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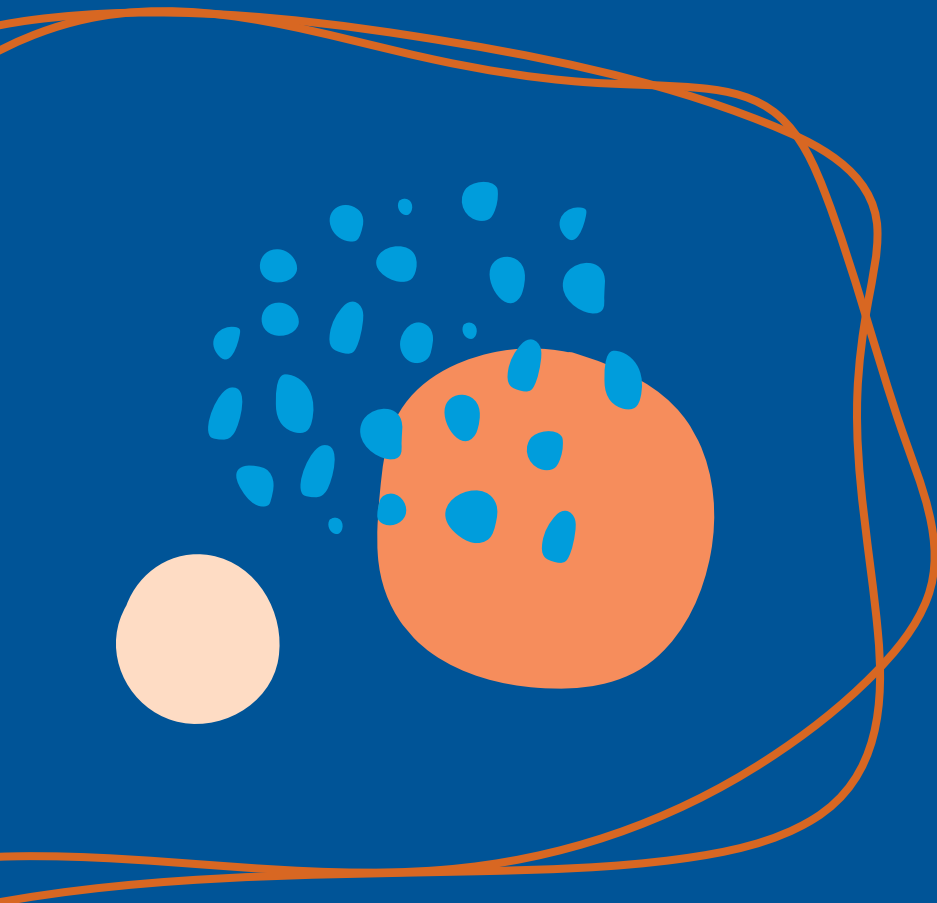
A Synthesis Review of the UN Trust Fund's Special Window on ending Violence against Women & Girls who are Refugees and/or forcibly displaced

Cover photo description and credit: Group protest rallies. Credit: Badabon Sangho.

Cover title description and credit: Quote from a representative of one of the participating partner organizations in the focus group discussion.

About the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women

The United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) is the only global grant-making mechanism dedicated to eradicating all forms of violence against women and girls. Managed by UN Women on behalf of the United Nations system since its establishment in 1996 by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 50/166, the UN Trust Fund has awarded $215 million to 646 initiatives in 140 countries and territories. In 2022, the UN Trust Fund managed a grants portfolio of 186 projects aimed at preventing and addressing violence against women and girls in 70 countries and territories across five regions, with grants totalling $87 million. Grant recipients are primarily civil society organizations (CSOs). Since 2018 (cycle 20), the UN Trust Fund has been funding only CSO projects. In 2022, the majority (62 per cent) of these CSOs were women's rights organizations.

About the Special Window on Ending Violence against Women & Girls who are Refugees and/or Forcibly Displaced

In 2016, the UN Trust Fund launched a special window of grant-making focused on providing funding to organizations specifically addressing the issue of VAWG experienced by refugees with an eye on the Syrian refugee crisis; the world's largest ongoing refugee and displacement crisis since the conflict began in 2011. This special window was designed to enhance protection efforts during the transit process and to increase the provision of basic information and adequate basic services targeting the needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls in transit and host countries. This special funding window originally prioritized proposals from the following countries: Egypt, the Republic of North Macedonia, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Serbia, and Turkey. Succeeding calls under this window welcomed a wider pool of grants to address the growing challenge and inadequate response to the needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. Organizations working on refugee crisis related issues in other official development assistance (ODA) recipient countries were encouraged to apply through subsequent calls as part of this special funding window, which was maintained for four funding cycles until 2019. To date, the UN Trust Fund has supported 18 civil society-led projects through this special window for a combined total of USD 8.5 million across 13 countries.

Group protest rallies.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Women and girls who are refugees and/or forcibly displaced are at increased risk of marginalization and violence. This comes amidst a recent unprecedented level of global forced displacement. Yet, security risks and threats faced by refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls remain mostly invisible and minimized (VOICE and HIAS 2022). Moreover, despite the extent of violence against women and girls (VAWG) prevention programming in humanitarian settings, such efforts are often short-term with limited budget, or not part of holistic efforts to address the underlying causes of VAWG (Murphy et al. 2022). There is also a particular gap in evidence around what works to prevent violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls.

This synthesis review offers an important contribution to this gap by taking a qualitative, grounded approach, to identify practice-based knowledge (PBK) and lessons learned to prevent violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. It summarizes key insights from 13 civil society organizations (CSOs) and women's rights organizations (WROs) which were funded by the UN Trust Fund's special window on ending violence against women and girls who are refugees and/or forcibly displaced between 2016-2022. These grantees were situated across a range of settings (humanitarian and crisis, to transit or host country settings), and aimed to both prevent and respond to diverse forms of VAWG. In this way, the review contributes to the wider end violence against women and girls (EVAWG) sector, to inform programming that meets the specific needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls.

Methodology

The synthesis review followed approaches and methods associated with qualitative meta-synthesis, while prioritizing the documentation of PBK. It engaged with project-specific monitoring reports, and the available endline external evaluations from 13 projects funded under this special window. Three focus group discussions and three interviews were also conducted with representatives of the 13 grantees included in this review.

School communication session.

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Key emerging themes from practitioner insights

Five inter-linked themes emerged from the analysis and synthesis processes and were used to structure this report:

1. **Intentionally engaging primary beneficiaries and key partners** – This includes considerations to recruit, engage, and meet the needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls as primary beneficiaries, as well as secondary key beneficiaries including representatives from host communities, men and boys, government, and religious leaders, CSOs and humanitarian actors.

2. **Strategies to prevent and respond to violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls** – Grantees' experiences highlight lessons learned and best practices behind these strategies, some of which are similar to evidence-based programming to address violence with other types of women and girls, but some of which have specific considerations to meet the needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls and address their heightened risk factors to violence. Common considerations include addressing information gaps they may have, raising awareness of their rights, seeking to meet their and their family's mental health and trauma-related needs, integrating economic empowerment activities, building skills and providing opportunities for activism or advocacy.

3. **Adapting programming to intersecting and compounding crises** – Projects were implemented in contexts with multiple and intersecting crises related, inter alia, to the global refugee crisis, conflicts, or political crises. Some of the projects were implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased the risks of violence, especially for refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. Grantees offered important insights around how and why they adapted their programming in response to challenging contexts or changing realities of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls.

4. **Ensuring staff and organizational security and well-being** – This emerged as a key consideration for WROs and CSOs working with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, whereby staff are prone to insecure contexts, burnout and/or vicarious traumas. Important lessons were identified in terms of how to care for and support staff and equip organisational security, and to continue being operational and critically serve the needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls.

5. **Enabling organisational preparedness and resilience** – This is especially important for WROs and CSOs working to prevent and respond to the heightened risk of violence among refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. The UN Trust Fund's special window was identified to fill a unique gap to support the resilience of grantees, including through offering flexible, longer-term and core funding, and understanding the challenges they typically face when working with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The synthesis review offers overarching reflections on the value of this special window as showcased by the portfolio data including its timing and focus. This special funding window was implemented amidst a time of unprecedented global migration alongside more restrictive asylum policies. This special window helped translate increased attention and commitments to respond to the global refugee crisis into meaningful efforts on behalf of local WRO and CSO grantees to meet the needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. The findings of the synthesis review demonstrate how the UN Trust Fund supported grantees' organizational preparedness and resilience, adaptivity, self-care, monitoring and evaluation, all of which supported their capacities to prevent and respond to violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. The review concludes with seventeen recommendations that emerged from the findings addressed, respectively, to practitioners, donors, and researchers.

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

ATINA	Citizens Association for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and All Forms of Gender-based Violence
AWO	Arab Women Organization of Jordan
CBO	Community-based organization
CENDEROS	Fundación Centro de Derechos Sociales de la Persona Migrante
COMAR	The Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CSO	Civil society organization
EWEI	Empowering Women for Excellence Initiative
FACT	Facilitators of Community Transformation
FYF	Free Yezidi Foundation
FGD	Focus group discussion
FHD	For Human Development
GBV	Gender-based violence
IDI	In-depth interview
IDP	Internally displaced person
IPV	Intimate partner violence
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
IMUMI	Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración A.C.
MEAL	Monitoring, evaluation, and learning
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ODA	Official development assistance
PBK	Practice-based knowledge
PPE	Personal protective equipment
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
RCK	Refugee Consortium of Kenya
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SIHA	Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa
UN Trust Fund	United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women
UNHCR	United Nations Human Rights Commission
VAW	Violence against women
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
VSLAs	Village savings and loan associations
WATC	Women's Affairs Technical Committee
WAW	Women for Afghan Women
WRO	Women's rights organization

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Ending violence against women and girls who are refugees and/or forcibly displaced

As a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, and other events disturbing public order, the last year has witnessed an unprecedented level of global forced displacement.[1] The number and intensity of armed conflicts globally is increasing, and these conflicts are lasting longer, causing more people to be displaced (United Nations 2022). As a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, causing the fastest and one of the largest displacement crises in Europe since World War II, and other emergencies, from Afghanistan, to Haiti, Myanmar, and Syria, the number of refugees and forcibly displaced people recently surpassed 100 million.[2] The climate crisis is also contributing to the rise in global forced displacements, such as the flash floods in Pakistan, which displaced millions of people.[3] During conflicts and displacement, the risk of violence against women and girls (VAWG) is heightened (VOICE and HIAS 2022). This is due to a variety of factors including the breakdown of social structures, a lack of law enforcement, the potential of further entrenchment of harmful gender norms, and the loss of livelihood opportunities for men and women (Marsh et al. 2006).

Evidence from multiple conflicts suggests that refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls are more vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) due to their typically low status and other risks brought about by displacement (What Works 2017). For instance, a study in Colombia and Liberia found that displaced women had 40 to 55 per cent greater odds of experiencing intimate partner violence (IPV) than non-displaced women (Kelly et al. 2021; Murphy et al. 2022). Similarly, in South Sudan, research found that the likelihood of women and girls having experienced IPV increased two to three times if they had been directly exposed to an incident of armed conflict or had been displaced, compared to women and girls who did not have these experiences (Ellsberg et al. 2020). VAWG rises through the entire forced migration process and manifests in multiple forms, including domestic violence, sexual violence, trafficking, and early and forced marriage. In refugee camp settings, poor physical layouts or security including cramped accommodation, insufficient lighting, and placement of latrines or water points in unsafe areas, can increase the likelihood of SGBV (Bermudez et al. 2018; Murphy et al. 2022). VAWG is often exacerbated in humanitarian emergencies that fuel displacement, where vulnerability and risks are high, while family and community protections often break down. Yet, security risks and threats faced by refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls remain mostly invisible and minimized (VOICE and HIAS 2022). There are insufficient mechanisms in place at policy, funding, and implementation levels to comprehensively prevent and respond to such violence.

Despite the extent, VAWG prevention programming in humanitarian settings is often short-term, allocated limited funding, with a predominant focus on service provision and/or awareness raising. This emphasis does not address the root causes of VAWG including power differentials, gender inequalities and harmful social norms (Murphy et al. 2022), nor is it part of a holistic and sustainable approach based on what is known to work to prevent VAWG (Jewkes et al. 2021). The risks faced by women and girls during emergencies can be heightened when humanitarian actors overlook women's strength and agency and do not work with local women's organizations.[4] One of the priorities of the Grand Bargain, an agreement between more than 50 of

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1   UNHCR: Global displacement hits another record, capping decade-long rising trend. Accessed at: https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2022/6/62a9d2b04/unhcr-global-displacement-hits-record-capping-decade-long-rising-trend.html

2   https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/un-geneva/ukraine-war-pushes-global-displacement-numbers-new-record-high_en?s=62

3   MercyCorps. Devastation in Pakistan: Deadly floods displace millions. Accessed at: https://www.mercycorps.org/blog/pakistan-deadly-floods-displace-millions

4   Call to Action on Protection from GBV in Emergencies: Road Map 2021-2025. Accessed at: https://www.calltoactiongbv.com/_files/ugd/1b9009_3ea8c8a80f4b41c6852e7ef79a6feecc.pdf

the largest donors and aid providers worldwide, is to promote operational capacities targeting women led-organizations in humanitarian settings (Perez del Pulgar 2023). Yet, despite such commitments, humanitarian action is not sufficiently localized. While WROs and CSOs shoulder a significant amount of crisis response in local communities, including to prevent and respond to violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, funding to such actors is significantly lacking (UNFPA and UN Women 2020) and they are often left out of humanitarian decision-making platforms (UN Women 2022).

There remain significant gaps in knowledge to best address violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls in both host and transit countries, partly due to the limited programmatic base and difficulties to collect data in humanitarian settings. There is also limited documentation of practice-based knowledge (PBK) on how and why programmes with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls work to address violence, particularly from the perspective of WROs and CSOs. Yet, more promising practices and rigorous evaluations are beginning to emerge, with increased attention to what works to prevent and respond to VAWG in humanitarian settings, including among refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls (Murphy et al. 2019; Spangaro et al. 2013). The available evidence suggests that the most successful programmes in humanitarian settings are multifaceted, address underlying risk factors, actively engage a diversity of community members and key stakeholders, consider both immediate physical protection as well as longer-term empowerment of women and girls, and shift inequitable gender norms (Murphy et al. 2022). Increasing evidence suggests that the types of VAWG prevalent in conflict and humanitarian settings share similar trends with VAWG in non-emergency settings – including violence perpetrated by an intimate partner being the most common form of violence facing women (Stark and Ager, 2011). Approaches that have had success in decreasing VAWG in non-conflict settings may be applicable to humanitarian settings, although need to be adapted to the diversity of contexts that refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls inhabit (e.g. refugee camp settings, urban displacement, host-communities, mobile populations) and address some of the acute drivers of VAWG amongst refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, such as by incorporating economic empowerment models or efforts to manage trauma and improve mental health (Stark and Ager, 2011).

Key terms

Forcibly displaced person: When a person has been forced or obliged to leave their homes or places of habitual residence to avoid the effects of events or situations including armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights abuses, natural or man-made disasters, and/or development projects. The distinction between an internally displaced person (IDP) and a forcibly displaced person is the later refers to where an individual has been removed from their home, evicted, or relocated to another place not of their choosing, whether by state or non-state actors. The distinguishing factor is the absence of will or consent.5 A forcibly displaced person cannot or chooses not to cross an international border, and as a result is not considered a refugee. Although they often share many of the same circumstances and challenges as refugees, they do not have the same special status according to international law.

Refugee: A refugee is defined and protected in international law. The 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as "someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being prosecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion."6 Subsequent international instruments (such as the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees and the Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa) expanded this definition in some settings to persons fleeing the general effects of armed conflict and/or natural disaster. A crucial requirement to be considered a refugee is to have crossed an international border.

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG): The UN General Assembly defines VAWG as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering for women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (UN General Assembly, 1993). This applies to women of all ages, so is inclusive of girls and older women.

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5   https://www.unhcr.org/4794b2d52.pdf

6   Convention and Protocol Related to the Status of Refugees. Available at: https://www.unhcr.org/media/28185

1.2 The UN Trust Fund Special Window on Ending Violence against Women and Girls who are Refugees and/or forcibly displaced

A key focus of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women (UN Trust Fund), has been to support WROs and CSOs working with the most marginalized women and girls and those experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination. In 2016, the UN Trust Fund launched a special window of grant-making focused on providing funding to organizations specifically addressing the issue of VAWG experienced by refugee and/or forcibly displaced persons with an eye on the Syrian refugee crisis; the world's largest ongoing refugee and displacement crisis since the conflict began in 2011.[7] This special window was designed to enhance protection efforts during the transit process and to increase the provision of basic information and adequate basic services targeting the needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls in transit and host countries. This special funding window originally prioritized proposals from the following countries: Egypt, the Republic of North Macedonia, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Serbia, and Turkey. Succeeding calls under this window welcomed a wider pool of grants to address the growing challenge and inadequate response to the needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. Organizations working on refugee crisis related issues in other official development assistance (ODA) recipient countries were encouraged to apply through subsequent calls as part of this special funding window, which was maintained for four funding cycles until 2019.

Through this special window, the UN Trust Fund has contributed to global investments in ending violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. A mid-term review of the 2015-2020 UN Trust Fund's Strategic Plan suggested that this special window encouraged applicants to work on intersectionality around violence and migration status and attracted attention and funding to this under-resourced area. Grantee representatives interviewed as part of this synthesis review commended the inclusivity of this special window:

This window is one of the most inclusive windows of funding. The UN Trust Fund looks at the organizations with the capacities that they have, and they include all kinds of groups, taking an intersectional approach. Having this window just for humanitarian response is important because we cannot predict when a crisis will end. This is a window of hope for local organizations, especially women led organizations, to respond to crises in their countries and at the local level. (FGD 1 English, 25 October 2022).

This special window has offered a tool for localization by supporting projects that are not only implemented but also conceptualized and designed by local organizations (Pérez del Pulgar 2022). In doing so, the window aligns with the Grand Bargain's commitment to localization by increasing and supporting multi-year investment in the institutional capacities of CSOs, including WROs, as responders to VAWG. As refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls typically inhabit humanitarian and emergency settings, this funding window also aligns with the mandate of the GBV Call on Action on Protection from GBV in Emergencies,[8] a global initiative of actors including governments donors and agencies, that aims to foster accountability from the humanitarian system to address GBV from the earliest phases of a crisis. This mandate calls for specialized GBV services and programmes, implementing actions to prevent GBV and mitigate the risk across all levels and sectors of the humanitarian response, and mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls throughout humanitarian action.

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7   World Vision. Syrian Refugee Crisis. Accessed at: https://www.worldvision.org/refugees-news-stories/syrian-refugee-crisis-facts

8   Call to Action on Protection from GBV in Emergencies: Road Map 2021-2025. Accessed at: https://www.calltoactiongbv.com/_files/ugd/1b9009_3ea8c8a80f4b41c6852e7ef79a6feecc.pdf

Some grantees interviewed for this synthesis review encouraged the UN Trust Fund to re-establish this special window given its unique focus on addressing violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, and in the context of an unprecedented level of global displacement. As one grantee representative noted:

I feel this window was critical and important. There has been a lot of growing and increased conflict and displacement. This window should be re-considered and re-opened and not just mainstreamed. Because often, issues of VAWG in humanitarian settings really fall through the cracks and funding is limited. Mainstreamed means more programmes will come on board, incentivising them to address VAWG in humanitarian settings. But that can cause a risk as many things may be overlooked in those scenarios. For women organizations that are focusing on the humanitarian scenario we need to continue to focus on that. (FGD 1 English, 25 October 2022).

This special window is not the only approach that the UN Trust Fund has been using to ensure a focus on violence against women and girls who are refugees and/or forcibly displaced. Since 2020, the UN Trust Fund's general portfolio has mainstreamed a focus on projects engaging refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, with 10 of 37 (27 percent) grants in cycle 24 and 7 of 37 (19 per cent) grants in the most recent cycle 25, prioritizing work with this sub-group. This was done to institutionalize an intersectional approach – a key focus of the UN Trust Fund's new Strategic Plan (2021-2025) – intentionally engaging the most marginalized women and girls across the entire fund's portfolio, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals global commitment to leave no-one behind. The UN Trust Fund continues to prioritize the most marginalized women and girls in crisis setting, including through its 2022 call for proposal (cycle 26), which included a special focus on protracted crises, with the aim to meet the needs of crisis-affected women and girls at risk of exclusion and marginalization. However, an analysis of the UN Trust Fund's work in mainstreaming the inclusion of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls across its full portfolio is beyond the scope of this synthesis review.

National protests against rising cases of rape and defilement of women.

© Wanangwa Sichinga/FACT Malawi

1.3 The Special Window Portfolio[9]

To date, the UN Trust Fund has supported 18 civil society-led projects through this special window for a combined total of USD 8.5 million across 13 countries.
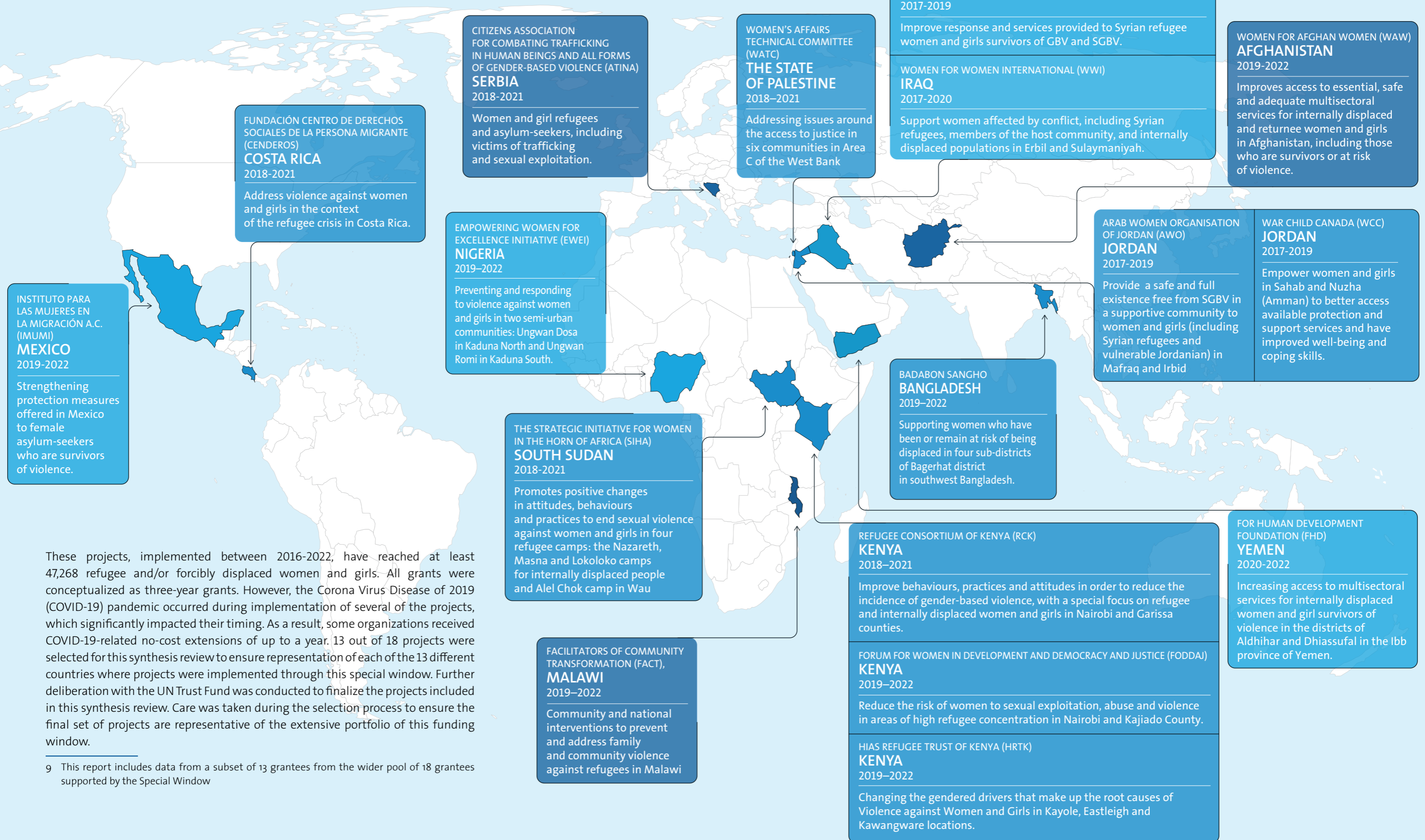
These projects, implemented between 2016-2022, have reached at least 47,268 refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. All grants were conceptualized as three-year grants. However, the Corona Virus Disease of 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic occurred during implementation of several of the projects, which significantly impacted their timing. As a result, some organizations received COVID-19-related no-cost extensions of up to a year. 13 out of 18 projects were selected for this synthesis review to ensure representation of each of the 13 different countries where projects were implemented through this special window. Further deliberation with the UN Trust Fund was conducted to finalize the projects included in this synthesis review. Care was taken during the selection process to ensure the final set of projects are representative of the extensive portfolio of this funding window.

9   This report includes data from a subset of 13 grantees from the wider pool of 18 grantees supported by the Special Window

FREE YEZIDI FOUNDATION (FYF)
IRAQ
2017-2019

Strengthening the work of a women's center; the Free Yezidi Foundation runs in an IDP camp in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

ASUDA FOR COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (ASUDA)
IRAQ
2017-2019

Improve response and services provided to Syrian refugee women and girls survivors of GBV and SGBV.

WOMEN FOR WOMEN INTERNATIONAL (WWI)
IRAQ
2017-2020

Support women affected by conflict, including Syrian refugees, members of the host community, and internally displaced populations in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah.

WOMEN FOR AFGHAN WOMEN (WAW)
AFGHANISTAN
2019-2022

Improves access to essential, safe and adequate multisectoral services for internally displaced and returnee women and girls in Afghanistan, including those who are survivors or at risk of violence.

CITIZENS ASSOCIATION FOR COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS AND ALL FORMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (ATINA)
SERBIA
2018-2021

Women and girl refugees and asylum-seekers, including victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation.

WOMEN'S AFFAIRS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (WATC)
THE STATE OF PALESTINE
2018–2021

Addressing issues around the access to justice in six communities in Area C of the West Bank

FUNDACIÓN CENTRO DE DERECHOS SOCIALES DE LA PERSONA MIGRANTE (CENDEROS)
COSTA RICA
2018-2021

Address violence against women and girls in the context of the refugee crisis in Costa Rica.

EMPOWERING WOMEN FOR EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE (EWEI)
NIGERIA
2019–2022

Preventing and responding to violence against women and girls in two semi-urban communities: Ungwan Dosa in Kaduna North and Ungwan Romi in Kaduna South.

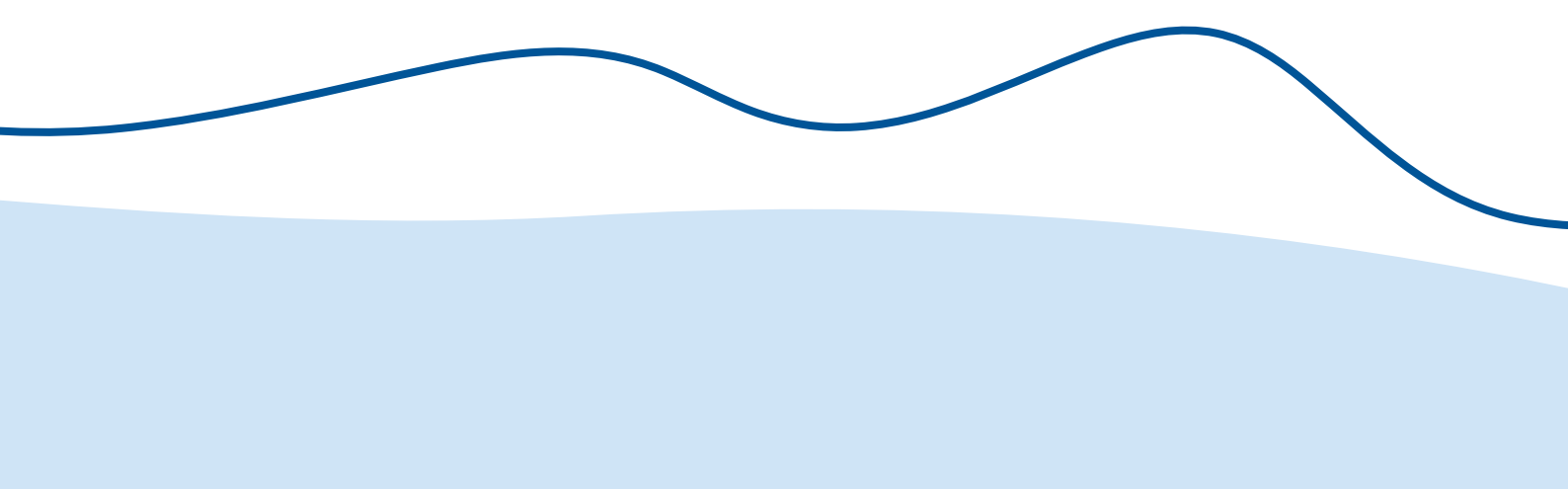**INSTITUTO PARA LAS MUJERES EN LA MIGRACIÓN A.C. (IMUMI)**
MEXICO
2019-2022

Strengthening protection measures offered in Mexico to female asylum-seekers who are survivors of violence.

ARAB WOMEN ORGANISATION OF JORDAN (AWO)
JORDAN
2017-2019

Provide a safe and full existence free from SGBV in a supportive community to women and girls (including Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanian) in Mafraq and Irbid

WAR CHILD CANADA (WCC)
JORDAN
2017-2019

Empower women and girls in Sahab and Nuzha (Amman) to better access available protection and support services and have improved well-being and coping skills.

BADABON SANGHO
BANGLADESH
2019–2022

Supporting women who have been or remain at risk of being displaced in four sub-districts of Bagerhat district in southwest Bangladesh.

THE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE FOR WOMEN IN THE HORN OF AFRICA (SIHA)
SOUTH SUDAN
2018-2021

Promotes positive changes in attitudes, behaviours and practices to end sexual violence against women and girls in four refugee camps: the Nazareth, Masna and Lokoloko camps for internally displaced people and Alel Chok camp in Wau

REFUGEE CONSORTIUM OF KENYA (RCK)
KENYA
2018–2021

Improve behaviours, practices and attitudes in order to reduce the incidence of gender-based violence, with a special focus on refugee and internally displaced women and girls in Nairobi and Garissa counties.

FORUM FOR WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY AND JUSTICE (FODDAJ)
KENYA
2019–2022

Reduce the risk of women to sexual exploitation, abuse and violence in areas of high refugee concentration in Nairobi and Kajiado County.

HIAS REFUGEE TRUST OF KENYA (HRTK)
KENYA
2019–2022

Changing the gendered drivers that make up the root causes of Violence against Women and Girls in Kayole, Eastleigh and Kawangware locations.

FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION (FHD)
YEMEN
2020-2022

Increasing access to multisectoral services for internally displaced women and girl survivors of violence in the districts of Aldhihar and Dhiassufal in the Ibb province of Yemen.

FACILITATORS OF COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION (FACT),
MALAWI
2019–2022

Community and national interventions to prevent and address family and community violence against refugees in Malawi

The UN Trust Fund prioritizes demand-driven, contextually relevant projects that are key to sustainable impact, localization, and ownership. Projects are therefore very diverse across their geographic spread, the range of VAWG issues covered, stakeholders engaged, and strategies adopted. Five grantee organizations are based in the Arab States (Afghanistan, Iraq, Jordan, State of Palestine, and Yemen), four in Eastern, Southern and Western Africa (Kenya, South Sudan, Malawi, and Nigeria), two in the Americas (Costa Rica and Mexico), one in Eastern Europe (Serbia), and two in South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh). The locations included in this portfolio represent a diversity of contexts where organizations may be working with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls including crisis and humanitarian settings, to transit and host countries. Five of the 13 grantees are WROs and 2 grantees are regional networks for WROs. The remaining 6 grantees are civil society organizations (CSOs) or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for human rights advocacy and humanitarian assistance, with one NGO in Serbia: the *Citizens Association for Combating Trafficking of Human Beings and All Forms of Gender-based Violence (ATINA)* dedicated specifically to supporting survivors of human trafficking and violence through offering psycho-social, legal, and reintegration support, while also addressing the root causes of trafficking, including abusive family relations, poverty, marginalization, and discrimination. Apart from ATINA, most organizations funded through this special window operate in multiple areas of advocacy around refugees, women's rights, and humanitarian aid. For example, the *Free Yezidi Foundation (FYF)* in Iraq and *For Human Development Foundation (FHD)* in Yemen are engaged in a range of community development projects including providing water, sanitation, and emergency assistance. Some NGOs such as *Facilitators of Community Transformation (FACT)* in Malawi are involved in reproductive and sexual health promotion as part of comprehensive strategies to prevent violence and improve women's health and safety.

Many of the projects funded through this special window were operating in fragile contexts where communities are vulnerable to armed conflicts, disasters, and the effects of climate change. For instance, the *Women for Afghan Women (WAW)'s* project in Afghanistan was implemented during the collapse of the former government, and after the Taliban's takeover, most project activities were delayed by a few months due to banking issues, project assets being seized, and the Taliban initially not allowing female staff to come back to work. WAW was able to re-access their project assets and stock materials, although many stock materials and IT equipment was lost. In Iraq, the 2017 Kurdistan Regional Government referendum for independence took place during project implementation, which led to conflict, closure of airports, and several obstacles to FYF's project. For instance, the main psychologist had to be evacuated to the UK due to unsafe conditions for her as a foreigner, which delayed the provision of such services until a replacement was found. The instability, uncertainty and prospect of renewed fighting negatively influenced the trauma therapy that was being offered by the project. In Mexico, the *Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración A.C. (IMUMI)* faced rapidly changing dynamics of incoming refugees during project implementation due to a variety of factors including climate change motivating migration, the impact of regional (i.e. Haiti and Venezuala) and international (i.e. Afghanistan and Ukraine) economic crises or conflicts, and political changes in the US related to asylum and processing of refugees that arrive in the US from Mexico. COVID-19, and its related restrictions drastically increased food insecurity, disrupted livelihoods and supply chains, caused a significant spike in the incidence of VAWG, forced the closure of schools and safe spaces and disrupted essential services, including protection services for survivors of VAWG (UNHCR 2020). These effects were particularly grave for operational projects funded through this special window, as this further contributed to a spectrum of crises already affecting the health, livelihoods, and security of engaged refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls.

Grantee representatives across the portfolio focused on preventing and responding to diverse forms of VAWG. Economic empowerment, including its links to climate justice and political participation are among the priorities of some of the funded WROs that aim to change social conditions for women to comprehensively prevent VAWG. Badabon Sangho in Bangladesh is a WRO that is especially concerned with VAWG arising during the pursuit of land, water, and farming rights and works to increase economic independence for the lower-caste, Dalit, single, separated, widowed, or divorced women, and religious minorities. Operating as regional coordinating networks for several WROs, The Strategic Initiative for W*omen in The Horn of Africa Network (SIHA)* in South Sudan and *Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC)* in Palestine offer technical assistance to design, deliver, and evaluate VAWG prevention and response programmes. The grantee organizations from Afghanistan, Costa Rica, Iraq, Kenya, and Mexico have dedicated missions to support migrants, IDPs, refugees, asylum-seekers, and their families. Projects funded through this special window helped refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls with education, employment, housing, health, food, legal aid, documentation, and resettlement as part of broader efforts to prevent and respond to VAWG.

Projects selected for this review had a diversity of objectives. These included to improve and sustain the physical and mental health of survivors of violence and their children; to prevent family and community violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls; to reduce acceptance of VAWG; to strengthen protection measures for female asylum-seekers; to prevent sexual violence in refugee camps; to enhance social and economic reintegration for refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls; and to improve access to justice for refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls who are survivors of or at risk of violence. Many projects worked at the continuum of VAWG prevention and response, and worked with a diversity of actors including government, education and health sectors, justice officials, media, traditional and community refugee leaders, other CSOs, host communities, and humanitarian actors.

Grantees selected for this review engaged in different ways with the UN Trust Fund's three outcome focus areas (prevention of VAWG; expanding access to safe and adequate services; and strengthening implementation of laws, policies, and action plans). Most grantees worked across more than one outcome area, which suggests the importance of not siloing these outcome areas.

A diversity of strategies were employed by grantees whose projects focused on the UN Trust Fund's first outcome of primary prevention of violence. These included educating women and girls (with a focus on refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls) about their rights and how to report VAWG; training for activism or advocacy; engaging men and boys to support attitude and social norm change and incorporating efforts to improve the mental health and well-being of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. For instance, in Nigeria, Empowering Women for Excellence Initiative (EWEI) hosted community dialogues with internally displaced women and other beneficiaries to raise awareness of their rights to be involved in community life through mapping out resources that could be accessed and considering how to use them to their advantage to address VAWG. Many projects aimed to empower refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls to address the underlying causes of their exposure to VAWG. For instance, in Bangladesh, Badabon Sangho hosted awareness raising sessions with women who were or at risk of being displaced from land ownership to help them resist regular pressures to sell their inherited family properties. As a result of these sessions and support, more women were empowered to file charges for registration and settlement at different stages of land administration, and report cases of violence linked to property disputes. A few projects aimed to economically empower refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls through offering livelihoods trainings or enhancing their abilities to engage with economic opportunities. For instance, in Kenya, the Refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK) supported refugee and displaced women with access to justice as well as entrepreneurship skills and business grants to start income generating activities, many of whom reported greater financial independence and reduced exposure to VAWG as a result.

A diversity of strategies were applied by projects focusing on the UN Trust Fund's second outcome of improving access to safe and adequate services for refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. These included referrals to services that grantees themselves offered (i.e. shelters, counselling services, hotlines, safe spaces for survivors of violence to access psycho-social support, medical assistance and referral services); referrals to a diversity of existing, relevant services; or coordinating multi-sectoral services. **Other strategies employed included establishing mobile courts in refugee camps, training service providers and justice officials to provide more survivor centered care, accompanying survivors to court, and offering pre-trial counselling.** Many grantees identified the importance of expanding access to services for survivors of VAWG to ensure more ethical and effective VAWG prevention efforts (the first outcome area of the UN Trust Fund). As one FGD participant noted: *"the response was necessary even though we did prevention because where would these people report to in case they know their rights?"* (FGD 1, 25 October 2022) Indeed, it is recommended best practice to have risk mitigation and response services accompany violence prevention programming, especially in humanitarian settings (Murphy et al. 2022).

Finally, projects employed a diversity of efforts to meet the UN Trust Fund's third outcome area to increase the effectiveness and accountability of relevant legislation and policies. Many of the projects identified gaps or aimed to hold existing laws and policies meant to protect women and girls from VAWG to account, with a focus on laws and policies designed to protect refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. Strategies to do so included collaborating with or training police and justice officials to improve their responses to VAWG and advocating for improved legislation and policies. A few projects supported the development of relevant procedural guidelines or policies. For example, because of formal complaints made regarding human rights violations of women seeking refuge in Costa Rica by *Fundación Centro de Derechos Sociales de la Persona Migrante (CENDEROS)* in partnership with other local organizations, guidelines were established by the Ombudsman's office that regulate and guarantee the rights of migrants and asylum-seekers in their transit through Costa Rica. RCK in Kenya was one of the lead agencies supporting the Refugee Affairs Secretariat of Kenya to review the country's Refugees Act from 2006, to offer a more robust and inclusive environment to enhance the resilience of refugees and their host communities. More details on the individual projects, which includes justification for their inclusion in this synthesis review, can be found in Appendix A.

*Women landowners receive information about parcel maps and documentation.*

© Aureed/Badabon Sangho

1.4 Methodology

At the heart of this synthesis review are practitioner insights from a subset of WROs and CSOs funded under the special funding window to prevent violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. The synthesis review followed approaches and methods associated with qualitative meta-synthesis, which aims to bring together findings on a chosen theme in a way in which the results are greater than the sum of the parts (Finlayson and Dixon 2008). This synthesis review prioritized documentation of practice-based knowledge (PBK), which centers the cumulative knowledge and learning acquired by practitioners from designing and implementing diverse programmes in different contexts.

This synthesis review engaged with selected project-specific monitoring reports and a number of external evaluations (where available) from the 13 projects included in this special window. Thematic analysis was conducted of this data set, applying an exploratory and grounded approach. One focus group discussion (FGD) and one interview in Spanish, two FGDs and two interviews in English were conducted with representatives of the 13 grantees included in this synthesis review. Three different written responses to FGD questions were also provided by grantees, in response to questions that could not be asked due to insufficient time in one of the English FGDs. As the final evaluations for all projects were not available, this synthesis review focused on processes more than impacts of this special window including how projects worked to prevent violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls and distils practice-based insights and lessons learned from this broad scope of projects. A technical annex to complement this synthesis review is forthcoming that will distil more impacts of this special window, including by drawing on all of the final evaluations. For more details on the methodology, please see Appendix B, C, and D.

The findings of this synthesis review offer relevant insights for practitioners to best meet the needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, and in doing so contributes to the gap in evidence around what works to prevent violence against this sub-group. The findings also offer insights around the value and contribution of the UN Trust Fund's support of CSOs and WROs through this funding window and how donors can support grantees to apply this intersectional focus to the design and implementation of their programmes to prevent and respond to VAWG.
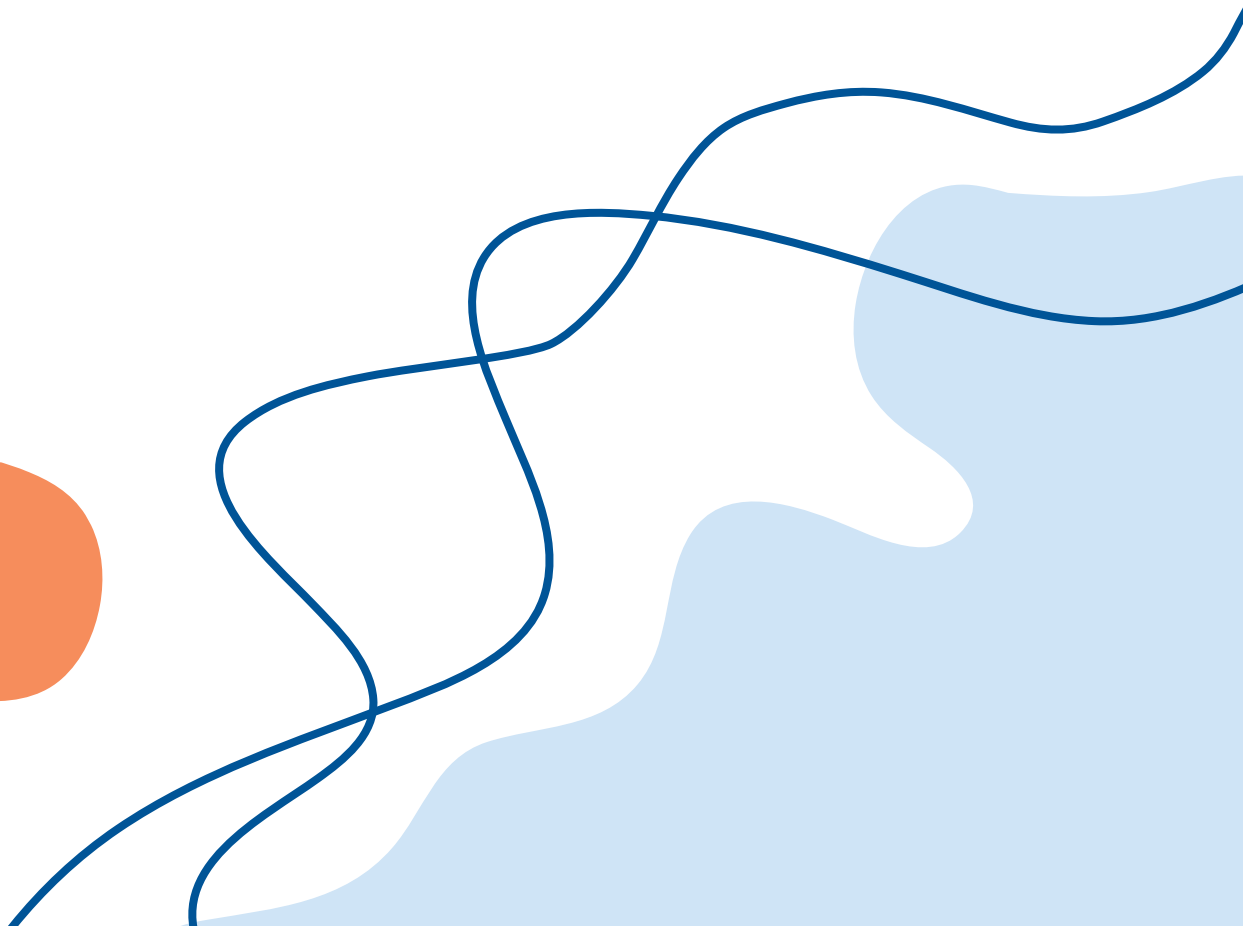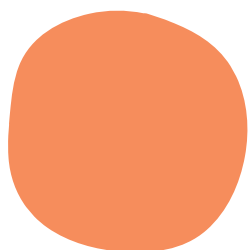
2. KEY THEMATIC LESSONS EMERGING FROM PRACTICE

The findings are organized according to key themes that emerged through the thematic analysis: (1) intentionally engaging project participants and key partners, (2) efforts to prevent and respond to violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, (3) adapting programming to intersecting and compounding crises, (4) ensuring staff and organizational security and well-being and (5) enabling organizational preparedness and resilience.

2.1 Intentionally engaging project participants and key partners

2.1.1 Engaging refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls

Many grantees identified the importance of having clear and transparent criteria for intentionally engaging refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. For instance, *WAW's* project in Afghanistan aimed to improve access to essential, safe, and adequate multisectoral services for internally displaced and returnee women and girls and those at risk of violence. Project locations were selected for hosting the highest numbers of IDPs and refugee returnees, as well as for having a high prevalence of VAWG, child labor, and human trafficking. **Carefully considering criteria of primary beneficiaries was important given the common experience for grantees to have demand that outstretched their capacities.** *FYF's* project in Iraq focused on providing services to survivors of SGBV and other female IDPs, prioritizing Yezidi women. Yet, their project struggled to meet the demand from the number of women who wanted to access the project's trauma and

*Workshop on asylum-seeking process
in Oaxaca, Mexico*

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mental health support. Group therapy was offered to reach more women, and individual therapy sessions were prioritized to those who had recently returned from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) captivity, who were at risk of harming themselves or to those unsuitable for group sessions for any reason. A few grantees identified the importance of working with both male and female community members and leaders to help identify participants and ensure engagement of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls especially at risk of violence.

Many grantees identified barriers to engage refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls as programme participants for various reasons including competing priorities (i.e. work commitments), lack of access to internet or communication devices, or limited access to childcare. Grantees valued the importance of projects identifying and overcoming such challenges in order to leave no one behind. For instance, in Kenya, language barriers and low literacy levels affected participants' active engagement with the entrepreneurship skills trainings offered by *RCK*. As a result, individualised sessions were offered to refugees and displaced women with low literacy levels to help them catch up with other participants. In Iraq, there was some irregular attendance to FYF's group therapy sessions due to women's domestic and caregiving obligations, or the need to engage in income-generating activities, including farming. *FYF's* project identified the importance of offering more child friendly spaces for women to feel comfortable to participate, without concerns for their children.

Several grantees identified the importance of engaging refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls in empowering ways as decision makers and co-designers of projects, rather than as passive recipients. As a representative from RCK in Kenya noted in an FGD:

It is very important to engage the target population in project implementation, not only as beneficiaries, but as partners as well. Having dialogue forums to discuss ways in which some of the challenges can be resolved, from their perspective. (FGD 2 English, 26 October 2022).

Participatory engagement and proactive engagement of women and girls not only helps reduce power imbalances but is also critical for humanitarian responses to identify potential safety risks including for sexual exploitation and harassment and develop strategies to reduce such risks (e.g. community safety mapping, safety audits) (Murphy et al. 2022).

In another FGD, a representative from IMUMI in Mexico identified the importance of creating safe spaces and promoting trust to support empowerment, while recognizing the individual agency of refugee women:

There is stigma around the vulnerability for refugee women and the types of help they can receive. So it's important to create a safe space for women to generate their self-confidence and trust in our services, even when we were offering digital services. We aim to empower women with the tools to leave the cycle of violence and not return to it. Sometimes it was hard for us because we wanted to decide for them, but we know that this is not the right way. We can offer them the tools, but it is up to them to pick them up. (FGD Spanish, 26 October 2022).

FACT's project in Malawi aimed to increase the effectiveness of legislation, polices and national action plans and strengthen community prevention, implementation, and monitoring of SGBV violence against women and girl refugees. *FACT* identified the importance of collaborating with target communities to jointly develop culturally appropriate and comprehensive messages, which was important given the diversity of communities in the intervention refugee camp. In one FGD, a participant from *FACT* identified the value of working with refugee women and girls as agents of change:

There is often a top-down kind of approach in terms of issues of protection, engagement of VAWG. What we have seen to be effective in this grant is to be able to set up community action groups which represent women and girls in the refugee camps. (FGD 1 English, 25 October 2022).

Another best practice identified to engage refugee and/or displaced women and girls was obtaining updated information on migration processes or policies, and openly sharing this information with intended participants. In one FGD, a grantee representative from IMUMI in Mexico noted:

An important aspect was ensuring that information is based in reality and not on gossip of what migrants heard back in their own country, like what they will face, the geographies, how much walking they will have to do. This is because migrants will arrive with distorted information and the false hope that they will pass as soon as they arrive at the border. This can be just as dangerous as the circumstances that led the person to flee in the first place. We say, do not give false hope to migrants – disseminate only truthful info about politics in Mexico and the US so that people decide whether to stay in Mexico, go back, or move forward with their journey. (FGD Spanish, 26 October 2022).

Some grantees identified the importance of building the capacities of refugee and/or displaced women and girls for sustainability, as they can continue serving their communities after a project ends. For instance, in Iraq, psychologists worked towards developing supervision skills of Yezidi women so they could continue to supervise more junior psychologists after the completion of *FYF's* project. As part of *FACT's* project in Malawi, a local community-based organization (CBO) of women refugees was trained on project management, as building the capacity of refugee women and girls who live in the camp was expected to make the project more sustainable.

FACT Hotline launch.

© FACT Malawi

2.1.2 Other key partners

Most projects included in this review operated in socio-economically deprived and challenging environments, which could heighten sensitivities regarding who was being targeted as programme participants. Although all projects primarily focused on refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, some grantees emphasized the importance of working with both refugees and host communities to help minimize conflict or prevent backlash, stigma, and discrimination against refugee or displaced communities. For instance, *Arab Women Organization of Jordan (AWO)'s* project in Jordan aimed to strengthen social cohesion among Syrian refugees and host communities through hosting open dialogues between women from both communities. In Yemen, local authorities requested that *FHD's* project, which aimed to support and empower internally displaced women and girl survivors of violence, increase the number of participants from the host community as the conflict had resulted in many locals losing income and having no salaries for years. The project thus pivoted to ensure an equal representation of women and girls from both the displaced and host community. *FHD's* project also aimed to include all ethnic groups, based on survey data to avoid any community sensitivities. *ATINA* in Serbia aims to empower women and girl refugees and asylum-seekers including victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation towards active participation and leadership. *ATINA's* project provided services to both the local population and refugees, to allow for wider support of women's leadership and create employment opportunities in local communities. Involving representations of both host and refugee communities can be an important risk mitigation strategy and as a result, some donors require that a certain percentage of funding is intended for host communities. This special funding window did not have this requirement however, given the UN Trust Fund's commitment towards demand driven grant-making.

Although the focus of all projects included in this review was to prevent violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, several grantees noted the importance of engaging men and boys in project activities for a variety of reasons. These included that men are more commonly the perpetrators of VAWG, to challenge social norms that underlie VAWG and gender inequalities, since many justice and government actors are men, to engage men and boys as agents of change to prevent VAWG, to help mitigate the risk of backlash against women and girls, and to meet the needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced men and boys. This emphasis builds on the evidence that the most successful VAWG prevention approaches engage men and women holistically (Jewkes et al. 2022). *AWO's* project in Jordan identified the importance of carefully recruiting men to be involved with their project which could be more challenging, including through collaborating with workplaces or youth centers. Some projects pivoted to have a stronger focus on engaging men and boys mid-way through implementation. For instance, SIHA's project in South Sudan, which aimed to empower women and girls and mobilize communities (in both refugee camps and host communities) to shift tolerance of sexual violence, had originally planned to target more girls than boys. They changed this in response to feedback from schools that they should more equally involve boys since they can perpetrate school-based GBV. **Importantly, accountability mechanisms to women and girls were put in place, including through supporting female and male role models that could act as peer mentors to run the girls' and boys' clubs.**

In Mexico, *IMUMI's* project aimed to improve service provision to meet the needs of women and girl asylum-seekers. *IMUMI* recognized the heightened vulnerability of Haitian refugees, including because of language barriers, and for not having official refugee status in Mexico according to the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (COMAR). The project thus pivoted to support both male and female refugees from Haiti, which included offering psycho-legal assistance and information to obtain recognition of their refugee status, instead of only prioritizing support of female refugees.

2.1.3 Collaboration with key stakeholders

Many grantees identified the importance of collaborating with a range of key stakeholders who both understand the conditions to best design and deliver programmes intended for refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls and could have an influence on their lived realities. Stakeholders engaged across the projects included local leaders, justice officials, CSOs and WROs, service providers, and humanitarian actors (i.e. refugee camp leaders or refugee mandated agencies). In one FGD, a grantee representative from IMUMI in Mexico identified the value of collaboration across disciplines:

One lesson from my end is to always be linking up with different stakeholders in programme design, research analysis, and development of products. In this project, we connected with academics, human rights defenders, and frontline workers throughout Mexico and in various border crossings, and that made a big difference in making our work acceptable and accessible. (FGD Spanish, 26 October 2022).

Similarly, SIHA's active collaboration in South Sudan with a variety of stakeholders including teachers, male mentors and youth, traditional leaders, and women's groups was identified as one of the most successful project elements, which was intended to create a positive environment of support and exchange.

Some grantees shared the importance of collaborating with religious and traditional leaders, who are often well positioned to raise community awareness of prevention and response to VAWG, and since community members, including refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, regularly obtain their support to access justice. For instance, as identified by SIHA's project in South Sudan:

Many types of SGBV are socially sanctioned, such as early and forced marriage, domestic violence, and marital rape. Therefore, it is important for traditional leaders to recognize these practices as SGBV and speak out against them. (Monitoring report, SIHA).

Some grantees noted how collaboration with government stakeholders was critical to obtain legitimacy and support sustainability of their projects. For grantees who worked in refugee camps, it was crucial to collaborate with a range of decision makers and key stakeholders operating in camp settings to obtain approval, enhance legitimacy, and/or gather relevant information. For instance, in Iraq, *FYF* held a few meetings with camp leaders to inform them of the programme and gather their perspectives on the mental health needs of the camp residents. In South Sudan, *SIHA's* curriculum was integrated into the local school programme as a result of engaging school leadership, which was identified as a significant achievement towards institutionalization and sustainability. However, *SIHA* identified the importance of petitioning the national government to integrate the curriculum more widely.

Some grantees identified challenges of collaborating with government partners given the common occurrence of change in government or competing priorities, especially for projects operating in volatile political environments. For instance, WAW's project in Afghanistan had finalized a partnership with the Ministry of Women's Affairs, yet this was dissolved after the Taliban was established as the de facto authorities. In Bangladesh, elections for local representatives were conducted during the project, which made it much more difficult for Badabon Sangho to engage candidates in project meetings and trainings. In the State of Palestine, the Palestinian National Authority imposed significant cuts in the salaries of public servants during project implementation, which challenged the ability for WATC to engage such authorities with the project activities. Some projects identified similar challenges when working with state employees. For instance, in South Sudan, schoolteachers were trained by SIHA to implement the project curriculum and were also trained on anti-sexual harassment and sexual exploitation. Yet, due to poor salaries and common

transfers, there is a high teacher turn-over in the public schools where *SIHA's* programme was implemented. This hindered the longevity of teachers who had been inducted into the curriculum.

Some projects identified how collaboration with formal actors including service providers, government agencies, and justice officials was helpful to identify services offered, assess any gaps in services, facilitate referral pathways, and strengthen access to justice for survivors of VAWG. For instance, in Kenya, *RCK* fostered a strong relationship with government agencies involved in the criminal justice system, which enabled *RCK* to learn of VAWG cases after being reported to the police, obtain important documents and evidence for hearing cases and procure the attendance of investigation officers and medical practitioners in court. During one FGD, a representative from *RCK* in Kenya noted:

The use of a multiagency collaboration approach has been effective in ensuring holistic provision of services to survivors of VAWG. Prevention and response to VAWG requires multi sectoral interventions, which has been achieved by strengthening partnerships with key duty bearers. (FGD 1 English, 26 October 2022).

Collaboration with refugee camp leaders and humanitarian actors was identified as valuable to support coordination and referral processes of available services within refugee camp settings. For instance, in Malawi, FACT identified poor stakeholder coordination and ineffective referral systems for services responding to VAWG and promoting sexual and reproductive health within the refugee camp. FACT thus regularly engaged and attended coordination meetings with various key stakeholders operating in the refugee camp including ministries, UNHCR and women's rights organizations to help address this gap.

Collaboration with other CSOs and human rights organizations could support grantees to apply an intersectional approach to ensure inclusion of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls at heightened risk of marginalization (linked to disability, LGBTIQ+, class, ethnicity, age etc.) For instance, *ATINA's* project in Serbia cooperated with a few well-established LGBTI+ organizations to help raise awareness of challenges that LGBTI+ refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls were facing. In partnership with *ATINA,* these organizations became part of a process aimed at creating policy mechanisms for addressing issues faced by the LGBTI+ population in global migrations. In Malawi, FACT partnered with *Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA)* to identify refugee women and girls living with disabilities and link them with their project's community outreach assistants. Other research has emphasized the importance of applying an intersectional approach when working with refugees and/or forcibly disabled women and girls. For instance, in Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya, women living with disabilities were twice as likely to report having experienced non-partner physical or sexual violence during their life before arriving in the camp, compared to women without disabilities (Hossain et al. 2020). Another evidence review identified how displaced LGBTIQ+ people are at particular risk for sexual violence due to their refugee status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics (Ahlenback 2022).
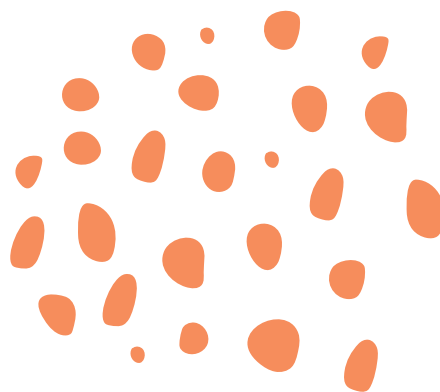
2.2 Efforts to prevent and respond to violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls

2.2.1 Strategies to prevent violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls

Projects applied a variety of strategies to prevent VAWG including awareness raising, community mobilisation, economic empowerment, individual or group-based counselling, and participatory group trainings. Important lessons were identified around how and why strategies worked, particularly to prevent violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, and how to make them more effective. While some of these practice-based insights reinforce the evidence around what works to prevent VAWG (Jewkes et al. 2020), they also offer considerations around how to meet the needs and vulnerabilities of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls.

Many projects used awareness raising strategies and trainings to increase knowledge among women and girls about the root causes and consequences of VAWG, how and where to report cases of VAWG, and the rights of women and girls (focusing on the rights of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls). Several grantees noted the importance of awareness raising efforts as such knowledge and information could be especially limited among refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. A few grantees used radio programming as an awareness raising strategy. For instance, in Kenya, *RCK* held radio programmes to disseminate information and sensitise the community on ending VAWG, including to highlight the vulnerability of refugees to VAWG, the role everyone can play in prevention, and encouraging survivors to report VAWG in a timely manner. RCK identified an increased number of reported cases of VAWG to their services and found that individuals were motivated to do so after hearing the radio programmes. The radio sessions helped access hard to reach communities and were offered in local dialects to ease comprehension. Awareness raising is a commonly used strategy in the conflict and humanitarian space, although is typically unable to prevent VAWG on its own (Jewkes et al. 2020). Awareness raising approaches are more likely to reduce VAWG when embedded as a strategy among interventions that address multiple drivers of violence and incorporate features and best practices to support behaviour changes (Stern et al. 2021).

Group photo of the beneficiaries of the entrepreneurship skills training in February 2021, in Garissa.

© Yusuf Salat/Refugee Consortium of Kenya

A few projects applied community activism, which was identified as a critical strategy to not only challenge harmful norms and attitudes underlying VAWG among target communities, but to also refer or direct support to survivors of VAWG. This builds on the evidence that the most effective programmes to reduce acceptance for and the incidence of VAWG are those that target underlying gender inequitable norms and power structures throughout the entire community – including by engaging men and boys (Jewkes et al. 2020). While there is a need for further expansion and evaluation of the effectiveness of community mobilisation approaches in conflict and humanitarian settings, there is increasing evidence that these interventions can work to reduce VAWG in such settings (Murphy et al. 2022). For instance, UNICEF's Communities Care programme implemented in Somalia and South Sudan documented significant reductions in the acceptance of harmful social norms that sustain sexual violence (Glass et al. 2019). Evidence-based community mobilisation programmes including *SASA!* have increasingly been successfully adapted for humanitarian and insecure settings (Bourassa et al. 2022). *SIHA* in South Sudan supported 10 grassroots women's groups, mainly consisting of market vendors trained in microfinance, who were given seed grants to support economic activities and offered training on women and girls' rights and how to conduct community outreach. The women's groups worked with school clubs and conducted dialogues with traditional leaders and other community members to promote girls' rights to education and to prevent child marriage. Members of these groups were also trained in survivor-centered approaches and how to link survivors of violence to medical, legal, and psychosocial services. Given that these groups had direct contact with survivors of VAWG, *SIHA* noted the importance of careful recruitment through establishing clear criteria, including a history of promotion of gender equality and action against VAWG, and having community respect and integrity. Community action group members were also vetted by *SIHA* and other community stakeholders.

Some projects enhanced advocacy skills of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls and supported their opportunities for more active engagement in community life. For instance, ATINA in Serbia conducted workshops for refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls to increase their communication and advocacy capacities and help them reach decision-makers and advocate for changes. Peer support and advocacy groups were established to support women and girls to identify where the refugee system had failed them. As identified through ATINA's project in Serbia:

Joint efforts of these women through the operation of the advocacy groups positively contributed to their individual empowerment and significantly enhanced the prospects of their integration into the local community. (Monitoring report, ATINA).

Some projects relied on group-based, participatory learning approaches to shift harmful gender norms underlying VAWG and promote changes in relevant attitudes and behaviours. In Costa Rica, CENDEROS used a Bingo for Prevention of GBV game as a group-based educational resource to challenge inequitable gender norms and tolerance of GBV and promote actions that can be carry out to prevent VAWG. The Bingo is a tool for group-based workshops to prompt analysis and debate, facilitated by staff trained in the use of this methodology. In South Sudan, *SIHA* developed a participatory curriculum drawn from several existing programmes to raise awareness of rights and responsibilities, gender and VAWG, sexual and reproductive health, and referral pathways. *SIHA's* project importantly aimed to foster an enabling environment to support students to make the changes encouraged through the curriculum, through school clubs that incorporated sports, music, drama, debate, and open sharing of examples between the boys' and girls' clubs. These experiences build on the evidence suggesting that group-based participatory learning methods that emphasize empowerment, critical reflection, and skills building can be critical to the success of interventions to prevent VAWG for adults or children (Jewkes et al. 2021). *SIHA's* example also draws on the demonstrated importance of the pedological approach for engaging children to be empowering, engaging and fun (Jewkes et al. 2021; Scott 2015).

Many projects incorporated an economic empowerment component to reduce women's financial dependence and vulnerability to violence, through offering livelihoods or financial literacy trainings, access to microfinance loans or business grants, supporting the establishment of cooperatives or community-based savings and loans associations. Evidence suggests that livelihoods and economic empowerment programming can be effective at preventing VAWG especially if they incorporate skills building and seek to rebalance power between men and women (Jewkes et al. 2020). Economic empowerment approaches have demonstrated improvements in gender equitable and quality relationships in humanitarian settings; however, significant reductions on VAWG have not always been documented, and more evaluations are needed. For example, Pigs for Peace is a livestock microfinance programme implemented in conflict-affected DRC which demonstrated reductions in male-perpetrated IPV, but not statistically significant reductions (Glass et al. 2017) Another study from conflict-affected Côte d'Ivoire found that women's participation in village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) reduced reported experiences of physical IPV, but not sexual or economic IPV (Gupta et al. 2013).

Grantees funded through this window emphasized the importance of economic empowerment activities with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls to support their agency and empowerment including to return to a sense of normalcy after facing hardships, and since they are often particularly disadvantaged socio-economically. For instance, in Kenya, a project annual report related how host community women typically have stronger support structures as they have access to banks and other savings options whereby they can borrow money, which is not available to refugee women and girls, and that this inequality was heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic. In one FGD, a grantee representative from RCK in Kenya emphasized the impact of their project's economic empowerment activities to meet the needs of refugee women: *"Maybe this lady was living with an abusive husband but now she has been able to find her own place, start her own business, and is living with her kids and I consider this a big success." (FGD 2 English, 26 October 2022)*. In Iraq, *FYF* staff realized participants would have greatly benefited from income-generating activities and learning skills that could provide financial benefits, as pressing financial needs affected participants' mental health and could generate a sense of helplessness. The need for income generation was emphasized in the external evaluation of FYF's project as a solution to participants' low attendance project activities, to enable them to support their families financially, be more empowered, and contribute to the project's sustainability. This learning highlights the importance of combining economic empowerment activities with psychological programmes to address poor mental health. Similarly, SIHA in South Sudan identified how economic empowerment strategies could be a critical incentive to maintain the ongoing participation of target beneficiaries, and address other factors underlying violence:

The addition of economic empowerment activities maintained the participation of women's groups and young women and girls when they might not otherwise have been able to continue. It is also hoped that long-term the investment in their economic empowerment will enable more girls to remain in school. (Monitoring report, SIHA).

An identified best practice of economic empowerment strategies was ensuring the viability of business opportunities, and trainings covering both the livelihoods skills and the way of making optimal use of these skills. For instance, in Yemen, some women were trained by *FHD* in sewing basics and livelihoods skills including marketing, planning and decision-making. A bazaar that was very popular was held to promote their products and helped ensure earned income for this work. Alternatively, in Jordan, *AWO's* vocational livelihoods training programmes were limited as they were too short to enable the female participants to learn a profession or obtain the certification necessary for employment and did not offer any material support for initiatives and start-ups. An external evaluation suggested that *AWO* could have helped the women conduct basic feasibility studies to ensure the sales of their products or services.

Another best practice identified regarding economic empowerment efforts is the importance of ongoing support and engagement of trained beneficiaries. For instance, in Kenya, *RCK* established quarterly meetings for women entrepreneurs, which equipped them to exchange ideas working for their businesses, address challenges and obtain peer support. In South Sudan, community action group members were trained by *SIHA* to support the establishment and operation of community-based savings and loan associations, and they regularly worked with these savings groups to register accounts and establish guidelines around the use of the savings and seed funds.

Some grantees identified the importance of changes in laws and policies that undermine protection and empowerment of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. Although these identified gaps were beyond the capacities of projects to solely change, they speak to the importance of partnerships and multi-level strategies to comprehensively prevent VAWG against this population. For instance, because more asylum-seekers with whom *ATINA* was working were starting to stay in Serbia (and not just transit through the country), the project identified the need to give more attention to policies and advocate for sustainable changes of the national legislative and strategic framework to allow for refugees' successful and sustainable integration. *FACT* in Malawi learned that some refugees have the education and expertise to practice professions (i.e. doctors, engineers, lawyers) but they cannot obtain employment in Malawi due to prohibitive laws. Such barriers could hinder the economic empowerment of refugees; an important protective factor against their exposure to VAWG. They noted that in future, legislators should be engaged to implement policies that safeguard the fundamental rights of refugees including the right to employment, education and to do business upon meeting certain conditions.

Gathering before a workshop at the Asylum Center.

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2.2.2 Strategies to respond to violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls

Grantees employed a diversity of strategies to improve responses for survivors of VAWG, focusing on violence experienced by refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. Several projects offered critical services themselves in light of identified gaps. For instance, *ATINA* runs one of the only shelters accommodating victims of trafficking in Serbia. This shelter provides safe accommodation for all women and girls – refugees and VAWG survivors in need of this type of support and offers urgent support 24/7 through their hotline. **Some grantees identified challenges to survivors of VAWG accessing services they were referred to.** For instance, in Afghanistan, *WAW's* project connected displaced women and their children to established women's shelters and legal centers. Yet, some women were reluctant to access these services for fear of losing family members, or because of negative perceptions of shelters after the country's political changes under Taliban control.

Grantees identified strategies they used to help survivors of violence overcome barriers to accessing services they were referred to, including through offering support or accompaniment. For instance, in South Sudan, SIHA's community action groups not only referred survivors to medical, legal, and psycho-social services but would also accompany them to these services as needed. **Some projects established or referred survivors of VAWG to one-stop services; another identified strategy to minimize barriers to survivors accessing services.** For instance, as noted through AWO's project in Jordan:

Centres for women which provide a multitude of services ranging from basic humanitarian services such as cash assistance to psycho- social, legal, vocational, and educational services. This enables the woman to access a variety of essential services at the same facility which reduces the burden of transportation costs and saves time and energy. (Monitoring report, AWO).

Some grantees identified the value of relying on community members to act as frontline counsellors and/or refer survivors of violence to additional services. For instance, in Kenya community-based counsellors acted as a link between clients and *RCK* for various services and were able to highlight emergency cases that required swift response from *RCK*. Some community members felt more comfortable reporting to these counsellors, for being from their communities. These counsellors were well-connected with refugee camp leaders, which facilitated the ability for VAWG survivors to seek help from the leaders. In addition, *RCK* conducted awareness raising sessions with caregivers and service providers who interact with SGBV survivors around psychological first aid for survivors, ethical principles such as confidentiality and doing no harm, and self-care skills to mitigate the witnessing of traumatic experiences. A representative from *WACT* in Palestine similarly noted the importance of ensuring access to quality services for refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, including through referrals via informal sources of support:

Where we have people living under occupation and a taboo in the issue of women accessing justice. It is literally life saving for women to find networks of women able to find them at the right moment and be there to refer them to the right place, to listen to them, to catch them when they may be in a continued cycle of violence and literally save their lives from being assaulted or killed by their families or anyone. Because being a woman facing GBV it means you are a person alone in this world. (Interview, 2 November 2022).

A few grantees identified the importance of training and supporting formal and informal providers to offer survivor-centered care or referrals, to enhance the trust and experience for survivors of VAWG. Some grantees trained service providers including police and health officials to offer survivor-centered, accessible, and comprehensive services to survivors of VAWG. Across the projects, many of these stakeholders appreciated the trainings for having improved their knowledge and skills to deliver higher quality services to survivors of VAWG.

Grantees also employed a diversity of strategies to improve access to justice for survivors of VAWG, including refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. This included regular engagement of representatives of key institutions (policymakers, courts, police officials etc.). For instance, in Mexico, *IMUMI* offered trainings to CSOs and officials from government agencies around processes of asylum and international protection in Mexico, the rights of female survivors of SGBV to international protection, and tools so these types of cases can be correctly identified and properly referred. *IMUMI* also completed an investigation around international best practices to form a document as a basis for this training and documented 150 cases of female survivors of violence in need of international protection. In Kenya, *RCK* trained police officers how to document evidence to ensure improved access to justice for survivors, as some VAWG cases are dismissed due to inadequate evidence. In Palestine, *WACT* identified that not all staff of the Shari-a courts (which are governed by religious law and responsible for family issues in the country) had sufficient experience in prosecution, law degrees, or were aware of best practice procedures and guidelines. *WACT* thus trained members of the Shari-a courts, including judges and family counselling centers that are part of the courts, on best practices for receiving female survivors of violence. *WACT* also produced and disseminated procedural guidelines targeting formal and informal justice actors that synthesized best practices around execution and decision-making at each legal stage (from the police to prosecution to the courts) to improve access to justice for survivors of VAWG. These guidelines were developed based on consultations with several national CSOs working in the field of women's and children's rights.

Another strategy used by some grantees to improve survivors' access to justice was to offer court accompaniment or legal counselling to help familiarize survivors with court processes and increase their confidence to access the justice system. For instance, in Kenya, RCK offered pre-trial counselling to survivors before and during court proceedings, which allowed survivors to access updates on ongoing cases and request clarifications for any questions. **As was the case for accessing services, grantees identified the importance of reducing barriers to survivors of violence accessing justice, especially refugee and/or forcibly displaced survivors.** For instance, *FACT* in Malawi established partnerships with the Women Judges Association of Malawi, Women Lawyers Association of Malawi and Gender and Justice Unit. Through this partnership, mobile courts were brought to the refugee camp where *FACT's* project took place, to ensure that reported cases of VAWG had a speedier trial. *FACT* also engaged members of parliament who in turn became more aware of the extent of SGBV in the refugee camp. As a result, the government implemented stiffer penalties for SGBV perpetrators. *FACT* also partnered with the police, especially those responsible for the protection of the refugee community, to convict perpetrators of SGBV more effectively. Community action groups were encouraged to report any challenges in the implementation of camp policies and cases of violation to relevant authorities, including the police, to hold them accountable.

Many grantees applied strategies to improve the mental health, well-being and resilience of target beneficiaries and help them manage trauma, which was identified as especially important when working with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. Indeed, mental health care is under resourced in most humanitarian settings, despite being a huge need. Exposure to conflict, post-conflict, and high-violence settings, as well as stress from displacement, creates multiple forms of trauma and increases the risk of severe mental health problems (Slegh et al. 2021). As a result, refugee and/or forcibly displaced people are particularly vulnerable to psychological distress and anxiety (Green et al. 2018). These risks may be offset by protective factors, including positive coping strategies, being surrounded by supportive peers, and having access to strong justice mechanisms and psychosocial support programmes (Carll 2008). A range of mental health strategies including those that can be implemented by lay personnel, have been demonstrated to work effectively in conflict and humanitarian settings (Bass et al. 2020). Moreover, efforts to improve mental health can be a critical violence prevention strategy (Stern et al. 2023; Ramsoomar et al. 2019; Tol et al. 2019).

Strategies applied by grantees to meet this objective included raising awareness of trauma related symptoms and teaching techniques to promote self-care and manage stress. For instance, in Iraq, trained Yezidi women held regular dialogues in a refugee camp to educate community members about trauma and self-help techniques. These sessions helped community members become more aware of how the genocide of Yezidis by ISIS had affected them and develop skills to support each other with recovery and healing more effectively. FYF also offered individual therapy sessions which were found to reduce suicidality, nightmares, or flashbacks, and improve emotional well-being among beneficiaries. **A few projects applied group-based storytelling, to offer women a safe space to share their experiences of trauma and violence, to better understand their impacts and to have opportunities for healing and collective care.** For instance, in Costa Rica, CENDEROS offered regular storytelling listening circles, facilitated by women leaders and activists. The listening circles were designed to offer a safe space for trust and collective care among women who had suffered violence, including refugee and/or displaced women. During these listening circles, exercises were carried out encouraging women to both speak and listen, and to foster self-esteem and self-care through identifying their skills, qualities, and abilities. This builds on the wider evidence suggesting the role of social support to improve mental health and act as a powerful source of healing from trauma (Hinton et al. 2013). A particular value of group-based approaches is the process of 'mutual aid' whereby participants can draw upon their experiences and needs to help fellow group members (Ward 2020).

CENDEROS training sessions

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2.3 Adapting programing to intersecting and compounding crises

2.3.1 Adaptive programming

Grantees identified the importance of applying adaptive programming, especially given the uncertain and challenging contexts where many of their projects were implemented. A common reason for adaptation identified was the changing nature of refugee's needs or patterns of migration due to a range of external factors from climate change to conflicts to political crises. For instance, because of the political crisis in Haiti, *IMUMI* identified an influx of refugees from Haiti, and the challenges of them accessing support given Mexico's position that Haitians are not eligible for asylum. In response, *IMUMI* issued advocacy documents around the feasibility for Haitians who had previously received refugee status in Brazil or Chile, to be offered legal protection, and a report that identified the vulnerabilities of Haitian female refugees to SGBV, since they tend to speak less Spanish, among other things. *IMUMI* also pivoted the project to hold informative workshops aimed at female SGBV asylum-seekers of Haitian origin. In an FGD, a representative from *IMUMI* identified the importance of monitoring political trends and public agencies, such as COMAR, who regularly make changes to the asylum-seeking process. They did so by building alliances with the government and with other CSOs.

Some grantees identified how government approvals, oversight or control could require adaptation of their projects. For instance, it took 10 months of negotiation to obtain permits and approval to start implementation for *FHD's* project in Yemen. *FHD* decided to transfer the project to a different district with more supportive local leadership, to facilitate project approval. In Nigeria, *EWEI* was restricted from using Twitter for their project as the government banned the use of this platform during implementation. The project had to pivot to solely rely on Facebook for their social media campaign and use other methods including radio to implement planned awareness raising activities. For *FACT's* project in Malawi, there was concern from refugee camp authorities that some of the rights-oriented trainings and capacity building of women and girls', and men and boys' groups, might develop some resistance in the camp. In response, *FACT* had to change some of the narrative within the grant itself. In one of the *FGDs,* a representative from *FACT* noted that: "Working in refugee settings, is not as easy as programming outside. Given you have to go through all levels of approval, interventions and approaches have to suit the norm in that setting." (FGD 1 English, 25 October 2022).

Some projects were implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was identified as a common cause of adaptation, at the same time as increasing the risk of VAWG, especially among refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. As identified by RCK in Kenya: *"Measures taken to address the COVID-19 pandemic such as movement restriction, dusk to dawn curfew and closure of businesses created financial instability and economic distress which placed women and girls in the community at a heightened risk of gender-based violence." (Monitoring report, RCK).* For many grantees, COVID-19-related restrictions including restrictions on movement and gathering, curfews, and closure of key project locations (i.e. schools, courts), led to significant postponement of planned project activities, or required significant revisions in implementation. For instance, in South Sudan, schools were closed for a significant portion of the project where the bulk of activities had been planned, and SIHA had to pivot to out-of-school and community-based activities. **Closure of government and state services (i.e. shelters) due to pandemic restrictions could generate a heavier burden on grantees to fill these gaps.** For instance, upon closure of state-run shelters in Serbia, women and children affected were accommodated in *ATINA's* safe houses. A few grantees identified how the COVID-19 pandemic caused challenges to countries processing refugees, which could compound the ongoing cycle of violence faced by refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. For instance, a grantee representative from *IMUMI* noted:

A common adaptation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic was pivoting planned in-person activities to online platforms, so that the projects could continue amidst pandemic-related restrictions and maintain trust and ongoing communication with target beneficiaries. A few grantees noted the importance of ensuring target beneficiaries could communicate with projects and access project services, even amidst the COVID-19 lockdowns, and so pivoted to communicating with participants remotely, including through WhatsApp, online messages, and e-mail.

Yet, challenges to pivoting online were identified across several projects including poor network connection, grantees' limited experience and capacities with online programming, unstable power supply, lack of access to mobile phones or internet for beneficiaries, and illiteracy. **For a few projects, it was necessary to build capacities of their own staff members and/or procure equipment (i.e. laptops, internet data) to facilitate online engagement.** Some grantees identified the value of building their organizational capacity to work remotely to be more prepared for future pandemics or scenarios that require it; especially likely when working in emergency or conflict settings. **Some projects aimed to build capacities of target beneficiaries to engage online.** For instance, the Kenya judiciary moved court operations online during initial COVID-19 restrictions. RCK supported survivors who lacked the necessary infrastructure and tech-literacy to participate in online court proceedings.

Several projects not only pivoted delivery, but also the actual content of projects, including to raise awareness of the links between COVID-19 and VAWG, how women and girls can protect themselves from the virus and mitigate the consequences of pandemic restrictions. For instance, in Mexico, *IMUMI* developed strategies to help women cope with the pandemic through developing a well-being manual with breathing exercises and tips to control anxiety, sharing relaxing music, and stories to help explain the pandemic to children. *IMUMI* also shared advice on how to identify symptoms of COVID-19 and where to access health care. In Bangladesh, content that raised awareness of the COVID-19 pandemic and its links to violence was developed by Badabon Sangho and shared with beneficiaries through text messages. Where permitted, localized courtyard meetings were held with women and girls to discuss safety tips and precautions related to COVID-19 and strategies to report VAWG and seek support amidst pandemic restrictions.

To help women and girls navigate the significant economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, several projects pivoted to have a stronger focus on economic empowerment including through offering financial assistance to meet the basic needs of women and girls (i.e. food, hygiene products, masks, cash). For instance, in Kenya, *RCK* gave women and girls affected by the COVID-19 restrictions (prioritizing refugee women and girls) cash assistance, supermarket vouchers and dignity kits to help meet their immediate needs. Yet, in one *FGD*, a representative from *RCK* identified the challenge of creating notions of financial dependency or raising expectations among beneficiaries through offering such financial support. Indeed, *RCK* faced challenges when they re-started their original plan of establishing microfinance activities, where some women did not pay back the microfinance loan accessed through their local savings and loans groups as they understood the funds to have the same terms as the initial cash assistance packages. IMIMU's project in Mexico identified a similar

challenge and the importance of strengthening tools and capacities of beneficiaries when offering immediate financial support, to avoid creating a situation of dependency.

The findings suggest the importance of carefully mitigating the potential risks of emergency cash transfers, especially when targeting refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. While in some humanitarian settings, emergency cash transfers have been found to prevent VAWG, in others they have had no impact, especially when the cash transfers are offered without any integration of gender norms or power dynamics trainings or interventions (Murphy et al. 2022). A review of 28 studies on the use of cash transfers in humanitarian settings found that 80% of studies reported some self-reported positive effect on IPV (Cross, Manell and Megevand 2018), although most of these studies were not rigorous impact evaluations. A pre- and post-evaluation of a 3-month emergency unconditional cash transfer in Syria that targeted heads of households (regardless of sex) found that women reported increased food security and reduced negative coping strategies. However, married women reported increased levels of IPV, which suggests the need to ensure adequate protection mechanisms, carefully monitor the potential for harm, and consider how cash transfers are delivered (i.e. whether given to men or women). (What Works 2020)

Some projects were able to resume to in-person activities once COVID-19 restrictions eased, though some programming adaptations were necessary, including by limiting the number of beneficiaries, changing the location (i.e. to outside) or reducing the length of activities. For instance, in Serbia, once reception and asylum centers could be re-opened, ATINA's activities were conducted outside these centers; yet this did not allow for the same degree of confidentiality or restriction of access. In one FGD, a representative from AWO's project in Jordan noted the concerns for beneficiaries to spend as much time together for the in-person activities: *"We faced a challenge that we have only been together for more than 45 minutes instead of having 60 minutes before. Because they started to be anxious about being together in one room." (FGD 1, 25 October 2022)*

The findings from this synthesis review align with other assessments of how the UN Trust Fund's flexible and core support for CSOs and WROs facilitated their quick adaptations in rapidly changing contexts (Perez del Pulgar 2023). Many projects funded through this special window were given non-cost extensions to be able to deliver the project results, which was necessary given the multiple and interlocking challenges and crises they faced. The findings speak to the fact that donors should be prepared for certain risks when funding projects in unstable environments, which are regularly inhabited by refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls.

Community Organizing Training.

© Arab Women Organization of Jordan
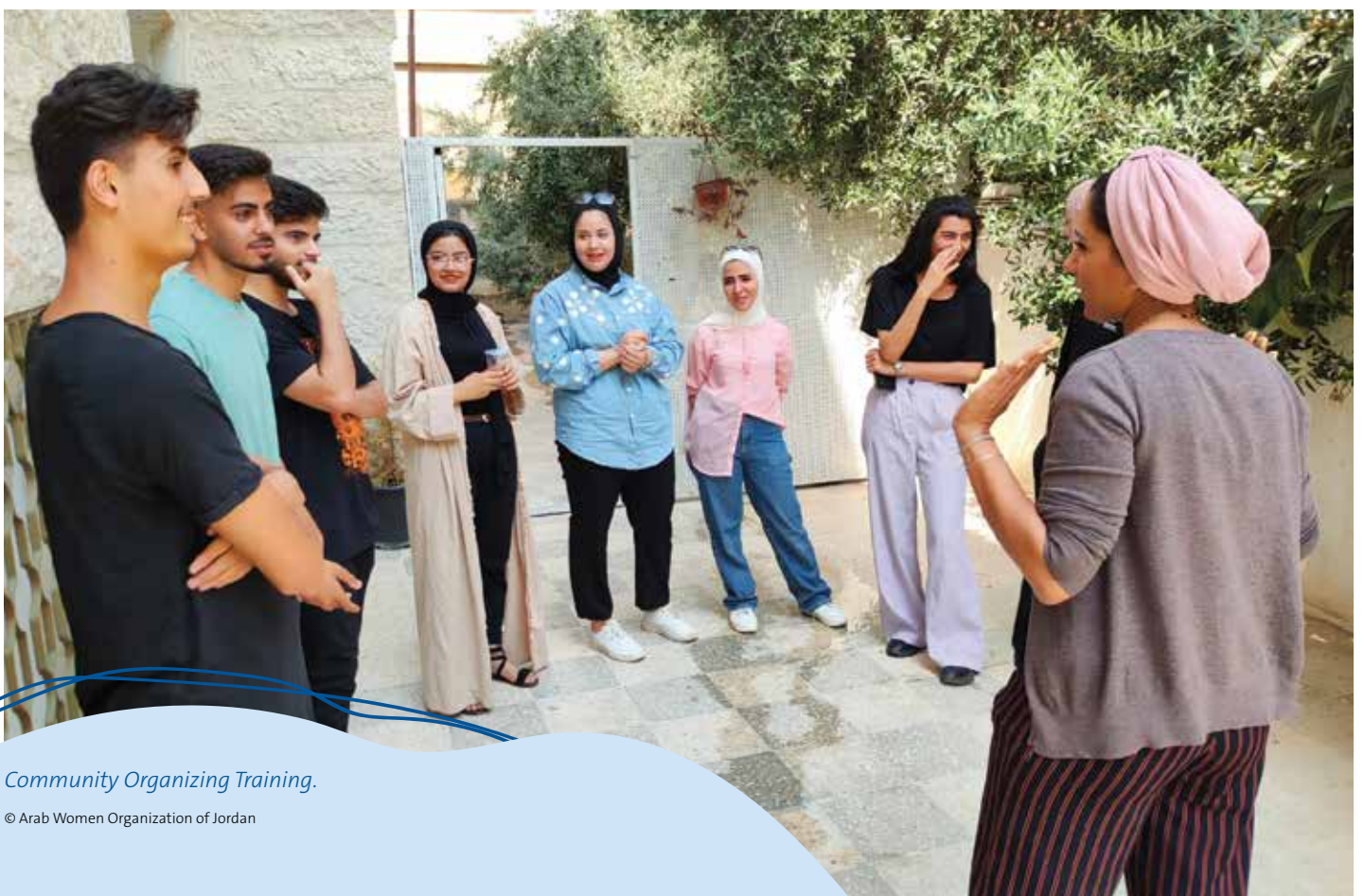
2.3.2 Monitoring, evaluation and learning to inform appropriate and responsive programming

Some grantees identified how their projects' monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEAL) helped inform programming that is adaptive and responsive to their changing contexts and needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. **A few grantees identified the importance of formative research to understand the local context and drivers of VAWG.** For instance, RCK in Kenya conducted a baseline survey, which explored community perceptions of physical and sexual violence against refugee and host community women and girls in intervention areas, trends on conviction of VAWG cases, perceptions of service providers, awareness of VAWG prevention, and response mechanisms and legal rights of VAWG survivors, and perceptions of self-worth. The baseline data identified gaps and challenges faced by refugee and host community women and girls in the project locations and helped to measure progress of key indicators and assumptions. Formative research conducted as part of *WACT's* project in Palestine helped to identify the context of VAWG in target communities, including gaps, and develop an intervention plan to address those gaps. For instance, the information derived from the needs assessment encouraged the project to prioritize problems women face when receiving services from the Shari-a courts.

Formative research could also help ensure project activities meet the needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. For instance, to plan and organize events to improve IDP camp residents' awareness of the impact of trauma and displacement on individuals and the community, *FYF* conducted a community survey with randomly chosen camp residents. The survey assessed knowledge of *FYF* and services offered, understanding of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and their ideas about what they would find useful as community event topics. The survey informed the need for *FYF* to focus community events on positive mental well-being and general support, followed by marital, relationship and family issues. The survey also identified the stressors of living in deprived conditions in an IDP camp for 5 years after a genocide and how this could be a risk factor for IPV. Considering these survey findings, *FYF* hired an external trainer to provide training in conflict resolution skills and to understand the long-term effects of conflict and trauma. *FACT* in Malawi initiated a preliminary policy and legal environment assessment to highlight the magnitude of policy and legal barriers to address SGBV among refugee women and those living with disabilities. This exercise was used as evidence for policy dialogues and discussions with government leaders.

Some grantees identified the importance of ongoing MEAL to identify if and how their projects were meeting the needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, including to mitigate any potential risks. In Serbia, ATINA's project regularly conducted needs assessments of refugee women and girl clients, whereby *"contextual relevance of the project is conditioned by the organization's learning/adaptive culture on one hand, and by its dedication to the survivor-centered approach, based on the continuous needs' assessments and respective delivery and a full informed participation of the beneficiaries." (External Evaluation, ATINA)* In Yemen, progress and activity reports against key indicators were completed monthly and reviewed by *FHD's* project team during project review meetings, to inform any project adjustments required. *FHD* relied on a diversity of monitoring tools including workplans, tracking activity reports, meeting minutes, *FGDs*, awareness-raising sessions monitoring tools, and M & E reports. These tools allowed *FHD* to iteratively learn throughout project implementation. In one *FGD*, a representative from *FHD* noted how these tools offered the opportunities for community members to raise concerns and ensured a process of regular feedback:

Field visits were conducted to follow up the activities and listen to the concerns, complains and suggestion of beneficiaries and staff. Beneficiaries are also able to raise their complaints and suggestion directly to the project staff during their outreach activities. (FGD 2 English, 26 October 2022).

CENDEROS in Costa Rica similarly identified how MEAL can be an important safety monitoring tool. Their project monitored the experiences of displaced women within institutions in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and identified violations of the rights of migrants and asylum-seekers. *CENDEROS*, with other organizations, filed complaints with national authorities and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

based on this monitoring. UNFPA's minimum guidelines on GBV programming in emergencies[10] identifies the responsibility of humanitarian actors to regularly monitor the potential GBV-related risks and vulnerabilities of affected populations, particularly women and girls, to inform measures that can mitigate such risks.

Meaningfully involving refugee and/or displaced women and girls in MEAL processes was identified as best practice. For instance, in Iraq, one of the IDPs who had been trained as a counsellor conducted evaluation interviews to assess the impact of *FYF's* group and individual therapy sessions. A *FYF* project report identified the importance of the data collector being an IDP and a survivor of violence, as she was able to collect more robust data from participants, with less social desirability bias.

Given the identified benefits of rigorous MEAL, a few grantees appreciated the UN Trust Fund's emphasis on MEAL, including through ensuring sufficient budget for this and offering capacity building to improve MEAL processes. As one grantee representative noted in an FGD:

The process and the sessions that UN Trust Fund has provided is very useful. They provide us with tools, guidance and take much care of the evaluation and we have the space to have enough money to do that when we design the project. The learning events and activities that the UN Trust Fund is doing throughout the fund years is very important and informative. (FGD 1 English, 25 October 2022).

A grantee representative from FYF in Iraq similarly noted how the dedicated funding for MEAL as part of the UN Trust Fund grant helped them to develop a better pilot project:

The MEAL that happened at the end of and during the UN Trust Fund grant helped us develop a better project. A lot of organizations don't have a lot of funding for MEAL. The success of this project was to be able to see what was working and what was not working and to create a better project. (Interview, 8 November 2022).

Challenges and limitations of the projects' MEAL processes were also identified. For instance, an external evaluation of *AWO's* project in Jordan noted that it was difficult to assess provision of VAWG protection services and knowledge gained for Syrian and Jordanian refugee and vulnerable women and girls, because of weakness in the MEAL design. The evaluators highlighted the importance of such knowledge to enhance the protection of women and girls from violence in crisis situations, and recommended that in future, *AWO* plan for better impact assessment through establishing baseline and endline measures, including to assess sustained impacts after completion of a project. Similarly, an external evaluation of *ATINA's* project in Serbia noted that their MEAL system and instruments did not offer an adequate framework for measuring envisioned changes and required further elaboration and support. The evaluation identified the importance of enhancing MEAL expertise, through developing and implementing organizations' capacities and the engagement of external MEAL experts from the inception phase. The evaluation also recommended that *ATINA's* MEAL would have been strengthened by assessing longer-term impacts of the project:

The project has influenced changes that reflect in improved institutions' response to VAWG, to sustain these changes to become the permanent way of institutional response to VAWG on an operational and policy level, ongoing monitoring of institutional response and advocacy actions needs to be continued. (External evaluation report, ATINA).

Although the UN Trust Fund's MEAL portfolio and related capacity building was highly appreciated, the findings also suggest some capacity gaps in this domain. More intensive capacity building and hiring external expertise, may be required to ensure rigorous MEAL.

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10 UNFPA Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies. Accessed at: https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/GBVIE.Minimum.Standards.Publication.FINAL_.ENG_.pdf.

2.4 Ensuring staff and organizational security and well-being

Many projects related challenges around hiring and retaining quality staff, especially when working with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, where staff are prone to operate in insecure contexts, and to experience burnout and/or vicarious trauma. For instance, *FYF's* project in Iraq noted the challenges of recruiting international clinical psychologists given the dangerous setting, and the requirement to evacuate them during periods of instability. This partly motivated the project to rather focus on training local, Yezidi women to provide psychological care. In Bangladesh, some Badabon Sangho team members were threatened by companies given the project's focus on challenging land displacement, and as a result, one staff member left the job. In South Sudan, a national protest was planned to denounce the government's limitations in implementing the country's peace agreement. The protest did not go ahead, but in the weeks preceding the proposed protest, many organisations and individuals were targeted by the National Security Service with threats and intimidation. Three *SIHA* staff were arrested by members of the National Security Service during a project event, and were released after subsequent intervention by the state governor and other *SIHA* partners. *WAW's* project in Afghanistan was implemented during the collapse of the former government, and after the Taliban's takeover, there was a pause where female staff were not allowed to come back to work. However, this issue was resolved after several negotiations on behalf of *WAW* with the Taliban groups. After the Taliban took control of the country, *WAW's* project also faced a challenge paying staff due to the bank restrictions on individuals and NGOs accessing their bank accounts. These challenges were shared with the UN Trust Fund and until it was feasible, the project received cash from their *WAW* New York office, or obtained cash from other UNDP or UN agencies which were partnering with the UN Trust Fund in Afghanistan.

Provision of Medical Services to gender-based violence survivors.

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Some grantees identified the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on staff, including risk of exposure to infection due to limited access to personal protective equipment (PPE), increase in burnout and mental health consequences. Some grantees aimed to mitigate these challenges by sharing the latest information on COVID-19 with staff, or access to PPE as needed, which was supported by flexible funding provided by the UN Trust Fund. In addition, some grantees related the challenges of growing inflation and economic pressures because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how this has led to higher staff turnover.

Given the challenges to recruit and retain staff for projects working with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, especially to operate in humanitarian and crisis settings, many grantees emphasized the importance of integrating robust self-care efforts for staff. For instance, *FYF's* project in Iraq regularly monitored the emotional well-being of all Yezidi counsellors through supervision sessions to help alleviate burnout and provide opportunities to de-stress. Some female counsellors who had experienced negative life events that affected their work were offered individual therapy. In Mexico, in addition to offering staff therapy sessions, *IMIMU* provided staff with economic incentives to participate in recreational activities aimed at reducing work stress and burnout. In Nigeria, *EWEI* hosted an overnight project retreat for all staff and partners, where a facilitator took participants through guided sessions on self-care and relaxation. *EWEI's* project further identified the importance of training staff on institutional risk mitigation and contingency planning, to be well equipped to support survivors of VAWG in the context of crises and emergencies. The need for self-care was similarly identified in a study in the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya where community workers and national staff reported heavy workload due to the high incidence of GBV cases, limited number of staff available, and challenges including insecurity, poor pay, opposition, or violence from community members (Izugbara et al. 2018). Staff safety and self-care have been identified as particularly important for staff working in humanitarian organizations, especially for those addressing GBV. UNFPA's Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to GBV in emergencies[11] identify the importance of establishing an environment where all staff working on issues of GBV are safe, able to take care of their physical and mental health and to access support through appropriate management, supervision, and psychosocial support.

A few grantees identified the value of budgeting for expenses related to retaining and supporting staff, and how this could be justified by donors for helping to strengthen the capacities of WROs and CSOs to work with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. Such budgets could include costs for professional development, individual and group supervision, and other strategies to support care and well-being of staff including to manage vicarious trauma. As recommended in the external evaluation of ATINA's project in Serbia:

Self-care funds could be used for diverse purposes based on staff needs, from additional supervision and psychological support, through paid recreation and additional vacations, to professional development. Given the nature of work itself, as well as the strenuous circumstances that further exacerbate its effects, this is of utmost importance. (External evaluation report, ATINA).

Importantly, the UN Trust Fund has a line in grant budgets dedicated for self-care activities, including for all projects funded under this special window. This commitment to self and collective care helped build the organizational resilience of grantees, which we turn to as the next key theme.

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11 UNFPA Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies. Accessed at: https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/GBVIE.Minimum.Standards.Publication.FINAL_.ENG_.pdf

2.5 Enabling organisational preparedness and resilience

The findings highlight the importance of equipping CSOs and WROs working with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls for organizational preparedness and resilience. All grantees identified the importance of flexible funding to be able to pivot their projects to respond to fluctuating and challenging contexts (especially common for those in humanitarian and crisis settings), but also to meet the changing needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. Several grantees appreciated the flexibility of the UN Trust Fund to allow for quite significant changes to their original programme designs, including in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as per the identified areas noted previously (i.e. pivoting to online, shifting target beneficiaries, changing activities such as offering food and cash assistance). As a grantee representative in one FGD noted:

Flexible financing is very necessary for us because when we faced the COVID-19 pandemic we had to switch a lot of our activities and how we delivered them, such as going from in person to online. Flexible financing allows us to respond quickly to external and unexpected pressures, which means that we can't deliver exactly as how we originally intended but we can still get to our goals through other ways. (FGD Spanish, 26 October 2022).

One grantee representative identified the particular value of the UN Trust Fund's contingency budget:

The emergency relief fund that the UNTF has provided also contributed greatly to maintaining all the much-needed services to ATINA's beneficiaries. It has helped expand the online counseling service, which is of utmost importance in these troubling times. Now, we able to provide the service to an even greater number of beneficiaries in need and assist them in this manner. (Monitoring report, ATINA).

Some grantees lamented the stringent requirements of donors, for being out of touch with realities on the ground, and appreciated that the requirements of the UN Trust Fund were easier compared to many donors. As one participant noted in an FGD:

Due diligence is a nightmare for some organizations. We can find other ways to make sure that this organization is eligible for funding without this process. It is exhausting and needs someone to be dedicated to do this for some organizations. The questions are repetitive and asking for more details that sometimes is not there. The UN Trust Fund is one of the easiest. They have a checklist, and we must provide documents, and we have a space to send the documents that are missing. (FGD 1 English, 25 October 2022).

Another grantee representative similarly expressed appreciation for the UN Trust Fund's more accessible reporting template and the support provided to ensure grantees feel comfortable using it:

The template we are using is very organized and easy to complete. This is one of strengths from the donor's side. There is a very clear explanation, and description for each section. The UN Trust fund provided an orientation on their project management system, which was very useful for us. They have provided feedback on each report, which is also helpful. (FGD 1 English, 25 October 2022).

Indeed, a few grantees appreciated the transparent and respectful relationship between UN Trust Fund and grantees, for positively influencing the success of their projects. As one grantee representative noted:

The process of communication was very good between us and the Trust Fund as it was more of a partnership than a donor receiver relationship. The understanding, and the level of responsibility and practice by the people working on this funding was an important part of achieving the success of our project. (Interview, 2 November 2022).

One grantee identified the importance of donors, including the UN Trust Fund, to conduct field visits to a project to better understand the contextual realities and project impacts, especially for projects working in crisis and humanitarian settings.

Challenges for WROs and CSOs operating in such settings to access funding that accommodates circumstantial obstacles were identified. For instance, a few grantees identified the need to obtain government approvals in their project settings (including special permission required to work in refugee camps) as a significant hindrance to access funding. A grantee representative from *AWO* in Jordan relayed how the need to obtain government approvals often delays projects or influences project activities, and is hindering many local organizations from accessing funding:

To get funding from any organization we must apply for approval from the relevant government ministry which takes up to 6-7 months. Ministries try to change some activities if they do not understand them. That is usually not possible because the project is already set and designed with a donor. After approval they ask for quarterly reports about implementation, about the finances, they may have visits without informing anyone at the organisation. A lot of organisations are losing their funds because of these struggles. (FGD 1 English, 25 October 2022).

Several grantees identified the importance of longer-term funding to support sustainability and accountability to beneficiaries, especially in settings where the need to get government approvals can reduce implementation timelines. For instance, it took six months for FACT in Malawi to get approval to work in a refugee camp. In an FGD, a representative from FACT suggested that since it can be so challenging to obtain approvals when working in humanitarian settings, it is important to be able to access longer funding (5 years instead of 3 years):

The ideal scenario given the existing funders for the humanitarian settings is there can be funding on a rolling basis to create sustainability. A 5-year time frame is much more suitable for a humanitarian setting give you can ground your intervention, like I said we lost a bit of the first year and the second year was COVID-19. In a 5-year time frame we could ground the intervention to create sustainability of the project itself. (FGD 1 English, 25 October 2022).

Some grantees noted that their projects would benefit from being eligible for another phase of funding from the UN Trust Fund to enhance sustainability of their efforts, as it is difficult to ensure sustainability of projects with funding cycles limited to 3 years.

In addition to longer-term funding, **some grantees identified the importance of core funding that was not always linked to specific projects but could be used to cover staff and organizational costs to equip the sustainability and responsiveness of organisations.** Core funding was identified as especially important given the unstable settings where many grantees work. In one FGD, a grantee representative from AWO in Jordan identified core funding as:

Essential to local organizations. Sometimes we need to have an activity outside any program we are implementing. In our work, the crises are urgent and come all of a sudden. Sometimes we have floods, we can be dealing with a genocide in another area. Core funds help to respond to these kinds of crises. (FGD 1 English, 25 October 2022)

Another grantee representative similarly commented on the importance of core and continuous funding for WROs and CSOs, especially when working with and to be accountable to vulnerable women and girls:

In an interview, a representative from WACT in the State of Palestine lamented how it is especially difficult to secure core funding for WROs:

Funding for WROs is always hard and not an easy process. To be able to accumulate work you need to have a sense of security to be able to build work and make it stronger and build better networks with other WROs. It is something that takes a lot of our time and effort to ensure we have core funding. (Interview, 2 November 2022).

Some grantees identified the importance of funding being directed to CSOs and WROs as they tend to work closely with communities and can thus respond to changing contexts and needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. The Trust Fund's flexible and core funding of grantees played an important role in supporting the capacities and organizational resilience of CSO and WRO grantees.

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3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This synthesis review offers an important contribution to the evidence by highlighting practitioner-based insights through a diversity of programmes that aimed to prevent and respond to violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. Concluding this report is a reflection on the contributions that resulted from this special window, followed by key recommendations to practitioners working to prevent VAWG, donors and researchers.

3.1 The special window timing and its focus on refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls

All projects funded through this special window were implemented between 2016-2022, capitalizing on the increased global attention and commitments to better respond to the ongoing refugee crisis. For instance, in 2018 the United Nations General Assembly affirmed the Global Compact on Refugees, a framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing, recognizing that a sustainable solution to the refugee crisis cannot be achieved without international cooperation. **The special window, viewed retrospectively, was well positioned to contribute to this wider momentum and to help translate this high-level global attention into positive, practical realities for refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls in local contexts.** By funding WROs and CSOs working with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, the UN Trust Fund's special window showcased the importance of recognizing this focus as part of the EVAWG agenda and leaving no one behind. This synthesis review highlights the relevance of this special funding window given the rise in global displacement and the common experiences for grantees to have demand greater than their capacities. Amidst these growing needs, there is an increasing erosion of the right to free asylum and more restrictive asylum policies globally, and grantees related such challenges and potential backlash against working with this population.

As crises are becoming increasingly protracted,[12] the distinction between traditional humanitarian and development actions and actors are often less clear (Pérez del Pulgar 2022). Preparedness, response, and recovery efforts require increased collaboration among humanitarian, development, and peace actors, working jointly to reduce growing gender inequalities (OECD 2021). This will require strengthening the resilience of locally owned VAWG prevention efforts, including by supporting WROs and CSOs to prevent violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls in all their diversities and as agents of change. The UN Trust Fund's special window supported the localisation agenda by funding WROs and CSOs to implement VAWG prevention and response activities, which uniquely straddle humanitarian and development programming. The special window also critically supported grantees' organizational preparedness and resilience, adaptivity, self-care, and MEAL.

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12 Protracted crises refer to situations in which a significant portion of a population is facing a heightened risk of death, disease, and breakdown of their livelihoods. While each protracted crises is distinct occurrence, there are several common characteristics which are often present, including duration or longevity; conflict; weak governance or public administration; unsustainable livelihood systems and poor food security outcomes; and breakdown of local institutions. https://www.humanitariancoalition. ca/protracted-crises

Adaptability by the UN Trust Fund required receptiveness, flexibility, and a strong relationship with grantees to ensure a thorough understanding of their changing needs and circumstances and those of the participants they work with. This included being responsive to a number of crises faced, including the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected many of the projects in this portfolio, while placing refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls at greater risk of violence and of being left behind in the pandemic responses. The pandemic underscored the importance of flexible and core funding to invest in grantees' organizational resilience and facilitate programmatic adaptations to rapidly changing contexts and overlapping crises. This special window allowed grantees to improve the situation of refugee and/or forcibly women displaced and girls that they worked with, at a time when they were exceptionally vulnerable and at risk because of the pandemic.

This special window enabled research and learning around how violence prevention programming can meet the needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls; a critical intersection to be aware of for the broader EVAWG agenda. The learning that emerged across the portfolio emphasized the importance of programming to both prevent and respond to violence that is specifically targeted to this sub-group.

3.1.1 The special window's funding impact for those working with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls

In the FGDs and interviews, many grantees noted the significant value of being able to apply for organizational funds under a special window focused on violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, which meant not having to compete with other EVAWG agendas. This window was appreciated given the limited funding in humanitarian settings that focuses on prevention of VAWG, and/or for which WROs and CSOs are eligible for. Indeed, most humanitarian funding mechanisms are short-term in nature, not responding to the protracted, longer- term, and complex humanitarian needs (Pérez del Pulgar, 2022). A strength of the projects funded through this window is that they contributed to both humanitarian needs and broader development needs, which marks an important contribution given the typically siloed development and humanitarian funding.

The fact that the UN Trust Fund provides long-term, flexible and core funding, and prioritizes organizational care, makes it uniquely positioned to support WROs and CSOs working with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. Additionally, the UN Trust Fund's standard capacity building and MEAL portfolio contributed to building the organizational capacities of grantees and helped strengthen their pivotal role to work with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. **In 2022 the UN Trust Fund launched a call for proposals for WROs and CSOs working in crisis settings to address VAWG by providing longer-term, comprehensive and lifesaving services.** With its longstanding experience of working with CSOs and WROs to end VAWG, the UN Trust Fund can play a pivotal role to scale up efforts to empower these actors operating in complex, protracted crises. This funding call will respond to existing gaps in complex contexts where growing longer-term needs require sustained interventions (Pérez del Pulgar 2022). Nonetheless, the findings from this synthesis review suggest the importance of prioritized efforts to prevent and respond to violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. The UN Trust Fund should thus consider re-establishing this special funding window, or alternatively carefully monitor if and how the focus on refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls is mainstreamed across their entire funding portfolio to ensure sustained support to meet the ever-increasing number of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls.

The recommendations below are offered based on learnings that emerged from the entire synthesis review, including concrete recommendations offered by grantees during the FGDs and interviews. The recommendations target three specific groups: 1) practitioners, 2) donors, and 3) the EVAWG research community.

3.2 Recommendations for practitioners aiming to prevent and respond to violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls

1. **Ensure transparent and inclusive recruitment of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls as programme participants.** Practitioners should appreciate that refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls are not a homogenous group and can face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and vulnerability to violence (i.e. considering disability, class, age, ethnicity, LGBTIQ+, whether they are forcibly displaced persons or refugees). Intentionally engaged refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls may change throughout project implementation, which can depend on fluctuating factors including organizational capacities in response to demand, input from government and key stakeholders or the changing nature of forced migration and displacement.

2. **Ensure careful engagement of critical stakeholders for delivery and design of programmes intended for refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls.** To comprehensively prevent violence against refugee and/or displaced women and girls, it is important to meaningfully engage men and boys, including as agents of change, to prevent and mitigate VAWG, which aligns with UNFPA's minimum standards to prevent GBV in emergencies. It can also be important to engage local communities as participants to avoid stigma or backlash against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, especially when working in deprived or emergency settings.

3. **Equip refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls to participate as decision makers and co-designers of projects, rather than as passive recipients.** This is empowering and best practice (Anderson 2019), and can help ensure appropriateness of programmes given the commonality to work with a diversity of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls (i.e. from a range of backgrounds, languages, countries). Participatory engagement of communities in humanitarian settings has also been identified as important to mitigate the risk of harm including to exacerbate VAWG (Murphy et al. 2022). Refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls were engaged in a diversity of roles for projects covered in this synthesis review, including as activists, lay counsellors, and data collectors. Building the capacities of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls can also support the sustainability of projects.

4. **Carefully collaborate with stakeholders who have influence and decision-making power concerning the lived experiences of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, including UN agencies, government and religious leaders, service providers, justice actors, and other CSOs or NGOs.** Such collaboration can be critical for buy-in and access to projects (i.e. to work in refugee camps), help identify and map available services and referrals, and inform programming to better meet the needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. Key stakeholders can have significant influence on community members' attitudes and norms related to VAWG and gender equality, and their engagement can help enhance the sustainability of projects. Collaboration with service providers and justice officials can help to address barriers to refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls accessing services or justice. Collaborating with other CSOs (i.e. disability rights or LGBTIQ+ rights organizations) can help ensure a more intersectional approach to working with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls.

5. **Build the evidence base around what works to prevent violence, including with women and girls who are not refugees and/or forcibly displaced.** The findings of this review further attest to the value of longer-term programming that addresses the underlying causes of violence and does not solely rely on awareness raising, which is typically unable to prevent VAWG on its own (Stern et al. 2021). It is important for prevention programming to address risk factors that make refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls more vulnerable to violence, including through supporting their mental health and trauma related needs; addressing any information gaps, including in relation to available services, raising awareness of their rights and particular risk factors for violence; and teaching activist and advocacy skills. Economic empowerment activities may be warranted given that refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls are more likely to be socio-economically disadvantaged or have limited access to state-sponsored safety

nets. It is important to ensure the viability of economic activities, offer sufficient trainings to ensure acquisition of the intended profession or skill, and ongoing support of beneficiaries. However, economic empowerment activities, especially emergency cash transfers, need to be implemented and monitored carefully so as to not create situations of dependency, and/or increase women and girls' risk of violence. Indeed, an essential component of any humanitarian response is to reduce the risk of GBV by implementing mitigation strategies as part of all GBV prevention and response efforts.[13]

6. **Alongside efforts to prevent violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, it is critical to ensure access to quality, survivor-centered violence response services and justice mechanisms.** This review suggested the importance of integrating prevention and response efforts since women and girls may seek services or report violence in response to prevention activities and given the vulnerabilities of refugee and/or displaced women and girls to violence. This recommendation builds on the evidence that establishing survivor-centered response systems is an important strategy for supporting an enabling environment in conflict and humanitarian settings (Murphy et al. 2022). It is important to not only offer information about available services, but also support and accompaniment to address barriers to accessing services, which are often heightened amongst refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls for multiple reasons (i.e. language, lack of legal status, particular stigma). This review suggested that one-stop services that are situated within reach of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, with access to multiple services, drawing on community-based counsellors, and providing court pre-counselling, could help minimize barriers to this population accessing violence response and/or justice services.

7. **Given the common challenges of recruiting and retaining staff for projects that work with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, it is important to prioritize well-being and safety of staff, including to manage vicarious trauma.** Programmes should offer self-care activities for staff which can include professional development activities, individual and group supervision, and economic incentives for staff to participate in self-prioritized activities. UNFPA's Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to GBV in Emergencies similarly identifies the importance of supporting staff performance by encouraging self-care and safety.[14] To ensure staff safety, especially for projects working in crisis or humanitarian settings, it is warranted to carefully monitor political situations and keep staff updated, have in place rigorous security and safety protocols for staff, and train staff in risk mitigation and contingency planning.

8. **Rigorous monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEAL) should be applied to help inform adaptive programming, which is commonly needed in response to fluctuating contexts or changing realities of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls.** Formative research can help understand local drivers of VAWG, particularly among refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, which can help inform project design. MEAL should allow for beneficiaries to share regular feedback, including any risks or concerns, and can thus be a tool for participatory engagement and to monitor for harm. MEAL is a skill in and of itself and requires internal and external support, dedicated funding, and capacity building. Ideally, MEAL should include a baseline and endline assessment to be able to demonstrate project impacts, and assessments after a project ends to demonstrate sustainability and longer-term outcomes. This will help contribute to the limited evidence around what works to prevent violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls.

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13   Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action. Accessed at: https://gbvguidelines. org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2015-IASC-Gender-based-Violence-Guidelines_lo-res.pdf

14   https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/GBVIE.Minimum.Standards.Publication.FINAL_.ENG_.pdf

3.2.1 Recommendations for donors

1. **Donors should offer longer-term (minimum of 3 to 5 year grants) and flexible funding to organizations working with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls so that programmes can be responsive to their changing needs, and to the typical fluctuating realities when working in crisis and humanitarian settings.** Flexible funding can include abilities for grantees to make changes around programme timing, key stakeholders to target, and activities. It is often challenging for WROs and CSOs to obtain approval to work in crisis or humanitarian settings, and these potential delays to implementation should be considered for timing and duration of funding. Longer-term funding can support the sustainability of such projects, and grantees' accountability to refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. Increasing and supporting multi-year investments in the institutional capacities of CSOs, including WROs, aligns with the Grand Bargain's commitment to localization.

2. **Donors should dedicate a percentage of project funding for WROs and CROs working with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls to include activities to support collective care, well-being, and safety of their staff.** Staff working with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls have a higher likelihood of facing challenges including safety concerns, insecurities, burnout, and vicarious trauma; all of which can affect the ability of WROs and CSOS to recruit and retain quality staff. Such dedicated funds can help strengthen the capacities of WROs and CSOs to play their critical role in preventing and responding to violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. Given the common high turn-over of WRO and CSO staff in humanitarian and emergency settings, such efforts can also help strengthen the institutional capacities of actors operating in these environments.

3. **Donors should support core funding of WROs and CROs working to prevent VAWG, including those that are engaging refugee and/or displaced women and girls.** Core funding includes organization's operational costs (i.e. to cover staff salaries) that are not necessarily tied to a specific project, which can support organizations' security and responsiveness to rapidly changing contexts and needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. Core funding is often difficult for WROS and CSOs to secure, especially for those that work in humanitarian and crisis settings, and so donors should respond to meet this critical need.

4. **Donors need to strike a balance between due diligence and not overly burdening WROs and CSOs working with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, who are often operating with limited funding and/or staff capacities, in challenging environments.** It is important to build the capacities of WROs and CSOs to meet specific donor reporting requirements (i.e. templates they need to complete, meeting financial due diligence requirements), and where feasible, work to simplify reporting requirements. Donors should provide regular opportunities for two-way dialogue with grantees, and ideally conduct field visits to projects to gain a better understanding of the contextual realities, which is especially important when funding projects operating in crisis and humanitarian settings. Donors should be considerate of typical challenges WROs and CSOs face in such settings and the influence these may have on project timelines, including obtaining approvals and accessing funding.

5. **Donors should ensure a meaningful budget and sufficient capacity building to ensure robust MEAL processes.** This should not only entail a final, external evaluation, but include documentation of practice-based knowledge and/or operational research, which can be used by grantees to inform adaptive programming. Formative research is especially valuable to inform contextualised programme design that addresses risk factors that make refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls more vulnerable to violence. MEAL is an important mechanism to monitor adherence to the principles of doing no harm and leaving no one behind, and can help contribute to the knowledge gap around what works to address violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. Donors should support research and knowledge-sharing initiatives to advance the evidence base on effective interventions to prevent and respond to VAWG in crisis and humanitarian settings and ensure that this research is informed by the perspectives and experiences of affected women and girls.

6. **Given the limited funding with this focus and significant need, donors should prioritize funding to WROs and CSOs to prevent violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls.** WROs and CSOs have an important role to play in preventing and responding to violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, as they tend to work closely with these beneficiaries, which can allow them to adapt efforts to meet their changing needs. This synthesis review demonstrated how these actors may also fill a void in services that are not offered by governments (i.e. offering shelters to refugees). Dedicating funding to these actors aligns with recommendations for efforts to prevent VAWG in humanitarian settings to be led by WROs and ensure that WROs have leadership positions throughout programme implementation (Murphy et al. 2022).

3.2.2 Recommendations for researchers in the field of ending VAWG

1. **More research is needed to understand what works and how to prevent violence against refugee and/or forcibly women and girls.** This includes how best to recruit and engage refugee and/forcibly displaced women and girls, especially given the common challenge of limited capacities to meet the demands from this sub-group and in order to leave no one behind. There is also a need to better understand how to adapt evidence-based programming that has been shown to work with women and girls who are not refugees/forcibly displaced to better meet the needs of this sub-group. Refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls are of course not a homogenous group, and it is important to better understand how programming can apply an intersectional approach when working with this sub-group in all their diversity. PBK could significantly contribute to these research gaps. More initiatives are needed that can help translate research findings into practical recommendations amongst different stakeholders (policy makers, practitioners and donors), and also for the CSOs and WROs themselves. The UN Trust Fund's knowledge exchange hub (SHINE) should consider including a focus on work with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. SHINE is accessible in 50+ languages and could be a valuable tool for co-creating and helping to build the knowledge base.

2. **More research is needed to inform programme design and implementation elements that should be considered depending on the intervention setting (i.e. whether working in refugee camp settings, in urban displacement settings, with host communities, mobile populations, in transit or host countries).** The nature of VAWG programming varies from one context to another and documenting the specificities of how VAWG prevention programmes can best meet the needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls depending on the phase of migration and forced displacement or the type of crisis (i.e. conflict, post-conflict, re-settlement), is warranted. Cross comparative and synthesis reviews across multiple and diverse settings, such as this one, will help contribute to this evidence gap.

3. **More research is needed to assess the characteristics and factors underlying the adaptive capacities and resilience of WROs and CSOs, particularly those working with refugee and/or forcibly displaced and women and girls.** This is especially important given the common challenges and need for adaptive programming when working with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. Such insights could also generate lessons around how to foster the adaptive capacities and resilience of WROs and CSOs that aim to prevent and respond to violence against this sub-group.
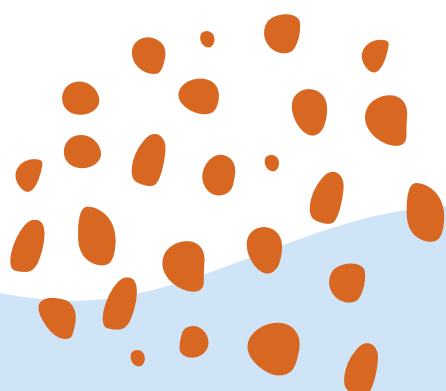
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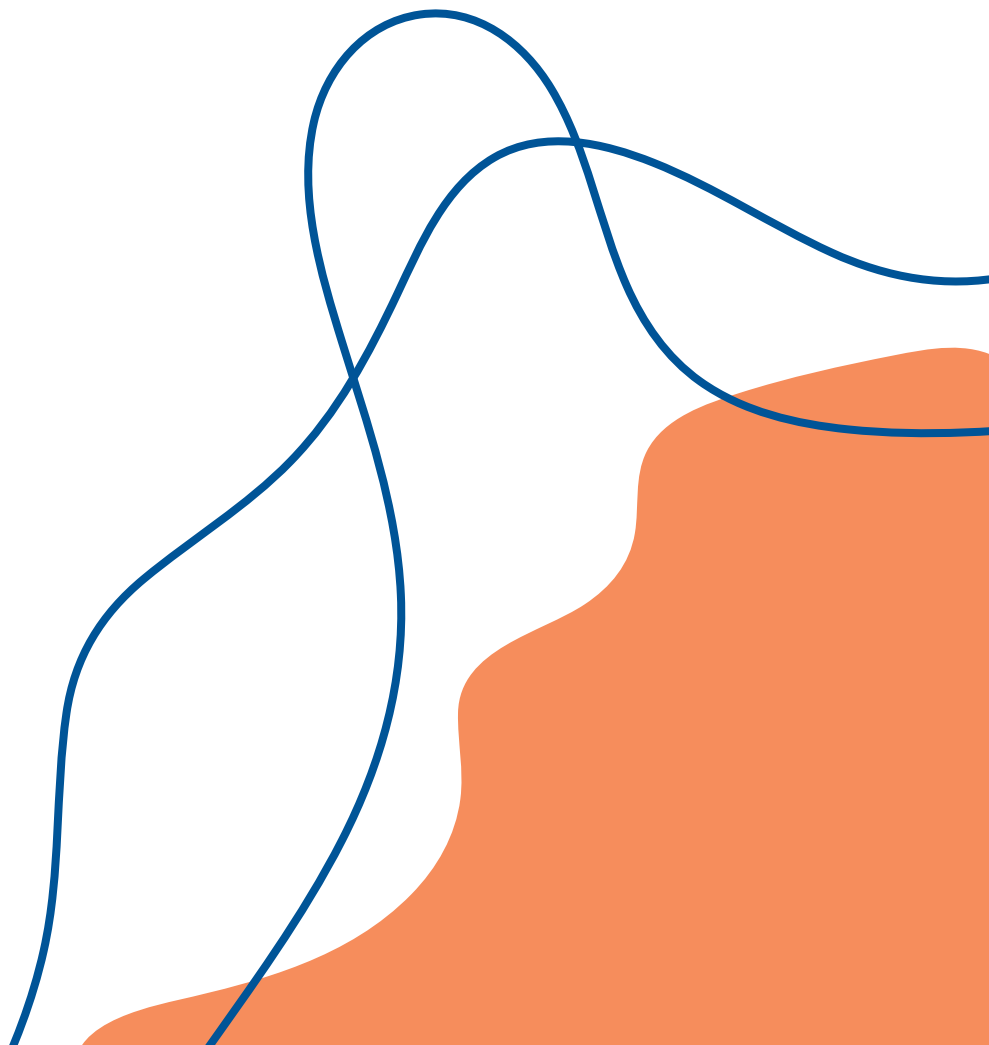
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Selection and Description of Projects

13 of the 18 projects funded through this special window were selected for this brief, ensuring representation of all countries where there are projects under this portfolio. Efforts were also made to ensure a diversity of implementing organisations, project strategies and objectives.

Country, Organization, Justification for Inclusion dates	Project Summary
Bangladesh **Badabon Sangho** Only special funding window project in Bangladesh	This project is supporting women who have been or remain at risk of being displaced in four sub-districts of Bagerhat district in southwest Bangladesh. Key activities include educating women about their rights and gender-based violence while linking them with public services; raising awareness about violence against women, including in activities that involve men and boys; and engaging with police, land officials, elected bodies and legal aid committees to improve responses to violence against women.
Nigeria **Empowering Women for Excellence Initiative (EWEI)** Only special funding window project in Nigeria	The project focuses on preventing and responding to violence against women and girls in two semi-urban communities: Ungwan Dosa in Kaduna North and Ungwan Romi in Kaduna South. The grantee provides survivors of violence safe spaces where they can access support, build their confidence and enhance their capacity to address violence. The initiative also works to improve community support to address violence against women and girls using participatory and community-based approaches.
Malawi **Facilitators of Community Transformation (FACT)** Only special funding window project in Malawi	This project focuses on community and national interventions to prevent and address family and community violence against refugees in Malawi. The project adopts a holistic strategy of increasing the effectiveness of legislation, polices and national action plans and strengthening community prevention, implementation and monitoring of sexual and gender-based violence against women and girl refugees. Using a variety of activities delivered by various partners, FACT is undertaking a legal assessment of the current policy and convening dialogues to raise the issues and lobby for greater protection of refugee women's rights. The grantee also focuses on raising awareness among refugees to empower them to demand their rights and among the general public to support these rights.
Yemen **For Human Development Foundation (FHD)** Only special funding window project in Yemen	This project aims to increase access to multisectoral services for internally displaced women and girl survivors of violence in the districts of Aldhihar and Dhiassufal in the Ibb province of Yemen. To achieve this the grantee works to identify and address the needs of this group of survivors and to recognize and address the needs of the vulnerable host community. A central element of the initiative is increasing the capacities of local humanitarian organizations to support and empower internally displaced women and girl survivors of gender-based violence, including by establishing two safe spaces and providing psycho-social and medical assistance and referral services. Engaging men and boys and training are also an important aspect of the project.
Iraq **Free Yezidi Foundation (FYF)** Meets the needs of particularly vulnerable group (Yezidi women and girls). Women for Women International (the other organisation funded to do work in Iraq) is also already represented through the project in Afghanistan.	This project aims to strengthen the work of a women's center; the Free Yezidi Foundation runs in an IDP camp in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The project focuses on providing services to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence and other female IDPs. The aim is to expand the capacity of the center so more Yezidi women can avail of services provided and to add counselling services for women survivors of violence and other trauma. ISIS has targeted the Yezidi population, and Yezidi women and girls in particular.

Country, Organization, Justification for Inclusion dates	Project Summary
Costa Rica **Fundación Centro de Derechos Sociales de la Persona Migrante (CENDEROS)** Only special funding window project in Costa Rica	This project works to address violence against women and girls in the context of the refugee crisis in Costa Rica. This project specifically targets refugee women and girls from Nicaragua in two districts in the canton of Upala (the San José district and the Delicias district) who are at risk of or who have experienced gender-based violence. The project empowers and protects women and girls from violence by providing them with information about their rights and referring them specialized services and networks for financial and psychological support. CENDEROS also works to raise awareness among government officials, community groups, lawyers, the police and other organizations on how to prevent violence and discrimination against refugee women and girls.
Kenya **Refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK)** Refugee Consortium of Kenya is a woman-led, Kenyan organization. Important lessons can be learned from this project as it relates to localization.	This project works to improve behaviours, practices and attitudes in order to reduce the incidence of gender-based violence, with a special focus on refugee and internally displaced women and girls in Nairobi and Garissa counties. The project aims to increase survivors' access to justice as well as increase the rate of successful prosecution through better access to legal aid, representation and support. The project offers survivors of GBV psychosocial assistance to enhance their coping skills and improve their self-esteem and be more prepared to face perpetrators and recount their experiences in court. Moreover, capacity building and training among stakeholders, as well as partnerships forged by the Refugee Consortium of Kenya with the government, help ensure the sustainability of these improvements in the lives of the refugee women and girls.
Mexico **Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración A.C. (IMUMI)** Only special funding window project in Mexico	This project is strengthening protection measures offered in Mexico to female asylum-seekers who are survivors of violence. It is working to improve service provision – including legal aid, medical and psychological assistance, and expert advice – during the asylum process. It is also gathering information and developing public policy recommendations to better serve the needs of women and girl asylum-seekers.
Serbia **Citizens Association for Combating Trafficking of Human Beings and All Forms of Gender-based Violence (ATINA)** Only special funding window project in Serbia	This project is aimed at women and girl refugees and asylum-seekers, including victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation. The project operates in several areas of Serbia, where large refugee populations reside. These areas include: asylum centers in Krnjaca in Belgrade, Presevo, Bujanovac, Banja Koviljaca, Adasevci and Bogovadja; the Maternity House in Belgrade; and ATINA's safehouses. ATINA provides access to information and services and empowers these women and girls towards active participation and leadership. Mobile teams, consisting of a social worker, psychologist and cultural mediator, operate in reception centers and in the field to provide support and further referral for appropriate services, including counselling, legal assistance and economic empowerment. ATINA also holds workshops to enable women to advocate for their own needs and work to sensitize local institutions on the special requirements of women and girl refugees.
South Sudan **Strategic Initiative for Women in The Horn of Africa Network (SIHA)** Only special funding window project in South Sudan	This project promotes positive changes in attitudes, behaviours and practices to end sexual violence against women and girls in four refugee camps: the Nazareth, Masna and Lokoloko camps for internally displaced people and Alel Chok camp in Wau. The project empowers women and mobilizes communities, improves protection mechanisms and ends the culture of violence, which is regarded as the root/leading cause of the problem. Applying participatory learning methods incorporating local community knowledge and expertise, the project works to engage over a thousand young women and girls in training and extracurricular programmes around gender equality and violence against women and girls. The project encourages 75 activists to participate in capacity building, dialogue and awareness-raising sessions. The project strengthens grassroots women's organizations through capacity building and addresses patterns of sexual violence against women and girls through education, community awareness and the direct engagement of and with men. SIHA collaborated with the Ministries of Education and of Gender, Child and Social Welfare; academic institutions, community members, students and educators, men and youth, traditional leaders and civil society organizations.

Country, Organization, Justification for Inclusion dates	Project Summary
Jordan **Arab Women Organization of Jordan (AWO)** The insights from this project provide the opportunity to assess the impact of multiple interventions benefitting vulnerable refugee women and girls (legal awareness, life skills, childcare, literacy, etc.) AWO also has experience supporting the second chance education global programme in refugee camps, which is an important dimension in addressing the educational needs of refugees that can assist them to attain employment and income, as part of the WEE model (cash for work, education, employment, etc.) AWO are also a repeat grantee of the latest cycle.	This project was implemented in Irbid and Mafraq northern governorates, which border Syria and host Syrian refugees. Using a survivor-based approach, the project targets Syrian refugees, but also vulnerable Jordanians from Mafraq and Irbid hosting communities and survivors of sexual gender-based violence and domestic violence. The beneficiaries range from adolescents to elderly women, including rural women. The project also works with men and boys. The project: (1) provides safe spaces and services in two AWO women safe centers, assisting beneficiaries with online and direct legal and psycho-social support, and offering case management as well as lifesaving skills training and counselling to help them cope with the crisis; (2) advocates with key State actors for effective implementation of national legislation addressing violence against women and girls; (3) provides legal counselling services to men and boys to ensure they understand and support women; and (4) runs digital literacy courses for AWO staff in the field, the project's beneficiaries and community members.
Afghanistan **Women for Afghan Women (WAW)** Only special funding window project in Afghanistan	This project works to improve access to essential, safe and adequate multisectoral services for internally displaced and returnee women and girls in Afghanistan, including those who are survivors or at risk of violence. The project, implemented in the Balkh, Faryab and Kunduz provinces in Afghanistan, works to improve the physical and mental health of survivors of violence against women and their children and safer reintegration of survivors and their families through a survivor-centered approach. It also works to increase survivors' access to and ability to engage with economic opportunities. To achieve these results, Women for Afghan Women aims to provide survivors with shelter and meet their basic needs (including dignity kits); deliver counselling sessions, awareness-raising sessions on rights and information about the resources and services available; and offer case management and referral services (including legal aid).The project also supports families by helping place their children in schools, offering vocational skills training and providing information to government officials and civil society organizations to help them better assist the process of reintegration.
State of Palestine **Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC)** Only special funding window project in the State of Palestine	This project is being implemented in six communities in Area C of the West Bank to address issues around the access to justice. The project primarily focuses on women and girls who are displaced or at risk of being displaced, among them refugees, survivors of violence and women living in shelters as a result of gender-based violence. The project also reaches formal and informal justice actors, police officers, community members, legal officers and media personnel. The project adopts a three-fold approach to address the gaps identified which hinder access to justice for at-risk women: (1) in-depth coordinated actions with key formal and informal justice actors and institutions; (2) building women-led community forums to pursue justice and advocate for an end to violence against women and girls along with key justice stakeholders; and (3) promoting online female digital campaigning, awareness raising, knowledge building and advocacy.

Appendix B: Methodology

A key focus of the UN Trust Fund over the last decade has been to support WROs and CSOs working with marginalized women and girls experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination. Since 2016, the UN Trust Fund has been providing support – through a special funding window to WROs and CSOs dedicated to addressing violence against women and girls who are refugees and/or forcibly displaced, with this portfolio spanning 13 countries. With a number of these projects closing and the special window coming to an end, the UN Trust Fund commissioned this synthesis review to collate results and lessons learned across the portfolio of closed and active projects focused on violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. The synthesis review had the following research objectives:

- To synthesize and analyze key lessons emerging from the portfolio focusing on addressing violence again refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls
- To reflect retrospectively on this special window
- To identify key lessons for donors around supporting EVAWG programming with women and girls who are refugee and/or forcibly displaced

This synthesis review followed the approaches and methods associated with qualitative meta-synthesis, which aims to bring together findings on a chosen theme in a way that the results should (in conceptual terms) be greater than the sum of the parts (Finlayson & Dixon 2008:60). The synthesis review emphasized the collation of practice-based knowledge (PBK), which is the process of 'experiential learning by doing', including critical reflection on place-based practice.[15] PBK is particularly suited to complex causal systems and environments, in particular to identify best practices to prevent and respond to violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. At the same time, PBK needs to move beyond practice-based insights of an anecdotal nature only, by improving rigour and robustness in collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing, sharing, and applying this important source of knowledge (Palm and Clowes 2019). This synthesis review makes an important contribution by extracting PBK embedded in diverse contexts through multiple projects that all aimed to prevent violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls. The brief methodology is robust through drawing on multiple insights across space (13 UN Trust Fund funded projects), time (multiple time points within projects) and from diverse perspectives (grantees, evaluators, peer review, etc.).

PBK centers the concrete experiences of practitioners implementing programmes within specific local contexts (Faris and Jayaserkara 2019). In doing so, this process does not separate knowledge from its specific context and producers, which helps to decolonize entrenched knowledge hierarchies and enable participation by often excluded voices (Weber et al. 2014). Sources closest to the ground and written at the time of implementation are likely better able to center the insights of practitioners. Formal project reports and evaluations can be sources of PBK but require careful mining, and ideally to be supplemented by primary data collection. Evaluations and project reports can contain and consolidate PBK insights, especially if some of their sections allow for practitioner reflection where implementors may share informal learnings regarding why and how they did things in practice, including challenges and adjustments made along the way (Kwok 2016). This includes reflections on how programmes were shaped by wider events and how actions of programme participants, field staff and other local actors shaped programme processes and outcomes (Faris and Jayaserkara 2019).

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15 PBK is the cumulative knowledge and learning acquired by practitioners from designing and implementing diverse programmes in different contexts, including insights gained from observations, conversations, direct experiences, and programme monitoring (The Prevention Collaborative 2020, inspired by Raising Voices, Uganda).

In identifying relevant PBK, the focus was on layered PBK, which is more than only a statement of decision and outcome, but also includes detail, context, narrative, cumulative learning, and/or complexity around why and how. An inductive approach allowed data to drive the analysis and report content. In coding PBK for this brief, the following was prioritized:

• Critical reflection by implementors (and beneficiaries) on their embedded practice
• Textured insights which surface the 'why' and 'how' of strategies within a specific time and place
• Unexpected programmatic and operational adaptions made due to the wider context
• Challenges projects faced in practice and if/how they were overcome
• Lessons from approaches that failed or issues that emerged as complex or ambiguous
• Similarities/differences that were seen to resonate between diverse contexts
• Emergent role/contribution (if any), of WROs/CSOs and the UN Trust Fund in the humanitarian space.

The following questions of interest further guided the grounded, thematic analysis applied to the data:

1. What beneficiaries/partners were reached through this special window and what documentation do we have of the impact on their lives, including in meeting previously unmet needs of these beneficiaries/partners? What were the challenges in reaching refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls?

2. What is the perceived difference (according to partners and beneficiaries) in the UN Trust Fund's approach to its work with WROs/CSOs supporting refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls compared to other donors? What is the added value of the UN Trust Fund in this space?

3. What are the findings on types of interventions that CSOs/WROs are using effectively to work with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls? (Why are certain interventions that have been used effective/not effective, particularly for refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls?)

4. What are the identified best practices on how CSOs/WROs have been designing, implementing and adapting their interventions to work with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls?

5. What are the challenges, barriers and lessons learned (both programmatic and operational) for the UN Trust Fund and its partners through this special window (including data gaps)?

6. What is the key role of WROs and CSOs in particular, when it comes to ending violence against refugee and/ or forcibly displaced women and girls?

Through responding to these questions, this brief explores how practitioners can best meet the needs of refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, and how donors like the UN Trust Fund can support grantees to apply an intersectional approach to the design and implementation of their VAWG prevention and response projects. The insights were used to offer recommendations regarding the value-add of the UN Trust Fund's support of CSOs and WROs through the refugees/and forcibly displaced special window.

A coding framework was developed after reading some of the project documents, to ensure thorough documentation of the data, while also aiming to respond to the overarching research questions. Each grantee project was first approached as a stand-alone unit. All available key project documents (including annual reports and external evaluations where available) were then thematically coded using qualitative data analysis software NVIVO Version 11. Once this had been done with each grantee project, a basic framework was developed based on recurrent themes from the different projects, which formed the key themes of this synthesis review. In reviewing the project documentation provided by UN Trust Fund for the 13 projects, not all grantees had external evaluations completed. This limited the ability to synthesize key results of the projects.

Representatives of all 13 grantees who participated in this special window were invited to participate in a focus group discussion (FGD), depending on language needs of grantee representatives (as described further below). As for representatives who were interested to participate, but could not make the proposed times of the FGDs, they were able to participate in individual interviews. The FGDs took on average 1.5 hours, and care was taken to ensure all participants had time and space to contribute in a meaningful way. The FGDS and interviews offered opportunities for practitioners – who are often members of the communities they are serving – to share

their own theories and insights about violence and its prevention, which is an important source of PBK, and the FGDs and interviews were also used as a source of data to inform this synthesis review. The FGDs focused on reflecting with practitioners what happened within the time frame of their UN Trust Fund projects. This allowed:

- Further exploration into the key themes identified during the analysis of report data
- The 'filling of gaps' — where report data was limited or incomplete and further information is needed

In total, one focus group discussion (FGD) and one interview in Spanish, two FGDs and two interviews in English were conducted, with representatives of 12 of the 13 grantees included in this synthesis review. The FGDs and interviews were not transcribed; however the sessions were recorded and detailed notes will be taken. For one of the English FGDs where there was not time to discuss all the proposed questions, participants were invited to share written responses to the remaining questions, and three written responses were received from different grantees. Due to the limited time, university-level ethical clearance was not sought. However, ethical consent forms and processes were adhered to. The transcripts and written responses from the FGDs and interviews were thematically analyzed using the same coding framework applied to the project documents. In a second phase, the findings will be validated through a consultation held on the UN Trust Fund's SHINE platform, which allows practitioners in over 50 languages to engage with each other and provide feedback.

A literature review was not part of the methodology. However, after the analysis was completed, a limited amount of time was spent reviewing selected academic and grey literature particularly relevant to the themes that emerged from the analysis. The goal of this exercise was to make selected connections between the evidence emerging through this synthesis review and the wider body of evidence.

Appendix C: Focus Group/Interview Discussion Guide

1. Looking back on your project funded by the UN Trust Fund, can you share any particular successes or areas that you are particularly proud of? Possible probe: What worked particularly well to prevent VAW/G amongst IDP and refugee women and girls and why?

2. Now I want you to think about the other side. Can you give us a concrete example from the challenges encountered through your projects to prevent VAW/G? Please feel free to be honest. We can often learn as much from each other around what did not work as from what did work.

   - How did you address this? Why in that way? Did you learn things along the way that helped you here and that you can share with others?

3. What beneficiaries/partners were reached through your projects funded through this special window? Did you face any challenges in reaching intended beneficiaries in your project settings? If so, how did you address these?

4. What organizational factors or funding realities are important for projects like yours working in humanitarian settings? For example, risk management structures? Flexible funding?

5. What factors required you to adapt your UN Trust funded projects? For example, climate change, COVID-19 crisis, political instability, conflict? How did you adapt your projects in response to such challenges?

6. How did you use monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEAL) to inform your project? For example, to assess the impact of your projects? Inform adaptive programming?

7. In your opinion, what difference did UN Trust Fund special funding window make if at all? Possible probe: why was it important?

8. We are hoping that other practitioners can learn from your experiences in the field about how and why to prevent and respond to VAWG amongst refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, including what to do but also what NOT to do. We want to finish off this discussion by asking each of you: based on your own recent experiences in the field, what is it that you really want other practitioners who are working to prevent VAW/G with refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, to know?

Appendix D: Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate in research to inform a co-produced synthesis review with former and current grantee organizations to assess the impact and lessons learned of the UN Trust Fund's special window targeting women & girls who are refugees and/or forcibly displaced. You are invited to participate in a focus group discussion (FGD) as your organization has been recognized as one of thirteen organizations which are grantees within this special funding window, and whose work will make a strong contribution to the meta-analysis on A synthesis review of the UN Trust Fund's Special Window on ending Violence against Women & Girls who are Refugees and/or Forcibly Displaced.

I am asking you, as a representative of your organization, to take part in an online FGD to share lessons learned and your experiences of your violence prevention projects funded through this special window. The FGD will take 1.5 hours. The discussion will be audio recorded and notes will be taken.

Everything that you share will remain anonymous, and your name will not be included in the reporting. You will not receive any payment for taking part in the study.

Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary, meaning you decide if you want to take part in the study. There is no penalty if you choose not to take part or if you want to stop taking part at any time. If you have any questions about this study, you may contact the researcher leading the synthesis review, Dr. Erin Stern, at erin.a.stern@gmail.com.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the attached Declaration of Consent and email it to the researcher.

DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT

By signing below, I _____ agree to take part in this research study assessing lessons learned and the impact of the UN Trust Fund's special window targeting violence against refugee and/or forcibly displaced women and girls, conducted by Dr. Erin Stern.

Signed on _____ (date)

_____
Signature of participant