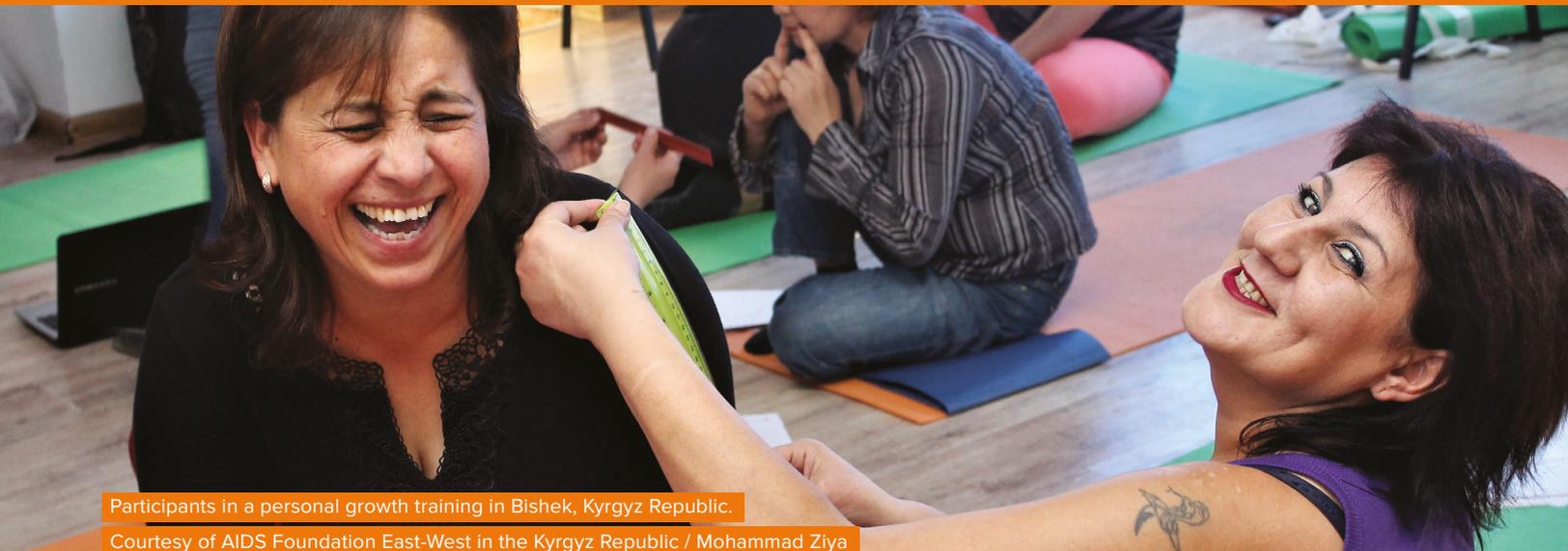


EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

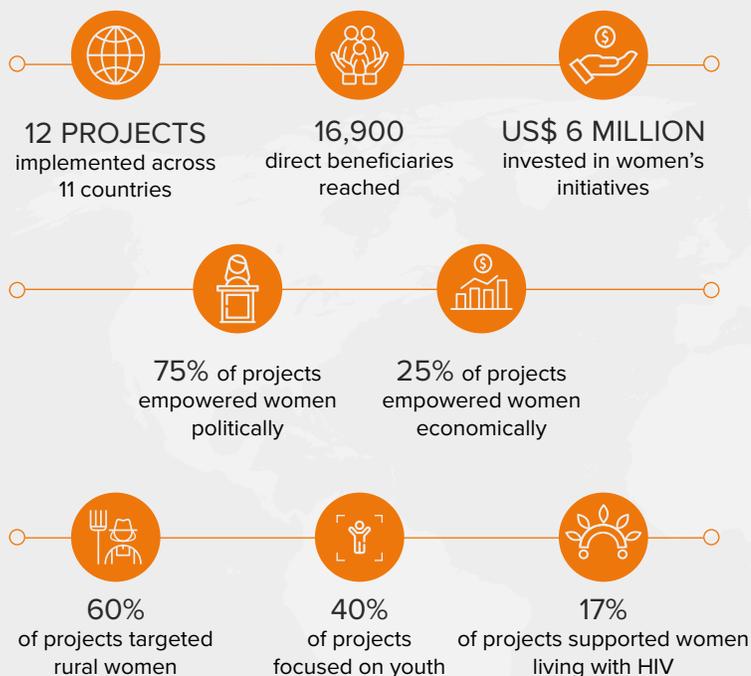


Participants in a personal growth training in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic.

Courtesy of AIDS Foundation East-West in the Kyrgyz Republic / Mohammad Ziya

2009-2019 PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

Ten Years of Reaching the Furthest Behind



The **Fund for Gender Equality** (FGE) is UN Women's global grantmaking programme dedicated to supporting **women-led civil society organizations** to accelerate **women's economic and political empowerment**. The FGE **benefits women who are furthest behind** by funding organizations best equipped to reach them. In Europe and Central Asia, the Fund has worked with rural women in remote settings, youth, women living with HIV, single mothers, populations affected by conflict, and survivors of gender-based violence, among others.

FROM MARGINALIZED GROUPS TO AGENTS OF CHANGE

Below are some snapshots of FGE-supported initiatives in the region:

The All Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS pioneered the first project in **Ukraine** designed by and for women living with HIV. An unprecedented study led by the network analyzed linkages between HIV/AIDS and gender, leading to policy and legislative changes. The project also created the Ukrainian Network of Women Living with HIV/AIDS, which today is the main driver of gender and HIV issues in the country as the Positive Women's Network.

In **Georgia**, Fund Sukhumi established Gender Advisory Councils in three municipalities comprising representatives from local government, NGOs, displaced people, the media and community leaders. After learning about gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting, they developed needs assessments and policy recommendations to solve pressing community issues, 30 of which were adopted. By the end of the project in 2016, each municipality had a Gender Action Plan with an allocated budget. Based on the model's success, the national Government in 2016 legislated the establishment of Gender Advisory Councils in every municipality. Today, all 64 Georgian municipalities have them.

AIDS Foundation East-West in the **Kyrgyz Republic** provides socially disadvantaged women – including prisoners, sex workers, women living with HIV or with disabilities, and survivors of violence - assistance to advance their personal development and financial stability. A new referral network of 27 public and private organizations offers over 650 services and a trained cohort of 32 social workers provides adequate counselling and referrals to women.

In **Turkey**, the Mother Child Education Foundation (AÇEV) addressed the underrepresentation of women in local governments through continued formal and non-formal education, volunteering, income-generating activities and the mobilization of men and boys as allies. More than 600 women have bettered literacy skills, and learned about their rights, gender equality, children's rights and participation in decision-making.

UNIQUE MODEL IN THE UNITED NATIONS: Combines financial and technical support

- Puts civil society first to own the change process
- Invests in local women's organizations
- Global knowledge and results.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT:

Reaches the most marginalized

- Local impact (builds skills and creates women's groups)
- Changes social norms
- Reduces inequalities among civil society organizations.



Thanks to the FGE the organization is going to another level. This project has allowed us to lead the positioning of women, peace and security issues at the top of the political agenda in Albania.

Association of Women with Social Problems, FGE partner in Albania



Olena Stryzhak, Chair of the Board of the Positive Women Network

in Ukraine, speaking with ICTV, a national television channel.

Courtesy of Olena Stryzhak / Alina Yaroslavskaya

TALES OF EMPOWERMENT

FROM OUTCAST TO LEADER: THE POWER OF SELF-HELP GROUPS IN RURAL ARMENIA



Lusine poses proudly next to her raspberry orchard.

Courtesy of Green Lane / Armen Sarukhanyan

Lusine, 48, farms in Ashotavan, an impoverished rural community in Armenia. Many young people and men have left the area in search of education and better jobs.

Since 2016 Green Lane Agricultural Assistance NGO is providing training and small grants to address the 30 per cent gender income gap among farmers, associated with women's limited access to knowledge and technologies.

“

Before all of this, I was sleeping, and now I have woken up.

Lusine

“Before, we didn't know much about agriculture and business. Green Lane gave us the literature, consultancy and support we needed,” says Lusine, who has turned farming into her main occupation. She and 170 other women have organized in 15 women's farmers groups that make organic fertilizers and use organic methods to fight diseases and pests on higher value crops such as raspberries.

Their greater productivity and income have encouraged women from neighbouring communities to create their own groups, which quickly provided a new space for them to become leaders in community decision-making. “They cannot simply ignore us anymore. We raised important issues with the head of the local administration, particularly the need for us to access natural gas. When he came to our community, he said, ‘Everyone is talking about these raspberry women,’” Lusine notes with pride.

More than 180 Green Lane beneficiaries have gained IT skills, and each group has a Facebook page and email addresses. Lusine says her son is now considering a return to Ashotavan, intrigued by new ways of doing business. She is busy planning her next move – a greenhouse. “Our project gives us a goal to work towards,” she says. “Before all of this I was sleeping, and now I have woken up.”

2018-2019 UPSCALING AND SOCIAL INNOVATION INITIATIVE TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Launched in 2018, the FGE's Upscaling and Social Innovation Initiative works with grantees to enhance their abilities to accelerate the empowerment of women and girls in vulnerable and marginalized positions. The Fund is testing new approaches by providing nine existing grantees with additional funds, coupled with intensive training and coaching. In applying beneficiary-centred principles, grantees are gaining a deeper understanding of the communities they serve. They are testing scalable models and experimenting with innovative solutions to the challenges they face.

In the Europe and Central Asia region, FGE partner the Association for Women with Social Problems (AWSP) in **Albania** was selected to expand its project and gain social innovation skills through an additional grant of US\$ 85,000.

Advocacy by AWSP led to the Government's adoption of the first National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The plan was prepared in close consultation with civil society and international partners, under the leadership of AWSP.

AWSP's upscaling initiative entails expanding civil society's role in sustaining the momentum. To that end, it has launched Albania's first civil society coalition on women, peace and security. Over 30 organizations from across the country provide expertise and work together to demand action and accountability. For its social innovation initiative, AWSP is applying different methodologies from systems thinking and human-centered design to help the coalition's cohesion and support its members co-create a joint identity and design novel strategies for advocating and monitoring continued progress.

Our targeted population



WOMEN HEADS OF
HOUSEHOLD



SURVIVORS OF GENDER-
BASED VIOLENCE



WOMEN AFFECTED BY
CONFLICT



YOUNG WOMEN



SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY
VULNERABLE

Do you want to learn more? Are you ready to invest in women changemakers and innovators for gender equality?
Do you feel as excited and committed as we do about our work?

Tell us all about it at fund.genderequality@unwomen.org