

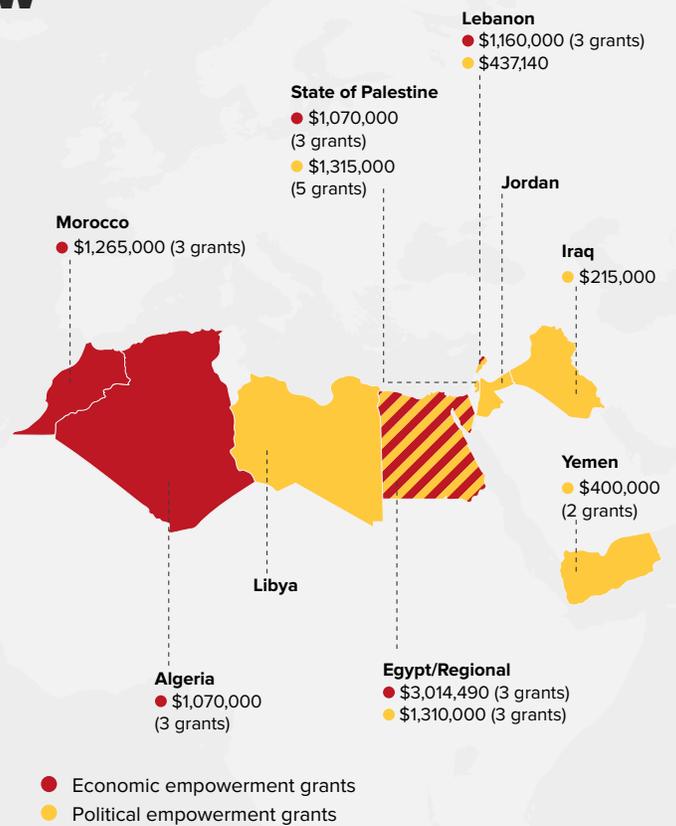
ARAB STATES



A project participant supported by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon.
UN Women / Joe Saade and Ghinwa Daher

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 the Arab States, the Fund has worked with refugees, rural women in remote settings, youth, women living with disabilities and single mothers, among others. The FGE has been operating in complex settings in the Arab region, addressing different levels of vulnerability and marginalization, and investing in grantees' innovation capabilities as catalysts for change.

FROM MARGINALIZED GROUPS TO AGENTS OF CHANGE

Below are some snapshots of FGE supported initiatives from the region:

Through the support of the Palestinian Centre for Peace and Democracy, a group of young representatives of 25 community-based organizations from across the **State of Palestine** formed a coalition and drafted an alternative to the official draft constitution, which lacked provisions for gender equality. Their advocacy galvanized public and political support – including the signature of a formal petition by over 360 public officials in favour of a more gender-sensitive constitution.

A cohort of 3,800 young women across **Egypt's** 27 governorates gained knowledge and tools to become leaders and promote development initiatives in their communities, bridging longstanding divides in engaging with local authorities and governmental bodies. The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights trained and mentored a core group of 175 young activists, who then recruited and trained thousands of others. Positive messages about female leadership ran in popular radio and TV shows, causing a ripple in the stagnant topic of female participation in elections.

In **Lebanon**, the Amel Association trained over 5,700 Lebanese rural women and refugees from Iraq, Sudan and Syria to create an umbrella brand and the first economic network for women in the country, "MENNA". Linking 14 cooperatives and 650 producers, MENNA markets unique, high-quality household products and handicrafts linked to traditional techniques and cultural heritages. Beyond creating economic opportunities, the project has raised women's awareness of their rights, and developed confidence and self-esteem.

In **Morocco**, the National Institution for Solidarity with Women challenged single mothers' social exclusion by easing their entry into the labour market. Among 160 single mothers, 115 found jobs and 90 gained an identity card to facilitate employment. Collective advocacy engaged over 60 civil society organizations, and included a documentary featuring real-life testimonies that went viral through a major social media campaign called "Baraka" ("enough").

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.



Partnership with FGE is special to us. It supports our organization to go beyond the war in its thinking and actions.

Youth Leadership Development Foundation, FGE partner in Yemen



Young women mobilizing for a gender-sensitive Constitution in the State of Palestine.

Courtesy of Palestinian Center for Peace and Democracy

TALES OF EMPOWERMENT

HANDS-ON VOCATIONAL TRAINING ENABLES WOMEN'S INTEGRATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET IN EGYPT



Faten and Hadeer supervising their honey production.

Courtesy of the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, Egypt

Faten Fayeze and Hadeer Abu Zaid have been neighbours for many years in the Sharkeya Governorate in Egypt. But they were not close friends before they joined the Salheya Initiative. Led by the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower in collaboration with the American University in Cairo, it has piloted a practical model helping women and girls join the local labour market.

Faten, 26 years old, performed well at school, but could not complete her education because she married early and soon after gave birth to her first baby. Hadeer, 19 years old, is continuing her university education, majoring in social sciences.

Their friendship began when they both took the Salheya Initiative's honey production course. After completing it, Faten and Hadeer decided to establish an apiary of their own.

Even at the early stages of their small business, the positive impact of being entrepreneurs was evident. Faten, whose family supported her during the course and the establishment of the apiary, now feels independent and self-confident. Hadeer has new hopes for a promising future as an active participant in Egypt's economy.

Altogether, more than 1,300 women graduated from 80 hands-on training courses covering 13 professional fields. The Salheya Initiative also helped the Ministry of Manpower to institutionalize a Gender Equity Seal, establish a specialized unit to oversee gender audits of private and public firms, and train more than 400 ministry employees on gender equity. In a ripple effect, a similar unit was established in the Sharkeya Governorate.

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 Arab States region, FGE partners El Ghaith Association and the Lebanon Family Planning Association for Development and Family Empowerment were selected to expand their projects and gain social innovation skills through additional grant funds.

In **Algeria**, the El Ghaith has helped over 500 women farmers from the poorest municipalities in the Bordj Bou Arreridj region to boost returns from their products – cheese, honey and wool – thanks to a goat revolving scheme model. Three food production units allow larger volumes and adherence to national hygiene and quality standards. In its upscaling phase, the project is transferring the management of the units to women's cooperatives and connecting them to wider markets to support the expansion and sustainability of their businesses. El Ghaith's innovation experiment involves the beneficiary-centered design of a communications campaign to incentivize demand for the women's products.

In **Lebanon**, through the Lebanon Family Planning Association for Development and Family Empowerment, 300 rural women have increased agricultural productivity and income through improved business and technical skills, better quality production standards and the establishment of four agricultural cooperatives. Women's newly created "NESWA" agri-food brand provides a platform to enhance the ownership and cohesion of its members, helping them transition from home-based manufacturers to cooperative managers, operators and entrepreneurs. The model also combines the use of south-south and triangular cooperation initiatives – such as knowledge exchanges and expert visits. Social innovation approaches are being applied to test non-traditional production techniques and new food combinations with a distinctive appeal.

Our targeted population



RURAL WOMEN



WOMEN HEADS OF
HOUSEHOLD



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