

WE RISE 2023

**UN TRUST FUND TO END
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE CO-REGIONAL
LEARNING CONVENTION:**

LESSONS LEARNT AND WAY FORWARD



**Spotlight
Initiative**



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LEARNING CONVENTION:

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List of abbreviations

CSO

civil society organization

EU/UN Spotlight Initiative

European Union and United Nations
Spotlight Initiative

LGBTQ+

lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer

UNABU

Umuryango Nyarwanda w'Abagore Bafite Ubumuga

UN Trust Fund

United Nations Trust Fund to End
Violence against Women

UN Women

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the
Empowerment of Women

VAPP Act

Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015, Nigeria

We Rise 2023

We Rise 2023: A Co-Regional Learning Exchange

WRO

women's rights organization





1 BACKGROUND

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 United Nations General Assembly resolution 50/166, the UN Trust Fund has awarded more than US\$ 225 million to 670 initiatives in 140 countries and territories. In 2023, the UN Trust Fund managed a grants portfolio of 191 initiatives aimed at preventing and addressing violence against women and girls in 68 countries and territories across five regions, with grants totalling US\$ 92 million. The UN Trust Fund's long-term vision as laid out in its current Strategic Plan (2021–2025) is a world of global solidarity in which women and girls live free from all

forms of violence and enjoy and exercise their human rights. Its mission is to enable civil society organizations (CSOs), especially women's rights organizations (WROs) and those representing the most marginalized groups, to play a central role in delivering survivor-centred and demand-driven initiatives and to support their programmes to achieve sustainable impact on ending violence against women and girls in ways that contribute to global solidarity, partnerships and stronger inclusive feminist movements.

Over the past 25 years, the UN Trust Fund has played a key role in enabling a ground-up approach to transformative change by supporting community-based, local CSOs and WROs who constitute the driving force of social movements and who have been at the forefront of reaching those at risk of being left furthest behind in pursuing the ending violence against women



and girls agenda. As the key United Nations system mechanism for grant giving to CSOs and WROs in the context of women's/feminist movement-building to end violence against women and girls, it has a long history of strengthening the resilience of feminist organizing, particularly through flexible and core funding to demand-driven and contextually relevant projects. The UN Trust Fund also has a strong commitment and record of amplifying practice-based knowledge of CSOs and WROs and continued advocacy for and recognition of the essential role of CSOs and WROs and inclusive feminist movements in efforts to end violence against women and girls.

In September 2017 the European Union and United Nations launched the Spotlight Initiative (the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative), a multi-year partnership to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls by 2030. Between 2019 and 2023, the UN Trust Fund in partnership with the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative has funded single-country and multi-country projects across 15 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. The projects focused on strengthening and supporting

WROs and autonomous CSOs, in line with Outcome 6 of the Spotlight Initiative Theory of Change. In addition, and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN Trust Fund reallocated support to 44 grantees in sub-Saharan Africa in partnership with the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative to further institutional strengthening for crisis response and maintain or adapt existing interventions to end violence against women and girls. In total, US\$ 24 million has been awarded to 55 CSOs and WROs under the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative.


Since 2019, the UN Trust Fund has been on an ongoing learning journey with this cohort of grantees¹ – whether through building relationships of mutual enablement, providing programmatic and operational support, elevating practice-based knowledge on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, organizational resilience, adaptations to crises and movement-building or through facilitating knowledge exchange through the online hub SHINE. The aim so far has been to inform continual and increased resourcing and to support knowledge-sharing and advocacy to CSOs and WROs.

¹ UN Trust Fund, Movement building series, Available at: <https://unf.unwomen.org/en/learning-hub/knowledge-products/movement-building>.

2

WE RISE 2023: CO-REGIONAL LEARNING EXCHANGE





In December 2023, the UN Trust Fund brought together the 55 CSOs and WROs supported in partnership with the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative and organized a cross-regional learning exchange called “We Rise 2023: Co-Regional Learning Exchange” (“We Rise 2023” from here on). As their projects came to a close, this was an opportune moment for all 55 CSOs and WROs along with key partners in the United Nations system and women’s movements in Latin America and Africa to come together for an exchange of knowledge and resources – to learn from one another what has worked to prevent and end violence against women and girls while building strong and resilient feminist movements.

We Rise 2023 also took place in the context of complex, overlapping and protracted crises happening around the world. Since the first UN Trust Fund Grantee Convention in 2019, CSOs and WROs have experienced and adapted to numerous global challenges, from the COVID-19 pandemic to natural and human-made disasters, stronger anti-rights movements, further shrinking of civic spaces and unprecedented levels of violence against women and girls. In the face of multiple crises, these organizations have remained vital lifelines as first responders to survivors and those at high risk of violence. We Rise 2023 therefore became a moment to reflect on these past four years throughout which collective actions have brought innovation, built resilience, and taught invaluable lessons to deliver systemic solutions to violence² against women and girls. It was also a unique opportunity to exchange lessons across the two regions where grantees are based, that is across sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America.

Through a series of consultations with grantee partners and key stakeholders, We Rise 2023 was conceived to:

1. Foster an environment where UN Trust Fund grantee partners can effectively network, engage in open dialogue, and collaboratively address pressing challenges and backlash related to violence against women and girls through experience sharing, data and evidence, and mutual solidarity.
2. Enable practice-based knowledge to inform joint advocacy, further empowering regional feminist organizations to advance their own agendas.
3. Bolster co-regional feminist organizing and movement-building by nurturing mutually beneficial solidarity and movement-building networks among Latin American and African CSOs and WROs.
4. Create opportunities for meaningful engagement and partnership building between CSOs and WROs, and other stakeholders, including United Nations agencies, United Nations Member States, European Union Member States, private sector partners, connectors, researchers, and feminist umbrella organizations.

2 UN Trust Fund, COVID-19 series, Available at: <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/learning-hub/knowledge-products/covid-19>.

With a focus on fostering regional and local feminist organizing and building upon existing investments and efforts, the UN Trust Fund aimed to amplify its systemic impact by connecting its grantees and facilitating meaningful dialogue among stakeholders, forging a path towards a brighter future. The learning exchange – its agenda, format and content – was co-designed in partnership with grantees and key stakeholders from its inception. During the preparation stage, an advisory group was established and, through biweekly consultations, this group identified key themes for

workshop discussions. Grantees who expressed interest and/or had demonstrated expertise to lead thematic sessions with support from the UN Trust Fund’s staff co-created the agenda. The co-creation process was iterative and incremental, in that the UN Trust Fund maintained channels for voices of participants to influence the process in multiple ways – focus groups, surveys, regular advisory group meetings – and through iterative rounds of consultation. Shared priorities emerged and were redistributed among all participants to shape the design of the thematic agenda.

The Convention spanned three days, from 4 to 6 December 2023, and was designed to include plenaries across three thematic topics:

1

End Violence Against Women and Girls Programming: Progress and Emerging Challenges, including Intersectional Programming

2

EVAWG Movement Building to drive transformative change for EVAWG

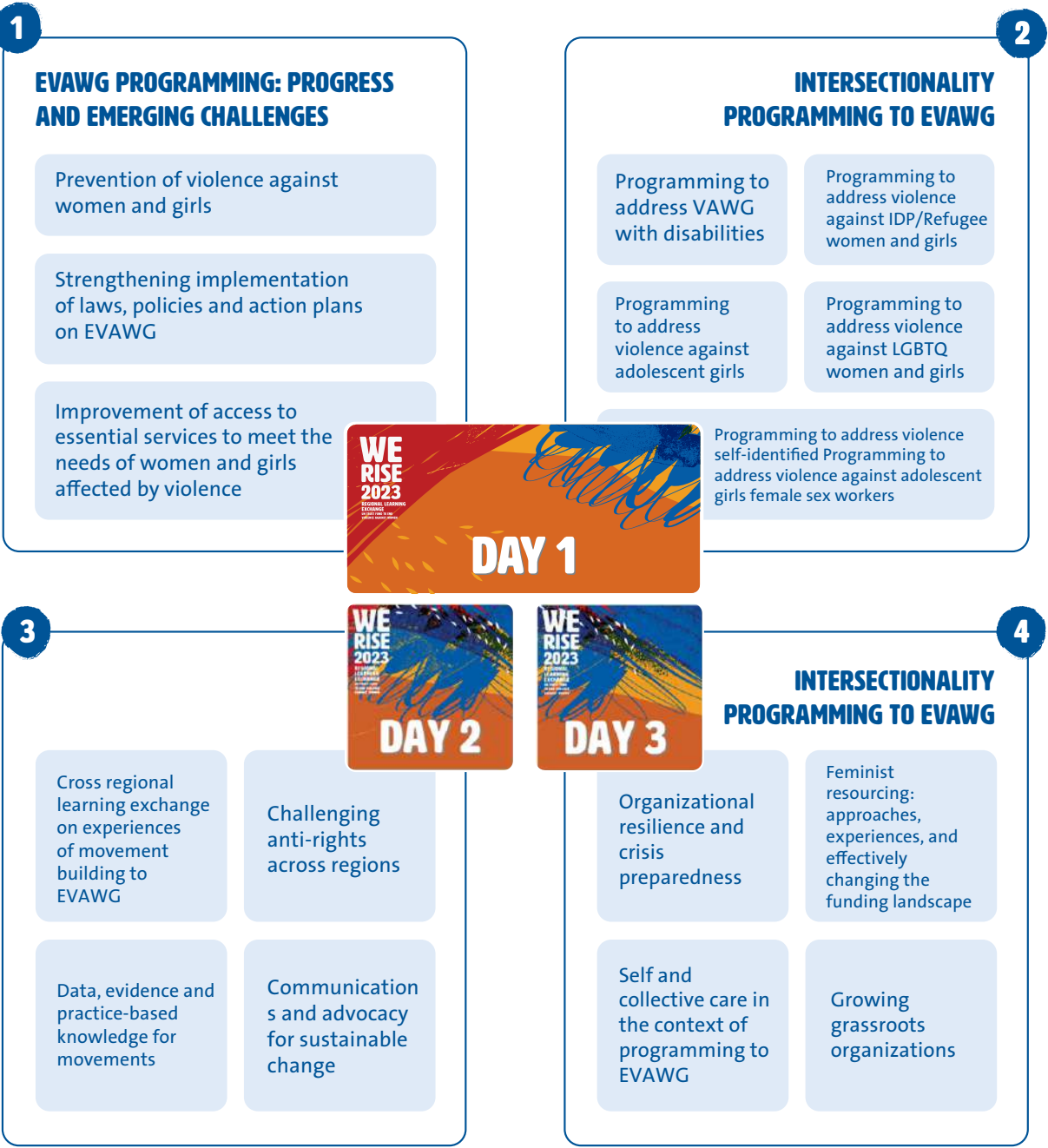
3

Organizational Resilience and Adaptability.

The plenary sessions were used as opportunities to share broad cross-regional insights, reflections and takeaways of the day’s discussions from the different workshops. In addition to the three plenaries, each day comprised a series of parallel workshops co-led by grantees on specific subtopics pertinent to the plenary’s themes below.



We Rise 2023 Plenary and workshop agenda



The following chapters report back on what was discussed among stakeholders over the course of the event, summarize key messages, lessons and shared knowledge from all plenaries and workshops, and conclude with some key takeaways to and from

practitioners. The views, shared experiences and conclusions expressed hereafter are those of the We Rise 2023 participants, and do not necessarily represent the views of the UN Trust Fund, UN Women, the United Nations or any of its affiliated organizations.

3

OPENING SESSION





The EU understood that only women’s empowerment leads to sustained development and peace in the world. That’s why the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative has also made sure there is a strong civil society component that supports front-line activists and supports the activists in countries and across different regions. The networks are the ones that bring the movement forward.”

Henriette Geiger, European Union Ambassador to Kenya

The opening ceremony began with Henriette Geiger, European Union Ambassador to Kenya, setting the stage by highlighting the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative’s investment in a strong civil society component. This support ensures that grassroots activists and the end violence against women and girls movement are supported across different regions. The Ambassador gave a special mention to the rising need to streamline funding channels for small CSOs and WROs. These organizations, which operate in dire and complex conditions, are usually deemed ineligible for international funding yet hold an important role in prevention of violence against women and girls.

Anne Wang’ombe, Principal Secretary, State Department for Gender and Affirmative Action, Ministry of Gender, Culture, the Arts and Heritage of Kenya, followed by extending a warm welcome to all participants and acknowledged the ongoing work led by CSOs and WROs that contributes to the national commitment of Kenya to advancing gender equality and ending all forms of gender-based violence. The principal secretary is also a co-leader of the Gender-Based Violence Action Coalition.

From Latin America, Cecilia Allemany Billorou, Deputy Regional Director Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office, UN Women, grounded the convention in the key role that activism and women’s organizations play in the region as essential drivers to reduce impunities and structural inequalities. The deputy regional director stressed the importance of strengthening South–South and triangular cooperation for gender equality, particularly in the contexts of sociopolitical crises, human mobility and climate change.

Finally, Abigail Erikson, Chief, UN Trust Fund, opened the convention by outlining its key objectives and stressing how it provides a unique opportunity to understand the collective efforts of all organizations present in navigating the challenges posed by the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, alongside a rise in climate crises, escalating conflicts and emergencies, which disproportionately impact women and girls. The chief extended an important recognition to the participants’ efforts that have positively impacted approximately 30 million individuals.





This week offers a rare opportunity to think deeply, learn from one another, and exchange valuable knowledge to advance our collective efforts to end all forms of gender-based violence and press for peace, equality, security and freedom for all women and girls.”

Abigail Erikson, Chief, UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women

Following opening high-level remarks, a panel discussion set the scene of the Regional Learning Exchange, with Faye Macheke, Co-Executive Director of the Association of Women’s Rights in Development; Tarcila Rivera Zea, Founder of the Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas (Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas), Peru; Shruti Majumdar, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager at the UN Trust Fund; Shamah Bulangis, Spotlight Initiative Civil Society Advocacy and Monitoring Co-Coordinator; and Leah Wangechi Wachira, Executive Director of the Centre for Rights Education and Awareness, Kenya.

In her remarks, Leah Wangechi Wachira emphasized the imperative to translate political commitments into tangible actions to end violence against women and girls, particularly in nations like Kenya where comprehensive national and international commitments exist. She advocated for holding societies and institutions accountable for their commitments and suggested allocating taxpayer resources to address public issues,

rather than solely relying on private funding for CSOs and WROs worldwide. Tarcila Rivera Zea highlighted the pivotal role Indigenous women play in the global feminist movement, noting that increased Indigenous participation in consultations and discussions enrich the movement with intersectional and Indigenous perspectives. She thanked the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative and the UN Trust Fund for supporting Indigenous organizations financially and emphasized the importance of sustaining these investments for collaborative efforts and envisioning a collective future. Faye Macheke lamented the financial challenges faced by CSOs and WROs globally, with nearly half of participant organizations unable to achieve their goals due to funding barriers. She advocated for a shift in narrative to redefine donors and grantees as partners, knowledge creators, and essential actors in the movement to stop violence against women. Shruti Majumdar highlighted the UN Trust Fund’s commitment to learning from and collaborating with CSOs and WROs, showcasing the vast repository of practice-based data and collaborative analyses produced hand-in-hand with partner organizations. Majumdar noted the ongoing efforts to document the impacts of programmes addressing violence against women and girls to better inform critical operations in complex contexts. Finally, Shamah Bulangis expressed solidarity with marginalized groups, including those in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and those facing authoritarian regimes, underscoring the pivotal role of CSOs in grass-roots efforts. She commended the UN Trust Fund for its extensive engagement with CSOs and WROs, recognizing their invaluable contributions to building knowledge and advancing on-the-ground work.



What is not counted and measured is unfortunately not valued. What is our data telling us in terms of accountability, policy and the fulfillment of our commitments?”

Leah Wangechi Wachira, Executive Director of the Centre for Rights Education and Awareness, Kenya

4

PROGRAMMING TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS: PROGRESS AND EMERGING CHALLENGES



The context of work to prevent and end violence against women and girls has changed rapidly in significant ways in the past several years. Global experience through the COVID-19 pandemic and its continuing aftershocks have brought challenges to CSOs and WROs working at the forefront of efforts, promoting continuous adaptations and innovations. The first thematic plenary in We Rise 2023 took the conversation from the global to the local, zooming in on key programming successes and challenges faced by speakers in their respective contexts. This was achieved by facilitating an exchange of experiences in programming, assessing the current state of technical and practical knowledge, and exploring how these insights translate into tangible and effective efforts to combat violence against women and girls from a civil society and grass-roots perspective. Furthermore, the session set the stage and stimulated reflection for the workshops that followed on:

- Prevention of violence against women and girls
- Strengthening the implementation of laws, policies and action plans on violence against women and girls
- Enhancing access to essential services to meet the needs of women and girls affected by violence
- Addressing the specific risks faced by marginalized groups of women and girls with an intersectionality lens.

During the panel, CSOs and WROs from diverse regions shared their experiences and perspectives on programming to end violence against women and girls, and articulated concrete recommendations and solutions in response to the identified challenges. Namuma Mulindi from Sonke Gender Justice, South Africa, began by highlighting the importance of understanding societal structural barriers to inform comprehensive work to end violence against women and girls. Breaking

down such barriers requires effective engagement with men and boys, as well as cultural and religious leaders, to foster positive and overarching changes in attitudes and behaviours. Mulindi emphasized the importance of engaging with smaller women's organizations by providing additional financial and institutional support because many smaller organizations encounter significant challenges in accessing local, national and international funding due to the stringent operational infrastructures required by donors and funders. While many of these organizations offer essential services to victims and survivors of violence, they often lack essential financial support to enhance the quality of services provided.

Claudia Monserrat Arévalo Alvarado, Executive Director of the Asociación Mujeres Transformando El Salvador, shared her organization's experience conducting advocacy work in a highly political environment. In 2022, while the organization was implementing the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative project, the El Salvador Government approved a state of emergency as a response to various forms of violence perpetrated by a wide range of non-state armed actors. The approved decree put a hold on all constitutional rights, particularly those referred to as rights of assembly, setting the stage for a shrinking civic space. Amidst the state of emergency, CSOs and WROs were required to advocate for additional resources to ensure effective application of the law, implementation of policies, and comprehensive sensitization of actors in the justice system. Another important issue in understanding the environment of the women's movement in El Salvador is the multitude of public bodies mandated to prevent and protect against gender-based violence. The complex institutional infrastructure in place makes it challenging for women and girls to know and understand how and to whom to turn in times of need. This is especially pertinent according to Alvarado because 63.48 per cent of victims and survivors of gender-based violence in El Salvador are under 19 years of age.



The justice system and those in charge of imparting justice have not deconstructed the traditional patriarchal structures.”

Claudia Monserrat Arévalo Alvarado, Asociación Mujeres Transformando, El Salvador

In the same plenary session, Anicette Kemneloum Beassoum, from the Public Interest Law Center, Chad, explained how support from the UN Trust Fund under the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative enabled her organization to establish a new safe house for women and girls to access information, psychosocial support and health services. This kind of support was particularly important in an environment with a lack of state-provided services. Most of the organization’s previous work relied heavily on volunteers to guide survivors in their demand for public psychosocial and health-care services. Another significant aspect of the Public Interest Law Center’s work in Chad has focused on supporting women and girls in accessing justice and the legal system. According to Beassoum, the organization has undertaken the challenging task of engaging with communities, particularly women and girls, to identify cases that have not been addressed by the justice system.

Lorena Fernanda González on behalf of La fundación de nuevos derechos in Argentina highlighted her organization’s work with community leaders to accompany and support survivors by creating an advisory group to monitor and identify risks and develop mitigation plans against gender-based violence. The bulk of the organization’s work has been carried out amid a significant political backlash to the well-established feminist movement in Argentina. This context has compelled La fundación de nuevos derechos and other civil society leaders in the country to devise innovative solutions to build trust with and among marginalized women and girls, particularly in informal settings that extend beyond state-run services. The organization’s

community-based work is primarily conducted in the densely populated marginalized neighbourhoods of Buenos Aires. Through their community presence and a series of intersectional analyses, they support the work of community leaders, accompanying them as first responders to gender-based violence in their communities, and providing professional psychosocial support to victims and survivors. At the same time, they work to complementarily empower women and minorities at the economic, labour or entrepreneurial level to strengthen their autonomy to be able to break the chain (or circle) of violence. The strengthening of community agents of early listening is fundamental in the chain of prevention.

Finally, Gaudence Mushimiyimana, from Umuryango Nyarwanda w’Abagore Bafite Ubumuga (UNABU), Rwanda Organization of Women with Disabilities, emphasized the significance of empowering women and girls with disabilities to become advocates in their own communities and to challenge stigma and discrimination. A platform for the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities, UNABU provides them with practical knowledge, skills and confidence to take on leadership roles as advocates in their own communities. Furthermore, UNABU’s work demonstrates that by working with service providers, civil society can ensure that state-run services better meet the specific needs of women and girls with disabilities. The use of a human rights approach in work related to the inclusion of marginalized communities is key for addressing diverse forms of violence perpetrated against intersecting identities in individuals. UNABU based its work with women and girls with disabilities on building confidence, trust and capacities to ensure access to public services and survivor support. Today the women and girls with disabilities affiliated to UNABU have an improved understanding of their constitutional rights, and the services and service providers present in their communities. They also serve as amplifiers of this information to other women and girls in their communities and localities.



“**Being a woman and having a disability makes it harder to see the violence coming and escape from it. Stigma, intimidation and economic and social dependence are important barriers. An intersectional approach brings opportunities for success.**”

Gaudence Mushimiyimana, UNABU, Rwanda

Following the plenary session, CSOs and WROs broke out into parallel thematic workshops on programming and intersectionality. On programming there were three parallel workshops on:

- Prevention of violence against women and girls
- Strengthening the implementation of laws, policies and action plans on violence against women and girls
- Enhancing access to essential services to meet the needs of women and girls affected by violence.

The key takeaway messages from these sessions are presented below.

4.1 Prevention of violence against women and girls

- **Starting early is key.** Prevention of violence against women and girls must be addressed as a cornerstone of early childhood development. Interventions at an early development stage can demystify and tackle historical patriarchal cultural norms that promote harmful practices. CSOs shared various examples of early childhood interventions in their contexts that have worked. The Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean for the Defense of Women’s Rights has a project that accompanies girls, providing a safe space for them to discuss safety risks, emotions and their changing bodies during adolescence. This work has been found to impress autonomy and instil the importance of reporting violence in girls.
- **Digital literacy and communications.** As technology advances, new harmful practices are emerging that perpetuate cycles of violence against women and girls in various contexts. The forms of violence and risk factors vary significantly based on context. Networks are powerful and sustainable and the use of different platforms, like those facilitated by digital social media, are gaining popularity and functions. Women are finding their own local solutions in the digital space, and it is also a tool for reaching the younger generation. Thokozile Phiri Nkhoma of Facilitators of Community Transformation Malawi mentioned spreading awareness through the dissemination of cartoons and animation using a WhatsApp group for their “Know Your Rights” campaign within Facilitators of Community Transformation community action groups, even in midst of the pandemic.
- **Religious and traditional leaders as agents of change.** By building capacities in these leaders and working closely with them, they can be positioned as prevention champions and promoters of institutional and behavioural change. This is especially relevant in remote settings where governments and social services do not reach, and faith leaders play a critical role.

Engaging them, particularly women religious leaders and engaging deeply with the texts is key. The social capital of traditional male leaders extends to their wives in certain settings. Michael Anyeko of African Partners for Child Poverty shared how the social capital of even the wives of faith leaders were instrumental in spreading public pronouncements against gender-based violence through their door-to-door campaigns.

- **Involve justice actors within prevention.** CSOs and WROs working with formal and traditional justice systems in various contexts have learned that agents in these institutions can become pivotal in the prevention of violence against women and girls. Nancy Sitima's organization, Forum for Women in Development, Democracy and Justice, established a network of 46 members which included justice actors, government, health actors and men's

organizations, for prevention and response. This network is now a reliable community tool to drive gender-based violence prevention ahead.

- **Economic empowerment and decision-making as essential elements in prevention.** Women's organizations' experience has proven that economic empowerment serves as an effective and essential tool to prevent violence against women and girls. Empowering Women for Excellence Initiative Nigeria was able to create women's cooperative societies for economic empowerment, which has also become a safe space for women to discuss gender-based violence.
- **Centering prevention work in survivors' voices.** This creates solidarity and encourages others to speak up to break the silence. Survivors understand that they are not alone.

Practitioners corner

EFFECTIVE WAYS OF ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES IN THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Institutional and behavioural change takes time, especially when historical cultural customs that normalize violence against women and girls are deeply ingrained in the institutions and norms that govern social interactions within a community. By consciously analysing the local context and developing contextually relevant interventions, work to end violence against women and girls can be planned for the long run. It is through this long-term vision that CSOs organize their work and seek pertinent resources for sustained interventions. Often, preventive work is planned for short periods of time, engages with a limited number of stakeholders, and focuses only on targeted actions. It has been through the sustained work of women's movements over time that societal norms have changed and rights have been granted to historically marginalized groups. Embedding this long-term view in preventive actions and advocacy efforts can help reduce cases and support victims and survivors.



4.2 Strengthening implementation of laws, policies and action plans on violence against women and girls

- **Civil society and women's movements as a unified front.** Given the current political and social backlashes against women's and feminist movements, collaborative efforts between WROs and CSOs have proven critical in fostering a collective approach to influence and shape laws, policies and action plans. Associated CSOs with pre-existing relationships with duty bearers can help them adapt in times of crisis, consider implications for violence against women and girls and filter expertise into new policies and laws.
- **Long-term flexible funding for legal advocacy policy drafting.** CSOs and WROs stressed that sustained impact hinges on reliable core funding. Sustainable strategies require financial and organizational flexibility to adapt in response to evolving needs, changes in political contexts and overlapping crises that undermine the effective operation of legal and political institutions. Additional funding is also required beyond programming, to support monitoring and legal frameworks including accountability mechanisms to follow up on implementation, enforcement and impunity.
- **Legal capacity-building.** For successful application of laws, policies and action plans, all relevant stakeholders need be aware of and understand the law. The public, government officials, and political and traditional leaders must have the knowledge and capacity to promote and implement the women and girls' rights legal framework. CSOs and WROs can play a key role in this.
- **Bridge gaps between formal legal systems and informal or traditional systems and social norms.** Bridging identified gaps between formal duty-bearing systems and informal systems and actors around law and policy at various levels is key when trying to influence the implementation of laws, policies and action plans. Some cases require specialized training in constitutional law and human rights, capacities that can be found in associated CSOs and WROs.



Practitioners corner

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES IN IN ENHANCING ACCOUNTABILITY WITHIN GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES

For instance, Alliances for Africa, reflected on its work on laws and policies in Nigeria. Through continuous and iterative contextual and legal analysis, and with the appropriate legislative strategy, on 15 December 2021 Alliances for Africa advocated for the approval of a state law based on and in support of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015 (VAPP Act), and the Maputo Protocol. The main purpose of the state law is to support VAPP Act efforts in preventing acts of violence such as rape (defined in the VAPP Act), help eradicate all forms of gender-based violence and eliminating harmful practices, which is a critical issue in the Igbo State, and providing punishment for offenders. To date, the VAPP Act has been incorporated into various laws in 36 of the 37 Nigerian states, providing a legal framework to shield survivors from recurring violence and revictimization. The International Network of Religious Leaders Living with and Affected by HIV and AIDS in South Africa reflected on how they bridged gaps between the formal and informal legal systems at the community level by establishing community-based legal aid services tailored to local contexts to recognize and refer women to available formal services. This provision of community-based legal aid services directly tailored to specific contexts includes the establishment of community legal kiosks staffed with volunteers equipped with basic legal information. The women's community paralegal model, involving training and empowering mobile community-based volunteer paralegals and women's rights mentors, was a multidimensional approach to address entrenched patterns in traditional settlements around violence against women and girls.



4.3 Improvement of access to essential services to meet the needs of women and girls affected by violence

- **Barriers to accessing essential services for marginalized women and girls persist.** From an intersectional perspective, it is evident that women and girls with intersecting marginalized identities encounter more obstacles in accessing essential services. Furthermore, non-governmental actors, as well as community and religious leaders, often end up providing these services in the absence of state intervention. Despite the identification and study of these access barriers, concrete and sustainable actions by state actors responsible for providing these services have not materialized and CSOs and WROs are often filling a crucial gap.
- **Promoting empowerment platforms.** It is essential to provide platforms for survivors to feel empowered to access essential services, especially in instances where CSOs, WROs, and non-government organizations serve as providers due to a lack of publicly funded services. Lack of knowledge, along with social factors such as stigma, the status of women in their community, or patriarchal dynamics at home, have become intangible barriers to accessing essential services. By raising awareness and developing local capacities, CSOs and WROs are paving the way to promote greater access to and better quality social services.
- **Capacity-building and knowledge-sharing at the forefront of granting access to essential services.** By facilitating roundtables, policy dialogues and working groups inclusive of all stakeholders, CSOs and WROs have promoted access to essential services and advocate for needed policy and legislation change for services to be effectively provided. Communication and outreach strategies and social media penetration have been pivotal in mobilization and sensitization around the issue.

Practitioners corner

PROVIDING SERVICES IN WEAK INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXTS

Contexts widely discussed during We Rise 2023 do not count on a conducive legal framework for the overarching protection of women and girls. In others, overlapping crises and financial resource scarcity hinder the ability of institutions to provide essential services to women and girls. Shrinking civic spaces also represent an important backlash in most African and Latin American countries, particularly in terms of access to sexual and reproductive health services and psychological support. Success stories in these types of environments portray the intervention of CSOs and WROs creating one-stop centres that provide essential services for survivors of gender-based violence. Some of these centres conceived under the UN/EU Spotlight Initiative are at the forefront of the crisis and violence response, and provide safe spaces for women and girls to have access to health care and psychosocial support. At the same time, these centres serve as primary care providers by hosting volunteer medical services, legal aid specialists and community advocates.

5

INTERSECTIONAL PROGRAMMING TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS



One of the common threads across all CSOs and WROs at We Rise 2023 was their sustained efforts in applying an intersectional lens to ending violence against women and girls programming with a focus on women who have a heightened risk of violence because of intersecting aspects of their identities or circumstances, namely, women and girls with disabilities, refugee and forcibly displaced women and girls, adolescent girls, self-identified women sex workers and LGBTQ+ women. Ahead of We Rise 2023, participants raised the need to share and discuss learnings on these five groups during consultations:

- women and girls with disabilities
- women and girls who are internally displaced persons or refugees
- adolescent girls
- self-identified sex workers
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex rights

The key takeaway messages from these sessions are presented below.

5.1 Programming to address violence against women and girls with disabilities

- **Societal barriers imposed on women and girls with disabilities require a deeper focus on agency and independence.** Lack of accessible communication, societal stigma, financial and economic exclusion, underreporting, limited awareness, and education are some of the most pressing barriers women and girls with disabilities face daily. CSOs and WROs recognize and address these barriers throughout the project life cycle, ensuring active participation and agency of women with disabilities. By focusing on providing spaces for agency, specialized CSOs and WROs have been able to successfully run community-based violence against women and girls prevention initiatives.
- **Meaningful inclusion and consultation for project design and implementation.** In work with women and girls with disabilities a multisectoral intersectional approach is needed to foster partnerships with a wider range of stakeholders. Furthermore, given the unique challenges faced by women and girls with disabilities, flexible strategies are needed to promote the meaningful inclusion of women and girls with disabilities throughout the

project life cycle. In addition, projects tailoring interventions to people with specific disabilities have been pivotal in the provision of practical and targeted support.

- **Collaborative efforts across sectors and inclusive partnerships are paramount for addressing challenges associated with violence against women and girls with disabilities.** Additional funding for collaborative efforts and inclusive partnerships are needed, as this ensures that the perspectives and needs of women with disabilities are integrated into the planning and execution of programmes and policies, promoting a more inclusive and equitable society.
- **Recognizing the uniqueness of each disability is paramount.** Tailoring interventions to specific disabilities allows for more targeted and practical support. By acknowledging the distinct challenges associated with different disabilities, efforts can be customized to address particular needs and empower women across a spectrum of abilities.



Practitioners corner

INCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOSTER INTERSECTIONALITY BY ACKNOWLEDGING AND ADDRESSING THE COMPLEX INTERPLAY OF VARIOUS IDENTITIES AND EXPERIENCES

For women with disabilities, this means recognizing how factors such as gender, disability, race and socioeconomic status intersect to shape their unique challenges.

By understanding and embracing intersectionality, inclusive partnerships can develop more nuanced and effective strategies that resonate with the diverse experiences of women. This workshop underscored the importance of collaboration, inclusivity and tailored approaches to empower women and girls with disabilities in the fight against violence against women and girls. One example from Society for Life Changers and Good Parental Care - SoLife in Nigeria was that the project prioritized active participation and inclusive implementation by integrating the disability agency into its Project Management Team. This strategic decision aimed to push against the exclusion faced by persons with disabilities in society. By including the disability agency in project leadership, the initiative ensured that the voices and perspectives of women and girls with disabilities were incorporated into project activities.

Another example, in the Gender-based Violence Champion Programmes, women and girls with disabilities equipped as gender-based violence champions engaged local communities through outreach and information-sharing initiatives. These efforts, conducted quarterly in strategic locations such as schools for special needs, facilitated community mobilization and awareness-raising on gender-based violence issues. Additionally, weekly television programmes reaching approximately 3 million viewers were anchored by women with disabilities in the project's target states, further amplifying awareness efforts. Furthermore, establishing the Gender-based Violence Club, known as the Life Changers Forum, within schools for the handicapped provided a platform for girls with disabilities to lead activities focused on gender-based violence information and support services, with assistance from trained teachers. The involvement of women with disability extended to advocacy efforts within the State Partnership Against Gender-based Violence, engaging legislators in discussions regarding the implementation of disability-related legislation at the state level. By actively centering the agency of women and girls with disabilities throughout project activities, the project fostered a more inclusive approach to addressing gender-based violence.



5.2 Programming to address violence against women and girls who are refugees or internally displaced persons

- **Community engagement strategies, community-based solutions.** When it comes to programming to address violence against refugee and displaced women and girls, engaging with communities and supporting their involvement as active agents of change is a key strategy employed by CSOs and WROs in various ways – from needs assessments to displacement tracking, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation, consulted communities possess practical and context-specific knowledge that, when used effectively, have served as the basis for successful community-based programme design.
- **Host community support as a preventive measure to violence against women and girls.** By including host communities in the development of needs assessments and as allies and agents of change, preventive work can be undertaken while providing durable solutions to forced displacement and asylum seeking. Tools such as community-based monitoring and evaluation have proven helpful in enabling host communities to provide missing data, disseminate critical preventive information and provide valuable information to course correct interventions in constantly changing environments (developmental approach to programme design). Local human mobility observatories can also play a crucial role in the protection of refugee and internally displaced women and girls, serving as first responders with the valuable assistance of host communities.
- **Fostering the positive influence of women leaders.** Ending violence against women and girls programming for refugee and internally displaced women often relies on providing emergency services. However, if programme design also seeks to engage with refugee and forcibly displaced women leaders, a comprehensive and meaningful engagement can provide a segue to identify the root causes of violence, implement extensive preventive work, and offer targeted services that are context specific.
- **Long-term flexible funding.** Programming in refugee and forcibly displaced settings requires a developmental approach to design and a high level of flexibility to adapt, course correct, and redirect resources in constantly changing environments. Often, CSOs and WROs are expected to remain flexible even though the vast majority of the funding received must remain unchanged in theory. By providing additional flexibility, modifications to budgets and project structures can significantly help address the newly emerging needs of project beneficiaries, particularly refugee and forcibly displaced women and girls.
- **Involving women and girls with disabilities in crisis contexts.** From an intersectional perspective, making sure all communications and resource dissemination material is accessible to various identities and circumstances, particularly to women and girls with disabilities, is key to promote prevention of violence against women and girls.
- **Addressing different cultural norms between host and refugee communities as part of violence against women and girls programming.** Patriarchal and traditional norms prevail in forcibly displaced and refugee communities. Addressing norms originating from different cultures requires intentional local dialogues to understand issues and find solutions. Creating platforms for sensitization and awareness of violence against women and girls is crucial. At We Rise 2023, participants emphasized the need to establish safe spaces for dialogue while considering norms that inhibit direct engagement between certain groups, such as women and men.

HOLISTIC AND FLEXIBLE PROGRAMMING IS KEY

Practitioners working to end violence against refugee and internally displaced women and girls have shared that community engagement and community-based solutions are vital. Involving communities in needs assessments, implementation and monitoring leverages local knowledge for better programme design. Including host communities as allies and agents of change, and using tools such as community-based monitoring and evaluation, helps gather crucial data and adjust interventions. A participant shared a strategy that can be used when working where traditions and customs do not allow men and women or any other groups to engage directly with each other. Called “What I need from you – WINFY”, focus group discussions are planned separately and each group meets to decide on “what they need” from other groups (for example, men and boys, traditional leaders, state actors). Then, a representative from each group meet and share what they “need” from each other. Some risks of exploitation of beneficiaries have been shared by participants; for instance, a case in Cameroon where leaders asked their relatives to act as beneficiaries, while in Nigeria, there was a case of corruption where leaders asked for parts of the daily subsistence allowance. To increase accountability, having a youth movement in the different communities could help mitigate these risks.

As needs and situations evolve, flexible and long-term funding can help communities adapt. Ensuring inclusivity, particularly for people with disabilities, guarantees accessible communications and resources, promoting comprehensive prevention of violence against women and girls. Addressing differing cultural norms between host and refugee communities through local dialogues creates platforms for awareness of and sensitization to violence against women and girls. Additionally, providing trauma-informed care is essential for addressing the psychological impact of violence and displacement, while establishing safe spaces and shelters offers immediate safety and access to critical services. These flexible, community-involved strategies are key to effectively addressing and preventing violence against refugee and internally displaced women and girls.






5.3 Programming to address violence against adolescent girls

- **Balance and continuum between school-based and community-based interventions.** CSOs and WROs struggle in the search for effective ways to maintain the continuum and provide safe spaces for adolescent girls. By prioritizing agency, organizations are experimenting with strategies that involve engaging effectively with family members, caregivers, traditional and religious leaders, and educators. Significant backlash is still evident, particularly from institutions that uphold traditionally patriarchal beliefs and discourage communities from engaging in honest and direct intergenerational dialogues about sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence, and ending violence against women and girls.
- **Adolescent-led programming in conditions of extreme poverty and extreme racism.** There is still very little documentation on this matter,

especially when programming for adolescent girls with intersecting aspects of identity at risk from violence. Additional funding is crucial to conduct comprehensive research and documentation, which will provide sufficient evidence to inform more effective programming. Moreover, with increased funding, the sector can enhance its understanding of the school-community-home continuum and develop targeted interventions to address the specific needs of adolescent girls in these environments.

- **Community-based programming and addressing conflicting preconceptions on sexual and reproductive health and rights and other critical issues for adolescents.** Spaces where adolescent girls learn about sexual and reproductive health are at home, in the community, and at places of worship. By involving mothers, caregivers, educators, and



traditional and religious leaders in preventive violence against women and girls programming, sustainable change can be achieved. Nevertheless, further research is needed in this area to ensure the sustainability of the community-school-home continuum and that key messages are not lost in these spaces.

- **Inclusion of boys as primary beneficiaries in programmes addressing sexual and gender-based violence, and sexual and reproductive**

health and rights. By fostering a collaborative approach, early intervention programmes can be effective, with the inclusion of men and boys as primary beneficiaries and supporters of safe spaces for women and girls. Additionally, providing capacity-building through a training of trainers approach enables peer-to-peer learning, which can influence cultural and behavioural change and enhance the sustainability of interventions.

Practitioners corner

WORKING WITH ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN BUILDING MOVEMENTS TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Salome Siulapwa Sikananu, from Zambia National Women's Lobby, shared that engaging through girls' leadership clubs and school assemblies was highly effective for movement-building among adolescent girls. These platforms provided valuable opportunities for learning and sharing experiences, contributing to the empowerment of young women in their communities and put a strong focus on agency as an entry point. To address issues related to gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health and rights, multisectoral committees were established in five target districts. This initiative aimed to enhance community-led responses to these challenges. Additionally, including boys as primary beneficiaries in programmes addressing gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health and rights significantly improved programme outcomes, promoting gender equality and healthy relationships among adolescents. Capacity-building and peer-to-peer learning emerged as effective strategies for ensuring project sustainability. However, challenges arose due to the COVID-19 pandemic, impacting the project's planned timelines and limiting opportunities for holistic discussions on sexual and reproductive health and rights in some faith-based schools. Meanwhile, Rebecca Gumbo, shared how the Bethany Project in Zimbabwe, focused on increasing protection for girls and young women by preventing and reporting sexual and gender-based violence cases in Zvishavane District of Zimbabwe. Through the establishment of Pamumvuri Forums, women and adolescent girls were empowered to identify and report sexual and gender-based violence cases, contributing to a safer environment for girls in the community. However, challenges such as high mobility of girls and gaps in service provision, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, hindered the project's effectiveness. Despite these challenges, both initiatives demonstrated the importance of grass-roots movement-building and community engagement in addressing sexual and gender-based violence and promoting gender equality among adolescents. Through collaborative efforts and targeted interventions, organizations like Zambia National Women's Lobby and Bethany Project are making strides in protecting the rights of girls and young women in their respective communities.



5.4 Programming to address violence against self-identified female sex workers

- **According to grantee organizations working with self-identified sex workers, they are often depicted as having little or no agency in choosing their way of living.** Some expressed that even though sex workers have myriad intersecting identities, they are often perceived as a monolithic group, being viewed as potential victims or survivors of gender-based violence. Additional identities or circumstances imposed on sex workers include being the sole household breadwinners, young, enslaved, victims of human trafficking, and uneducated. Furthermore, according to participants, sex workers are often solely interpreted as not having an option and engaged in sex work for survival alone. In the context in which the two presenting organizations are working, this can be the case for their beneficiaries and this is why a programme that allows girls to come back to schools or for economic empowerment is still viewed as necessary and critical to combat different forms of violence.
- **Patriarchal views of sex work and women's sexuality echoes the stereotype that unmarried or unpartnered sex is "shameful".** Patriarchal cultural and religious norms often shame women who engage in sexual practices outside of marriage or partnership. The presence of multiple partners, sexually transmitted diseases and social stigma hinders sex workers' economic and social integration in communities. These cultural norms frequently impede women and girls from accessing appropriate health care, protection from violence and knowledge on sexual and reproductive health and rights. Participants mentioned that, in their communities, sex workers are excluded from the formal economy and have little to no access to essential services.
- **Programmes targeting sex workers often look at economic empowerment and prevention of gender-based violence.** Economic empowerment is often used to present sex workers with livelihood opportunities different from sex work. Capacity-building and sharing, skills training and integration to the formal economy is shown as a potential segue to alternative livelihoods opportunities. In contexts with a formal legal framework, sex workers are trained in how to access health-care services and justice in cases of gender-based violence.
- **According to grantee organizations, programming for self-identified female sex workers must focus on advocating for the effective implementation and enforcement of laws, policies and programmes in place.** It was noted by most participants that cases of violence against self-identified female sex workers often remain untreated and unpunished, because of the complicity of perpetrators and law enforcement, and historically patriarchal cultural norms, hence focusing on enforcement of laws and policies already in place is key.
- **Feminist and women's movements are perceived to exclude self-identified sex workers in their efforts for gender equality, women's empowerment and ending violence against women and girls.** There is a common perception that feminist movements often do not include self-identified women sex workers, as their groups and organizations are often marginalized with no effective participation. Meeting participants reaffirmed the human rights of self-identified female sex workers and the importance of ensuring their presence in discussion and policymaking spaces to end violence against women and girls. Additional dialogue spaces must be promoted to foster the interchange of ideas and knowledge between sex workers, communities and the organized civil society, and build cross-movements.

SEX WORKERS, OFTEN PERCEIVED THROUGH STIGMATIZING LENSES, FACE INTERSECTING CHALLENGES SUCH AS ECONOMIC EXCLUSION AND SOCIAL STIGMA

Practitioners stressed the importance of economic empowerment and access to essential services as part of their programming, aiming to integrate sex workers into formal economies while providing alternatives to sex work. Moreover, addressing patriarchal views on women's sexuality and advocating for the effective enforcement of laws against gender-based violence are crucial. Workshop facilitators from the Family AIDS Caring Trust Zimbabwe and ONG Conscience et Vie, Côte d'Ivoire, agreed that working closely with police forces improves effective implementation of protective laws and legal frameworks providing safety for beneficiaries. After years of working in this field, they observed that there is now a link between their programme beneficiaries i.e. women who identify as sex workers and police forces, and women are able to reach out to them directly if they are in danger. It is imperative to include sex workers in feminist and women's movements, ensuring their voices are heard in discussions on gender equality and violence against women and girls. Creating inclusive dialogue spaces that promote participation and policymaking by sex workers is essential for advancing their rights and combating violence effectively. As the status of sex workers before the law is still a grey area in many countries, the two workshop leads advised that organizing training and supporting the police was a successful strategy to deconstruct stereotypes that reinforce stigmatization, discrimination and overt violence, thus ensuring that their rights are respected.



5.5 Programming to address violence against LGBTQ+ women and girls

- **LGBTQ+ women and girls face violence based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.** According to participants, LGBTQ+ women and girls often encounter barriers to accessing health care, education, social gatherings, places of worship, and essential services. These constitute the most significant sources of violence faced by this population. Gender-based violence and physical aggression are also common, stemming from patriarchal cultural norms. Furthermore, this population faces political violence and, oftentimes, exclusion and marginalization in public settings, dialogue spaces, and even within women's and feminist movements.
- **In comparison to other regions of the world, the LGBTQ+ movement in Latin America is advanced and well positioned in most countries.** As often happens in the rest of the world, integration with women's and feminist movements is still a pressing challenge. In most Latin American and Caribbean countries, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ+) population is organized, with groups representing lesbian, gay and bisexual women, transgender women, and people with a wide range of gender diversities. Most LGBTQ+ organizations are active in promoting and defending their rights. With the rise of trans-exclusionary radical feminism, many LGBTQ+ organizations have labelled themselves as "transfeminists". Due to conflicting ideologies and interpretations of gender equality, in only a very few cases are these organizations also part of the feminist movement at the national level.
- **The transgender population is more visibly targeted by various forms of violence.** In most countries, there is currently no legislation recognizing transgender and gender-diverse identities, and overarching anti-discrimination laws designed to protect women against violence do not openly include transgender women. Often, governments tend to be discriminatory, and service providers are judgmental, thereby increasing access barriers for this population.

TRANSMASCULINE MOVEMENTS

Participant organizations acknowledge that transmasculine movements exist. They also highlight that it is difficult for these movements to find participation spaces because, within these platforms, even when talking about gender diversity, the conversation is still operating under the binary model of gender. In some cases, cis-gays who are cis-men, engage in discriminatory and exclusionary practices against lesbians and transgender women, perpetuating the cycle of violence against women.

- **Capacity-building and sensitization of government officials as a pivotal strategy to eliminate violence against LGBTQ+ women and girls.** Local governments and health-care service providers are often at the forefront of treating cases of gender-based violence against LGBTQ+ women and girls. Building capacity in these institutions is crucial for the promotion of human rights and the effective treatment of these cases to end the cycle of violence. Moreover, training programmes can sensitize these stakeholders to the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals, such as discrimination and stigma, thereby improving their ability to provide sensitive and inclusive care. Fostering partnerships between government agencies, health-care providers, and LGBTQ+ organizations can enhance the accessibility and effectiveness of support services for LGBTQ+ individuals experiencing gender-based violence. Furthermore, incorporating LGBTQ+-inclusive policies and protocols within health-care systems can help ensure that the specific needs of LGBTQ+ survivors are addressed in a comprehensive and respectful manner. Overall, investing in capacity-building and collaboration among local stakeholders is essential for creating a supportive and inclusive environment that effectively addresses gender-based violence against LGBTQ+ women and girls.
- **Advocacy to increase visibility of violence against LGBTQ women and girls.** The promotion of anti-discrimination and trans-inclusive gender laws and policies through intense political and legal lobbying is essential to empower and build the capacities of nascent LGBTQ+ collectives and networks. By advocating for legislation that explicitly protects the rights

of LGBTQ+ individuals, these groups can work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society. Moreover, such laws and policies can serve as powerful segues to strengthen the prevention of violence against women and girls. In addition to legal advocacy, there is a pressing need for the inclusion of LGBTQ women and girls in feminist movements. By actively engaging with and amplifying the voices of LGBTQ+ individuals within feminist spaces, these movements can foster a wider understanding of population dynamics and shared vulnerabilities. This inclusive approach not only strengthens the feminist movement but also creates a more cohesive and united front against gender-based discrimination and violence. By recognizing and addressing the intersecting forms of oppression faced by LGBTQ+ individuals, feminist movements can work towards a more inclusive and intersectional approach to gender equality.

- **Challenging traditional notions of femininity, womanhood, sexual orientation and gender identity.** Advocating for the inclusion of LGBTQ women and girls in feminist movements can help challenge traditional notions of femininity and womanhood, promoting a more expansive and inclusive understanding of gender. This can create space for diverse experiences and identities to be acknowledged and valued within feminist discourse, ultimately leading to a more inclusive and equitable society for all.
- **Flexible funding.** Organizations, movements and networks working in spaces where diverse sexual orientation is penalized, require access to flexible funding given the lack of formalization due to fear of red-tagging and political persecution. This includes the funding of organizations that may not be formally registered.

Practitioners corner

LEARNING FROM OTHER REGIONS

A participant mentioned that in a South-East Asian country, CSOs and WROs supported the creation of feminist lesbian, bisexual, queer (LBQ) networks in cities. In that country, there are LGBTQ+ organizations but none specifically for LBQ women and girls. At the national level there is one widely known lesbian organization. “It is a very informal movement – registration tends to be expensive since they have the need to focus on the security of their members and avoid being monitored or surveilled by state actors. Networks also avoid formal registration upon the competent authorities for these same reasons.” As raised by participants, laws and policies are crucial to empower networks but also administrations. One example was shared in Argentina, where the Micaela Law requires transversal training in gender for the entire public administration. Similarly, the voices of lesbian, bisexual, transgender (LBT) women need to be fully integrated in the movements, and at all levels of decision-making. The same participant explained that in Argentina there are quotas in the national public administration in some provinces and municipalities that ensure a minimum percentage for recruiting of transgender people. LBQ networks are also organized through schools – since most violence against LBQ women and girls happens in those contexts. In perspective, networks aim to become the LGBTQ+ arm of a women’s organization or a women’s arm of an LGBTQ+ organization.



6

MOVEMENT-BUILDING TO DRIVE TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE FOR ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS



The plenary, Movement Building to Drive Transformative Change for Ending Violence against Women and Girls, took place on the second day of the convention and aimed to discuss experiences across Latin America and Africa, as well as globally, on strengthening movements on ending violence against women and girls. Through a moderated discussion with panellists, the plenary discussed key aspects of strengthening movements in both regions. This included centering women and girls in movements and building their leadership and inner power, collectivization and the power of networks and partnerships across movements, building feminist knowledge power as a core movement strategy, and dealing with resistance and backlash. Furthermore, the plenary contributed to set the stage for four workshops that followed the plenary:

- Cross movement learning on movement-building
- Role of practice-based knowledge, data and evidence
- Resistance and backlash
- Communications and advocacy for movements.

Participants heard from Tarcila Rivera Zea, Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas, Peru; Leticia Echavarrí, Centro de Intercambio y Servicios para el Cono Sur Argentina, Argentina; Glanis Changachirere, the Institute of Young Women Development, Zimbabwe; Natsnet Ghebrebrhan, Raising Voices, Uganda; Faye Macheke, Association of Women's Rights in Development, South Africa; and the session was moderated by Tina Musaya from Social Development Direct, Uganda. Four parallel and in-depth workshops among participants followed the plenary discussion.



We need to celebrate ourselves as Indigenous women. Strategies used by our elderly who came to the UN to ask to be recognized as people not minorities. We have our language, philosophy, territory, way of life that are granted in our existence. In order to defend ourselves first we defended our territory and our nature.”

Tarcila Rivera Zea, from Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas, Peru

The session began with Tarcila Rivera Zea who shared the story of the Indigenous women's movement and their tireless work to reclaim their territories and rights, including the right to live free from violence. She grounded the session in the long journey of the role of Indigenous women in local, regional and global women's movements. For Glanis Changachirere it is crucial to use feminist education and feminist analyses to build the collective power of women in all their diversity and challenge harmful social norms and practices. “We are able to build solidarity where women are able to stand for themselves”. In her statement, Changachirere pointed out that the Institute of Young Women Development has tirelessly worked towards changing social norms and values that perpetuate violence. Through feminist education initiatives, the organization has targeted hard-to-reach women from rural areas, activists, politicians, sex workers, and LGBTQ+ individuals, among other important stakeholders, in order to build their collective power. This approach has been instrumental in deepening the organization's understanding of violence and its impacts. However, questions arise such as “while we are constantly fighting, what is feminism? How does it relate to our daily lives?”

Leticia Echavarri reflected on the importance of strengthening women's voices and movements to raise awareness and address gender-based violence in the public space, recognizing the continuum of violence that women and girls face in Argentina. Echavarri introduced Centro de Intercambio y Servicios para el Cono Sur Argentina, a feminist organization based in the Cordoba Province. Through the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative project, the organization has worked to amplify women's voices and strengthen violence prevention strategies through sensitization and movement-building inside and outside small local communities. Most of the time funding goes

to the provinces' capitals, so this funding became a huge contribution to continue strengthening the movement in more remote parts of the country. Echavarri emphasized the current political and social backlash to the feminist movement in Argentina. "Since the last general elections [held in late 2023], the far-right wing has won so the rights of the women are in danger." For now, the country has a comprehensive legal framework on sexual and reproductive health and rights as well as overarching policies to protect women and girls. "These laws are the results of long-lasting fights and we need to protect them" according to Echavarri.

Natsnet Ghebrebrhan continued the conversation and noted how valuable practice-based knowledge can be in movement-building to end violence against women and girls. Raising Voices has been using a flexible approach to practice-based knowledge by creating space and time to learn and reflect, to inform and reshape their project activities. Through the gender-based violence [prevention network](#), Ghebrebrhan said her organization's project conducted feminist analysis of violence against women and girls in Uganda, built collective solidarity among movement members, and facilitated collective actions. Faye Macheke, from the Association of Women's Rights in Development, South Africa, focused on the need to work closely with funders and to hold them accountable, especially in a context of increasing backlash, as a way to open doors for feminist resourcing and true partnerships. Backlash is intersectional, just like violence, Macheke observed, and therefore movements need more than just funding; they need collective care, flexibility and context-driven interventions. In this sense, Macheke stressed the need to unify a global strategy to hold funders accountable, demanding to be sitting at the table and be active parties in the discussion that it is not just about money.



Practice-based learning is not easy because when we look at the knowledge generation and utilization it prioritizes academic research. Feminists have been disconnected from that space and taking leadership is a process and it needs a collective approach. At Raising Voices, we are learning the value to bring practitioner-based learning among academic research because they can feed on each other."

Natsnet Ghebrebrhan from Raising Voices, Uganda



6.1 Cross-regional learning exchange on experiences of movement-building to end violence against women and girls

- **Movement-building is about finding common ground.** Building a movement is a method of organizing and mobilizing people to come together for a common cause or vision. By bringing together different perspectives and expertise, movements can work together towards the achievement of a common goal or in the interest of greater good. Movements help strengthen key messages for advocacy at higher levels and provide better visibility to pressing issues and needs. The more divided and or disconnected the voices are, the more difficult it is to achieve change. Movement members must have the ability to identify spaces for common ground from all actors involved in the decision-making process.
- **Adequate, flexible, context-specific funding and the support of donors is crucial for movement-building.** Public agendas are in constant evolution and change. Flexible funding can support sustained engagement between parties, as long as movement members are given the ability to shift strategies and keep a sustained engagement.
- **Women's rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights and ending violence against women and girls are common movement igniters across regions.** Participants stressed that most movements have evolved from common concerns around the protection of women's human rights. These concerns are often addressed in dialogue when women's rights are violated, or harmful practices against women and girls are recurrent in their communities, localities and countries. Today, grass-roots CSOs and WROs count on global networks to portray their work, share their experiences and lessons learned in the advocacy for protection of the common igniters. Synergies are built over time but are not easy to achieve.
- **Solidarity around common agendas strengthen the results and impact of movement-building.** Communication among movement members is key to identify innovative entry points in addressing common agendas. Furthermore, fostering solidarity means sharing good practices and lessons learned in the advocacy and implementation of ending violence against women and girls, and women's rights initiatives. We Rise 2023 participants stressed the need for a larger conversation on women's participation, to provide better visibility to better influence policy on intersectional factors.



THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Building effective movements for women's rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and ending violence against women and girls requires strategic collaboration and unity across diverse stakeholders. These movements mobilize people around shared causes, amplify advocacy efforts, and raise awareness. For example, in Argentina, the Ni Una Menos movement united around the adoption of the abortion law, demonstrating a powerful common agenda. Adequate, flexible funding is crucial for sustaining engagement and adapting strategies as public agendas evolve, facilitating ongoing dialogue and coordination. Grass-roots organizations and civil society groups leverage global networks to strengthen advocacy and share best practices. Additionally, one Indigenous organization from Mexico introduced innovative concepts such as "tejer estrategias" (weaving strategies), emphasizing the collaborative nature of movements. Symbolically, each workshop participant received a colourful woven scarf, representing solidarity and shared objectives within the movement, fostering a cohesive social fabric. Solidarity among members fosters innovation and enhances impact, promoting effective communication and advocating for increased visibility of women in policy discussions on intersectional issues.



6.2 Data, evidence and practice-based knowledge for movements

- **Through the use of robust data collection, CSOs and WROs have evidenced change happening.** With the introduction of data-collection methods and analyses, as well as robust monitoring systems, organizations at the local level have been able to make important discoveries about how institutional and behavioural changes occur through project implementation. These discoveries show that civil society, across regions and over time, has embraced the knowledge and practice of using scientific methods to effectively provide evidence that can inform decision-making, programming and policy drafting.
- **Monitoring and evaluation and practice-based knowledge-sharing and communication.** Who is listening? Currently, monitoring systems and project evaluations are primarily intended to comply with donors' administrative and financial requirements. However, much of the evidence gathered through project implementation and evaluation serves merely as a compliance accountability measure. Often, when evidence indicates significant operational or impact advancements, CSOs and WROs struggle to effectively convey a message that is listened to and understood by other stakeholders in the environment. By transforming monitoring and evaluation

practices from a mere compliance requirement into mutual accountability tools, a wider audience can be engaged and messages can effectively reach relevant stakeholders. Additionally, practice-based knowledge holds untapped potential and has not been widely used as an advocacy and communication tool for movement members and implementing organizations. Communication of practice-based knowledge needs to be enhanced in order to fully leverage its potential for impact.

- **Innovation in data collection, analysis and reporting is costly and time-consuming.** We Rise 2023 participants stressed that even though they would like to be innovative and groundbreaking in terms of data collection and analysis, funding is usually scarce. Think tanks, donors and even the private sector, tend

to be data and analysis holders in the ending violence against women and girls landscape. By providing CSOs and WROs with enough flexible funding, more evidence could be gathered on the ground, additional capacities built in communities, and a greatly informed movement built.

- **Practice-based knowledge is key to informing and strengthening women's and feminist movements.** Knowledge about gender-related issues is mostly at the grass-roots level. By involving communities in data collection and analysis, on top of building transferable capacities to community members, movements can widen their engagement at the local level, better understanding the root causes of violence against women and girls and its impact on women, girls, men and boys.

Practitioners corner

HARNESSING DATA AND PARTICIPATION

In the realm of addressing violence against women and girls, practitioners have used data collection and monitoring practices for different reasons; some shared that it was used for capacity-building while others for decision-making. One participant explained that these tools were necessary to inform not only donors and high-level stakeholders, but their own programming too and helped them be accountable to the groups they work for and those they work with. These discussions underscore the importance of using data-driven approaches to inform decision-making, shape programming and draft effective policies across diverse contexts. However, challenges persist in effectively communicating these insights beyond compliance requirements, targeting a defined audience. Transforming monitoring and evaluation practices into mutual accountability tools can broaden engagement with stakeholders and amplify the impact of messages. Furthermore, harnessing practice-based knowledge as an advocacy tool remains underutilized, highlighting the need to enhance communication strategies to maximize its potential impact within women's and feminist movements. Flexibility in funding is crucial to support innovative data initiatives, build community capacities, and empower informed advocacy efforts at the grass-roots level, ultimately advancing ending violence against women and girls in a comprehensive manner.

6.3 Communications and advocacy for sustainable change

- **Harnessing the power of feminist communication.** Human rights advocacy today relies heavily on coordinated communication strategies. From engaging with local communities, to creating safe spaces to prevent violence against women and girls, movement members highlight the importance of communication in all their efforts as key to influence the public agenda, promote policy drafting, and share knowledge. Emphasizing the urgency and necessity of feminist communication from a human rights perspective is crucial in addressing violence against women and girls and other issues.
- **Leveraging social media for advocacy and stakeholder engagement.** Participants have shared experiences and strategies for curating effective social media content to amplify their own messages, particularly regarding challenging issues such as violence against women and girls. Using social media platforms, influencers and WhatsApp groups can increase visibility of free helplines and disseminate important messages, especially to marginalized or hard-to-reach populations.
- **Bridging the digital divide and ensuring inclusivity.** Recognizing the varying levels of digital literacy and Internet access in remote communities, efforts have been made to bridge this gap by transferring online messages to traditional forms of communication like town criers, ensuring accessibility for all. Special attention has been given to communicating with people with disabilities, and resources have been allocated to adapt messages and ensure inclusivity in communication strategies, including through digital security manuals tailored for different age groups.

Practitioners corner

EFFECTIVE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION

Effective feminist communication strategies are crucial to strengthen feminist movements. This includes community engagement, policy influence, and knowledge dissemination. Using social media and customized content enhances outreach to marginalized groups, while initiatives to close the digital gap promote inclusivity by adapting messages for diverse audiences using both digital and traditional communication channels.



7

ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE AND ADAPTABILITY IN TIMES OF BACKLASH



The aim of the plenary discussion “Funding Feminist Movements and Building Resilience” was to delve into the vital concept of organizational resilience, particularly within CSOs and WROs at the forefront of efforts to end violence against women and girls. In an era marked by COVID-19 pandemic challenges and intersecting global crises, this dialogue aimed to unpack the various dimensions and practical knowledge surrounding the capacity of these organizations to not only endure, but to adapt and thrive. Ultimately, this discussion was about harnessing collective wisdom to fortify the foundations of movements to create a world that is free from violence against women and girls, and ensure the longevity and impact of these organizations. Core and flexible funding is essential for strengthening the resilience of civil society and women-led organizations at the grass-roots level, as

there is no resilience without resources. Particularly for small community and grass-roots organizations, flexible funding is paramount. Self-care budgets and well-being programmes proved invaluable during the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing their significance.

In this plenary, participants heard from Faizat Badmus-Busari from the Strategic Initiative for Women in The Horn Of Africa Network about their UN Trust Fund supported project in South Sudan; Jackline Bartenge from Women Challenged to Challenge, Kenya; Fernanda Rotondo from the Abogados y Abogadas del Nordeste Argentino en Derechos Humanos y Estudios Sociales, Argentina; Hisham Obaid from the UN Trust Fund; Lara Fergus from the Spotlight Civil Society Global Reference Group; and Katarzyna Staszewska, Association of Women’s Rights in Development.

Faizat Badmus-Busari reflected on the importance of flexible funding to adapt projects in times of crises, such as COVID-19, to respond effectively to the needs of women and girl who are survivors or at risk of violence. A key component of their project was working with schoolchildren, teachers and school administration; however, during the COVID-19 pandemic schools closed, and they were unable to create the project’s initially intended school clubs. Badmus-Busari shared the extensive adaptations that were made to pivot from a school-based intervention to a more community-based intervention. Jackline Bartenge highlighted how core funding and funding from the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative enabled them to build both the resilience of women and girls with disabilities and strengthen the capacity of the Women Challenged to Challenge organization itself. The organization was also able to provide phone counselling for women with disabilities; and to scale up its organizational capacity. In terms of challenges, Bartenge mentioned that through the project implementation they were able to find supported evidence that stigma, patriarchal social norms and gatekeepers disallow women with disabilities to report cases of violence against them.

Fernanda Rotondo observed how flexible funding from the UN Trust Fund has allowed the Abogados y Abogadas del Nordeste Argentino en Derechos Humanos y Estudios Sociales to adapt to different contexts, including to support Indigenous women human rights defenders facing persecution in the Jujuy Province and to establish a mental health support programme for their staff. The organization has an association of lawyers in the north of Argentina working on public policy and public advocacy, and access to justice, particularly for the LGBTQ+ community. Funding was leveraged to investigate barriers to access to justice, accompany more cases of violence against women and girls, and expand a public advocacy and communication campaign. According to Rotondo, the flexible funds were very useful to address various challenges in Argentina, such as the rampant hyperinflation, political backlash and shrinking civic space.



Lara Fergus explained how the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative was an unprecedented opportunity to resource grass-roots organizations through flexible funding, including constituent-led organizations. Fergus stressed that the reason the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative had selected to work with the UN Trust Fund was because it wanted a comprehensive approach, and because it would mean that all approved programming was linked to the international human rights framework. “We need to strengthen women’s movements if we want to end violence against women and girls. This isn’t just a belief, its evidence based,” she added.



Hisham Obaid shared the journey of the UN Trust Fund over the years in implementing and simplifying procedures in order to progressively make space for more flexible and adaptable funding. Obaid shared the UN Trust Fund’s demand-driven approach and how it has adjusted to the local contexts of its partner organizations. To this end, the capacity development budget was designed to add targeted and context-specific support to partner organizations. Furthermore, Obaid explained that the UN Trust Fund applies detailed regulation and procedures oriented at supporting the work of CSOs and WROs operating in crisis and post-crisis situations.

Concluding the panel session, **Katarzyna Staszewska** from the Association of Women’s Rights in Development commented on how funders should provide additional core funding to grass-roots women’s organizations to allow them to drive sustainable, transformative change for women and girls, noting that only 1 per cent of the total official development assistance goes to WROs. “We need to make sure that systems are fit for purpose and adapt to different practices.” Staszewska focused her intervention on what donors could do to support resilient CSOs. WROs are chronically underfunded and despite being very resourceful, they need core and flexible funding to survive. It is important to make sure that systems are fit for purpose and that no one is left behind. Staszewska also acknowledged the progress UN Trust Fund had made over the years in becoming a learning organization that focuses on WROs, with adequate core and flexible funding.

7.1 Organizational resilience and crisis preparedness

- **A need for resilience in challenging contexts became evident during the COVID-19 pandemic.** The global emergency significantly impacted programming, limiting access to beneficiaries and requiring the suspension of certain activities. Moreover, it exacerbated existing challenges, such as poverty, with women resorting to extreme measures like selling children to survive. The pandemic also disrupted work routines, hindering staff mobility and connectivity, underscoring the importance of resilience in overcoming such obstacles. However, organizations leveraged their relationships with government and local stakeholders to strategize, reprogramme, and address emerging needs. Despite Internet connectivity issues, initiatives like establishing hotlines and obtaining government permission for travel facilitated the identification and response to cases of violence. Online meetings played a crucial role in maintaining connections and disseminating information, while resources such as procured vehicles and data support from the UN Trust Fund eased logistical challenges, enabling outreach to remote areas even amidst concurrent crises like floods.
- **The ability to respond to crises and maintain operations amidst challenges is a fundamental aspect of organizational resilience.** It entails intentional efforts to effect change and preparedness for potential disruptions. Anticipating, preparing for, and adapting to crises or disturbances is crucial to implement

mechanisms to manage and mitigate risks to organizational and programmatic impacts, ultimately striving to overcome crises and thrive. Efforts during the pandemic underscored the importance of organizational preparedness and resilience building, with actions including capacity-building for staff, development of self-care plans, and review of strategic documents to align with emerging contexts such as climate change. Decentralization strategies, such as creating WhatsApp groups and supporting beneficiaries at the local level, aimed to sustain support networks despite technological challenges and limited pre-existing connections. The necessity of disaster management plans and effective communication strategies, particularly to combat misinformation during crises like that observed during the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out, emerged as critical action points to ensure response effectiveness and community trust.

- **Mental health and self-care play critical roles in resilience.** Leadership and senior management bear the responsibility of supporting mental well-being, and trauma can have lasting effects. There remains an ongoing critical need for resources to address the self- and collective care of those actively working on ending violence against women and girls issues, particularly those working in the context of crises to address immediate individual needs and organizational resilience as well as the longer-term resilience of future movements.

7.2 Self- and collective care in the context of programming to end violence against women and girls

- **To foster holistic well-being and resilience, it is imperative to integrate self- and collective-care practices across all stakeholders.** These actions should extend beyond traditional beneficiaries to include government officials and security forces. Organizational strategies should be developed with multi-year perspectives, prioritizing self- and collective care as foundational pillars. This entails ensuring universal access to mental health services and support for all staff members, alongside proactive budgeting for internal and external self-care initiatives at the design stage. Additionally, strategies to manage workplace stress must be established to cultivate a supportive and nurturing environment. Embracing contemplation as a coping strategy can further aid in centering individuals amidst uncertainty and anxiety, fostering a sense of presence and grounding in the present moment. By institutionalizing these practices and principles, organizations can foster a culture of care and resilience that empowers individuals to navigate challenges with strength and compassion.
- **The implementation of self- and collective-care practices faces significant challenges, primarily stemming from constraints related to financial and human resources.** Many organizations and individuals, particularly in resource-constrained environments, encounter barriers to accessing such care due to limited financial resources. Moreover, the absence of mental health professionals and counsellors exacerbates this issue, further hindering access to essential support services. Additionally, institutional barriers pose significant obstacles to the integration of self- and collective care into development work. In some contexts, governments fail to recognize the importance of these strategies, thereby neglecting to support initiatives aimed at promoting well-being and resilience. This lack of political will not only impedes our ability to operate effectively within these spaces but also undermines efforts to incorporate self- and collective care into programmatic interventions, limiting their overall impact and effectiveness. Addressing these systemic challenges is essential to creating environments where individuals and organizations can prioritize and access the care they need to thrive.
- **Stand together in solidarity to promote collective care for movement-building.** The concept of collective care is also associated with movement-building and in certain shrinking civic space contexts it acts as an avenue that supports and protect activists and practitioners.



Practitioners corner

SELF-CARE STRATEGIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL WELL-BEING

When asked about self-care practices, participants shared that some simple actions can help such as taking walks, sightseeing, and grounding, such as taking the time to breath and reconnect with their body because it expresses emotions and feelings. Contemplation helps to centre themselves in the day, or in the place, and it can reduce anxiety. Similarly, others stressed the importance of listening attentively to those in distress, recognizing the value of simply being there for someone in need. For organizations that can allow a budget for it, as well as integrating self- and collective care to their multi-year strategies, having a garden for staff members to grow trees and plants was an example shared by a participant that can easily be implemented across various contexts.

7.3 Growing small grass-roots organizations

- **Small and grass-roots organizations require tailored support.** Recognizing the diverse needs and challenges of small organizations and providing separate calls for proposals to address their specific requirements can be an effective way to engage, support and most importantly fund these types of organizations.
- **Strengthening foundations.** By fostering partnerships and networks, advocating for constant connections and collaborations can bolster the organizational infrastructure. In the realm of strengthening small organizations, securing funds is vital; yet partnerships, core budgets and staff are equally crucial. While resources are often scarce, passion, determination and skill development remain pivotal. However, amidst the perpetual chase for funding, there is a need to pause and strategize for long-term sustainability. We must consider whether funding alone can solve all problems, including political and social ones. Thus, a holistic approach is imperative, addressing both immediate needs and underlying challenges.
- **Support institutional resilience.** This includes embracing internal challenges as opportunities for growth, prompting the development of innovative strategies, and reinforcing an organization's resilience.
- **Foster additional donor trust and support.** Prioritize building trust with donors by emphasizing institutional accountability, simplifying requirements, and ensuring user-friendly systems or platforms for small organizations.
- **Promoting self- and collective care.** This is a crucial component for the sustainability of organizations, especially those working closely with vulnerable populations such as women. Amid the constant pressures of surviving, reacting and defending against various challenges, staff members often experience fatigue and demotivation. In order to thrive in this demanding environment, it is essential for organizations to foster close connections with the women they serve. By celebrating moments of joy and placing emphasis on self-care, organizations can rejuvenate their staff and promote a culture of resilience.

Practitioners corner

NAVIGATING RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS AND DONOR DYNAMICS

In the dynamic landscape of small organizations, effective internal and external communication stands as a cornerstone for visibility and sustainability. However, the relentless pursuit of goals often leads to overextension, as highlighted by UN Women and the UN Trust Fund, whose remarks underscore the pressure to meet increasing demands, both from organizations and donors. The cyclical nature of this challenge, compounded by shifting donor expectations and the imperative to showcase tangible results, perpetuates a cycle of overstressing resources and capacities. This phenomenon, rooted in aid colonization, calls for a critical examination of the power dynamics at play within both WROs and donor entities. In navigating these complexities, partnership and collaboration emerge as indispensable tools for leveraging resources and expertise. Transparency in operations and dealings fosters trust among stakeholders, while access to donors and grant opportunities remains pivotal for organizational growth. Concurrently, investing in training and capacity-building equips organizations with the resilience and adaptability needed to navigate evolving donor landscapes and address emerging concepts such as “leave no one behind” and intersectionality. Through a concerted effort to balance self-care with strategic engagement, small organizations can mitigate burnout, enhance effectiveness, and realize their transformative potential within their communities.



8

RECOMMENDATIONS



Genuine change is transformational and it's not just about the money.”

We Rise 2023 ended with an open-ended reflection from all participants on the way forward. Overall, four intertwined recommendations on feminist resourcing for ending violence against women and girls programming emerged from the convening and consultations:

1. Adequate resourcing is required for intersectional approaches to ending violence against women and girls programming. According to participants, funding processes should facilitate access to organizations focusing on women and girls with intersecting marginalizations, recognizing the technical expertise and adequate resourcing required for intersectional approaches. Funding should also support collaborative efforts across sectors and inclusive partnerships are essential for addressing challenges as this ensures that the perspectives and needs of underserved and at-risk women and girls are integrated into the planning and execution of inclusive programmes and policies.
2. Adequate resourcing is required to support organizational resilience for ending violence against women and girls. Participants highlighted the importance of tailored funding processes,

which should be fit for purpose and enable organizations, especially small, local, self-led and grassroots organizations, to access flexible, long-term core resources and empower feminist organizing and knowledge production. UN Trust Fund grantees shared the impact of multiple, overlapping crises and the positive impact the COVID-19 institutional resilience funding had on their ability to adapt and continue to continue delivering, and reach the most marginalized women and girls. There remains an ongoing critical need for resources to address self- and collective care for those actively working on issues related to violence against women and girls, particularly those working in the context of crises to address immediate individual needs and organizational resilience as well as the longer-term resilience of future movements.

3. Adequate resourcing is required to support feminist and women's movements for ending violence against women and girls. This includes the need for more opportunities for connections, learning and strategizing among WROs across regions to break down isolation and provide platforms for movement strengthening. This also

includes funding to support new technologies for advocacy and stakeholder engagement to amplify messages and create safe spaces that bridge the digital divide. Participants also highlighted the need to recognize and address power dynamics associated with global North to South funding flows, which requires donors to have greater trust in WROs. There was also a push for greater cooperation and coordination within the ending violence against women and girls funding ecosystem to capitalize on the value added and limitations of different funders to maximize funding to WROs. And finally, given the challenges that the movement is facing, it is important that feminists and civil society are at the funding table, because donors need to be held accountable.

4. Adequate resourcing is required to support feminist and practice-based knowledge for ending violence against women and girls. In the current donor ecosystem grantees argue, the knowledge of practitioners, their monitoring systems, and project evaluations even when collected are primarily intended for compliance with donors' administrative and financial requirements and

serve merely as an accountability measure. Often, when evidence indicates significant operational or impact advancements, CSOs and WROs struggle to effectively convey a message that is listened to and understood by other stakeholders in the environment. Practice-based knowledge therefore holds untapped potential and has not yet been widely used as an advocacy and communication tool for movement members and implementing organizations. CSO partners advocate for communication of practice-based knowledge to fully leverage its potential for impact. All participants also pushed for more spaces for connection, learning and strategizing between WROs in these and other regions. We Rise 2023 was highlighted as a unique opportunity to break down the isolation faced by ending violence against women and girls practitioners and foster solidarity, which contributes to resilience, energy and motivation to continue this work. Beyond being a learning experience, participants reflected on how the convention served as a platform for organizational strengthening, critical thinking and coming together for change.

List of Participants

Hawe Hamman Bouba	African Indigenous Women Organisation Central African Network
Ajomuzu Collette Bekaku	Cameroon Association for the Protection and Education of the Child (CAPEC)
Violet Yigha Fokum	Center For Human Rights and Democracy In Africa
Gladys Mbuyah	International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Cameroon
Abonge Laura	Rural Women Center for Education and Development
Beassoum Annicette	Public Interest Law Center
Judyth Koffi	ONG conscience et VIE
Emilienne Gnamien Coulibaly	ONG Dignité et Droits Pour les Enfants en Côte D'ivoire (ONG DDE-CI)
Thérèse Nzale	Fund for Congolese Women
Abdul Bangura	United Funding and Development for Underage Mothers (UFDUM)
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Namuma Mulindi	Sonke Gender Justice
Munya Mandipaza	International Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS
Naledi Masipa	Gender Links HQ
Rhoda E. Udanyi	Scripture Union West Africa
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Chinyere Constance Obinna	Centre for Women Studies and Intervention
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Naigaga Damalie	Integrated Disabled Women Activities
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Rebecca Gumbo	Bethany Project
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Glanis Changachirere	Institute for Young Women Development
Tracey Sibanda	Voluntary Service Overseas
Ernest Cajuste	Episcopal Relief & Development
Gaudence Mushimiyimana	Rwanda Organization of Women with Disabilities (UNABU)
Faizat Badmus-Busari	The Strategic Initiative for Women in The Horn Of Africa (SIHA) Network

Michael Anyeko	African Partners for Child Poverty (APPCO)
Betty Achana	National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda
Nobuhle Moyo	Leonard Cheshire Disability Zimbabwe
Chazile Dlamini	Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse
Tsongo Mbalamy Claudine	Dynamique des Femmes Juristes
Miriam Maggs	Ethiopiaid
Thokozile Phiri Nkhoma	Facilitators of Community Transformation (FACT)
Fasio Gavern	Women’s Legal Resources Centre
Uche Brown	Empowering Women for Excellence Initiative
Falana Adeola	Society for Life Changers and Good Parental Care
Zakiya Bulhan	International Solidarity Foundation
Josephine Drama	STEWARDWOMEN
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Fernanda Rotondo	Fundación Abogados y Abogadas del Noroeste Argentino en Derechos Humanos y Estudios Sociales
Laura Morán	Asociación Colectiva de Mujeres para el Desarrollo Local
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Maria Esther Ayala Escalante	Centro de Derechos de Mujeres
Maria Virginia Diaz Mendez	Centro de Estudios de la Mujer - Honduras (Cem-H)
María de la Luz Estrada	Catolicas por el Derecho a Decidir A.C.
María Fernanda Rascón Rojas	Infancia Común A.C.
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Charlene Tafawa	Refugee Consortium of Kenya
Jacky Bartenge	Women Challenged to Challenge
Nancy Sitima	Forum For Women in Development and Democracy and Justice
Florence Keya	Maisha Girls Safe House
Doris Kawira	HIAS Refugee Trust of Kenya
Angelina Cikanda	Centre for Rights Education and Awareness
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Paola Yañez Inofuentes	Red de Mujeres Afrolatinoamericanas, Afrocaribeñas y de la Diáspora
Naomi Mwangi	Equality Now
Muhoza Ida Claire	COCAFEM
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Lara Fergus	Global Reference Group
Maria Rosa Avila	Latin America Reference Group
Mayela Garcia	Latin America Reference Group
Waldistrudis Hurtado	Latin America Reference Group
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Tamba Johnson	Africa Reference Group
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Cecilia Alemany	UN Women
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Gloria Kaberia	UNICEF
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Kasia Staszewska	AWID
Deya Bhattacharya	AWID
Faye Macheke	AWID
Leila Milani	Futures Without Violence
Natsnet Ghebrebrhan	Raising Voices
Tarcila Rivera Zea	Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas (ECMIA) // Indigenous cultural Center of Peru (CHIRAPAQ)
Wendy Carolina Franco, Ph.D.	Speaker
DeShaunta Johnson, PhD.	Speaker
Maura Bairley	Speaker
Elizabeth Kemunto	UN Women
Evanson Njomo	UN Women
Maureen Gicho	UN Women
Mary Wanjiru	UN Women
Maxime Houinato	UN Women
Sunita Caminha	UN Women
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Sam Callis	Strategic Agenda
Joseph Edunsin	Strategic Agenda



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