the digital ecosystem, and to sustain the efforts of the Global Platform.

To date, the SHINE hub has had **2,100 users**, surpassing initial targets. Thirteen online discussions have been held, encompassing diverse topics related to ending violence against women and girls, such as sustaining essential services, engaging the private sector, and embedding the principle of leaving no one behind into programmes and projects. The rich insights generated by these discussions have been collected, analysed and distilled into multiple knowledge products.

The most significant in-person convening since the launch of Spotlight Initiative was organized by the Secretariat in 2022. Convened at the sidelines of the Sexual Violence Research Initiative Forum,



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the **Global Learning Symposium**, which took place in Mexico, drew over **200 participants** from the United Nations, government, civil society and other stakeholders, and aimed to consolidate the gains made throughout the first five years of the Initiative. A total of **45 plenary and thematic sessions** were organized, providing a space for deep reflection and exchange of scalable results, lessons learned, and best practices across contexts, and supporting the development of a global community working to end violence against women and girls. Subsequently, a [Global Learning Symposium Resource Package](#) was developed and disseminated widely. The resource package summarizes key highlights from each session and includes all presentations, relevant tools and resources, enabling those unable to attend the symposium to access the rich knowledge generated.

Strengthening knowledge production on ending violence against women and girls

The Secretariat has invested deeply in the curation and dissemination of knowledge to advance the global evidence base on ending violence against women and girls with a focus on showcasing the innovative, promising and good practices, results, and lessons generated by programmes. Based on analyses of global, regional, and country reports, as well as mid-term assessments, the Secretariat produced more than **50 knowledge briefs** on strategic themes related to ending violence against women and girls. Some of these have included: [Integrating gender-based violence prevention into climate action](#), [A Comprehensive Approach to Ending Violence against Women and Girls](#), [Ending Child Marriage](#), [Engaging the private sector to](#)

[eliminate violence against women and girls](#), and [Lessons and Promising Practices of the Spotlight Initiative: Delivery of Quality Essential Services](#).

Critically, more than **1,000 knowledge products** and tools produced by Spotlight Initiative programmes have been consolidated into a repository, the [Global Knowledge Product Tracker](#). Available through the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office Gateway online portal, the Global Knowledge Product Tracker is intended to provide a one-stop space for easy access to all Spotlight Initiative knowledge products for practitioners working to end violence against women and girls. Similarly, the Community of Spotlight Initiative (COSI) internal United Nations space has facilitated access to the Initiative's virtual library of key resources, links to other relevant platforms and a direct means of communication amongst the Initiative's community of stakeholders. The Community of Spotlight Initiative mailing list has over 600 members, with over 530 conversations having taken place thus far.

To capture the depth of knowledge and lessons learned over the duration of the Initiative, the Secretariat collaborated with ImpactMapper, a global research and evaluation firm with proprietary software, to develop a [Compendium of Innovative and Good Practices and Lessons Learned](#). Principally intended to provide reflections on Spotlight Initiative's comprehensive model to support programmatic learning on ending violence against women and girls, the compendium was developed through a process of review of programme documents, a survey of all programmes to capture stories of change and lessons learned, and a series of five programme visits, during which key



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stakeholders were interviewed in order to illuminate innovative and good practices. The compendium distills the findings from this data analysis process into a series of 50 case studies, 47 lessons learned across the six original pillars of the Spotlight Initiative, and 13 briefs on cross-cutting themes. Intended for use by policymakers and practitioners working to end violence against women and girls, the compendium presents practice-based knowledge on ending violence against women and girls that is high-impact, innovative, sustainable by design, and rooted in local needs and context.

Through [SHINE](#), the Global Compendium, and over 50 monthly newsletters, the Secretariat has delivered a suite of tools, platforms and resources on ending violence against women and girls for use by Spotlight Initiative programmes, policymakers, and practitioners and other civil society groups working in this space.

Modeling comprehensive programming to end violence against women and girls in line with the Spotlight Initiative model

A significant focus of the Secretariat's capacity development work has culminated in the development of [Spotlight Initiative Learning Centre](#), which synthesizes the Initiative's wealth of knowledge, successes, innovative and promising practices, and lessons learned into a definitive guide on how to design and implement comprehensive programmes to end violence

against women and girls. The Learning Centre combines Spotlight Initiative's learnings with the critical expertise, guidance, and tools emerging from the wider UN system to create a holistic online learning centre, designed to be user-friendly and visually appealing to support optimal uptake and learning across stakeholder groups.¹⁵¹ A capacity development tool by design, the Learning Centre comprises seven modules, which are closely aligned to the Initiative's six pillars and distinctive model: programme design and implementation; effective partnerships; laws, policies and institutions; prevention of violence against women and girls; response to violence against women and girls; women's movements; and data, evidence and learning. The learning centre is intended to sustain the learnings of Spotlight Initiative and ensure its practices can be modelled widely. The knowledge synthesized will support continued efforts of global policy reform, programming implementation, and advocacy on ending violence against women and girls.

Overall, the knowledge management work of the Secretariat has been critical in documenting and sharing lessons on the progress made towards ending violence against women and girls through Spotlight Initiative, strengthening the quality of programme implementation and deepening the evidence base for global policy, programming and advocacy on ending violence against women and girls.

151. As part of the development process, a user reference group, representing a cross-section of Spotlight Initiative stakeholders, was convened to provide specialist feedback and ensure the Learning Centre met the needs of policymakers and practitioners working in the field.

6.1.2

Monitoring and Evaluation: Reflecting on What's Working and What's Not to Ensure Responsive Interventions

Over the duration of the Initiative, the Secretariat monitored the progress of the Fund, assessed and evaluated its impacts and highlighted important lessons (what is working and not working and why) to strengthen its programming, contributing to greater evidence and knowledge to end violence against women and girls. The Secretariat implemented a **tailored monitoring and reporting online tool** (SMART platform), which allowed Spotlight programme teams to easily report on their indicators and sub-indicators. This online platform contributed to more integrated reporting by United Nations agencies and strengthened quality assurance as well as facilitating the consolidation and aggregation of results at the global level. To increase accountability towards rights holders and ensure alignment with the core principle of

leaving no one behind, Spotlight Initiative played a critical role in advocating for (system-wide) change in how the United Nations carries out monitoring, evaluation, and reporting activities.

With the aim of increasing accountability toward right holders and civil society organizations, ensuring alignment with the core principle of leaving no one behind and of decentralizing knowledge, Spotlight Initiative made significant efforts to transform monitoring and evaluation within the United Nations system into a more participatory process, through its participatory monitoring and evaluation (PME) work. The Secretariat developed and promoted the [Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Guidance Note](#), providing additional guidance to programmes on how to implement an inclusive, participatory, feminist, and rights-based approach to monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Over the years, the Secretariat also hosted several global exchanges on the importance of fostering civil society engagement through participatory monitoring, evaluation and



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reporting. These dialogues contributed to the development of an action note featuring [tools, methodologies, lessons learned and promising practices](#) at country and regional levels.

At the end of 2022, Spotlight Initiative also held a series of dedicated conversations with the United Nations Development Coordination Office (DCO) on ways to support their efforts to deepen system-wide implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF) guiding principles (namely, a human rights-based approach, gender equality and leaving no one behind). As a result of these discussions, the Initiative's cutting-edge participatory approach to monitoring, evaluation and reporting was identified as a concrete way to operationalize these principles, [and is now featured in the UN Moderated Course on the UNSDCF Guiding Principles: Human Rights-Based Approach, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment \(GEWE\) and Leave No One Behind \(LNOB\)](#).

Assessments, Reviews, and Evaluations

Spotlight Initiative also coordinated a series of studies, assessments, and evaluations to document the Initiative's achievements, lessons, and challenges and help shape programmatic and practitioner decisions. These included a mid-term assessment in 2020, a meta-review of the mid-term assessment in Africa and Latin America, an impact modeling study in 2022, a thematic evaluation in 2024 — covering three interconnected dimensions of Spotlight Initiative's work: engaging civil society, leaving no one behind, and movement building — and a final evaluation of the Initiative in 2024.

Mid-term assessments

Spotlight Initiative Secretariat conducted an independent mid-term assessment of Spotlight Initiative programmes in 2020. Conducted by Hera, an evaluation and research company based in Brussels, the mid-term assessments offered an opportunity to assess the performance of each programme, improve programme management by informing stakeholders about the performance of the interventions, and identify lessons learned to test Spotlight Initiative's Theory of Change. Finally, the assessments provided critical information to guide the Operational Steering Committee's decisions on additional budget allocations for Phase II. Overall, the mid-term assessments validated the assumptions and key principles

of Spotlight Initiative: the comprehensive Theory of Change; the participatory and multi-stakeholder methodology; the central role given to civil society in the governance, design and implementation of the Spotlight Initiative; and its gender-transformative, survivor-centred and human rights-based approach.

Meta-review of the mid-term assessments

Following the completion of the mid-term assessments, a meta-review was developed, analysing the learning and results from Phase I across regions in order to bring to the fore common building blocks and driving forces for successful programming to end violence against women and girls. Important insights on constraints or barriers faced across programmes were documented for collective reflection and action. The meta-review confirmed the impact of the Spotlight Initiative model through its comprehensive, global and whole-of-society approach. The report found that the Spotlight Initiative model has a competitive advantage and greater impact compared to other joint programmes. Further, Spotlight Initiative principles of inclusivity, national ownership, and participatory stakeholder engagement proved to be essential factors driving success. The meta-review also underscored the important role of global stakeholders — the Civil Society Reference Group, United Nations agency headquarters, the Secretariat and the European Union are all recognized for their critical contributions and commitment to ending violence against women and girls.

Thematic Assessment

Spotlight Initiative Secretariat conducted a thematic assessment, covering three interconnected dimensions of Spotlight Initiative's work: the meaningful engagement of civil society organizations, particularly local and grassroots groups; the implementation of the principle of leaving no one behind; and the support to movement-building.

The assessment took a case study approach complemented by a global document review, key informant interviews, and story collection to gather data and insights, with a focus on capturing the perspectives of civil society and rights holders. Findings and conclusions were discussed and validated through several workshops with the Thematic Assessment Reference Group and others in Spotlight country and regional programmes, and

recommendations were co-designed with the reference group as well. The final report — and complementary briefs — are expected in July 2024. Results will be published and shared widely to further strengthen programming to end violence against women and girls.

Impact modeling study

Spotlight Initiative Secretariat commissioned a [modeling study conducted by Dalberg](#), a global development consulting firm, that models the potential long-term impact of implementing a comprehensive model (as the Spotlight Initiative has done) to end violence against women and girls. Drawing on a range of data to develop the predictive model,¹⁵² the study shows that:

- By simultaneously working on multiple pillars — prevention, survivor support services, and ecosystem building — and emphasizing civil society partnerships, Spotlight Initiative’s approach is between 70 to 90 per cent more effective at reducing the prevalence of violence against women and girls, compared to a model that focuses on a single pillar or works in silos. This means that Spotlight Initiative can prevent violence for almost 10 million more women and girls than it would have if it had taken a single pillar or siloed approach.
- Spotlight Initiative has prevented violence for at least 21 million women and girls in its initial five-year investment. This number is equivalent to the complete eradication of violence against women and girls in 18 out of 26 of the countries in which Spotlight Initiative has programmes. If Spotlight Initiative were to continue for another five years (in the same 26 countries) with an additional EUR 300 million, it could prevent violence for 47 million more women and girls.
- Spotlight Initiative’s work on prevention is estimated to have prevented the death of at least 600 women every year or nearly two every day, and resulted in 2,500 fewer cases of urgent medical attention and 320 fewer women experiencing depression daily. Moreover, in efforts to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights, preventing violence against pregnant women and mothers is expected, by 2030, to prevent 500,000 women from experiencing miscarriages, and



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also reduce the chances of newborn and infant mortality, saving the lives of 140,000 children.

- Preventing violence against women and girls leads to fewer school dropouts, higher net school enrolment, and better quality of learning. By 2025, the study predicts that Spotlight Initiative will have helped almost 1 million girls stay in school; ripple effects could contribute to an additional 4 million girls completing school in the next generation.
- Spotlight Initiative’s work on prevention also helps avoid the burden of violence-related costs, which can amount to up to 30 per cent of the average annual earning potential of a survivor. Ending violence against women and girls can ensure that women and girls are healthier, adding back a total of roughly 43 million productive days a year.
- By promoting self-expression and raising awareness of inequitable gendered norms, Spotlight Initiative could shift attitudes and beliefs in favour of equity and equality for almost 90 million children within the next generation.

Final evaluation

As per Spotlight Initiative’s Terms of Reference, a final evaluation was launched in 2023 as a system-wide evaluation under the supervision of the Director of the System-Wide Evaluation Office. The main objective of the final evaluation is to assess the Initiative’s overall performance, inclusive of its design (notably its commitment to UN Reform and the principle of leaving no

152. This includes Spotlight Initiative’s own monitoring and reporting data, expert interviews and more than 100 meta-experimental and quasi-experimental studies of interventions that the Initiative emulates.





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one behind), its management and operations (the extent to which it is “fit for purpose”), and the results it has achieved vis-à-vis its global results framework and other measures of success. The evaluation covers seven areas of analysis in alignment with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee’s Evaluation Criteria: programme design; management and operationalization; governance, leadership and coherence; results and progress; UN Reform and new ways of working together; sustainability and looking forward; and lessons learned for models of integrated programming. The evaluation is global in scope, covering all Spotlight Initiative programmes globally.

The report’s findings and conclusions have been extensively discussed through multiple forums, including with the evaluation’s reference group and in workshops with UN senior-level stakeholders. The recommendations have been collaboratively developed through these engagements, as well. Preliminary results are expected in the second quarter of 2024, with key conclusions and recommendations emerging in the summer of 2024. The final report is expected in late summer or early fall 2024.

6.2

Lessons Learned from Programme Implementation Over the Years of the Initiative

This section shares a set of cross-pillar and thematic lessons that have been identified through evidence synthesis and analysis processes and highlights elements for replication and adaptation from Spotlight Initiative’s comprehensive model to end violence against women and girls. These lessons are relevant across diverse programming contexts and serve as critical learning to ensure effective, responsive, contextually driven efforts to end violence against women and girls. Additional details on lessons learned within pillars can be found across [Spotlight Initiative’s previous global and programme annual reports](#), as well as in the above mentioned [Compendium of Innovative and Good Practices and Lessons Learned](#).

6.2.1

Cross-Cutting Learning

The following cross-pillar learnings underscore elements of success that support Spotlight Initiative's transformative impact over time. These lessons are relevant across programme contexts:

- A **whole-of-society** approach fosters joint action across diverse stakeholders who work together to end violence against women and girls.
- Approaching **government partnerships through a One UN interface**, whereby the UN Resident Coordinator leads the United Nations Country Team and coordinates with key partners, enhances efficiencies and drives coordinated action and national ownership.
- Partnership with the **European Union** ensures high-level political commitment and widens the base of powerful allies to make necessary changes in a country and region. Maintaining open communication, strategizing and joint monitoring between UN Country Teams and EU Delegations builds alignment and trust, and enhances coordination.
- **Community-centred approaches and network building** promote local ownership, increase rights holders' engagement with Spotlight Initiative and support outreach and awareness activities. They also create the conditions for longer-term sustainability of results, including positive changes in attitudes and social norms.
- **Sustainable outcomes** beyond Spotlight Initiative are strengthened through local capacity-building across movements, governments, civil society, activists, and other key stakeholders.
- **Leveraging the innovative approaches** that developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as technological approaches and the use of virtual platforms, helps to scale up efforts to end violence against women and girls.

- **Participatory monitoring and evaluation** integrates rights holders' voices and strengthens the relevance and effectiveness of programmes. Ensuring sufficient time is allocated to participatory monitoring, evaluation and reporting efforts is necessary to build relevant processes and trust, foster implementing partner buy-in, and enable a focus on the sustainability of interventions.
- Implementing the principle of **leaving no one behind** is critical for achieving relevant and equitable outcomes and must be done across all pillars to ensure equitable access, inclusiveness, and increased safety to end violence against women and girls.

6.2.2

Technical, Programmatic, and Operational Lessons Learned: Learning Across the Comprehensive Model for Evidence-Based Programming

The following section describes some of the main technical, programmatic, and operational lessons learned that emerged from the Spotlight Initiative-commissioned [Compendium of Innovative and Good Practices and Lessons Learned](#).¹⁵³ Thirteen themes that cut across the six pillars and results areas were identified:

- Centring gender-based violence as a high-level political priority
- Addressing challenges and sociocultural norms in the context
- Addressing child marriage and female genital mutilation
- Strengthening knowledge on sexual and reproductive health and rights in order to end sexual violence
- Engaging youth, adolescents and girls
- Engaging men and boys for transformation

153. In past Spotlight Initiative global annual reports, the lessons learned section was organized by pillar and focused on management and technical aspects. In this final report, we share thematic and intersectional lessons. Lessons often cross-cut different pillar areas, and a thematic approach to this work yields new insights.

- Engaging religious, traditional, and faith-based leaders
- Engaging the private sector
- Engaging with the humanitarian-development-peace (triple) nexus
- Adapting to COVID-19, conflict and other crises
- Embedding design perspectives for developing good programming
 - Supporting UN Reform and multi-sector governance structures
 - Ensuring the sustainability of programming and exit strategies.

For more detailed descriptions of lessons learned, along with specific lessons by outcome area (or pillar), please visit the [Compendium of Innovative and Good Practices and Lessons Learned](#) and [previous year's global and programme annual reports](#).

Centering gender-based violence as a high-level political priority

Spotlight Initiative worked to ensure that ending violence against women and girls was a high-level political priority in government bodies and leadership positions more broadly. High-level political support is crucial for securing domestic commitments, promoting gender-equitable policymaking, and ending impunity. Lessons learned in this thematic area include:

- Establishing partnerships with government actors and with civil society organizations

assures the continuity of initiatives to end violence against women and girls and expands their reach to the most marginalized.

- Encouraging active governmental participation in the design process and governance of a country's programme to combat violence against women and girls strengthens the implementation and prioritization of its actions.
- Ensuring budget lines and funds are in place demonstrates high-level political commitment, prioritization, and action.

Addressing challenges and sociocultural norms in the context

Spotlight Initiative uses a comprehensive and systems-change approach to addressing and ending violence against women and girls, with a particular focus on shifting sociocultural norms that deepen or maintain unjust practices and inequalities. Lessons from Spotlight Initiative's norm-change work included mobilizing youth as future leaders of change, targeting girls as agents of change on behalf of their fellow women and girls, and working with community leaders to mobilize norm-change to end violence and fight discriminatory and harmful practices. Further lessons learned in this thematic area include:

- Community support and social pressure help to transform social and cultural norms that maintain gender inequalities or discrimination in efforts to end violence against women and girls.
- Leveraging the credibility of existing leaders, celebrities and people in positions of power helps shift narratives, change social norms and behaviours, and supports more equitable relationships, practices, and institutions.
- Models that leverage modern tools in communications, technology, and media amplify behavioural change messaging with greater speed and reach to broader audiences.

Addressing child marriage and female genital mutilation

Spotlight Initiative engages in a wide set of transformative activities designed to end child marriage and collaborates with the [UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child](#)



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Marriage. Spotlight Initiative’s comprehensive approach focuses deeply on normative change and promotes changes in policy reform, reporting, and advocacy for equal age of marriage, raising awareness of how child marriage is detrimental for girls, and engaging traditional leaders and communities to stop the practice. The following lessons learned were identified by Spotlight Initiative programmes as promising strategies for ending child marriage in different contexts:

- Ensuring policies have action plans with identified costs and resources leads to better implementation of efforts to end child marriage.
- Connecting with and leveraging the influence of traditional religious leaders and community leaders helps to spread awareness and encourage the abolition of child marriage.
- Shifting social norms in communities through raising awareness of reporting mechanisms helps to end the harmful practice.
- Using creative communication techniques helps to raise the visibility of child marriage and other harmful practices and promotes a call to action to stop it.

Strengthening knowledge on sexual and reproductive health and rights to end sexual violence

Spotlight Initiative prioritizes strengthening women’s and girls’ awareness and understanding of their sexual and reproductive health and rights, including the link between violence against women and girls and HIV/AIDS. Appropriate awareness, services, and justice mechanisms must be available so that women and girls,

including those with diverse identities, are safe, empowered, and live free from discrimination. The following lessons learned emerged from Spotlight Initiative programming:

- Ensuring national laws, policies and plans integrate sexual and reproductive health and rights supports sustained attention to the issue.
- Leveraging formal and informal education systems to mainstream sexual and reproductive health and rights information, particularly with youth, mitigates violence against women and girls and provides important information to safeguard health and safety.
- Strengthening knowledge of, and access to, services and one-stop centres supports women’s and girls’ safety and leads to stronger health outcomes.
- Building the power and agency of women and girls leads to stronger sexual health and boundaries and a sense of empowerment that trickles over to other areas of their lives.

Engaging youth, adolescents and girls

Youth are nearly one third of the global population and often face higher rates of violence. As such, they must be engaged in prevention efforts to end violence against women and girls. Spotlight Initiative’s youth-based programming efforts have yielded the following lessons learned:

- Developing out-of-school community-focused initiatives that enable creative self-expression, mentoring and peer-to-peer learning can result in improved social norms and behaviours toward sexual and gender-based violence at the individual, household, and community levels.
- Partnering with schools and educational institutions is an effective way to reduce, prevent, and monitor instances of sexual and gender-based violence and ensure wider policy buy-in with local and national governments.
- Using digital and virtual channels is necessary to engage youth, especially girls, in problem-solving and awareness-generation activities to change their sociocultural



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perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours towards sexual and gender-based violence.

- Youth-led advocacy initiatives addressing sexual and gender-based violence bring the required innovative approaches, energy, and perspective to create meaningful and sustainable change for young people.

Engaging men and boys for transformation

In order to achieve gender equality men and boys must be part of the solution. As such, engaging men and boys is a central strategy that Spotlight Initiative programmes use. Gender roles, norms, and status affect everyone — men, women, and people with diverse gender identities. As such, all must be involved in transforming the status quo of gender inequality, gender bias, violence, and discriminations. A variety of lessons have been identified from this important line of work:

- Engaging leaders and role models in the community is a powerful mechanism for changing social norms around toxic masculinities and gender-based violence.
- Creating peer opportunities for men and boys to discuss, share, and model healthy and equitable relationships supports efforts to ensure men and boys have a greater respect of women and girls and more equitable gender norms.
- Targeting schools helps to scale up comprehensive and wide-reaching awareness-raising activities on masculinities and violence against women and girls.
- Engaging in creative and public spaces to raise awareness, such as through the media, theatre, and with campaigns, helps to increase the visibility of anti-violence messages.

Engaging religious, traditional, and faith-based leaders

Religious, traditional, and faith-based leaders often hold significant influence within their communities, making them valuable allies in promoting positive change, and they can provide a source of social, moral, and ethical guidance and support for their community members, including women and girls experiencing violence. Faith settings

are therefore important places to implement activities that address gender inequality and prevent violence against women and girls. Many Spotlight Initiative programmes have engaged religious, traditional or faith-based leaders in a variety of ways to help shift norms, playing an important role in protecting women and girls from violence. Lessons related to this strategy include:

- Building the capacity of religious, traditional, and faith-based leaders to be agents of change and to influence norms in their communities and institutions can create change in harmful practices quickly, given their influence in the community.
- Working together with religious, traditional, and faith-based leaders to establish by-laws and pass legislation to set new legal and community-based norms of equality can be an effective change strategy.
- Working with religious networks and coalitions through a regional approach can have a far-reaching impact and provide sustainable solutions that extend beyond a project timeline.

Engaging the private sector

Spotlight Initiative recognizes that engaging the private sector, including in the workplace, provides an opportunity to address discriminatory behaviours, social norms and practices across companies, the marketplace, and in communities. In the workplace, this can include promoting fair labour practices, facilitating greater numbers of women leaders and managers, ensuring equal pay for equal work, implementing sexual harassment and anti-discrimination policies, and providing access to violence against women and girls services and support (such as creating safety plans) to advance efforts to end violence against women and girls. Lessons related to this strategy include:

- Increasing the visibility and awareness of violence against women and girls can strengthen leadership and political buy-in to address workplace violence.
- Developing strong policies and ensuring workers have access to support mechanisms is critical to transform internal practices in the private sector.

- Developing trust and building multisectoral partnerships, including with non-traditional actors, is essential to success in working with the private sector.
- Processes that help companies demonstrate their commitment and improve their practices toward greater equality can be expanded and scaled up through benchmarking and institutional change initiatives.

Engaging with the humanitarian-development-peace (triple) nexus

Spotlight Initiative operates in countries experiencing conflict, disasters, and recovery zones. In these situations, women's and girls' access to services can be interrupted or limited. The lack of basic infrastructure combined with political instability, deterioration of the rule of law, and lack of economic opportunities can all contribute to increased violence against women and girls and the normalization of gender-based violence. In collaboration with civil society organizations, international institutions, and governments, Spotlight Initiative is implementing the triple nexus approach through preventative measures to ensure a safe environment and continued service delivery for women and girls. These measures seek to enhance gender justice by addressing poverty, inequality, and the lack of functioning accountability systems through agile and responsive programmes. The following lessons were identified:

- Increasing access to essential services and offering mobile centres for hard-to-reach areas during disaster or conflict settings helps ensure that no one is left behind and that quality services are available.
- Ensuring safe environments and pathways to access services or basic needs, such as lighted paths, safe transport, neighborhood watches, etc. supports reductions in violence against women and girls.
- Working together and combining efforts through strategic partnerships improves safe conditions and reduces violence against vulnerable women and girls.
- Increasing the knowledge and capacities of peacekeepers and humanitarian aid workers

concerning violence against women and girls leads to more effective interventions.

Adapting to COVID-19, conflict and other crises

With increasing natural and climate-related disasters, wars and conflicts, and health epidemics, the ability to adapt to extreme crises, threats or political opposition and backlash has become more important than ever. Although these circumstances present significant challenges to preventing violence against women and girls and supporting women and girls, they can also present opportunities to innovate and learn. Lessons learned during COVID-19 and other crises include:

- Direct support and emergency services reaching large numbers of women and girls in emergency situations, such as COVID-19 and other disasters, are often best delivered by local grassroots organizations that know the context, are trusted, and have existing partnerships in the community.
- Virtual innovations allowed services for women and girls to remain uninterrupted with wider reach.
- New partnerships and flexible funding models help achieve intended outcomes in light of changing circumstances.
- Responses to COVID-19 mobilized women's movements and brought national attention to increased incidences of violence against women and girls, providing the opportunity to refocus national efforts and strategies.

Embedding design perspectives for developing good programming

Developing clear design frameworks and perspectives helps ensure that programmes are targeted and focused on addressing the specific aspects of gender-based violence that are most relevant to the target community. It facilitates the involvement of key stakeholders, including survivors, community leaders, law enforcement, and service providers. Furthermore, it supports the efficient allocation of resources, ensuring that funds, personnel, and other resources are directed towards the most critical areas of the programme. The following lessons were identified:

- Implementing a strong context, gender, and power analysis, in addition to drawing on past evidence and learnings, yields more effective results.
- Integrating concepts and tools that are aligned with the local culture supports more relevant programming and the potential for deeper resonance.
- Conducting a multi-stakeholder partnership mapping, including of UN agencies, governments and civil society, reduces duplication and supports more coordinated efforts to end violence against women and girls.
- Improved coordination across agencies and implementing organizations contributes to improved efficiency and effectiveness to end violence against women and girls.
- Regional collaborations result in strengthened programmes, better use of resources, and the advancement of regional protocols.
- Simplifying procedures can improve efficiencies and minimize duplication. For example, Recipient United Nations Organizations collaborated with great success to streamline grant-making activities, templates, platforms, and monitoring protocols.

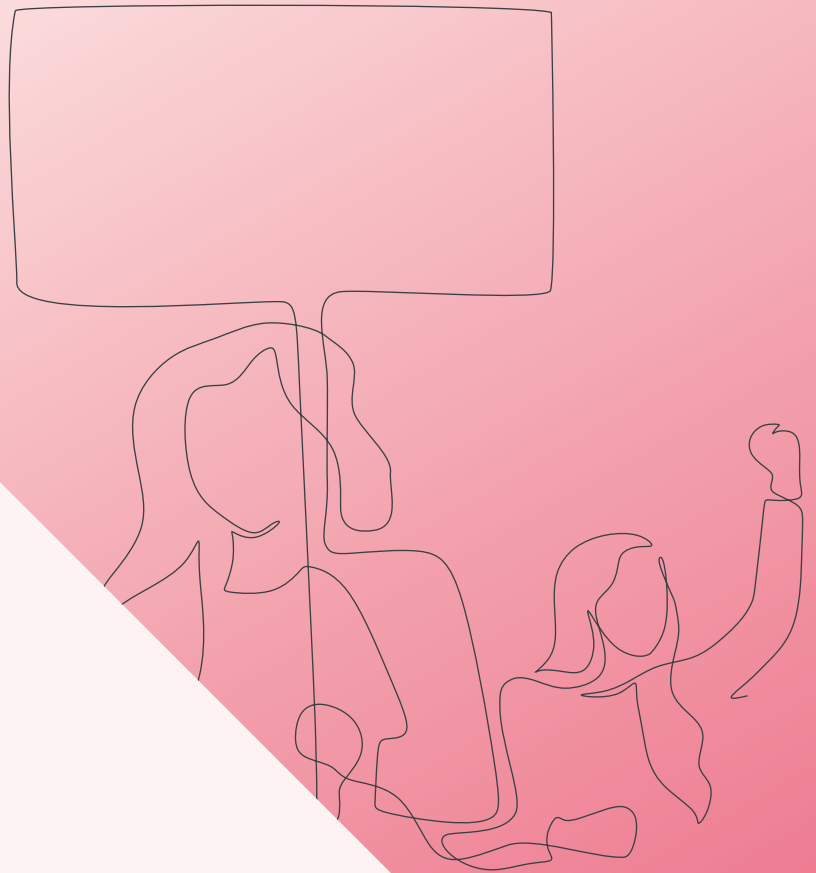
Supporting UN Reform and multi-sector governance structures

The United Nations Development System Reform set out to enhance coordination among UN agencies and bodies for more effective governance and improved communication and collaboration mechanisms that address global challenges, such as gender inequality. Leveraging each UN agency's area of expertise through effective coordination and collaboration allowed for more comprehensive programming and more efficient and effective implementation that reduced duplication. Key lessons learned in this area include:

- Resident Coordinators elevate the importance of ending violence against women and girls at the local and national levels, and enhance coordination and collaboration — implementing a pillar-lead system — where one or two agencies streamline the work on a particular pillar in a country.
- Ensuring Spotlight programmes have dedicated, full-time finance, administrative and operations staff within the coordination unit drives more effective and efficient programme and budget management, including better monitoring of budget needs, higher quality proposals and more timely inter-agency coordination on key operational issues.

CHAPTER 7

AMPLIFYING THE WORK: COMMUNICATIONS AND VISIBILITY RESULTS





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This chapter presents communication and visibility results for Spotlight Initiative since its inception. It opens with an overview of the communication objectives, followed by Spotlight Initiative’s global communication reach and closes with examples on how Spotlight Initiative’s communications challenged gender stereotypes and norms and raised awareness on violence against women and girls.

7.1 OVERVIEW

Spotlight Initiative’s communication and visibility activities have centred around four mutually reinforcing objectives: (1) to raise global awareness of violence against women and girls, harmful practices, and sexual and reproductive health and rights; (2) to illustrate and promote the impact and results of Spotlight Initiative-supported interventions; (3) to strengthen the role of communications in the prevention of violence against women

and girls; and (4) to ensure visibility for Spotlight Initiative, its donors and partners .

Spotlight Initiative’s **#WithHer** flagship campaign formed the backbone of its global communications activities throughout the first phase of the Initiative and involved engaging social media influencers to share personal stories of activists and survivors. At every stage, the Secretariat focused on supporting national, regional, and global communications capacity to ensure that messages, campaigns, and activities were localized and adapted to the unique context.

Communications and visibility 2019 - 2023

4,100 media outlets

3.6 billion average annual reach

155 countries

16,300+ articles

ABC News, AllAfrica, Al Jazeera, the Associated Press, The Boston Globe, BAZAAR, BBC, Clarin, CNN, Cosmopolitan, The Daily Mail, Deutsche Welle, El Pais, Euronews, Forbes, Global Citizen, The Guardian, The Hollywood Reporter, The Independent, Infobae, MSN, POLITICO, Vice News, The Washington Post, The World Economic Forum, Yahoo News and UN News.



496,000 website sessions



365,000 YouTube channel views



99,000 engagements

4.7 million impressions



248,000 engagements

15 million impressions



30,000 engagements

14 million impressions

7.2

GLOBAL REACH: SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE ANALYTICS

The following section provides cumulative data on the reach of Spotlight Initiative's global communication tools, such as the website, social media, and traditional media. This data highlights key aspects of global visibility of the Initiative and its increased traction over time.

Initiative **global website** published more than 540 news stories, press releases, and publications in five languages (English, French, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish). Over that same period of time, the Initiative's website recorded 496,000 sessions and over a million page views. More than 385,000 people visited the site. The global site's audience was located predominantly in the United States, which consistently ranked as the country of origin for around 20 per cent of users, followed by Mexico and Nigeria.

7.2.1

Global Website

From mid-2019, when Spotlight Initiative launched its website, to December 2023, the Spotlight

Spotlight Initiative's communications team built strong relationships with Recipient UN Organizations as well as with UN News and the United Nations Development Coordination Office to ensure that Spotlight Initiative content was featured across multiple United Nations platforms throughout the first phase

BETWEEN 2019-2023, THE GLOBAL SITE HAD:

More than

540 news stories, press releases and publications in five languages

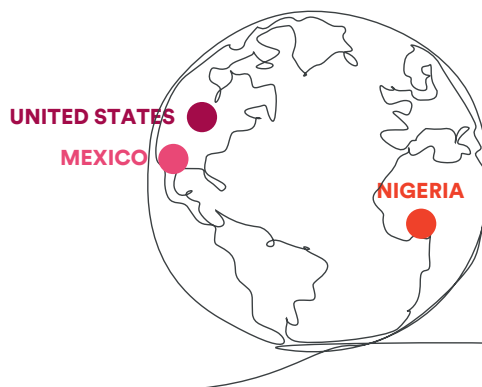
More than

a million page views

More than

496,000 sessions

The global site's audience was located predominantly in the United States, Mexico and Nigeria.





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of implementation. This culminated in the co-creation of “a brighter future” in 2023. This series of web stories and videos was published during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence and ran on the global websites and social media accounts of UN Women, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and UNHCR, as well as the Development Coordination Office and United Nations Sustainable Development Group. Two stories were also published by UN News in English, Swahili and Portuguese and the video series teaser was shared on social media by the UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina J. Mohammed.

Annual content was aligned with key thematic moments on the United Nations calendar, including the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, Day of the Girl, 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, and Spotlight Initiative’s high-level events. The site highlighted Spotlight Initiative’s work across all six pillars and five regions of implementation, elevating the voices of survivors of violence and activists through human interest stories.

7.2.2 Social Media

Spotlight Initiative’s social media presence on its owned platforms (X [Twitter], Facebook and Instagram) grew continuously from 2019 to December 2023. It grew its audience from 6,300 followers to almost 62,000 followers – an 884 per cent increase. The Initiative also recorded more than 33 million impressions, 380,000 engagements, and 2.3 million video views across its channels.

154. See X (formerly Twitter), Facebook and Instagram accounts aimed at audiences in Central Asia.

Spotlight Initiative reached users throughout the globe in English, Spanish (X (formerly Twitter), Facebook and Instagram) and Russian.¹⁵⁴ These accounts are administered by Spotlight Initiative communications colleagues working in the region.

Spotlight Initiative shared more content on its YouTube channel, making all globally and locally produced videos available to the public. The YouTube channel hosted more than 140 videos with 365,000 views and 1,110 subscribers.

7.2.3 Media Coverage

From January 2019 to December 2023, more than 16,300 Spotlight Initiative-specific articles and stories were published by more than 4,100 media outlets across 155 countries, with an annual average reach of 3.6 billion. Stories were published in top-tier media outlets including: ABC News, AllAfrica, Al Jazeera, the Associated Press, The Boston Globe, BAZAAR, BBC, Clarin, CNN, Cosmopolitan, The Daily Mail, Deutsche Welle, El País, Euronews, Forbes, Global Citizen, The Guardian, The Hollywood Reporter, The Independent, Infobae, MSN, POLITICO, Vice News, The Washington Post, The World Economic Forum, Yahoo News, and UN News, to name a few.

Notable media coverage included the dedicated Al Jazeera Inside Story episode on Spotlight Initiative, featuring: UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina J. Mohammed; UN Global Advocate for Spotlight Initiative and South Africa Rugby Captain, Siya Kolisi; and European Union Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen (2020).

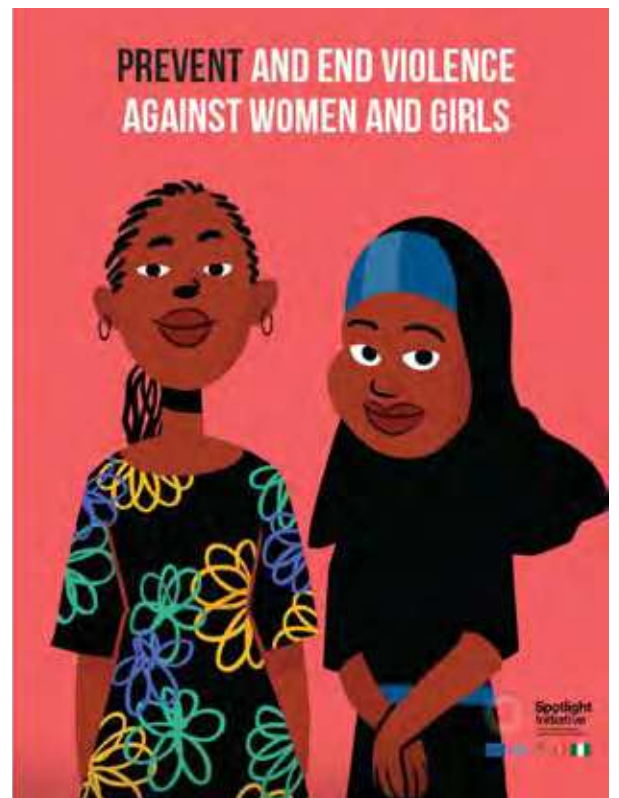


7.3 RAISING AWARENESS AND CHALLENGING GENDER STEREOTYPES THROUGH SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Spotlight Initiative communication campaigns challenged gender stereotypes and raised awareness of the importance of gender equality and ending violence against women and girls to support changes in laws, policies, and services. Country teams used a mix of digital strategies and in-person activities and workshops to maximize reach while deepening and consolidating change.

7.3.1 Raising Awareness and Challenging Gender Stereotypes across the Initiative: Highlighting Examples over the Years

Diverse country-level examples showcase how digital tools and campaigns play a critical role in raising awareness, changing norms, and supporting women and girls to understand their rights.



© Spotlight Initiative Nigeria.

For example, in 2020 Spotlight Initiative **Argentina** launched a social media campaign, [#AmigaDateCuenta](#) (Girlfriend, realize what is happening) to help adolescents recognize that violence can take many forms and to detect dangerous and controlling behaviours



© Spotlight Initiative Argentina.

early. Teens used the hashtag to discuss their personal experiences on social media platforms. The campaign took off when Argentinian singer and actress, Lali Espósito, supported the campaign by starring in a series of digital and social media videos and sharing it with her seven million Instagram followers. A follow-up campaign, #AmigoDateCuenta, used male influencers to encourage men and boys to reflect on toxic masculinity and to call out concerning behaviour among their peers.

Online tools, such as mobile phone apps, have been used in numerous countries to reach audiences, especially youth. In **Kyrgyzstan**, Spotlight Initiative supported the development of [Spring in Bishkek](#), a game designed to educate young people on what to do if they encounter *Ala-Kachuu*, or bride kidnapping. In February 2021, it had been downloaded more than 100,000 times. See the detailed case study in [Chapter 5](#).

The **Safe and Fair** programme developed the [MyJourney](#) mobile app to support women migrant workers to understand labour rights and migrate safely. This was complemented by a sixth-month media campaign in **Cambodia** that used mass media and social media platforms to promote public awareness of the contributions by women migrant workers, address negative social and gender norms, and provide information on services for safe migration and on violence against women. Through this campaign, which included a public forum, community engagement, mass media and social media outreach, 230,198 people were reached. The **Africa Regional Programme** supported the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Hackathon each year, which invests in new ideas and technology to end female genital mutilation. One such app, [Afyatoon](#), uses animation to make health information accessible to all.

In **Ecuador**, the Spotlight Initiative team supported the development of [Flores en el Aire](#), a digital mapping tool that aims to humanize the country's shocking femicide statistics by sharing testimonies from the families of victims to create a virtual "memory map". *Flores en el Aire* was publicly launched with in-person events in three cities and a commemorative walk for femicide victims was held in Cuenca. The significant media attention sparked a national debate around femicide and the barriers that families face in achieving justice. On 8 March 2022, International Women's Day, the Government



Spring in Bishkek is a mobile phone game designed to inform young people about the rights of women and girls. It focuses on what to do if they or a friend is affected by *Ala-Kachuu*, or bride kidnapping..

of Ecuador issued a presidential decree that reformed the delivery of compensation for children orphaned by femicide, representing an important step towards reparations for victims' families. See the case study in [Chapter 5](#).

Traditional media, such as film have also been widely used to challenge stereotypes. In **Timor-Leste**, Spotlight Initiative partnered with the local non-profit organization *Ba Futuru* to develop a [film series](#) for young people focused on sexual harassment, consent, teen pregnancy, respectful relationships and positive parenting. These were accompanied by community screenings and discussions, as well as training sessions. In **Honduras**, Spotlight Initiative worked with the Honduran Filmmakers Collective to showcase the [work of women filmmakers](#) — particularly those who experience intersecting forms of violence — as part of its efforts to address and prevent violence against women and girls. These were also screened publicly and accompanied by community dialogues.

7.3.2 Events and Launches

Spotlight Initiative launch in the margins of 62nd Commission on the Status of Women

In March 2018, the United Nations and the European Union hosted a [special event](#) to announce a new, global, multi-year initiative focused on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls — Spotlight Initiative. The event took place on the margins of the 62nd Commission on the Status of Women and heralded a unique, ambitious partnership unprecedented in its comprehensive scope and scale. Speakers and panelists included: EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and



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Development, Neven Mimica; United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, Amina J. Mohammed; Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka; and Secretary-General of the European External Action Service, Helga Schmid, alongside civil society activists and representatives. “When my granddaughter looks at this moment in time, I want her to remember that we didn’t just despair but answered the call to action,” said Commissioner Mimica. UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina J. Mohamed, announced that the first programmes launching the Initiative would be Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico, and Argentina.

#WithHer flagship campaign launch

In Brussels in March 2020, Spotlight Initiative launched #WithHer, a global digital campaign to raise awareness about violence against women and girls and efforts to address the issue. The campaign shared the stories of activists from Belgium to Zimbabwe who are working to end violence against women and girls in their communities, engaging new audiences by urging them to donate to women’s funds and show support on social media using the hashtag #WithHer. The event took place at

the Bozar Centre for Fine Arts, with high-level speakers including: European Union Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen; UNFPA Executive Director, Dr. Natalia Kanem; Anaïs Leleux of French activist organization, Nous Toutes; Belgian author and activist, Maité Lønne; Chair of the frontline organization, Isala Asbl Pierrette Pape; French Member of European Parliament, Chrysoula Zacharopoulou; and UN Women Regional Goodwill Ambassador for Africa, Jaha Dukureh.

The launch took place right before COVID-19 travel restrictions came into effect, and #WithHer became the Initiative’s umbrella campaign for digital activations throughout lockdown. More on #WithHer campaign can be found below in [Chapter 7.3.3](#).

Online Solutions to Real World Violence — 2020 Sustainable Development Goals Action Zone

As lockdowns prevented in-person events from taking place and time spent online rapidly increased, Spotlight Initiative focused its 2020 Sustainable Development Goals Action Zone panel (held virtually) on digital forms of

violence against women and girls. This event brought together UN Global Advocates, content creators, and representatives from Google and Facebook for a discussion on online violence. The [breakout session](#) was hosted in collaboration with the Social Good Club and was moderated by YouTuber and activist, Amber Whittington of Amber's Closet. She was joined by: two Global Advocates for Spotlight Initiative, the actor [Cecilia Suarez](#) and the captain of South Africa's national rugby team, [Siya Kolisi](#); the actor and host, Amanda du-Pont; YouTuber and filmmaker, Louis Cole; Head of Partnerships and Business Development at Google Jigsaw, Patricia Georgiou; and Director for Global Safety Policy at Facebook, Karuna Nain.

‘What were you wearing?’

Spotlight Initiative first partnered with RISE, a human rights organization founded by Amanda Nguyen, in 2021 to support the exhibit “[What](#)

[were you wearing?](#)” at the United Nations Visitors Centre in New York. ‘What were you wearing?’ invited viewers to observe the outfits worn by five survivors of sexual violence at the time they were attacked, subverting a victim-blaming phrase to highlight the barriers survivors face in accessing justice. The exhibit was part of RISE's campaign to have the UN General Assembly pass a Survivors' Bill of Rights.

Despite its small scale, the exhibit made a big impact and a year later, it [re-opened in New York](#) with a [high-level launch event](#) and more than 100 outfits from around the world, representing the 1.3 billion survivors of sexual assault worldwide. This was followed by a 2023 exhibit at the Salle de Glaces, Brussels Parliament. The high-level launch event raised the visibility of RISE's campaign on a new continent and brought together the UN system and Member States to learn about the issue and advocate for survivors.





© Spotlight Initiative/Santiago Mele.

United Nations Global Advocate mission

In March 2023, the Initiative coordinated a [visit to Argentina](#) for UN Global Advocate for Spotlight Initiative, Cecilia Suárez. Over the course of five days, she met and spoke with survivors, civil society activists and organizations, government officials, UN agencies and the European Union Delegation to hear about what is being done to improve the lives of Argentinian women and girls, and shared her experiences with more than one million Instagram followers. She also did [interviews promoting the Initiative's work](#) with high-profile media outlets, including GENTE, TN, Parati and Ohlala!, which reached an audience of 159 million people.

High-Impact Spotlight Initiative event at the Sustainable Development Goals Action Weekend

In 2023, Spotlight Initiative was selected as one of [12 High-Impact Initiatives of the UN](#). It was chosen from more than 120 applications



© UN Women/Ryan Brown.

as the only cross-cutting high-impact initiative. Spotlight Initiative hosted a [high-level event](#) at the UN Headquarters in New York during the Sustainable Development Goals Action Weekend in September 2023 to demonstrate ‘proof of concept’, not just on ending violence but as an accelerator across all the Sustainable Development Goals. The event highlighted the successes of Spotlight Initiative’s first phase of programming and advocated for renewed commitments from Member States to implement national plans to end violence against women and girls.

The event featured statements from: UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina J. Mohammed; leaders from the European Union and United Nations; Heads of State; actor and UN Global Advocate, Cecilia Suárez; actor, filmmaker and philanthropist, Natalie Portman; actor and UNFPA Goodwill Ambassador, Ashley Judd; music artist and UNDP Goodwill Ambassador, Yemi Alade; actor and UNDP Goodwill Ambassador, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau; and leaders from civil society, the private sector, and other partners. It featured musical performances by MILCK and Natasha Bedingfield and a panel discussion hosted by Futurist Sinead Bovell.

Ms. Portman spoke about the work of Spotlight Initiative at her other interventions, including during the closing plenary and in her [interview](#) with UN Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications, Melissa Fleming, on the sidelines of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit. Spotlight Initiative received positive, high-profile coverage in the days and weeks following the event.

28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28)

In November 2023, Spotlight Initiative participated in a series of events exploring the links between climate change and gender-based violence at the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai. The largest event was a talk show-style discussion, ‘[Climate change and violence against women: Zero degrees of separation](#)’. It included high-level participation from the UN Office on

Drugs and Crime Executive Director, Ghada Waly, and Deputy Executive Director (acting in) for UN Women, Sarah Hendriks, and it powerfully underscored the links between the climate crisis and gender-based violence.

Group of Friends for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls (Group of Friends) and Generation Equality Forum (GEF)

As noted in [Chapter 4](#), Spotlight Initiative’s partnership with the Group of Friends for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls began in 2020 as a response to the UN Secretary-General’s calls for “peace at home and in homes” amid rising violence against women and girls during the pandemic.

Since then, the Group of Friends has met consistently to discuss efforts on how to eliminate gender-based violence, improve cooperation on this issue, better support advocacy initiatives, and mobilize greater resources. Meetings often take place on the sidelines of the Commission on the Status of Women and are centred on a similar theme. These have included [links between climate change and gender-based violence](#) and [investing in the prevention of violence against women and girls](#). A 2021 meeting on [harassment and violence in the workplace](#) coincided with the International Labour Organization’s Action Week to free the world of work from violence and harassment. At the 66th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66), the Group of Friends’ meeting resulted in drafting key commitments for CSW66, in which they pledged to work through the negotiation of the Agreed Conclusions, to highlight the intersections between violence, climate change and disasters, and to call for concerted efforts to address these issues.

In 2022, the Group of Friends and Spotlight Initiative presented a television-style [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) dialogue](#) on the role and responsibility of men and boys in ending gender-based violence, ‘From perpetrators to allies.’¹⁵⁵ The video was published on the United Nations YouTube channel to more than 2.66 million subscribers.

155. It was moderated by UN Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications, Melissa Fleming and featured: European Union Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen; Head of the EU Delegation to the United Nations, Olof Skoog; Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the UN, Egriselda Gonzales Lopez; Permanent Representative of Botswana to the United Nations, Collen Vixen Kelapile; UNFPA Executive Director, Natalia Kanem’ and UN Global Advocate for the Spotlight Initiative, Siya Kolisi.

“The United Nations is working with governments and legislators to strengthen laws and regulations to better protect women and girls — and provide protection and counselling services.

And since its creation in 2020 in response to my call to action, the Group of Friends for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls ... has been critical to this work.”

**United Nations Secretary-General
Antonio Gutierrez**

The Secretary-General's speech
can be seen in this [video](#)

Additionally, Spotlight Initiative has collaborated closely with the [Generation Equality Forum](#) (GEF), particularly with the [Action Coalition on ending Gender-Based Violence](#). The Action Coalition's activities and key messages were developed in collaboration with Spotlight Initiative Secretariat, fostering alignment and complementarity. The European Union co-led the Action Coalition on GBV and regularly involved the Initiative's Secretariat, as well.

One of the most significant actions included under the GBV Action Coalition was the establishment of a global knowledge platform to capture lessons, promising practices and innovations from Spotlight Initiative programmes and to disseminate these to all actors and practitioners involved in the GBV Action Coalition. Through UN Women, Spotlight Initiative is involved in the planning efforts for the new phase of the GEF.

7.3.3

The #WithHer Campaign

Spotlight Initiative's flagship digital engagement campaign — [#WithHer](#) — focuses on curating online conversations among cultural influencers and providing a platform for the stories of activists and survivors. The campaign has reached more than 224 million users on X (formerly Twitter), Facebook and Instagram since 2021.

The [WithHer Fund](#) was launched in partnership with the UN Foundation in December 2021 to provide resources directly to a cohort of six grassroots women's organizations working to end violence against women and girls. Since November 2021, the WithHer Fund has raised USD 500,000, made possible with support from the UN Foundation, The Estée Lauder Companies Charitable Foundation, the H&M Foundation, the Target Foundation and Liberty Latin America. Approximately 70 per cent of



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funds have gone directly to grantee organizations as flexible unrestricted grants, enabling grantees to cover core organizational costs that are rarely covered by project-based funding. In 2022, digital art agency ArtRepublic partnered with the WithHer Fund to curate an [NFT auction](#) featuring globally recognized women photographers.

#WithHer on social media

More influencers joined [#WithHer Talks](#), a series of social media conversations around violence against women and girls that the Secretariat launched in 2020. A new episode was launched in 2023 with RISE Founder, [Amanda Nguyen](#), who spoke about recovering from trauma. Episodes in 2022 tackled topics such as [healing after domestic violence](#), [how to seek psychological support](#), and [colourism](#) in the Indian film industry. With the participation of international content creators, these videos reached 45,000 views on Instagram.

The Secretariat extended its #WithHer formats with the creation of [#WithHer Express](#), which was designed to let experts and influencers share their expertise and educate audiences on specific issues. It also launched a series called “The Feelgood Playlist”, highlighting three recent positive headlines or developments around women’s rights. Thanks to a strategic boosting campaign, the [final episode](#) of 2022 got more than 400,000 views.

Global advocates and influencers

A key strategy of Spotlight Initiative’s communications efforts is engaging public figures who have the power, influence, and platforms to reach new audiences and create a global culture free from violence. In 2021, Spotlight Initiative began its partnership with The Social Good Club — a creative impact studio that brings together a network of social media content creators to reimagine the ways influencers tell stories and engage their audience. This partnership led to the creation of a Culture Change Commitment and [Culture Change Starter Pack](#), followed in 2022 by a #WithHer fellowship programme. This programme curated eight influential creators and guided them through the process of developing one or more activations within their field. The approach was designed to integrate learnings from previous



work and gave creators the freedom to explore any relevant topics relating directly to ending violence against women and girls in their own way. This campaign got more than 600,300 views through the eight influencers’ accounts.

Actor Cecilia Suárez and Springboks Captain Siya Kolisi were appointed United Nations Global Advocates for Spotlight Initiative in 2021 and have been critical to raising awareness of gender-based violence and Spotlight Initiative’s work ever since. A supporter from the outset, Ms. Suárez [appeared at the Initiative’s Sustainable Development Goal Action Zone in 2018](#), wrote an [op-ed on femicide for El País in 2021](#), and was deeply engaged throughout 2023, going on mission to Argentina, speaking at the High-Impact Initiative event in New York and at the launch of ‘What Were You Wearing?’ in Brussels (events are outlined in more detail above, in [Chapter 7.3.2](#)). She and Mr. Kolisi both joined a [panel discussion](#) around online violence in 2020 and during the [Generation Equality Forum in Paris](#) in 2021.

Mr. Kolisi has been vocal on the need for men and boys to be part of the solution to violence, participating in [Al Jazeera’s Spotlight Initiative episode of ‘Inside Story’](#) in 2020 and the television-style [Sustainable Development Goal dialogue](#) “From perpetrators to allies” in 2022. Since being named UN Global Advocates, Ms. Suarez and Mr. Kolisi have continued to share the Initiative’s content and messages with their large social media followings.

“We are seeing the results [of the Initiative] in institutions but they are fragile because they depend on convincing those responsible of how urgent this Initiative is.”



© Maccasy.

Cecilia Suárez at Spotlight Initiative’s High-Impact Initiative event



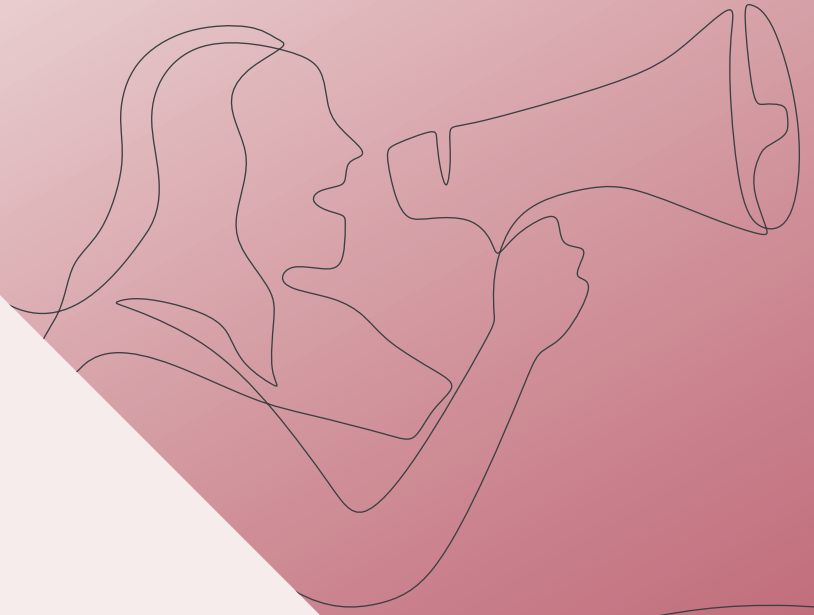
© Courtesy of Siya Kolisi.

“When I was 5 years old, seeing things happen to my mother, things happen to my aunt, that’s really stuck with me. I was helpless at the time but now I have a platform and I want to use my platform in a way that [ensures] this doesn’t happen to other women... I’m going to keep on fighting and I’m going to keep on using my voice.”

Siya Kolisi, ‘From Perpetrators to Allies’ SDG Dialogue

CHAPTER 8

MOVING FORWARD: A CALL TO INVEST



This chapter focuses on Spotlight Initiative’s plans for the next five years given its successful first phase. Given the projected impact of Spotlight 2.0, the chapter details how the Initiative plans to scale. The chapter concludes with an urgent call to action for increased investment in global efforts to end gender-based violence and advance women’s rights.

8.1 SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE 2.0: SCALING UP EFFORTS TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Ending violence against women and girls is possible, and Spotlight Initiative — [the United Nations High-Impact Initiative to end violence against women and girls](#) — has modelled the way forward. Through its first phase, the Initiative has catalysed a shift from disconnected, small-scale projects to end violence against women and girls, to large-scale, cohesive programming.

Leveraging the expertise of the UN system, Spotlight Initiative has brought together all actors under a common and effective approach that is responsive to diverse contexts and communities. The Initiative’s comprehensive way of working — helping to pass progressive laws and policies, strengthen institutions, deepen prevention programming, improve access to services and generate data — and its commitment to meaningful partnerships with

government and civil society (particularly local groups and women’s rights organizations) has been shown to be [significantly more effective](#) at reducing violence against women and girls than siloed approaches. It’s estimated that Spotlight Initiative will have [\(conservatively\) prevented 21 million women and girls](#) from experiencing gender based violence by 2025.

Corroborating this, the final evaluation of Spotlight Initiative recently noted that “over a few short years, Spotlight Initiative achieved notable successes. The comprehensive approach, combined with substantive funding allocations and high-level, multi-stakeholder engagement, made important contributions to significant changes toward eliminating violence against women and girls at country and regional levels.”

8.1.1 Spotlight Initiative 2.0 Projected Impact

Launched in 2024, “Spotlight Initiative 2.0” will build on the Initiative’s successful first phase to scale impact. With additional, long-term investment, even more is possible. Through well-coordinated, transformative actions, the Initiative hopes to raise USD 1 billion and expand its portfolio to more than 60 countries across existing and new regions. With USD 1 billion, the Initiative aims to ensure that 100 million women and girls live a life free from violence by 2030, reducing the prevalence of this egregious human rights violation from 1 in 3 to 1 in 5 women and girls in less than a decade.

As noted throughout this report, by working to end violence against women and girls, Spotlight Initiative has also contributed to the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals. Going forward, the Initiative will accelerate progress. By 2025, for example, the Initiative is expected to help almost 1 million girls stay in school;



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© UNICEF/Daniele Volpe.

with a potential for an additional 4 million completing school in the next generation (SDG 4). The Initiative's work on prevention is predicted to help diminish the economic costs of violence for women and girls, which can amount to around 30 per cent of the average annual earning potential of a survivor (SDG 8). And by preventing gender-based violence, the Initiative (and similar comprehensive models) promotes more peaceful societies for all people including women and girls (SDG 16).¹⁵⁶

In just a few years, the Initiative has changed the lives of millions of women and girls, demonstrating that change is possible. Looking ahead, Spotlight 2.0 will leverage this momentum and impact to continue to address gender-based violence, and advance women's human rights.

156. Dalberg (2022) "[Imperative to Invest: How addressing violence against women and girls today reduces violence over time, fosters peace & stability, and supports people reach full potential, all of which advances us towards the SDGs](#)".

8.1.2

Building Spotlight Initiative 2.0 Together: The Civil Society Organization Co-Design Process

Participatory approaches to programming uphold key human rights principles, including equality and non-discrimination, as well as participation and inclusion. They foster trust and national ownership, and help ensure that Spotlight Initiative's contributions are relevant and responsive to different stakeholders.

- The first principle mandates that the human rights of all women, girls, and gender-diverse In this spirit, Spotlight Initiative engaged in a yearlong co-design process

“In our final year we advised a co-design process, led by civil society, of high-level principles to guide the Initiative’s next stage: [Spotlight Initiative] Secretariat has given time, in-kind support and resourcing for this process. The co-design process has involved over 700 members of civil society involved with Spotlight [Initiative] — whether as reference group members, grantees or implementing partners. Co-design participants appreciated how Spotlight Initiative conceptualizes strong intersectional women’s movements — in and of themselves — as core to ending VAWG, and funds them accordingly. When funding is provided to women’s organizations in most EAWG programmes, it is contingent upon them undertaking a donor-determined activity. Spotlight [Initiative]— recognizing the deep role women’s movements play in catalysing and sustaining change with their communities and the centrality of this role to ending VAWG — aims to support women’s organizations to grow in influence and power. While there is further work to do to make UN funding mechanisms fully accessible, this conceptualization has already driven a number of significant practice changes within the system to ensure women’s organizations are funded to do the work they identify as necessary, in ways that have allowed for adaptation and included high percentages of core funding for institutional strengthening.”

Lara Fergus, member of the Civil Society Global Reference Group

with diverse civil society organizations. Led by the Initiative's Civil Society Global Reference Group, a series of hybrid and online workshops were held throughout 2023 involving 700 civil society stakeholders from all over the world. Organizations included a mix of implementing partners, grantees, and reference group members. Civil society participants contributed to developing [four key principles](#) to guide Spotlight Initiative 2.0. People are at the core of Spotlight Initiative, with a commitment to protecting human rights defenders. Initial actions involve leveraging human rights mechanisms and partnering with women's human rights defenders.

- The second principle emphasizes meaningful engagement of civil society through partnership within and shared leadership of the Initiative, ensuring that civil society organisations are seen as respected leaders and full partners in the Initiative's decision-making, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes. This involves supporting civil society collaboration and shared advocacy while avoiding Civil Society Reference Group 'voluntarism'.
- The third principle focuses on the quality of programming to end violence against women and girls, and prioritizes evidence-based programming, collaboration, sustainability, and positive outcomes for women and girls. Civil society has requested that Spotlight Initiative's comprehensive approach be maintained and ethically scaled, without compromising the quality of programming for 'reach'. This involves adequate time, resources, and technical support for meaningful collaboration with an emphasis on sustainability, including through collaborative revision of the monitoring framework.
- The fourth and final principle stipulates that funding mechanisms be accessible, accountable, and fit-for-purpose. Initial actions include drafting a proposal for a new funding framework for all United Nations programming on ending violence against women and girls to consider.

These co-designed principles will guide the implementation of Spotlight Initiative 2.0. Civil society has translated these principles

into concrete actions and recommendations for the Initiative to reflect in programming at the global, regional, and country level, and an accountability mechanism will be established to ensure that these principles are meaningfully taken on board.

8.1.3 Programmatic Framework of Spotlight Initiative 2.0








Spotlight Initiative's 2.0 streamlined results framework allows for programmes to better adapt interventions to their contexts and the diverse needs of women and girls. The Initiative's 2.0 framework deepens and further consolidates the Initiative's original results framework (which featured six outcomes) to four outcomes that more readily capture the Initiative's comprehensive, cross-cutting impacts, including its contribution to women's economic rights.

As before, the Initiative's 2.0 framework will continue to be rooted in a evidence-based Theory of Change, which posits that applying a comprehensive approach — working pass progressive laws and policies, strengthen institutions, deepen prevention programming, improve access to quality services, generate data for targeted response, and build meaningful partnerships (particularly with civil society and feminist and women's rights movements) — best accelerates efforts to end violence women and girls.

The theory of change continues to centre the rights-based principle of leaving no one behind across all contexts, ensuring that the Initiative consistently prioritises structurally marginalized communities, and women and girls facing multiple forms of discrimination. As noted above, the meaningful engagement of civil society (particularly local women's rights organisations and movements) will also be privileged. While upholding the key tenets of the Initiative's evidence-based comprehensive model, the 2.0 results framework will ensure greater flexibility and adaptability to foster deeper national ownership and more responsive programming, adapting to the diverse needs of communities across the development-humanitarian-peace continuum.



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OUTCOME A LAWS, POLICIES, INSTITUTIONS AND DATA		Laws and Policies	National plans, policies, institutions and budgets are where governments begin to translate commitments to end violence against women and girls into practical progress. Spotlight Initiative works with government and civil society to draft new legislation and/or assess gaps and strengthen existing legislation on EVAWG in line with international human rights standards.
		Institutions	Strong institutions play a critical accountability role and help to ensure that laws and policies to end violence against women and girls, and advance women's rights more broadly, are implemented and adequately funded. Spotlight Initiative supports the capacity development of personnel in all relevant institutions in order to strengthen the implementation of laws and policies, and improve the sustainability of efforts to EVAWG.
		Data	Data is critical to providing a better understanding of the nature, magnitude, frequency, consequences and cost of violence against women and girls. Spotlight Initiative works to enhance data collection and analysis to inform laws, policies and actions taken to address VAWG.
OUTCOME B PREVENTION		Social norms change and elimination of harmful practices	Violence against women and girls and harmful practices are upheld due to harmful social norms, beliefs and attitudes. Through its prevention work, the Initiative supports strategies that address harmful norms, beliefs and practices, and promote principles of equality and inclusion.
		Women's economic rights	The fulfillment of women's economic rights helps prevent and reduce violence against women and girls and directly contributes towards gender equality, inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. Spotlight Initiative promotes skills development and access to income-generating opportunities. The Initiative aims to promote better access to and control over resources, and greater security, including protection from violence.
OUTCOME C RESPONSE		Response services for survivors of violence and perpetrators' accountability	Quality essential services to address violence against women and girls are a central component of effective response, yet accessibility (and quality) is often compromised by inadequate funding, weak staffing, and capacity, coordination and implementation challenges. Spotlight Initiative strives to improve the availability and accessibility of rights-based, survivor-centred essential services that adequately address the needs of marginalised communities, and address impunity.
OUTCOME D WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS		Women's Movements	Diverse feminist, women's rights groups, autonomous social movements and civil society organisations, including those representing structurally marginalized groups, are uniquely critical for driving sustainable for progressive change, challenging intersecting supremacies (including colonialism, racism, sexism, and able-ism) and imagining alternatives. Spotlight Initiative prioritises direct support to women's rights and feminist organisations and movements, particularly at the local level, to buttress their ongoing efforts to EVAWG and advance human rights.

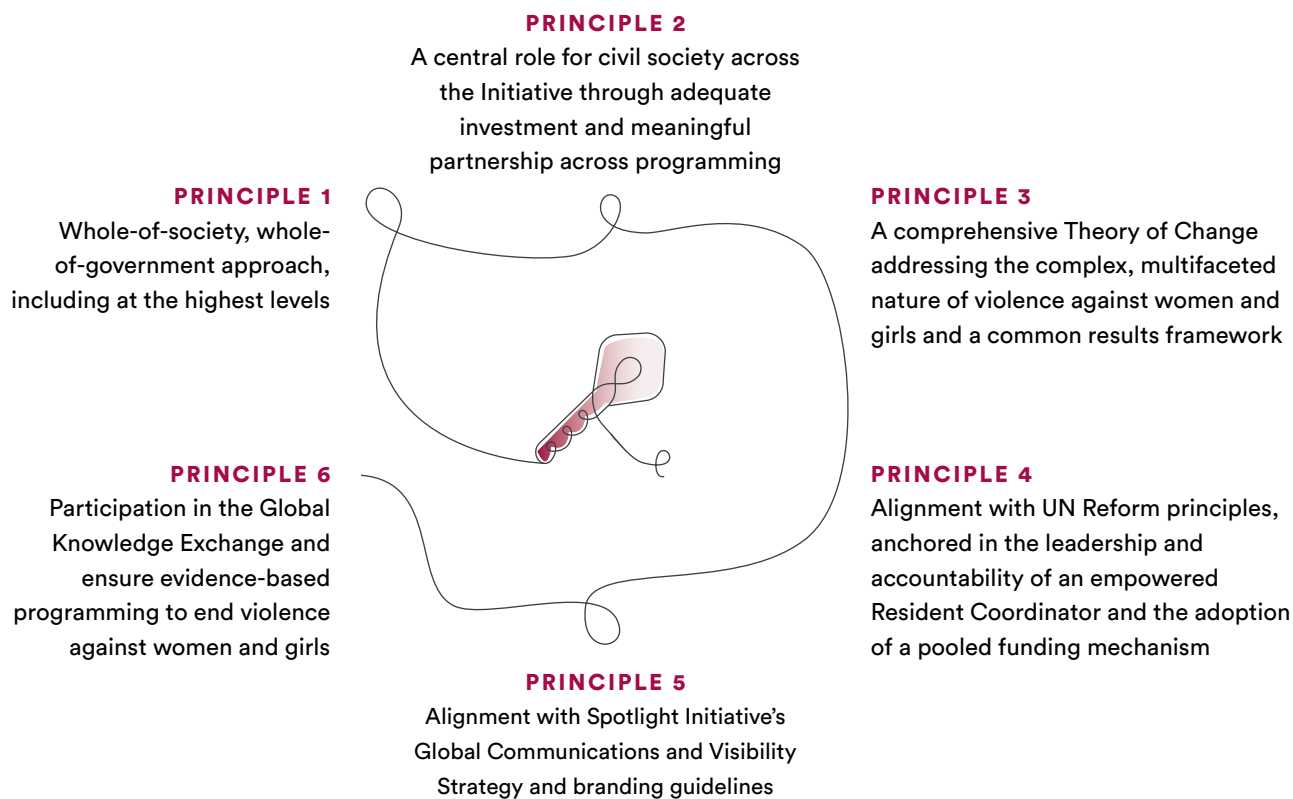
8.1.4 Spotlight Initiative 2.0 Key Principles

Spotlight Initiative remains a multi-donor, multi-stakeholder United Nations Secretary-General Fund anchored in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the

UN Development Coordination Office. The Initiative will continue to be grounded in robust collaboration among UN entities, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator.

During its first phase, Spotlight Initiative programming aligned with the following key principles to deliver successfully.

Spotlight Initiative — Key Features



These will be taken forward and deepened in the Initiative's next phase, aligning with the four key principles co-designed by civil society outlined above, as well.

Principle 1:
Whole-of-society, whole-of-government approach, including at the highest levels.

Ending violence against women and girls requires mobilization and coordination of a significant number of partners across institutions and sectors, including diverse rights holders, governments, civil society, traditional leaders, academia, and the media, among others, to ensure that ending violence against women and girls is at the centre of national development and humanitarian priorities. Working at the highest level of government helps foster national ownership and prioritisation of the issue, as well.

Principle 2:
A central role for civil society across the Initiative through adequate investment and meaningful partnership across programming.
As leaders and best placed to tackle gender-

based violence in their communities, the Initiative places civil society at the centre of its efforts and aims to ensure its civil society partnerships are equal, inclusive, and transparent. Civil society reference groups offer an interconnected governance structure, meaningfully engaging civil society in ongoing efforts. Spotlight Initiative leverages its convening role to ensure that civil society is involved in all aspects of decision-making, programming, and implementation, amplifying their authority and voice.

Principle 3:
A comprehensive Theory of Change addressing the complex, multifaceted nature of violence against women and girls and a common results framework. Rooted in the evidence-based, Spotlight Initiative promotes a comprehensive approach to address violence against women and girls at multiple levels of society centred around four broad outcome areas: *laws, policies, institutions and data; prevention; response; and women's movements*, that are easily contextualized and respond to the diverse needs of women and girls.



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Principle 4:
Alignment with UN Reform principles, anchored in the leadership and accountability of an empowered Resident Coordinator and the adoption of a pooled funding mechanism. Under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator and through inter-agency coordination, including with humanitarian mechanisms for crises and conflict settings, Spotlight Initiative 2.0 will continue to leverage the expertise of UN agencies, streamline efficient and cost-effective operational processes, establish collaborative partnerships aligned with national priorities, and jointly advocate for resourcing to end violence against women and girls.

Principle 5:
Alignment with Spotlight Initiative’s Global Communications and Visibility Strategy

and branding guidelines. Spotlight Initiative’s communications seek to bring further awareness to ending violence against women and girls, highlight the impact and results of the Initiative, catalyse action and advocacy to accelerate progress, and ensure visibility of the Initiative, its donors, and its partners.

Principle 6:
Participation in the Global Knowledge Exchange and ensure evidence-based programming to end violence against women and girls. Spotlight Initiative supports evidence-based programming on ending violence against women and girls that leads to catalytic and sustainable impact. Building on its knowledge management expertise, the Initiative aims to amplify lessons and good practices and connect and strengthen a diverse coalition of key actors to disseminate lessons learned.

8.2

A CALL TO ACTION: POLITICAL COMMITMENT AND INVESTMENT

Violence against women and girls remains one of the most pervasive human rights violations globally, with devastating consequences in the short and long term.

The world faces increasingly complex and compounding crises from conflict and war to climate disasters and the recurrent backlash to women's human rights and bodily autonomy. The 2023 Report on the Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals concludes that no country is within reach of eradicating intimate partner violence (SDG 5.2)¹⁵⁷ and the World Economic Forum estimates that it will take 131 years to reach gender parity.¹⁵⁸ The economic costs of violence against women and of discriminatory social institutions are estimated at approximately USD 1.5 trillion annually or around 2 per cent of the global gross domestic product.¹⁵⁹ Yet, research also shows that less than 1 per cent of aid targets gender-based violence. **We must do better for women and girls. The time for change is now — and the path to change has never been clearer.**

Spotlight Initiative envisions a world where women and girls live free from all forms of violence and enjoy all their human rights. But we cannot achieve this alone.

Partnerships and multilateral collaboration and cooperation, coupled with deep investments in holistic and comprehensive programming, are vital to ending violence against women and girls. As Spotlight Initiative moves into its next phase of programming, it will continue to drive forward its commitment to broadening its donor base and mobilising new political and financial commitments towards ending violence against women and girls. As noted, with new partners coming on board in 2024 — including Belgium and USAID — coupled with continued investment from the European Union, the Initiative will continue working towards a world where all women and girls can reach their full potential.

In its next phase, Spotlight Initiative will also continue to deepen its partnerships with governments and civil society, and will drive more and better funding towards women's rights organizations and movements that are leading efforts in their communities and globally. The data are clear: evidence shows that a vibrant civil society — and, specifically, robust feminist and women's rights organizations and movements — is uniquely critical to advancing progressive policies to end violence against women and girls.

**Join us in this journey to
scale up the impact of
Spotlight Initiative.**

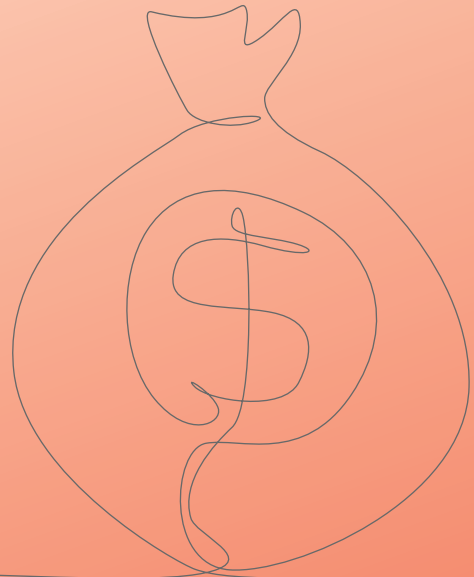
157. [Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2023](#).

158. [World Economic Forum: Global Gender Gap Report 2023](#).

159. Remarks by UN Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women, Lakshmi Puri at the high-level discussion on the ["Economic Cost of Violence against Women"](#).

CHAPTER 9

MULTI-PARTNER TRUST FUND OFFICE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL REPORT



SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE FUND FOR THE PERIOD 1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2023

UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
United Nations Development Programme
GATEWAY: <https://mptf.undp.org>

May 2024

INTRODUCTION

This Consolidated Annual Financial Report of the **Spotlight Initiative Fund** is prepared by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF Office) in fulfillment of its obligations as Administrative Agent, as per the terms of Reference (TOR), the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the UNDP MPTF Office and the Recipient Organizations, and the donor agreement signed with contributors/donors.

The MPTF Office, as Administrative Agent, is responsible for concluding an MOU with Recipient Organizations and donor agreements with contributors/donors. It receives, administers and manages contributions, and disburses these funds to the Recipient Organizations. The Administrative Agent prepares and submits annual consolidated financial reports, as well as regular financial statements, for transmission to stakeholders.

This consolidated financial report covers the period 1 January to 31 December 2023 and provides financial data on progress made in the implementation of projects of the **Spotlight Initiative Fund**. It is posted on the MPTF Office GATEWAY (<https://mptf.undp.org/fund/sif00>).

2023

Financial Performance

This chapter presents financial data and analysis of the **Spotlight Initiative Fund** using the pass-through funding modality as of 31 December 2023. Financial information for this Fund is also available on the MPTF Office GATEWAY, at the following address: <https://mptf.undp.org/fund/sif00>.

DEFINITIONS

ALLOCATION/TOTAL APPROVED BUDGET

Amount approved by the Steering Committee for a project/programme. The total approved budget represents the cumulative amount of allocations approved by the Steering Committee.

APPROVED PROJECT/PROGRAMME

A project/programme including budget, etc., that is approved by the Steering Committee for fund allocation purposes.

CONTRIBUTOR COMMITMENT

Amount(s) committed by a contributor to a Fund in a signed donor agreement with the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF Office), in its capacity as the Administrative Agent. A commitment may be paid or pending payment.

CONTRIBUTOR DEPOSIT

Cash deposit received by the MPTF Office for the Fund from a contributor in accordance with a signed donor agreement.

DELIVERY RATE

The percentage of funds that have been utilized, calculated by comparing expenditures reported by a Recipient Organization and Non-UN Organization against the 'net funded amount'. This does not include expense commitments by Recipient Organizations.

DONOR AGREEMENT

Standard Administrative Arrangement and/or European Commission contribution agreement between contributor/donor and MPTF Office.

NET FUNDED AMOUNT

Amount transferred to a Recipient Organization less any refunds transferred back to the MPTF Office by a Recipient Organization.

RECIPIENT ORGANIZATION

A UN Organization or other inter-governmental Organization that is a partner in a Fund, as represented by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the MPTF Office for a particular Fund.

PROJECT EXPENDITURE

The sum of expenses and/or expenditure reported by all Recipient Organizations for a Fund irrespective of which basis of accounting each Recipient Organization follows for donor reporting.

PROJECT FINANCIAL CLOSURE

A project or programme is considered financially closed when all financial obligations of an operationally completed project or programme have been settled, and no further financial charges may be incurred. MPTF Office will report a project financially closed once the financial report(s) has been received and any balance of funds refunded.

PROJECT OPERATIONAL CLOSURE

A project or programme is deemed operationally closed once all activities funded for Recipient Organization(s) have been concluded, and the Steering Committee has approved the final narrative report.

PROJECT START DATE

Project/ Joint programme start date as per the programmatic document.

US DOLLAR AMOUNT

The financial data in the report is recorded in US Dollars.

TRANSFERRED FUNDS

Funds transferred to Recipient Organizations by the Administrative Agent in accordance with the Steering Committee's request.

1. SOURCES AND USES OF FUNDS

As of 31 December 2023, 3 contributors deposited US\$ 529,868,747 and US\$ 2,466,600 was earned in interest.

The cumulative source of funds was US\$ 532,335,346.

Of this amount, US\$ 523,727,874 has been net funded to 11 Recipient Organizations, of which US\$ 499,717,297 has been reported as expenditure. The Administrative Agent fee has been charged at the approved rate of 1% on deposits and amounts to US\$ 735. Table 1 provides an overview of the overall sources, uses, and balance of the **Spotlight Initiative Fund** as of 31 December 2023.

Table 1
Financial Overview, as of 31 December 2023 (in US Dollars)

	Prior Years up to 31 Dec 2022	Financial Year Jan-Dec 2023	Total
Sources of Funds			
Contributions from donors	526,918,054	2,950,693	529,868,747
Sub-total Contributions	526,918,054	2,950,693	529,868,747
Fund Interest and Investment Income Earned	2,325,999	140,601	2,466,600
Total: Sources of Funds	529,244,052	3,091,294	532,335,346
Use of Funds			
Transfers to Recipient Organizations	482,302,326	18,783,217	501,085,543
Transfers to Recipient Organizations for Direct Cost - Fund Secretariat etc	20,652,585	4,468,031	25,120,616
Sub-Total Transfers	502,954,911	23,251,248	526,206,159
Refunds received from Recipient Organizations	(2,477,109)	(1,177)	(2,478,285)
Sub-Total Refunds	(2,477,109)	(1,177)	(2,478,285)
Administrative Agent Fees	735	-	735
Bank Charges	4,793	165	4,958
Other Expenditures	5,186,067	-	5,186,067
Total: Uses of Funds	505,669,398	23,250,236	528,919,634
Change in Fund cash balance with Administrative Agent	23,574,655	(20,158,943)	3,415,712
Opening Fund balance (1 January)	77,656,103	23,574,655	-
Closing Fund balance (31 December)	23,574,655	3,415,712	3,415,712
Net Funded Amount (Includes Direct Cost)	500,477,803	23,250,071	523,727,874
Recipient Organizations Expenditure (Includes Direct Cost)	386,680,418	113,036,880	499,717,297
Balance of Funds with Recipient Organizations	113,797,385	(89,786,808)	24,010,577

2. PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS

Table 2 provides information on cumulative contributions received from all contributors to this fund as of 31 December **2023**.

The **Spotlight Initiative Fund** is currently being financed by **3** contributors, as listed in the table below.

The table includes financial commitments made by the contributors through signed Standard Administrative Agreements with an anticipated deposit date as per the schedule of payments by 31 December 2023 and deposits received by the same date. It does not include commitments that were made to the fund beyond 2023.

Table 2
Contributions, as of 31 December 2023 (in US Dollars)

Contributors	Total Commitments	Total Deposits
European Union	530,489,225	529,795,272
Government of Albania	5,000	5,000
Government of Portugal	68,474	68,474
Grand Total	530,562,700	529,868,747

3. **INTEREST EARNED**

Interest income is earned in two ways:
1) on the balance of funds held by the Administrative Agent (Fund earned interest), and 2) on the balance of funds held by the Recipient Organizations (Agency earned interest) where their Financial Regulations and Rules allow return of interest to the AA.

As of 31 December **2023**, Fund earned interest amounts to US\$ **2,466,600**.

Interest received from Recipient Organizations amounts to US\$ **nil**, bringing the cumulative interest received to US\$ **2,466,600**.

Details are provided in the table below.

Table 3
Sources of Interest and Investment Income, as of 31 December 2023 (in US Dollars)

Interest Earned	Prior Years up to 31-Dec-2022	Financial Year Jan-Dec-2023	Total
Administrative Agent			
Fund Interest and Investment Income Earned	2,325,999	140,601	2,466,600
Total: Fund Interest Earned	2,325,999	140,601	2,466,600
Recipient Organization			
Total: Agency Interest Earned	-	-	-
Grand Total	2,325,999	140,601	2,466,600

4. TRANSFER OF FUNDS

Allocations to Recipient Organizations are approved by the Steering Committee and disbursed by the Administrative Agent. As of 31 December **2023**, the

AA has transferred US\$ **526,206,159** to **11** Recipient Organizations (see list below).

Table 4 provides additional information on the refunds received by the MPTF Office, and the net funded amount for each of the Recipient Organizations.

Table 4
Transfer, Refund, and Net Funded Amount by Recipient Organization (in US Dollars)

Recipient Organization	Prior Years up to 31-Dec-2022			Financial Year Jan-Dec-2023			Total		
	Transfers	Refunds	Net Funded	Transfers	Refunds	Net Funded	Transfers	Refunds	Net Funded
ILO	19,210,228	-	19,210,228	-	-	-	19,210,228	-	19,210,228
IOM	635,127	-	635,127	-	(1,177)	(1,177)	635,127	(1,177)	633,950
OHCHR	2,006,853	-	2,006,853	-	-	-	2,006,853	-	2,006,853
PAHO/WHO	1,014,862	-	1,014,862	159,519	-	159,519	1,174,381	-	1,174,381
UNDP	99,400,694	(785,772)	98,614,923	4,173,667	-	4,173,667	103,574,361	(785,772)	102,788,590
UNESCO	4,659,027	(153,666)	4,505,361	207,770	-	207,770	4,866,797	(153,666)	4,713,131
UNFPA	107,120,735	(465,363)	106,655,372	6,154,973	-	6,154,973	113,275,708	(465,363)	112,810,345
UNHCR	3,686,132	-	3,686,132	-	-	-	3,686,132	-	3,686,132
UNICEF	81,300,241	(162,171)	81,138,070	5,084,813	-	5,084,813	86,385,054	(162,171)	86,222,883
UNODC	1,811,818	-	1,811,818	-	-	-	1,811,818	-	1,811,818
UNWOMEN	182,109,194	(910,137)	181,199,057	7,470,506	-	7,470,506	189,579,700	(910,137)	188,669,563
Grand Total	502,954,911	(2,477,109)	500,477,803	23,251,248	(1,177)	23,250,071	526,206,159	(2,478,285)	523,727,874

5. EXPENDITURE AND FINANCIAL DELIVERY RATES

All final expenditures reported are submitted as certified financial information by the Headquarters of the Recipient Organizations. These were consolidated by the MPTF Office.

Joint programme/ project expenditures are incurred and monitored by each Recipient Organization, and are reported to the Administrative Agent as per the agreed upon categories for inter-agency harmonized reporting. The expenditures are reported via the MPTF Office's online expenditure reporting tool. The **2023** expenditure data has been posted on the MPTF Office GATEWAY at <https://mptf.undp.org/fund/sif00>.

5.1 Expenditure Reported by Recipient Organization

In **2023**, US\$ **23,250,071** was net funded to Recipient Organizations, and US\$ **113,036,880** was reported in expenditure.

As shown in table below, the cumulative net funded amount is US\$ **523,727,874** and cumulative expenditures reported by the Recipient Organizations amount to US\$ **499,717,297**. This equates to an overall Fund expenditure delivery rate of **95.42** percent.

Table 5.1
Net Funded Amount and Reported Expenditures by Recipient Organization, as of 31 December 2023 (in US Dollars)

Recipient Organization	Approved Amount	Net Funded Amount	Expenditure			Delivery Rate %
			Prior Years up to 31-Dec-2022	Financial Year Jan-Dec-2023	Cumulative	
ILO	19,210,229	19,210,228	12,963,106	6,039,093	19,002,198	98.92
IOM	635,127	633,950	480,846	135,229	616,075	97.18
OHCHR	2,006,853	2,006,853	1,635,297	250,034	1,885,330	93.94
PAHO/WHO	1,174,381	1,174,381	684,958	468,714	1,153,672	98.24
UNDP	105,490,983	102,788,590	76,361,645	20,547,050	96,908,696	94.28
UNESCO	5,325,853	4,713,131	3,639,684	645,588	4,285,272	90.92
UNFPA	117,073,483	112,810,345	86,929,569	25,129,812	112,059,381	99.33
UNHCR	3,686,132	3,686,132	3,595,499	90,633	3,686,132	100.00
UNICEF	87,802,457	86,222,883	63,482,364	18,158,952	81,641,316	94.69
UNODC	1,811,818	1,811,818	1,321,868	469,762	1,791,630	98.89
UNWOMEN	197,804,822	188,669,563	135,585,582	41,102,013	176,687,596	93.65
Grand Total	542,022,137	523,727,874	386,680,418	113,036,880	499,717,297	95.42

*The expenditures reported represent payments made against obligations made by PUNOs prior to the operational closure of projects.

5.2. Expenditures Reported by Category

Project expenditures are incurred and monitored by each Recipient Organization and are reported as per the agreed categories for inter-

agency harmonized reporting. In 2006 the UN Development Group (UNDG) established six categories against which UN entities must report inter-agency project expenditures. Effective 1 January 2012, the UN Chief Executives Board (CEB) modified these categories as a result of IPSAS adoption to comprise eight categories.

Table 5.2.
Expenditure by UNSDG Budget Category, as of 31 December 2023 (in US Dollars)

Category	Expenditures			Percentage of Total Programme Cost
	Prior Years up to 31-Dec-2022	Financial Year Jan-Dec-2023	Total	
Staff & Personnel Cost	52,574,603	13,896,987	66,471,591	14.23
Supplies, commodities and materials	9,397,282	3,258,948	12,656,229	2.71
Equipment, vehicles, furniture and depreciation	8,431,568	1,364,574	9,796,142	2.10
Contractual Services Expenses	83,102,618	31,901,827	115,004,445	24.62
Travel	13,294,775	6,921,271	20,216,046	4.33
Transfers and Grants	155,672,161	34,343,113	190,015,273	40.68
General Operating	38,921,778	13,985,704	52,907,482	11.33
Programme Costs Total	361,394,784	105,672,424	467,067,208	100.00
¹⁶⁰ Indirect Support Costs Total	25,285,634	7,364,455	32,650,090	6.99
Grand Total	386,680,418	113,036,880	499,717,297	-

¹⁶⁰ **Indirect Support Costs** charged by Recipient Organization, based on their financial regulations, can be deducted upfront or at a later stage during implementation. The percentage may therefore appear to exceed the 7% agreed-upon for on-going projects. Once projects are financially closed, this number is not to exceed 7%.

6. COST RECOVERY

Cost recovery policies for the Fund are guided by the applicable provisions of the Terms of Reference, the MOU concluded between the Administrative Agent and Recipient Organizations, and the SAAs concluded between the Administrative Agent and Contributors, based on rates approved by UNDG.

The policies in place, as of 31 December 2023, were as follows:

- **The Administrative Agent (AA) fee:** 1% is charged at the time of contributor deposit and covers services provided on that contribution for the entire duration of the Fund. Cumulatively, as of 31 December 2023, US\$ **735** has been charged in AA-fees.
- **Indirect Costs of Recipient Organizations:** A general cost that cannot be directly related to any particular programme or activity of the Recipient Organizations. Recipient Organizations may charge 7% indirect costs based on UNSDG policy, establishing an indirect cost rate as a percentage of the programmable costs for interagency pass-through pool funds. In the current reporting period US\$ **7,364,455** was deducted in indirect costs by Recipient Organizations. Cumulatively, indirect costs amount to US\$ **32,650,090** as of 31 December **2023**.

7. ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

services and facilitate monitoring and reporting to the UN system and its partners, the MPTF Office has developed a public website, the MPTF Office Gateway (<https://mptf.undp.org>). Refreshed daily from an internal enterprise resource planning system, the MPTF Office Gateway has become a standard setter for providing transparent and accountable trust fund administration services.

The Gateway provides financial information including: contributor commitments and deposits, approved programme budgets, transfers to and expenditures reported by Recipient Organizations, interest income and other expenses. In addition, the Gateway provides an overview of the MPTF Office portfolio and extensive information on individual Funds, including their purpose, governance structure and key documents. By providing easy access to the growing number of narrative and financial reports, as well as related project documents, the Gateway collects and preserves important institutional knowledge and facilitates knowledge sharing and management among UN Organizations and their development partners, thereby contributing to UN coherence and development effectiveness.

8. DIRECT COSTS

The Fund governance mechanism may approve an allocation to a Recipient Organization to

cover costs associated with Fund coordination covering overall coordination, and fund level reviews and evaluations. These allocations are referred to as 'direct costs'. Cumulatively, as of 31 December 2023, US\$ 25,120,616 has been charged as Direct Costs.

Recipient Organization	Approved Amount	Net Funded Amount	Expenditure			Delivery Rate %
			Prior Years up to 31-Dec-2022	Financial Year Jan-Dec-2023	Cumulative	
UNDP	10,182,492	10,182,492	6,438,739	1,996,276	8,435,015	82.84
UNFPA	65,190	65,190	63,408	-	63,408	97.27
UNWOMEN	15,798,264	14,872,935	11,182,672	3,328,432	14,511,104	97.57
Grand Total	26,045,946	25,120,616	17,684,820	5,324,708	23,009,528	91.60

ANNEX 1.

EXPENDITURE BY PROJECT GROUPED BY THEME/OUTCOME

Annex 1 displays the net funded amounts, expenditures reported and the financial delivery rates by Theme/Outcome by project/ joint programme and Recipient Organization

Annex 1 Expenditure by Project within Theme/Outcome

Country / Project No. and Project Title	Recipient Organization	Project Status	Total Approved Amount	Net Funded Amount	Total Expenditure	Delivery Rate %	
Africa							
00111640	Malawi Spotlight Programme	UNDP	On Going	7,163,251	7,163,250	7,044,287	98.34
		UNFPA	On Going	7,409,246	7,409,246	7,337,123	99.03
		UNICEF	On Going	5,941,806	5,941,806	5,845,150	98.37
		UNWOMEN	On Going	8,057,127	8,057,127	7,926,363	98.38
00111641	Mali Spotlight Programme	UNDP	Operationally Closed	3,071,802	3,071,802	2,856,757	93.00
		UNFPA	Operationally Closed	9,419,594	9,419,594	9,432,401	100.14
		UNHCR	Operationally Closed	910,987	910,987	910,987	100.00
		UNICEF	Operationally Closed	6,549,740	6,549,740	6,525,696	99.63
		UNWOMEN	Operationally Closed	5,762,163	5,762,163	5,535,684	96.07
		UNDP	On Going	5,732,960	5,732,960	5,326,980	92.92
00111642	Mozambique Spotlight Programme	UNFPA	On Going	8,925,741	8,925,741	8,874,037	99.42
		UNICEF	On Going	5,472,843	5,472,843	5,309,968	97.02
		UNWOMEN	On Going	8,439,885	8,439,885	8,388,116	99.39
		UNDP	On Going	5,887,686	5,887,686	5,557,585	94.39
00111643	Niger Spotlight Programme	UNFPA	On Going	7,956,988	7,956,988	7,942,145	99.81
		UNICEF	On Going	6,273,991	6,273,991	5,856,209	93.34
		UNWOMEN	On Going	4,167,050	4,167,050	3,701,422	88.83
		UNDP	Operationally Closed	7,423,367	7,423,367	7,007,697	94.40
00111644	Uganda Spotlight Programme	UNFPA	Operationally Closed	6,985,342	6,985,342	6,960,625	99.65
		UNHCR	Operationally Closed	2,775,145	2,775,145	2,775,145	100.00
		UNICEF	Operationally Closed	5,182,545	5,182,545	5,178,379	99.92
		UNWOMEN	Operationally Closed	9,062,172	9,062,172	8,350,709	92.15
		UNDP	Operationally Closed	7,423,367	7,423,367	7,007,697	94.40

Country / Project No. and Project Title	Recipient Organization	Project Status	Total Approved Amount	Net Funded Amount	Total Expenditure	Delivery Rate %	
00111645	Zimbabwe Spotlight Programme	ILO	Operationally Closed	1,177,209	1,177,208	1,176,219	99.92
		UNDP	Operationally Closed	4,461,851	4,461,851	4,444,689	99.62
		UNESCO	Operationally Closed	1,147,264	1,147,264	1,091,634	95.15
		UNFPA	Operationally Closed	6,054,909	6,054,909	5,997,524	99.05
		UNICEF	Operationally Closed	9,689,353	9,689,353	9,689,353	100.00
		UNWOMEN	Operationally Closed	7,469,414	7,469,414	7,184,631	96.19
00112285	Liberia Spotlight Programme	OHCHR	On Going	1,421,804	1,421,804	1,344,230	94.54
		UNDP	On Going	4,615,415	4,615,415	4,542,693	98.42
		UNFPA	On Going	6,208,800	6,208,800	6,158,659	99.19
		UNICEF	On Going	2,470,807	2,470,807	2,321,681	93.96
		UNWOMEN	On Going	7,917,460	7,917,460	7,825,043	98.83
00112286	Nigeria Spotlight Programme*	UNDP	On Going	9,799,911	8,862,687	8,799,332	99.29
		UNESCO	On Going	2,879,340	2,608,098	2,321,882	89.03
		UNFPA	On Going	9,958,587	9,020,459	9,031,004	100.12
		UNICEF	On Going	5,518,152	4,998,326	4,942,868	98.89
		UNWOMEN	On Going	11,272,582	10,224,716	9,936,111	97.18
00117245	SPOTLIGHT GRANTS UNTFEVAW - AF	UNWOMEN	On Going	20,636,792	20,636,792	19,194,038	93.01
00117247	SPOTLIGHT GRANTS WPHF	UNWOMEN	On Going	7,075,472	7,075,472	6,726,676	95.07
00119124	Africa Regional Programme	UNDP	On Going	2,134,479	2,134,479	2,113,426	99.01
		UNFPA	On Going	10,625,993	9,693,600	9,567,013	98.69
		UNICEF	On Going	9,404,872	8,705,504	7,659,984	87.99
		UNWOMEN	On Going	3,454,656	3,454,656	3,267,052	94.57
Africa: Total			283,966,553	278,620,503	269,979,210	96.90	
Asia							
00108309	Safe and Fair: Realizing women	ILO	On Going	16,334,125	16,334,125	16,130,340	98.75
		UNWOMEN	On Going	13,036,461	13,036,461	12,640,955	96.97
00119460	Afghanistan Spotlight Programm	UNDP	On Going	1,268,797	1,124,718	1,066,424	94.82
		UNFPA	On Going	4,804,967	3,441,490	3,350,764	97.36
		UNICEF	On Going	3,084,040	3,084,040	2,817,144	91.35
		UNWOMEN	On Going	7,342,196	2,202,659	1,947,108	88.40
00119461	Kyrgyzstan Spotlight Programme	UNDP	On Going	1,798,288	1,798,288	1,774,220	98.66
		UNFPA	On Going	1,271,898	1,271,898	1,266,824	99.60
		UNICEF	On Going	1,484,219	1,484,219	1,484,219	100.00
		UNODC	On Going	391,555	391,555	387,891	99.06
00119462	Tajikistan Spotlight Programme	UNWOMEN	On Going	1,768,326	1,768,326	1,746,963	98.79
		UNDP	On Going	1,881,924	1,881,924	1,756,372	93.33
		UNFPA	On Going	1,723,528	1,723,528	1,687,480	97.91
		UNICEF	On Going	1,588,453	1,588,453	1,431,819	90.14
		UNWOMEN	On Going	1,806,095	1,806,095	1,720,420	95.26

Country / Project No. and Project Title		Recipient Organization	Project Status	Total Approved Amount	Net Funded Amount	Total Expenditure	Delivery Rate %
00119463	Asia Spotlight Regional Progra	UNDP	On Going	1,400,351	1,400,351	1,390,181	99.27
		UNFPA	On Going	1,001,569	1,001,569	998,897	99.73
		UNWOMEN	On Going	2,907,378	2,907,378	2,720,327	93.57
00123503	SPOTLIGHT WPHF AFGHANISTAN	UNWOMEN	On Going	2,000,000	2,000,000	1,828,489	91.42
Asia: Total				66,894,171	60,247,078	58,146,837	96.51
Caribbean							
00119130	Belize Spotlight Programme*	UNDP	On Going	1,208,815	1,208,815	1,199,067	99.19
		UNFPA	On Going	883,725	888,725	887,768	99.89
		UNICEF	On Going	1,378,067	1,378,067	1,317,107	95.58
		UNWOMEN	On Going	60,107	60,107	-	-
00119131	Grenada Spotlight Programme	PAHO/WHO	On Going	531,729	531,729	530,233	99.72
		UNDP	On Going	519,318	519,318	498,471	95.99
		UNICEF	On Going	294,970	294,970	287,655	97.52
		UNWOMEN	On Going	1,011,126	1,011,126	868,966	85.94
00119132	Guyana Spotlight Programme	UNDP	On Going	1,013,603	1,013,603	842,982	83.17
		UNFPA	On Going	1,748,030	1,748,030	1,704,753	97.52
		UNICEF	On Going	1,271,265	1,271,265	1,259,343	99.06
		UNWOMEN	On Going	1,252,816	1,252,816	893,355	71.31
00119133	Haiti Spotlight Programme	UNDP	On Going	4,289,009	4,289,009	3,391,159	79.07
		UNFPA	On Going	2,792,554	2,792,554	2,817,576	100.90
		UNICEF	On Going	2,601,974	2,601,974	2,143,578	82.38
		UNWOMEN	On Going	4,459,320	4,459,320	4,099,384	91.93
00119134	Jamaica Spotlight Programme	UNDP	On Going	2,264,773	2,264,773	2,253,853	99.52
		UNFPA	On Going	2,244,654	2,244,654	2,227,981	99.26
		UNICEF	On Going	2,351,198	2,351,198	2,164,605	92.06
		UNWOMEN	On Going	2,567,946	2,567,946	2,008,442	78.21
00119135	Trinidad and Tobago Spotlight	PAHO/WHO	On Going	642,652	642,652	623,439	97.01
		UNDP	On Going	1,498,219	1,498,219	1,457,966	97.31
		UNFPA	On Going	1,257,673	1,257,673	1,255,365	99.82
		UNICEF	On Going	623,580	623,580	582,001	93.33
		UNWOMEN	On Going	1,263,590	1,263,590	1,090,569	86.31
00119464	Caribbean Spotlight Regional P	UNDP	On Going	2,086,061	2,086,061	2,083,475	99.88
		UNFPA	On Going	1,945,491	1,945,491	1,945,606	100.01
		UNICEF	On Going	2,330,308	2,330,308	2,238,910	96.08
		UNWOMEN	On Going	5,409,688	5,409,688	4,786,538	88.48
00123504	SPOTLIGHT WPHF HAITI	UNWOMEN	On Going	2,000,000	2,000,000	1,990,215	99.51
Caribbean: Total				53,802,261	53,807,261	49,450,363	91.90
Direct Cost Budget							
00108307	Spotlight Secretariat	UNDP	On Going	10,182,492	10,182,492	8,435,015	82.84
		UNFPA	On Going	65,190	65,190	63,408	97.27
		UNWOMEN	On Going	14,870,427	13,945,098	13,838,251	99.23
00128649	Global Platform - Spotlight In	UNWOMEN	On Going	927,837	927,837	672,854	72.52
Direct Cost Budget: Total				26,045,946	25,120,616	23,009,528	91.60

Country / Project No. and Project Title	Recipient Organization	Project Status	Total Approved Amount	Net Funded Amount	Total Expenditure	Delivery Rate %	
Latin America							
0011637	Argentina Spotlight Programme	ILO	On Going	744,820	744,820	741,564	99.56
		UNDP	On Going	2,434,295	2,434,295	2,338,969	96.08
		UNFPA	On Going	2,103,700	2,103,700	2,112,010	100.40
		UNICEF	On Going	202,230	202,230	202,230	100.00
		UNODC	On Going	64,200	64,200	47,281	73.65
		UNWOMEN	On Going	2,165,041	2,165,041	2,118,413	97.85
0011638	Guatemala Spotlight Programme	UNDP	Operationally Closed	1,641,475	20,387	20,390	100.02
		UNESCO	Operationally Closed	341,480	-	-	-
		UNFPA	Operationally Closed	1,034,140	-	-	-
		UNICEF	Operationally Closed	360,380	-	-	-
		UNWOMEN	Operationally Closed	2,022,526	-	-	-
0011639	Mexico Spotlight Programme	OHCHR	On Going	585,049	585,049	541,100	92.49
		UNDP	On Going	1,343,644	1,343,644	1,338,870	99.64
		UNFPA	On Going	2,151,406	2,151,406	2,150,595	99.96
		UNICEF	On Going	717,027	717,027	709,544	98.96
		UNODC	On Going	1,356,063	1,356,063	1,356,457	100.03
		UNWOMEN	On Going	2,846,811	2,846,811	2,811,017	98.74
0011283	El Salvador Spotlight Programm	UNDP	Operationally Closed	3,043,965	3,043,965	3,038,181	99.81
		UNFPA	Operationally Closed	2,315,828	2,315,828	2,314,065	99.92
		UNICEF	Operationally Closed	2,286,059	2,286,059	2,286,059	100.00
		UNWOMEN	Operationally Closed	2,639,861	2,639,861	2,569,554	97.34
0011284	Honduras Spotlight Programme	UNDP	On Going	2,936,255	2,936,255	2,895,970	98.63
		UNFPA	On Going	2,062,007	2,062,007	2,054,061	99.61
		UNICEF	On Going	1,625,381	1,625,381	1,621,868	99.78
		UNWOMEN	On Going	3,662,071	3,662,071	3,650,870	99.69
00116744	Latin America Regional Program	UNDP	Operationally Closed	1,501,795	1,501,795	1,501,598	99.99
		UNFPA	Operationally Closed	1,501,795	1,501,795	1,475,419	98.24
		UNWOMEN	Operationally Closed	1,996,410	1,996,410	1,996,117	99.99
00117246	SPOTLIGHT GRANTS UNTFEVAW - LA	UNWOMEN	On Going	5,660,378	5,660,378	5,413,341	95.64
00125139	Ecuador Spotlight Programme	UNDP	Operationally Closed	698,079	698,079	696,130	99.72
		UNFPA	Operationally Closed	698,079	698,079	697,238	99.88
		UNWOMEN	Operationally Closed	1,503,842	1,503,842	1,445,842	96.14
Latin America: Total				56,246,092	50,866,478	50,144,751	98.58

Country / Project No. and Project Title		Recipient Organization	Project Status	Total Approved Amount	Net Funded Amount	Total Expenditure	Delivery Rate %
Pacific							
00119125	Papua New Guinea Spotlight Pro	UNDP	On Going	5,417,820	5,417,820	4,732,417	87.35
		UNFPA	On Going	5,558,854	5,558,854	5,395,143	97.05
		UNICEF	On Going	4,444,079	4,444,079	3,810,971	85.75
		UNWOMEN	On Going	6,979,247	6,979,247	5,794,145	83.02
00119126	Samoa Spotlight Programme	UNDP	On Going	1,321,631	1,321,631	1,318,657	99.78
		UNESCO	On Going	957,769	957,769	871,755	91.02
		UNFPA	On Going	773,441	773,441	762,848	98.63
		UNICEF	On Going	451,005	451,005	265,296	58.82
		UNWOMEN	On Going	639,011	639,011	630,451	98.66
00119127	Timor-Leste Spotlight Programm	ILO	On Going	954,075	954,075	954,075	100.00
		UNDP	On Going	3,509,421	3,509,421	3,436,543	97.92
		UNFPA	On Going	2,303,059	2,303,059	2,310,860	100.34
		UNICEF	On Going	2,522,233	2,522,233	2,318,186	91.91
		UNWOMEN	On Going	4,854,069	4,854,069	4,710,180	97.04
00119128	Vanuatu Spotlight Programme	IOM	On Going	444,556	444,556	426,680	95.98
		UNDP	On Going	908,467	908,467	852,848	93.88
		UNFPA	On Going	1,419,594	1,419,594	1,412,510	99.50
		UNICEF	On Going	702,990	702,990	450,896	64.14
		UNWOMEN	On Going	60,107	60,107	-	-
00119129	Pacific Regional Programme	IOM	On Going	190,571	189,394	189,394	100.00
		UNDP	On Going	1,031,764	1,031,764	895,492	86.79
		UNFPA	On Going	1,867,101	1,867,101	1,867,677	100.03
		UNICEF	On Going	978,890	978,890	920,594	94.04
		UNWOMEN	On Going	4,777,361	4,777,361	3,712,202	77.70
00123505	SPOTLIGHT WPHF PNG	UNWOMEN	On Going	2,000,000	2,000,000	946,785	47.34
Pacific: Total				55,067,115	55,065,938	48,986,608	88.96
Grand Total				542,022,137	523,727,874	499,717,297	95.42

* The ERP system Quantum transition has resulted in some budgets not being fully reported. This will be corrected in future reporting periods.

ANNEX 2.

EXPENDITURE BY PROJECT GROUPED BY COUNTRY

Annex 2 displays the net funded amounts, expenditures reported and the financial delivery rates by Country by project/ joint programme and Recipient Organization

Annex 2 Expenditure by Project, grouped by Country

Country / Project No. and Project Title	Recipient Organization	Total Approved Amount	Net Funded Amount	Total Expenditure	Delivery Rate %
Afghanistan					
00119460 Afghanistan Spotlight Programm	UNDP	1,268,797	1,124,718	1,066,424	94.82
	UNFPA	4,804,967	3,441,490	3,350,764	97.36
	UNICEF	3,084,040	3,084,040	2,817,144	91.35
	UNWOMEN	7,342,196	2,202,659	1,947,108	88.40
Afghanistan: Total		16,500,000	9,852,907	9,181,440	93.19
Argentina					
00111637 Argentina Spotlight Programme	ILO	744,820	744,820	741,564	99.56
	UNDP	2,434,295	2,434,295	2,338,969	96.08
	UNFPA	2,103,700	2,103,700	2,112,010	100.40
	UNICEF	202,230	202,230	202,230	100.00
	UNODC	64,200	64,200	47,281	73.65
	UNWOMEN	2,165,041	2,165,041	2,118,413	97.85
Argentina: Total		7,714,286	7,714,286	7,560,467	98.01
Belize					
00119130 Belize Spotlight Programme*	UNDP	1,208,815	1,208,815	1,199,067	99.19
	UNFPA	883,725	888,725	887,768	99.89
	UNICEF	1,378,067	1,378,067	1,317,107	95.58
	UNWOMEN	60,107	60,107	-	-
Belize: Total		3,530,714	3,535,714	3,403,942	96.27
Ecuador					
00125139 Ecuador Spotlight Programme	UNDP	698,079	698,079	696,130	99.72
	UNFPA	698,079	698,079	697,238	99.88
	UNWOMEN	1,503,842	1,503,842	1,445,842	96.14
Ecuador: Total		2,900,000	2,900,000	2,839,209	97.90
El Salvador					
00112283 El Salvador Spotlight Programm	UNDP	3,043,965	3,043,965	3,038,181	99.81
	UNFPA	2,315,828	2,315,828	2,314,065	99.92
	UNICEF	2,286,059	2,286,059	2,286,059	100.00
	UNWOMEN	2,639,861	2,639,861	2,569,554	97.34
El Salvador: Total		10,285,713	10,285,713	10,207,859	99.24

Country / Project No. and Project Title		Recipient Organization	Total Approved Amount	Net Funded Amount	Total Expenditure	Delivery Rate %
Global and Interregional						
00108307	Spotlight Secretariat	UNDP	10,182,492	10,182,492	8,435,015	82.84
		UNFPA	65,190	65,190	63,408	97.27
		UNWOMEN	14,870,427	13,945,098	13,838,251	99.23
00108309	Safe and Fair: Realizing women	ILO	16,334,125	16,334,125	16,130,340	98.75
		UNWOMEN	13,036,461	13,036,461	12,640,955	96.97
00116744	Latin America Regional Program	UNDP	1,501,795	1,501,795	1,501,598	99.99
		UNFPA	1,501,795	1,501,795	1,475,419	98.24
		UNWOMEN	1,996,410	1,996,410	1,996,117	99.99
00117245	SPOTLIGHT GRANTS UNTFEVAW - AF	UNWOMEN	20,636,792	20,636,792	19,194,038	93.01
00117246	SPOTLIGHT GRANTS UNTFEVAW - LA	UNWOMEN	5,660,378	5,660,378	5,413,341	95.64
00117247	SPOTLIGHT GRANTS WPHF	UNWOMEN	7,075,472	7,075,472	6,726,676	95.07
00119124	Africa Regional Programme	UNDP	2,134,479	2,134,479	2,113,426	99.01
		UNFPA	10,625,993	9,693,600	9,567,013	98.69
		UNICEF	9,404,872	8,705,504	7,659,984	87.99
		UNWOMEN	3,454,656	3,454,656	3,267,052	94.57
00119129	Pacific Regional Programme	IOM	190,571	189,394	189,394	100.00
		UNDP	1,031,764	1,031,764	895,492	86.79
		UNFPA	1,867,101	1,867,101	1,867,677	100.03
		UNICEF	978,890	978,890	920,594	94.04
		UNWOMEN	4,777,361	4,777,361	3,712,202	77.70
00119463	Asia Spotlight Regional Progra	UNDP	1,400,351	1,400,351	1,390,181	99.27
		UNFPA	1,001,569	1,001,569	998,897	99.73
		UNWOMEN	2,907,378	2,907,378	2,720,327	93.57
00119464	Caribbean Spotlight Regional P	UNDP	2,086,061	2,086,061	2,083,475	99.88
		UNFPA	1,945,491	1,945,491	1,945,606	100.01
		UNICEF	2,330,308	2,330,308	2,238,910	96.08
		UNWOMEN	5,409,688	5,409,688	4,786,538	88.48
00123503	SPOTLIGHT WPHF AFGHANISTAN	UNWOMEN	2,000,000	2,000,000	1,828,489	91.42
00123504	SPOTLIGHT WPHF HAITI	UNWOMEN	2,000,000	2,000,000	1,990,215	99.51
00123505	SPOTLIGHT WPHF PNG	UNWOMEN	2,000,000	2,000,000	946,785	47.34
00128649	Global Platform - Spotlight In	UNWOMEN	927,837	927,837	672,854	72.52
Global and Interregional: Total			151,335,708	148,777,440	139,210,268	93.57
Grenada						
00119131	Grenada Spotlight Programme	PAHO/WHO	531,729	531,729	530,233	99.72
		UNDP	519,318	519,318	498,471	95.99
		UNICEF	294,970	294,970	287,655	97.52
		UNWOMEN	1,011,126	1,011,126	868,966	85.94
Grenada: Total			2,357,143	2,357,143	2,185,325	92.71

Country / Project No. and Project Title	Recipient Organization	Total Approved Amount	Net Funded Amount	Total Expenditure	Delivery Rate %
Guatemala					
00111638 Guatemala Spotlight Programme	UNDP	1,641,475	20,387	20,390	100.02
	UNESCO	341,480	-	-	-
	UNFPA	1,034,140	-	-	-
	UNICEF	360,380	-	-	-
	UNWOMEN	2,022,526	-	-	-
Guatemala: Total		5,400,001	20,387	20,390	100.02
Guyana					
00119132 Guyana Spotlight Programme	UNDP	1,013,603	1,013,603	842,982	83.17
	UNFPA	1,748,030	1,748,030	1,704,753	97.52
	UNICEF	1,271,265	1,271,265	1,259,343	99.06
	UNWOMEN	1,252,816	1,252,816	893,355	71.31
Guyana: Total		5,285,714	5,285,714	4,700,434	88.93
Haiti					
00119133 Haiti Spotlight Programme	UNDP	4,289,009	4,289,009	3,391,159	79.07
	UNFPA	2,792,554	2,792,554	2,817,576	100.90
	UNICEF	2,601,974	2,601,974	2,143,578	82.38
	UNWOMEN	4,459,320	4,459,320	4,099,384	91.93
Haiti: Total		14,142,857	14,142,857	12,451,696	88.04
Honduras					
00112284 Honduras Spotlight Programme	UNDP	2,936,255	2,936,255	2,895,970	98.63
	UNFPA	2,062,007	2,062,007	2,054,061	99.61
	UNICEF	1,625,381	1,625,381	1,621,868	99.78
	UNWOMEN	3,662,071	3,662,071	3,650,870	99.69
Honduras: Total		10,285,714	10,285,714	10,222,768	99.39
Jamaica					
00119134 Jamaica Spotlight Programme	UNDP	2,264,773	2,264,773	2,253,853	99.52
	UNFPA	2,244,654	2,244,654	2,227,981	99.26
	UNICEF	2,351,198	2,351,198	2,164,605	92.06
	UNWOMEN	2,567,946	2,567,946	2,008,442	78.21
Jamaica: Total		9,428,571	9,428,571	8,654,882	91.79
Kyrgyzstan					
00119461 Kyrgyzstan Spotlight Programme	UNDP	1,798,288	1,798,288	1,774,220	98.66
	UNFPA	1,271,898	1,271,898	1,266,824	99.60
	UNICEF	1,484,219	1,484,219	1,484,219	100.00
	UNODC	391,555	391,555	387,891	99.06
	UNWOMEN	1,768,326	1,768,326	1,746,963	98.79
Kyrgyzstan: Total		6,714,286	6,714,286	6,660,117	99.19

Country / Project No. and Project Title	Recipient Organization	Total Approved Amount	Net Funded Amount	Total Expenditure	Delivery Rate %
Liberia					
00112285 Liberia Spotlight Programme	OHCHR	1,421,804	1,421,804	1,344,230	94.54
	UNDP	4,615,415	4,615,415	4,542,693	98.42
	UNFPA	6,208,800	6,208,800	6,158,659	99.19
	UNICEF	2,470,807	2,470,807	2,321,681	93.96
	UNWOMEN	7,917,460	7,917,460	7,825,043	98.83
Liberia: Total		22,634,286	22,634,286	22,192,306	98.05
Malawi					
00111640 Malawi Spotlight Programme	UNDP	7,163,251	7,163,250	7,044,287	98.34
	UNFPA	7,409,246	7,409,246	7,337,123	99.03
	UNICEF	5,941,806	5,941,806	5,845,150	98.37
	UNWOMEN	8,057,127	8,057,127	7,926,363	98.38
Malawi: Total		28,571,430	28,571,429	28,152,923	98.54
Mali					
00111641 Mali Spotlight Programme	UNDP	3,071,802	3,071,802	2,856,757	93.00
	UNFPA	9,419,594	9,419,594	9,432,401	100.14
	UNHCR	910,987	910,987	910,987	100.00
	UNICEF	6,549,740	6,549,740	6,525,696	99.63
	UNWOMEN	5,762,163	5,762,163	5,535,684	96.07
Mali: Total		25,714,286	25,714,286	25,261,525	98.24
Mexico					
00111639 Mexico Spotlight Programme	OHCHR	585,049	585,049	541,100	92.49
	UNDP	1,343,644	1,343,644	1,338,870	99.64
	UNFPA	2,151,406	2,151,406	2,150,595	99.96
	UNICEF	717,027	717,027	709,544	98.96
	UNODC	1,356,063	1,356,063	1,356,457	100.03
	UNWOMEN	2,846,811	2,846,811	2,811,017	98.74
Mexico: Total		9,000,000	9,000,000	8,907,582	98.97
Mozambique					
00111642 Mozambique Spotlight Programme	UNDP	5,732,960	5,732,960	5,326,980	92.92
	UNFPA	8,925,741	8,925,741	8,874,037	99.42
	UNICEF	5,472,843	5,472,843	5,309,968	97.02
	UNWOMEN	8,439,885	8,439,885	8,388,116	99.39
Mozambique: Total		28,571,429	28,571,429	27,899,102	97.65
Niger (the)					
00111643 Niger Spotlight Programme	UNDP	5,887,686	5,887,686	5,557,585	94.39
	UNFPA	7,956,988	7,956,988	7,942,145	99.81
	UNICEF	6,273,991	6,273,991	5,856,209	93.34
	UNWOMEN	4,167,050	4,167,050	3,701,422	88.83
Niger (the): Total		24,285,715	24,285,715	23,057,362	94.94

Country / Project No. and Project Title	Recipient Organization	Total Approved Amount	Net Funded Amount	Total Expenditure	Delivery Rate %
Nigeria					
00112286 Nigeria Spotlight Programme*	UNDP	9,799,911	8,862,687	8,799,332	99.29
	UNESCO	2,879,340	2,608,098	2,321,882	89.03
	UNFPA	9,958,587	9,020,459	9,031,004	100.12
	UNICEF	5,518,152	4,998,326	4,942,868	98.89
	UNWOMEN	11,272,582	10,224,716	9,936,111	97.18
Nigeria: Total		39,428,572	35,714,286	35,031,198	98.09
Papua New Guinea					
00119125 Papua New Guinea Spotlight Pro	UNDP	5,417,820	5,417,820	4,732,417	87.35
	UNFPA	5,558,854	5,558,854	5,395,143	97.05
	UNICEF	4,444,079	4,444,079	3,810,971	85.75
	UNWOMEN	6,979,247	6,979,247	5,794,145	83.02
Papua New Guinea: Total		22,400,000	22,400,000	19,732,676	88.09
Samoa					
00119126 Samoa Spotlight Programme	UNDP	1,321,631	1,321,631	1,318,657	99.78
	UNESCO	957,769	957,769	871,755	91.02
	UNFPA	773,441	773,441	762,848	98.63
	UNICEF	451,005	451,005	265,296	58.82
	UNWOMEN	639,011	639,011	630,451	98.66
Samoa: Total		4,142,857	4,142,857	3,849,008	92.91
Tajikistan					
00119462 Tajikistan Spotlight Programme	UNDP	1,881,924	1,881,924	1,756,372	93.33
	UNFPA	1,723,528	1,723,528	1,687,480	97.91
	UNICEF	1,588,453	1,588,453	1,431,819	90.14
	UNWOMEN	1,806,095	1,806,095	1,720,420	95.26
Tajikistan: Total		7,000,000	7,000,000	6,596,092	94.23
Timor-Leste					
00119127 Timor-Leste Spotlight Programm	ILO	954,075	954,075	954,075	100.00
	UNDP	3,509,421	3,509,421	3,436,543	97.92
	UNFPA	2,303,059	2,303,059	2,310,860	100.34
	UNICEF	2,522,233	2,522,233	2,318,186	91.91
	UNWOMEN	4,854,069	4,854,069	4,710,180	97.04
Timor-Leste: Total		14,142,857	14,142,857	13,729,845	97.08
Trinidad and Tobago					
00119135 Trinidad and Tobago Spotlight	PAHO/WHO	642,652	642,652	623,439	97.01
	UNDP	1,498,219	1,498,219	1,457,966	97.31
	UNFPA	1,257,673	1,257,673	1,255,365	99.82
	UNICEF	623,580	623,580	582,001	93.33
	UNWOMEN	1,263,590	1,263,590	1,090,569	86.31
Trinidad and Tobago: Total		5,285,714	5,285,714	5,009,341	94.77


Country / Project No. and Project Title	Recipient Organization	Total Approved Amount	Net Funded Amount	Total Expenditure	Delivery Rate %	
Uganda						
00111644	Uganda Spotlight Programme	UNDP	7,423,367	7,423,367	7,007,697	94.40
		UNFPA	6,985,342	6,985,342	6,960,625	99.65
		UNHCR	2,775,145	2,775,145	2,775,145	100.00
		UNICEF	5,182,545	5,182,545	5,178,379	99.92
		UNWOMEN	9,062,172	9,062,172	8,350,709	92.15
Uganda: Total		31,428,571	31,428,570	30,272,556	96.32	
Vanuatu						
00119128	Vanuatu Spotlight Programme	IOM	444,556	444,556	426,680	95.98
		UNDP	908,467	908,467	852,848	93.88
		UNFPA	1,419,594	1,419,594	1,412,510	99.50
		UNICEF	702,990	702,990	450,896	64.14
		UNWOMEN	60,107	60,107	-	-
Vanuatu: Total		3,535,714	3,535,714	3,142,935	88.89	
Zimbabwe						
00111645	Zimbabwe Spotlight Programme	ILO	1,177,209	1,177,208	1,176,219	99.92
		UNDP	4,461,851	4,461,851	4,444,689	99.62
		UNESCO	1,147,264	1,147,264	1,091,634	95.15
		UNFPA	6,054,909	6,054,909	5,997,524	99.05
		UNICEF	9,689,353	9,689,353	9,689,353	100.00
		UNWOMEN	7,469,414	7,469,414	7,184,631	96.19
Zimbabwe: Total		30,000,000	29,999,999	29,584,050	98.61	
Grand Total		542,022,137	523,727,874	499,717,297	95.42	

* The ERP system Quantum transition has resulted in some budgets not being fully reported. This will be corrected in future reporting periods.

UN RECIPIENT ORGANIZATIONS

 <p>International Labour Organization (ILO)</p>	 <p>The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)</p>
 <p>International Organization for Migration (IOM)</p>	 <p>The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)</p>
 <p>The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)</p>	 <p>The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)</p>
 <p>Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)</p>	 <p>The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)</p>
 <p>The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)</p>	 <p>The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)</p>
 <p>The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)</p>	

CONTRIBUTORS

 <p>ALBANIA</p>	 <p>EUROPEAN UNION</p>
 <p>PORTUGAL</p>	

ANNEXES

Annex A: Global Results Framework Cumulative

Annex B: Summaries of the Programme Final Reports

Annex C: Methodology for Civil Society Funding Analysis

Annex D: Asset List



Spotlight Initiative

