

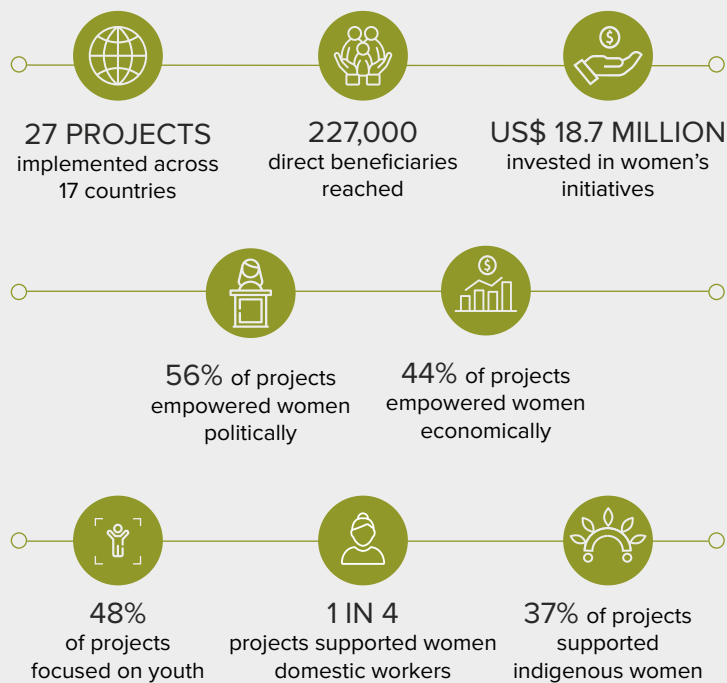
# AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN



Members of "e-Chicas" clubs organized by Centro de Investigación para la Acción Femenina (CIPAF) to ensure girls' inclusion in science, engineering and technologies while building their self-esteem and leadership. Courtesy of CIPAF, Dominican Republic / Lorena Espinoza

## 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 Americas and the Caribbean, the Fund has worked with rural women in remote settings, youth, indigenous women, survivors of gender-based violence and domestic workers, among others.

# FROM MARGINALIZED GROUPS TO AGENTS OF CHANGE

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

Benefiting over 2,900 people between 2013 and 2016, the award-winning “TIC-as” project implemented by Cooperativa Sulá Batsú improved technical capacities and provided more motivation and encouragement for young women and girls in the rural region of Santa Clara, **Costa Rica**. Dropout rates among women in technology degree programmes decreased from 50 to 10 per cent, and enrolment for such studies rose from 13 to 25 per cent. A national network of 750 women was created following the first female hackathon (collective computer programming competition) in Central America, in 2014. 25 digital initiatives addressing important gender issues were launched. Gender equality and technology elements are now included in university curricula, governmental strategic plans and private sector companies. Partnerships with Google and UNESCO are expanding the project in Costa Rica and beyond.

Training and a toolbox provided by Promundo equipped more than 460 municipal social workers and health professionals in **Brazil** to promote gender equality among beneficiaries of *Bolsa Familia*, the government poverty reduction programme. Over 1,000 women and men showed positive shifts in perceptions of women’s economic roles in the family, and shared responsibility in family planning and care for children. A group of 170 men and boys who took part in community activities increased the time spent on childcare – a major step towards the equal distribution of unpaid care work.

In **Argentina, Brazil, Guatemala** and **Peru**, CHIRAPAQ helped 400 indigenous women learn to plant traditional vegetables that were no longer cultivated, yet nutritious and climate-resilient, such as certain varieties of quinoa, beans, corn and manioc. The women also learned to promote ancestral indigenous agricultural techniques based on the equitable participation of women and men, and to organize themselves in cooperatives. This increased their productivity and livelihoods, enhanced food security and brought greater dietary diversity to local markets. The regional project also opened reflection spaces on indigenous women’s economic rights, spurring advocacy and leading to the repeal of a legislative decree undermining food security in Guatemala and the adoption of a local policy in Peru improving measures to realize economic rights.

**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.



The opportunity to work with the FGE is a privilege. The quality, the flexibility, the warmth. FGE support has allowed us to finally achieve goals that we have been working towards for years.

**Centro de Documentación y Estudios, FGE partner in Paraguay**



Young woman participating in the first female hackathon in Central America in Costa Rica.  
Courtesy of Cooperativa Sulá Batsú

## TALES OF EMPOWERMENT

# WOMEN CONSTRUCTION WORKERS IN BOLIVIA: BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE



María del Carmen Cáceres, who calls herself “a woman in the process of reconstruction”, at work in La Paz, Bolivia.  
Courtesy of Red Hábitat / Sofia Bensadon

María del Carmen Cáceres is the Secretary-General of the Association of Women Builders in Bolivia and a worker in the local government emergency unit in La Paz. A survivor of domestic violence, she sacrificed her career as a nurse to enter the better-paid building industry to pay for her cancer-affected daughter’s medical expenses.

Women comprise up to 30 per cent of Bolivia’s construction workforce. Many are indigenous coming from rural areas and are often heads of household. While finding higher incomes in the building sector, they often confront vulnerable situations due to high labour instability and frequent exposure to violence. Red Hábitat pioneered an initiative in two of Bolivia’s largest cities—El Alto and La Paz—helping them find better working conditions by learning high-demand technical skills and market analysis, and using professional business tools.

Participation in trainings brought a turning point in Carmen’s life. “I have gained confidence in myself, as now I know I can do everything I want to. While I keep finding barriers, both construction and this project make me feel I am valuable.”

The project also developed the leadership capabilities of 30 leaders like Carmen to skillfully lobby for policy reforms. Their advocacy persuaded the municipality of La Paz to offer safer options for local transport and construction sites infrastructures. Today, a proud advocate for women workers, María del Carmen champions social security, retirement rights, equal working conditions and violence-free working environments.



I have gained confidence in myself,  
as now I know I can do everything I want to.

**María del Carmen Cáceres**

# 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 Americas and Caribbean region, FGE partner Centro de Documentación y Estudios (CDE) in **Paraguay** was selected to expand its project and gain social innovation skills through an additional grant of US\$ 175,000.

CDE mobilized more than 1,000 civil society activists, political party members, and rural and indigenous women to bring gender parity into political debates and enhance women's political representation. This contributed to the approval by the Senate of the proposal for a gender parity law and an amendment to the Domestic Work Law.

In parallel, CDE has been supporting domestic workers' associations and unions to become more effective in their demands for better policies and services. These women, who are among the most marginalized, with many coming from indigenous, poor or otherwise vulnerable backgrounds, lack access to basic social services and are the only group of workers without a specified minimum wage.

CDE is focusing its upscaling efforts around strengthening the voices of an additional 2,500 domestic workers as leaders in claiming decent work for all, and equal pay for work of equal value. As part of the social innovation initiative, CDE is using human-centred design to boost enrolment in domestic workers associations and increase accessibility to information about rights and available services by testing a weekly radio programme by and for the workers.

## 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](mailto:fund.genderequality@unwomen.org)