

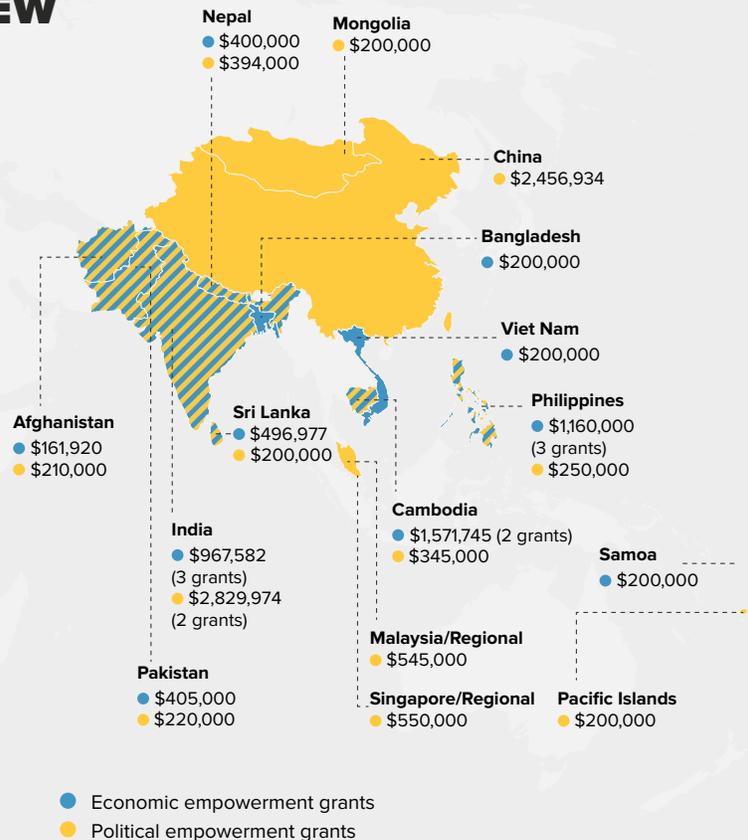
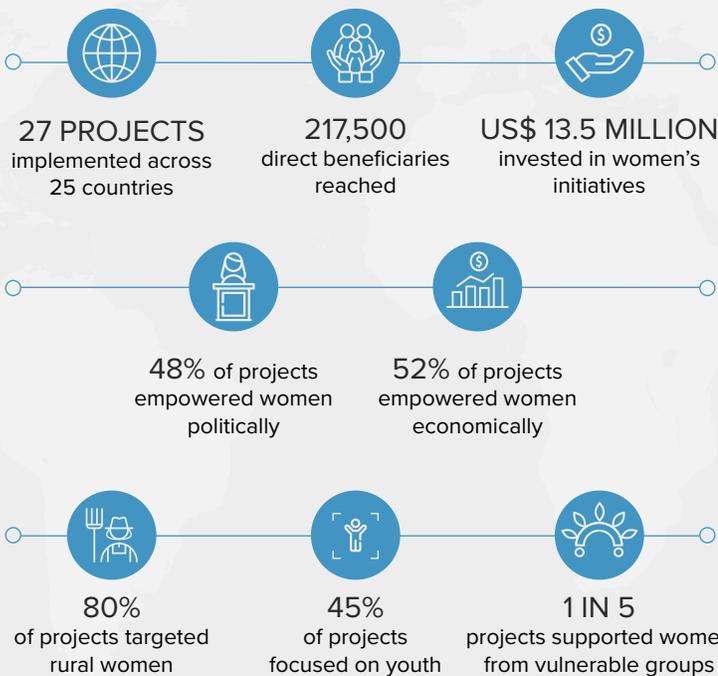
ASIA AND THE PACIFIC



Newly literate women reading newspapers at a literacy centre in West Bengal.
Courtesy of PRADAN / Sourangshu Banerjee, India

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 Asia and the Pacific, the Fund works with rural women in remote settings, youth, socio-economically vulnerable women and girls, indigenous women and migrant domestic workers, among others.

FROM MARGINALIZED GROUPS TO AGENTS OF CHANGE

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

In **Samoa**, the term “*nofotane*” refers to indigenous women who, after marriage, live in their husband’s village with his family. They are often exploited as domestic servants and are highly vulnerable to domestic abuse. Thanks to continuous community engagement by the Samoa Victims Support Group, more than 2,000 local leaders in 182 rural villages now openly support *nofotane* women’s rights and implement measures to stop discrimination against them. A *nofotane* representative has a seat in every village council meeting. A discussion in the Samoan Parliament about the project triggered a national debate and harnessed additional political support.

A regional research by the Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE) and Solidaritas Perempuan sought to replace patriarchal perspectives on religion and culture with those of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This was the basis of nine legislative proposals in **Indonesia** and **Singapore**. A network of over 560 gender advocates emerged and connected 650,000 people. In **India**, two NGOs – Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN) and Jagori – reached 300,000 women from poverty-stricken Dalit and tribal communities across 30 districts about their rights. As a result, women started to claim their entitlements to property and public services. Over 850 self-help groups facilitated the regular participation of 67,800 of its members in village meetings and enabled 38,000 women to increase access to livelihood opportunities.

While manual scavenging, which consists of cleaning dry latrines in exchange for housing, used clothing and minimal pay, is illegal in **India**, many Dalit women are still forced to practice it. Jan Sahas organization facilitated the liberation of 8,000 women from what is considered a form of slavery. They helped 6,600 of them find alternative sources of livelihood that increased their income by 310 per cent. The advocacy efforts of more than 7,000 women organized in community-based groups resulted in the passage of more than 60 local resolutions to stop scavenging and ensure decent work conditions for women. Jan Sahas received the Star Impact Award in 2014 for its achievements.

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.



As a women-led NGO it feels good to know you are working in a real partnership with UN Women’s Fund for Gender Equality. The Fund is truly a valuable vehicle for supporting innovations in gender equality interventions.

Atikha,
FGE partner in the Philippines



Participants in a market event in Samoa’s capital, Apia, in support of *nofotane* women supported by the Samoa Victims Support Group.
UN Women / Sarika Chand

TALES OF EMPOWERMENT

WOMEN IN RURAL CAMBODIA CULTIVATE THEIR WAY OUT OF VULNERABILITY



Khern Sreysor (right side, in red) provides monthly coaching to local farmers who have benefited from training on agriculture in Rohal village.

Courtesy of Banteay Srei / Krem Chhat



I am now seen [as a] person who knows about the rights of women and can lead the team.

Khern Sreysor

In five rural districts of Battambang and Siem Reap provinces in Cambodia, Banteay Srei, a local women-led NGO, helps the poorest, most marginalized women – including those who are illiterate or single mothers – improve their livelihoods.

Twenty-year-old Vern Chantha is one. The fifth in a poor family of seven children with unemployed elderly parents, she decided to participate in training on agricultural techniques to improve productivity on her small 100-square-metre family farm. “Sometimes the plants didn’t grow well and we did not have any product to harvest even after our hard efforts,” she says.

With new skills and continued coaching on the use of non-chemical fertilizers and natural pesticides, her yields have risen, providing enough to sell for income. “I am using the money to buy food and household supplies and to reinvest on my farmland,” explains a happy Chantha. She is also pursuing her second year of a bachelor’s degree in management.

Khern Sreysor, 31, took part in training on leadership and public speaking. Already serving as a community facilitator in Banteay Srei’s activities, she gained enough confidence to secure an appointment as the Ro Hal Deputy Village Chief. She is active on women’s issues, including property rights and improved support in cases of gender-based violence. “I am now seen [as a] person who knows about the rights of women and can lead the team,” she says. “I want to be a candidate for the upcoming commune council elections, and if I win, I may be able to help the community people more.”

In total, 25 female community members were trained to become trainers in agricultural techniques to raise pigs and chicken, and grow vegetables. Of the 100 poor rural women who gained skills through their guidance, almost a third increased their incomes by 50 per cent.

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 that they serve. They are testing scalable models and experimenting with innovative solutions to the challenges they face.

In the Asia and the Pacific region in the **Philippines**, Atikha was selected to expand its project and gain social innovation skills through an additional grant of US \$175,000.

Atikha offers financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills to Filipino migrant women working in **Hong Kong** and **Singapore**, using a validated model that provides simultaneous training and mentoring to overseas workers and their families. Atikha has linked 5,000 workers to investment programmes in the Philippines, of which 345 have invested US\$ 690,000. About 50 have set up or expanded businesses – such as rice production, trading, convenience stores, internet cafés, cattle farming and marketing - employing a total of 61 workers and investing US\$ 106,000.

To ensure sustainability, Atikha is focusing its upscaling efforts on establishing strategic partnerships with local governments and state universities to improve and expand training for migrant domestic workers. As part of its social innovation experiment, Atikha is piloting a weekly Facebook TV programme led by migrant domestic workers. Through it, they intend to increase participation in the reintegration preparedness programme, and overall to facilitate access to knowledge about saving, investing, entrepreneurship, family issues, legal rights and other practical information that can help migrant workers achieve their goals.

Our targeted population



DOMESTIC WORKERS



MIGRANT WOMEN



SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



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