



# Tracking the money towards ending Gender Based Violence



Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence

MOVING BEYOND FEAR

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A critical component of ending gender-based violence (GBV) is the proper resourcing—both in terms of human and financial resources—to address the expansive scope of prevention, mitigation and response. This paper explores the current state of funding around GBV. Taking an overview approach, it provides a snapshot of key platforms for tracking funding, recent funding levels, critical areas of partnership and identifies emerging opportunities to leverage the private sector to improve funding.

## Front cover image captions:

Students from Goljano School Gender Club in Ethiopia. An Irish Aid-funded programme implemented by Trócaire and four local partners to mitigate the risk of FGM and child marriage. - Ethiopia, **Photo Credit: Irish Aid**

Building community action on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls. - Malawi, **Photo Credit: Oxfam**

Sewing skills for young women survivors of GBV. As part of the Irish Red Cross programme supporting safe spaces for women to meet, share and learn to reduce the risks of child marriages and other violations. - Bazaar, Bangladesh **Photo Credit: Irish Red Cross**

Participants of GBV-Mobile-Awareness-Campaign. - Zimbabwe, Bulilima District **Photo Credit: GOAL**

Smiling African Ethnic Girl Outdoors with Food Basket, poverty symbol. **Photo Credit: Shutterstock**

Woman allocated land for safe area for sorcery-accusation related violence victims and their families.- Papua New Guinea **Photo Credit: Plan International**

Women led organisations taking on co-leadership of GBV of sub-cluster coordination mechanisms. - Somalia and South Sudan **Photo Credit: Trócaire**

Women addressing FGM and GBV using the sustainable community based SASA approach. - Somalia **Photo Credit: Ifrah Foundation**

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Irish Red Cross

**OXFAM**  
Ireland

**World Vision**  
Ireland

**PLAN**  
INTERNATIONAL

**Óglaigh na hÉireann**  
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES

# Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence



This policy paper provides a high-level snapshot on the state of funding, and financing opportunities, around gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, mitigation, and response. Contributing to the expanding body of analysis and work within the field to both track funding, and to coordinate research and programmatic efforts around GBV, the paper draws on publicly available data to offer a synthesised overview of critical issues facing the adequate resourcing of the GBV field and seeks to inform further empirical research. Additionally, it distils key recommendations for government donors, multilateral institutions, and private philanthropic organisations, while also highlighting emerging market-based options for financing of GBV.

The paper was commissioned by the Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence (ICGBV), consisting of fourteen diverse organisations including humanitarian, human rights and development NGOs, Irish Aid, and the Irish Defence Forces. Member organisations are directly engaged in peacekeeping missions and programming in over forty countries (including Ireland), and active in networks and alliances globally. The global presence and reach of the ICGBV, including a vast network of partnerships with grass roots and women's rights organisations, enables it to leverage local voices, bring to bear extensive subject matter expertise and access high-level political fora in a collective effort to address GBV and advance gender equality.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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A group of school children participate in the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV commemorations, Zimbabwe. **Photo credit: GOAL**



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Just over thirty years ago, in December of 1993, governments from around the world adopted the first international instrument to explicitly address violence against women, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. Ever since, this seminal resolution has served as a bedrock for the expansion of formal resolutions, funding, and programming at national and international levels to address the destructive scourge of violence against women. Yet, despite the growing acknowledgement of the critical importance of addressing violence against women, and gender-based violence (GBV) more broadly, the international community and governments are falling well short in providing the needed resources to make a world free from violence a reality for women, men, and children throughout the world.

A critical component of ending violence is the proper resourcing—both in terms of human and financial capital—to comprehensively address the full scope of the issue. This paper explores the current state of funding for the GBV field writ large. Taking an overview approach, it provides a snapshot of key platforms for tracking funding, recent giving levels, critical areas of partnership and identifies emerging opportunities to leverage the private sector to call in new resource streams.

Two of the leading platforms informing this topic are Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System (CRS) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (FTS).

In recent years both platforms introduced specific codes related to violence, providing unparalleled insight into the state of funding for GBV. There has been a marked year-over-year increase of funds since the introduction of these tracking codes. Though the overall volume of international development and aid for GBV remains frightfully low.

Recently released data from the OECD shows that less than 4 per cent of official development assistance is going to gender equality related work, with less than 1 per cent dedicated to GBV. OCHA data shows that for the last two years, GBV in emergency was funded at less than 25% of the sector needs. Roughly 1/3 of the world's female population, 736 million globally, have experienced violence. Given that evidence from multiple disciplines has demonstrated the negative multigenerational impact violence has over many domains—from mental health and education outcomes to economic development—it is staggering that the world's governments chronically under-invest in preventing, mitigating, and responding to violence.

Continued investment in strengthening the tracking mechanisms for funding is critical for raising awareness about the resources needed for the GBV field and to enhance transparency and accountability for



Women discussing legal provisions on GBV In Parsa, Nepal. **Photo credit: ActionAid Ireland**

donors. As the ecosystem of organisations working in international development continues to expand, there are emerging opportunities for feminist and women-led organisations to shape the development of new market-based products that can increase financing for GBV, women's empowerment and gender equality more broadly.

While governments must ultimately bear the majority of responsibility for ensuring there is appropriate funding, the expansive nature of GBV, which touches all communities throughout the world, requires concerted and collaborative action.



SASA! model equipping community leaders to address FGM and Gender Based Violence in a sustainable way, Somalia  
**Photo credit: Ifrah Foundation**

# I. INTRODUCTION

As countries continue to emerge from the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic, the international community is increasingly returning its energy and focus to delivering on the ambitious outcomes set forth in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Agenda, while also responding to a growing number of complex humanitarian crises and accelerating challenges across climate change and technology. A critical component of addressing these expanding fields of work is ensuring there are stable and adequate human and financial resources to meet the needs of individuals and communities throughout the world. For practitioners and policymakers working in the field of gender-based violence prevention, mitigation, and response, this is no easy feat. The scope of violence—why, how, where, and between whom it occurs—is expansive, often hidden, under-reported, and repeatedly includes adverse multi-generational impact. The question of what financing has traditionally been made available to enable this work, and how to better leverage resources and financial instruments to fund the full scope of GBV programming, first requires exploring the parameters of what GBV prevention, mitigation and response is and in what realms it exists. Gender-based violence touches all societies and can be traced through the full range of communities.



The Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence (ICGBV) understands the term Gender-Based Violence to mean: Any act of violence that arises from or is driven by inequalities, discrimination, roles, disparities, or expectations based on gender. It includes any act that results in, or is likely to cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering for an individual or group of people, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. In 2021, the WHO released a comprehensive study of prevalence estimates of violence against women. The study indicated that approximately 1 in 3 (30%) women worldwide had experienced physical and/or sexual violence throughout their life, with much of this violence occurring within the context of intimate partnership.<sup>i</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic put acute strains on individuals and communities, from lockdowns that limited mobility to economic constraints, and led to an even larger prevalence rate of GBV in many communities. The pandemic laid bare what practitioners have long known — no race, ethnicity, gender, religious order, or socio-economic group is immune from violence.<sup>ii</sup> GBV is not restricted to women and girls, with gendered violence touching men and boys, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Though data is limited, estimates show that transgender and gender-non-conforming individuals are particularly vulnerable to gendered violence, discrimination and harm, and experience even higher rates of GBV.<sup>1 iii</sup>

<sup>1</sup> While this paper uses the umbrella term of GBV, ICGBV members work across the full life course and acknowledge the distinct, but related, areas of violence against children (VAC) and violence against women and girls (VAWG). In many contexts VAC and VAWG are related, sharing the same risk factors, occurring in the same domain and arising from the same harmful social norms. Collaboration and shared learning between the two fields is imperative and offers unique opportunities, particularly for minimizing violence in the home/family and interrupting intergenerational trauma and harm.

GBV can be viewed through many lenses, from a human rights, security, or legal perspective to a public health epidemic. An important analytical framework for examining how GBV exists within societies is the socio-ecological model, which demonstrates how multiple levels of society relate and interact, linking the experiences of an individual to the interpersonal relationships they have, the community within which they live and the institutions and laws that shape their cultural norms, values and practises.<sup>iv</sup> From a programming and policy-making perspective, GBV prevention and mitigation can be conceptualised as the changes that can be made to the interpersonal, and the institutional and community, norms, practises, laws, and structures that enable and perpetuate violence and mitigate the opportunities for violence to occur. These can vary from school and health systems to community practises and local religious institutions, to national level laws, policies, and budgets. Gender-based violence response covers the range of interventions and services that are provided after violence has occurred, ranging from direct psychosocial, medical, legal, and economic support to victims, to changes in laws and practises to address violence. In many settings, prevention, mitigation, and response are inextricably linked to one another, forming a circle of actions and reactions.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The socio-ecological model was first introduced in the 1970s and has been adapted countless times over the decades to capture unique risks and opportunities across the life-course, while also reflecting differing vulnerabilities and opportunities based on gender, race, class and beyond. For more details on how to use the model in the context of violence against children and violence against women, see the Prevention Collaborative, at [https://prevention-collaborative.org/knowledge\\_hub/the-socio-ecological-model/](https://prevention-collaborative.org/knowledge_hub/the-socio-ecological-model/)

# Social ecological model for understanding and preventing violence



## **SOCIETAL**

- Gender, economic, and racial/ethnic inequality
- Social and cultural norms supportive of violence Harmful norms around masculinity and femininity
- Weak health, economic, gender, educational, and social policies

## **COMMUNITY**

- High unemployment • Concentrated poverty
- Residential instability
- Low collective efficacy (willingness to intervene) High rates of community violence
- Diminished economic opportunities
- Social disorganisation
- Social isolation
- Weak institutional support
- Weak community sanctions

## **RELATIONSHIP**

- Associating with delinquent peers Involvement with gangs
- Gender role conflict
- High relationship conflict
- Poor parent-child relationships
- Poor communication
- Poor family functioning
- Family environment characterized by violence, conflict, and instability
- Economic, childrearing, and other stress

## **INDIVIDUAL**

- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Antisocial beliefs and behaviour
- Attitudes supportive of violence
- Witnessing or experiencing violence as a child
- History of engaging in aggressive behaviour
- Poor behavioural control/impulsiveness
- Low educational achievement
- Low income
- Psychological/mental health problems

*World Health Organisation Prevention Unit*

There are multiple domains in which violence occurs, for example, in the home, at school, in online fora and through social media platforms. Increasingly, the connection between the digital world, and violence experienced either physically or psychologically, is becoming both more common and an important nexus for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to consider. As previously explored in an earlier ICGBV paper, technology-enabled violence can range from predatory behaviours, sexual exploitation and assault, harassment, bullying and privacy breaches that can violate personal information or lead to in-person threats through doxing, to the use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to develop deepfakes and altered sexual images. Incidents of (primarily) male individuals acting out sexually violent fantasies via their avatars are showing that the women whose online presence were violated are experiencing trauma similar to women who have been physically assaulted.<sup>v</sup> These stories highlight the frontier issues confronting policymakers and technology companies who continue to grapple with the implications of online activity in the physical world.<sup>vi</sup> Negative and persistent norms related to gender inequality are being further calcified within digital spaces.<sup>vii</sup>

A distinct, and particularly fraught, domain where violence occurs is humanitarian crises and complex emergencies. Humanitarian crises are uniquely vulnerable moments within communities for the perpetration of GBV. Forced migration, the destruction and displacement of homes and shelters, scarcity of food and resources, and the use of sexual violence and other gendered harms, such as early and forced marriage, can make women, girls and people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identities and gender expressions, of all ages more vulnerable. Evidence shows that women are disproportionately impacted during environment disasters,<sup>viii</sup> and there is a growing chorus linking global discourse on

environmental protections with the gender justice movement.<sup>ix</sup> This rightly identifies the relationship between displacement, food and water shortages, economic disruption, and the singular role women have in providing for and caring for families in many fragile contexts.

One of the great challenges, and opportunities, of addressing GBV prevention and response is the inherently multisectoral nature of the work. There is a role for all governments, communities, and sectors to play in preventing and responding to violence. In the context of international development, traditionally, GBV prevention, mitigation and response has been embedded within a range of sectors and programmes, from health and immunisation programming to education, child protection, nutrition, agriculture, economic empowerment, and political participation. The introduction of the SDGs in 2015, and the inclusion of “Goal 5, Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls”, and “Target 5.2, End Violence Against and Exploitation of Women and Girls”, ushered in a new focus on dedicated resources for skilled staffing, data, and funding.

Beyond the multisectoral nature of GBV, violence also occurs across the life course, with infants, children, youth, young adults, adults, and the elderly experiencing its pernicious effects. There are unique moments in life where different vulnerabilities and risks present themselves and impact the prevalence of violence, and which require different prevention, mitigation, and response modalities.



Judith Banda as a part of GBV programming in Malawi.  
**Photo credit:**  
**Self Help Africa**

## II. TRACKING THE MONEY

Mirroring the complexity of the issues of gender-based violence and reflecting that it has traditionally been embedded in multiple other sectors of work, historically, it has been particularly challenging to track the funding of policies and programmes that cover the full range of prevention, mitigation, and response. As the global community has increasingly organised itself, firstly around the Millennium Development Goals and subsequently the Sustainable Development Goals, the tracking systems have improved. Additional global fora, including the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (2013), World Humanitarian Summit (2016) and Conference of the Parties (COP) 21 and 26 (2015 and 2021) have also provided key inflection points for needed funding and action that have critical impact on GBV prevention, mitigation, and response work. Two of the most important official tracking platforms that have been developed are the OECD's Creditor Reporting System (CRS) and OCHA's Financial Tracking System (FTS).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The ground-breaking 2019 report by VOICE and IRC, *"Where's the Money? How the Humanitarian System is failing to Fund an End to Violence Against Women and Girls,"* and the recent, *"What Counts? The state of funding for the prevention of gender-based violence against women and girls"* released by the Accelerator for GBV Prevention both provided crucial insights into the state of GBV funding, drawing heavily on both platforms.

## OECD Development Assistance Committee

The high-water mark for tracking Official Development Assistance (ODA)<sup>4</sup> for GBV came in 2016 with the introduction of Purpose Code 15180—ending violence against women and girls (VAWG)—into the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Creditor Reporting System. The official platform to track ODA from its member countries on an annual basis, the DAC system continues to increase in sophistication and scope of available data and analysis. While it is mandatory for the 32 members of the DAC to report into the CRS (31 States and the European Union), over the years, the system has expanded into a critical voluntary reporting mechanism. Non-DAC OECD countries, select non-OECD Countries, multilateral organisations, development banks and private foundations choose to report into the CRS.<sup>5</sup> Despite its expansion, the OECD is not an organisation with universal global membership, and many countries do not report into the platform. Notably, none of the BRIC countries—Brazil, Russia, India, and China—report through the database, despite individually and collectively wielding significant influence and investment.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> ODA is a classification of aid adopted by the OECD in 1969 and is defined as “government aid designed to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries.” There are additional guidelines related to the concessionary nature of the aid, and further classifications, such as “other official flows” which captures aid that may not reach the concessionary terms or that have certain commercial characteristics.

<sup>5</sup> Collectively, they represent approximately 130 organisations and entities providing varying levels of data and information on aid.

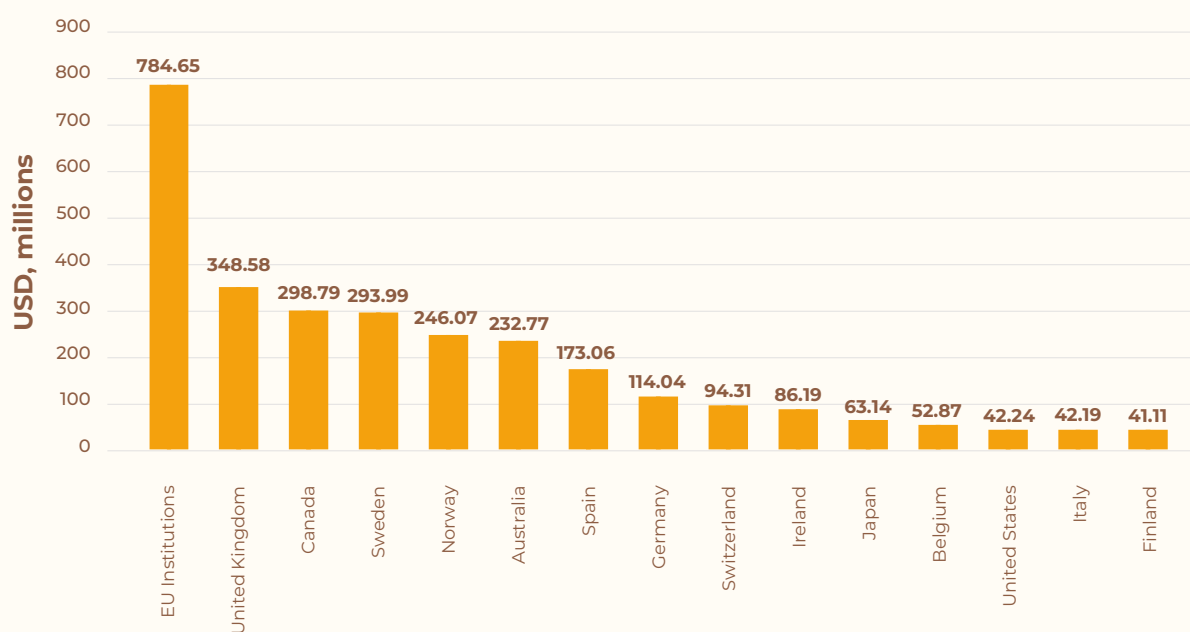
<sup>6</sup> Data used for Tables 1 & 3 was pulled from the OECD's Creditor Rating System on 19 February 2024. Unless otherwise noted, it reflects all donors who report: DAC governments, non-DAC governments, multilaterals, development banks and private foundations. Table 2 was extracted from the OECD GenderNet site on 13 March, 2024. At the time of writing, the OECD was undertaking a transition to a new data platform and updated CRS data for 2023 was not yet available on the new OECD data platform, [data-explorer.oecd.org](https://data-explorer.oecd.org). While some data is presented here in year-over-year analysis, the OECD uses 2-year averages to reflect the implementation of multi-year commitments and reduce volatility. Data undergoes a rigorous review and validation process, and the CRS is typically updated in April and December to reflect such reviews.

Developed in the wake of World War II and for the purpose of coordinating the implementation of the Marshall Plan for reconstruction, the OECD is a membership-based organisation that is separate from the United Nations System. The OECD is an independent body, with 38 government members. The organisation's history informs its focus on economic development and statistics, and its particular role in capturing the respective financial contributions of its members to international public goods and international development.

The Development Assistance Committee is a subset of 32 government members, 7 observer organisations comprised of international development banks and the United Nations Development Programme, and 7 non-OECD government Participants. The DAC monitors ODA, sets development cooperation standards and undertakes peer reviews as a form of accountability.

## TABLE 1

**Total ODA to end violence against women and girls, 2016-2022**  
**Purpose Code 15180**  
 Top 15 DAC Members



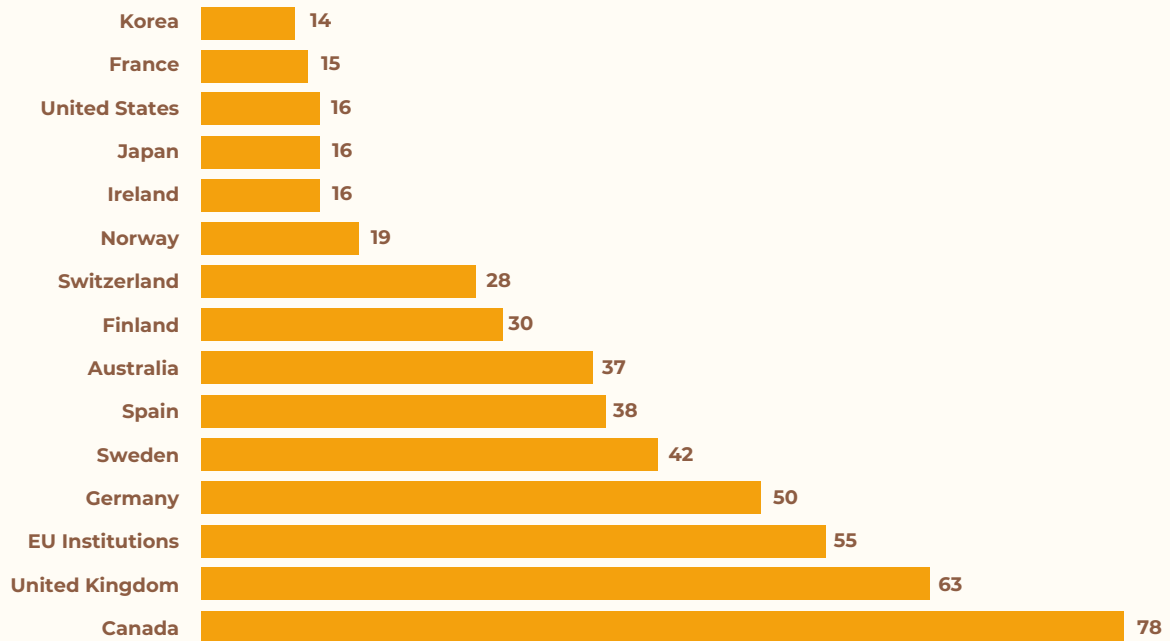
Source: Creditor Reporting System, OECD-DAC statistics



## TABLE 2

### ODA to end violence against women and girls, average 2021-2022 Purpose Code 15180

Top 15 DAC Members



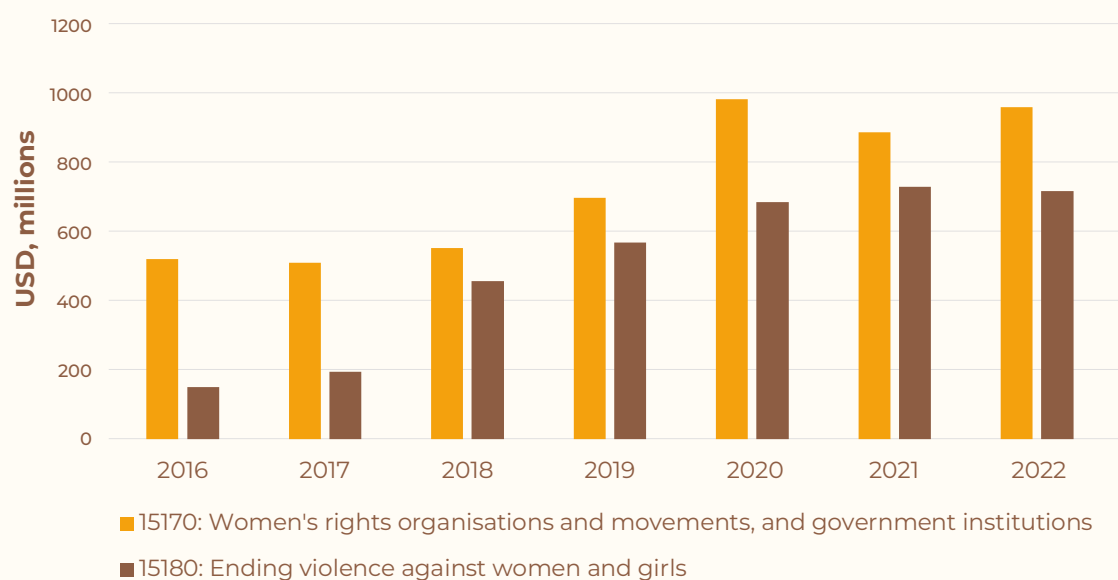
Source: Creditor Reporting System, OECD-DAC statistics

Despite limitations, it is indisputable that the introduction of the VAWG Purpose Code in 2016 has provided unmatched insight into the state of funding around GBV. It offers a strong foundation upon which governments and partners can continue to strengthen the tracking and accountability of financing and programming for preventing and responding to VAWG and GBV more broadly. For instance, data shows that while the amount of ODA under Purpose Code 15180 to end violence against women and girls has grown year-over-year, (from 2016-22), it remains at less than 1 per cent of ODA.<sup>x</sup>

**TABLE 3<sup>7</sup>**

**Total ODA for Purpose Codes 15180 and 15170**

Top 15 DAC Members



Source: Creditor Reporting System, OECD-DAC statistics

Though women's empowerment is not exclusively tied with GBV programming, the two are inextricably linked and share many overlaps in operating environments worldwide. While empowerment programming is as diverse and broad as GBV, one commonly used proxy is the existence of women's rights and feminist organisations. And indeed, as part of its strengthening on gender analysis, in 2019 the OECD updated the language for Purpose Code 15170 to—the women's rights organisations and movements and government institutions code. These two codes, coupled with the OECD qualitative gender equality policy marker, have greatly increased the visibility of the critical funding needs to end violence, and to gender equality and empowerment funding more broadly.

<sup>7</sup> Number of donors varied by year.

## OCHA Financial Tracking Service

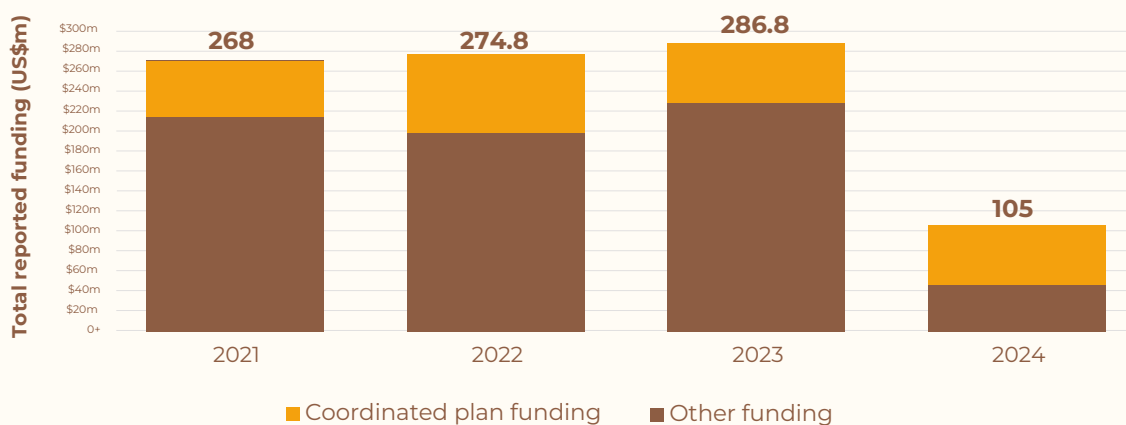
An additional essential tracking platform is the OCHA Financial Tracking Service. Established in 1992, the FTS captures funding flows covering a broad range of humanitarian crises. The FTS provides insight into money given and received by all countries in the world. Additional accessible detailed instructions for submission by private sector actors, non-governmental organisations and foundations feature prominently on the FTS portal. The funding flows included are linked both to specific humanitarian appeals—UN coordinated funding requests that provide an integrated proposed budget—in addition to a range of emergency responses that do not have humanitarian appeals. Like the OECD DAC database, the OCHA FTS is an important resource that continues to grow in sophistication and efficacy, while also experiencing limitations around coding and self-reporting.

### TABLE 4

#### Protection - Gender-Based Violence

Table downloaded from OCHA FTS on 10 March, 2024. Data for 2023 may change as continued validation occurs. Funding reflects received and committed funds, pledges are also tracked in the FTS but not included in the latest figures.

Global sector funding trends inside and outside coordinated plans



Data for this global sector is not available prior to 2020 because the breakdown of financial requirements by Protection AoRs, including GBV, were not included in response plans.

GBV was introduced as a stand-alone coding option in the FTS in 2016, with its adoption into use beginning in 2018 and fully integrated in 2020 data. The lack of explicit stand-alone coding in earlier years, with GBV instead being subsumed under the broader “Protection” umbrella, makes it challenging to conduct comprehensive historical analysis on funding in humanitarian settings around gender-based violence prior to 2020. Once the coding option was introduced, reported funding in 2018 came in at just under \$46m. Since then, both the reported amount requested and received has continued to grow year-over-year, topping out in 2023 at \$1.2b requested, and \$286.8m received and committed.<sup>8</sup> Despite the growth in absolute numbers, funding for GBV remains unacceptably low as a percentage of total humanitarian giving, at only 0.69 per cent. Additional analysis shows that while there is a growing diversity of funders in the humanitarian GBV space, the majority of backing in 2022, \$106m or 40%, was provided by the United States.<sup>xi</sup> The bulk of all GBV funds tracked in the FTS are received by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the lead agency of the GBV Area of Responsibility (AOR), tasked with coordinating on-the-ground efforts in humanitarian settings. This coordination mechanism is part of the broader Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the UN’s highest coordinating mechanism for humanitarian settings, which includes multiple agencies and international-non-governmental partners.

As the frequency of both acute and prolonged humanitarian events and fragile contexts continue to increase, the FTS faces ongoing challenges around human resource constraints for real-time reporting. This

<sup>8</sup> Figures represent latest data from the FTS as of 7 March 2024.

is exacerbated by the discrepancy between the scope of GBV occurrence and the number of GBV specialists on the ground who can correctly identify and capture the full range of prevention and response work, particularly within multisectoral efforts. OCHA is well-aware of these challenges and has itself highlighted the constraints the system is under. Currently, there are only a limited number of full-time dedicated staff members assigned to manually review and validate the tremendous volume of reporting that is submitted on an ongoing rolling basis. OCHA reports that it processes more than 11,000 reports a year, or more than 100 reports a day.<sup>xii</sup>

Anna WFC  
and Yusra  
ADA as part  
of Trócaire  
supporting  
women-led  
organisations  
in Somalia  
and South  
Sudan.

**Photo credit:**  
**Trócaire**





Elina Chaka as part of Self Help GBV response programme, Malawi. **Photo credit: Self Help Africa**

### III. PHANTOM FUNDS

As both the OECD CRS and the OCHA FTS show, standardised tracking systems that have clearly defined tags and coding, with teams that review and validate submissions, are critical to understanding the state of GBV financing. These reporting mechanisms are dependant on quality inputs, and several key avenues of funding, particularly as relates to ODA tracked through the OECD CRS, are not fully captured. This is because organisations themselves, including UN Agencies, international development banks and global programme partnerships, are not fully mandated to submit information through the same existing channels and, amidst competing priorities and limited resources, are not yet self-organised and staffed to provide comprehensive reporting.

## United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes

An ongoing challenge, not unique to the CRS nor caused by the platform, is the issue of tracking flows of money to and through the multilateral system. Many UN Agencies do not implement frontline programmes directly, and rather, contribute to global normative frameworks, developing programmatic resources, guides and trainings, data collection and analysis, partnering with governments to support domestic agencies, procuring commodities and piloting of programmes.<sup>9</sup> A large portion of UN programming funds are passed through to implementing partners on the ground, local civil society organisations and international and community based non-profits, with the UN agencies acting as intermediary stewards of the funding. The OECD has robust guidelines and processes in place to validate reported figures. But, how either the agencies or the implementing partners themselves classify the funds, or (re) allocate core funding is not always intuitively captured within the OECD system. Particularly for organisations that are not mandated to report into the system, or that do not have their own codified tracking system that readily pairs with the OECD's system, it is likely the full scope of GBV related funding is not being captured in the reported figures, particularly when considering multisectoral programming and umbrella sectors—such as protection—which obfuscate the true scope of GBV-related work.

## Development Banks

International development banks have a unique role to play in partnering with both donor and recipient countries to catalyse resources for development. Chief amongst them is the World Bank (the Bank), which provides a centralised hub of financial resources, data, research, analysis and convenings that informs policy and practice throughout the world. Beyond providing critically needed funds—as concessionary loans, grants, debt

<sup>9</sup> Notable exceptions to this include UNRWA and emergency deployments for operational agencies, funds and programmes in humanitarian settings.

and more—the Bank has been instrumental in pioneering research into the economic impact of development efforts. For the GBV sector, the seminal 2014 report “Voice and Agency: Empowering Women and Girls for Shared Prosperity” by the Bank included ground-breaking research that estimated that GBV costs countries 3.7 per cent of gross domestic product, more than double the expenditure on education of most countries.<sup>xiii</sup> This study and analysis irrefutably demonstrated what practitioners have long known, GBV obstructs development. There is not only a moral imperative to invest in GBV prevention, mitigation, and response, but there are economic and social welfare benefits for those who do.

The Bank’s work on GBV has grown over the past decade and features prominently in the provisional copy of the forthcoming 2024-2030 gender development strategy, which was released in January of this year. The new strategy has three strategic objectives, the first of which is “Foundational wellbeing: End Gender-based Violence & Elevate Human Capital”. The strategy identifies a range of activities the Bank can undertake to enhance the integration of GBV programming into its existing work, but the document falls short of identifying funding targets. Indeed, though the Bank is a leading authority on improving transparency and accountability within international development and aid, its own transparency on GBV-related funding is lacking.<sup>xiv</sup>

Currently, there is no publicly available database of Bank related funds that can be searched at the project level by GBV. A recently released Bank commissioned assessment showed that between Fiscal Years 2017 and 2022, 390 operations in 97 countries included GBV prevention and/or response. The assessment recognised the challenge in estimating the total amount of Bank financing dedicated to GBV prevention and response within all operations – but found that operations that have either full or stand-alone components of GBV (4 per cent) total \$680 million.<sup>xv</sup> In comparison, WB funding under Purpose Code 15180 in the OECD CRS for 2017-2022 totalled \$251.9 million. This mismatch highlights some of the challenges around harmonising data



across different platforms: lack of consistent coding and tags, capturing appropriate percentages of multisectoral work that are dedicated to GBV, different fiscal years and reporting cycles, and insufficient staffing to process the tremendous volumes of data passing through multilateral and international institutions. As the Bank looks forward towards the implementation of its new strategy, it is imperative that in addition to the many institutional and partnership strengthening activities it has identified, that it also prioritises setting concrete GBV funding targets and increasing its funding levels, using innovative financing to channel more funds to local non-profits—which it rightly identifies as being essential for ending GBV—and improving accessibility and transparency of its own funding data.

## Private Philanthropy and Pooled Funds

As official government resources have increased over the past several years, so too has private philanthropy, the emergence of global programme partnerships that work either explicitly or adjacently to GBV and women's empowerment, and the establishment of pooled funding mechanisms to magnify impact. Generation Equality is a multi-stakeholder initiative that includes UN Agencies, governments and a broad range of civil-society partners collaborating to accelerate action and impact to empower women and deliver on the ambitious goals of the SDG Agenda. Launched at the Generation Equality Forum in 2021, it calls on practitioners and donors to channel political will, advocacy efforts and financial resources into accelerating action by 2026 around six action coalitions, one of which is gender-based violence. The recently published 2023 accountability report, which takes stock of the half-way point of Generation Equality commitments, showed that the GBV Action Coalition has received \$5.2 billion pledged commitments, with more than 11% of the pledges received (\$565 million). Of received funds, more than a quarter, \$171.6 million, has been invested in CSOs.

Private philanthropic initiatives such as **Co-Impact** are also bringing **increased donor focus on gender-specific initiatives through the launch in 2022 of its Gender Fund. Aiming to mobilise and disburse \$1b over the next 10 years, the Fund is focused on many of the structural and normative frameworks that contribute to gender-based violence.**

Additional ground-breaking efforts include the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. A multi-year partnership launched in 2017 by the European Union with the UN, the EU's investment of €500m represented the single largest global investment in ending violence against women and girls and created a trust fund that is administered by the UN to provide coordinated and targeted investments in all regions of the world.

## LEVERAGING FINANCIAL MARKETS AND TECHNOLOGY FOR EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

Beyond ODA and philanthropic giving, innovative financing instruments and products can be developed to provide new and additional funding streams. The continued expansion of financing to counteract climate change shows there are growing incentives for companies and investors to get ahead of compliance markets and engage with rigorous third-party assessments that verify the efficacy of carbon offsets and emission reductions or removals through voluntary carbon market.<sup>10</sup> As recent panels and discourse at the COP28 meeting in Dubai show, understanding of the link between climate change and gender justice is expanding and there is a growing call to integrate gender considerations and other human rights into climate response. Beyond the designed programme for “Gender Day” as part of the official agenda at COP28, numerous independent side-events focused on the need for increased participation for women-led community organisations in the formal discussions and decision-making around climate.

<sup>10</sup> Both voluntary and compliance carbon markets have processes for third-party monitoring, assessment and registries to verify that a project meets the standards for being issued carbon credits. Notable credits traded on the voluntary market include the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) by Verra (the most traded credit) and the Gold Standard – which integrates the UN SDGs and the Paris agreement into its certifying protocol. Mandatory compliance standards, such as the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) is a cap-and-trade system covering all of Europe and three additional countries. The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) that emerged from the Kyoto Protocol facilitates investment in developing countries while also contributing to meeting industrialized countries commitments under the Protocol.

Harnessing the complementarity and links between the integration of GBV mitigation measures within environmental programmes has the potential to tap into extensive financial resources, from direct financing to credits. Efforts around developing a voluntary market linked to women's empowerment and wellbeing have been percolating for the past decade. The Women Organising for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN), a woman-led international membership network of women and men professionals and women's associations, developed the W+ Standard in 2014, a women-specific standard that measures women's empowerment in a transparent and quantifiable manner. The W+ Standard assesses projects across six domains: Income and Assets, Time, Education and Knowledge, Leadership, Food Security and Health. The domains were selected in consultation with rural women from South Asia and Africa, who identified them as key catalysts of change within their individual lives and communities. The W+ Standard also has a process whereby a credit can receive a dual certification with the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) and units generated by projects can be sold to investors across carbon markets, and impact and SDG markets.<sup>xvi</sup> While the domains do not explicitly include assessments around GBV, they address key areas of women's lives that have demonstrable links to both risk and response of GBV and women's empowerment broadly, and the model includes channelling financial resources back to women. At least 20% of the sales' revenue from the credits is returned to women in the community who use the money for self-directed climate adaptation and development activities.<sup>xvii</sup><sup>xviii</sup> The growth of modalities such as the W+ Standard show there is demand for projects on women's empowerment which can serve as a model for the creation and expansion of a global voluntary market that is addressing underlying and related factors contributing to gender inequality.<sup>xix</sup> It is important to note that market-driven interventions are not a panacea, and valid critiques on how carbon credits can perpetuate greenwashing should inform the ongoing development of credits and markets centred on women's empowerment.

Investors also have a critical role to play in leveraging their capital to support GBV. This can be done through a range of interventions, from impact investments that either screen out harmful companies and sectors to proactively seeking out investments that have positive effects on gender equality and human rights. An additional avenue of impact is initiating shareholder actions to influence the policies and practises of publicly traded companies. Multilateral organisations, international banks and philanthropic endowments can also positively accelerate the adoption of best-practises throughout the market more broadly by publicly and transparently posting their investment principles and parameters, dedicating a minimum portion of their endowment to gender-related investments, and when allowed under their governance structure, piloting innovative financing products and vehicles, such as social impact bonds.<sup>11</sup> In January 2024, the UN Joint Pension Fund, which currently has \$82 billion assets under management, updated its members on the multiple ways the Fund leadership are managing sustainable investing, building on the adoption in 2023 of a “Sustainable Investing Manifest & Policy”, actions include screening out of harmful sectors, shareholder engagement and increasing reporting and transparency.

Artificial Intelligence is expanding the frontier of possible solutions for programming and to filling financing gaps. The opportunities for how AI can transform our world currently seem limitless, with leapfrogging technologies advancing in computational power at exponential rates that appear poised to overtake skills and functions that currently dominate many corners of society. From the promise for bespoke learning and healthcare, to the disruption of the labour market which will usher in new jobs and rhythms of life yet unknown, the technologies offer the possibility that persistent inequalities and adverse structural determinants of health and wellbeing

<sup>11</sup> A study published in February 2024 by Bridgespan Social Impact, in collaboration with Capricorn Investment Group, found that the average US Foundation invests only 5 per cent of their endowment towards impact investing. US Foundation endowments total more than \$1 trillion, and Donor Advised Funds manage an additional \$200 billion, representing a tremendous opportunity to redeploy capital to maximize impact beyond traditional giving and programmatic outcomes.

may be shifted. The potentiality for AI is expansive, and it is crucial that feminists and women's rights organisations are at the forefront of shaping AI discourse, product development and platforms to prevent exacerbating gender disparities. The risks of not being involved could have devastating impacts for generations to come. Design biases that do not take gendered experiences into account and that are blind to the unique dangers and vulnerabilities that accompany both underlying and proximate causes of gender-based violence could embed hazards and expose communities to increased harm.

Stella Billiat and daughter participants of GBV programming in Malawi.  
**Photo credit:**  
**Self Help Africa**



## IV. THE WAY FORWARD: **Give more, give better**

The largest tranche and channel of funding has been, and should continue to be, from governments. Funding to GBV has increased over the past several years, associated with the introduction of improved tracking tools by both OECD and OCHA. The additional level of insight these tools provide allows both for the uncovering of existing investments, and clarity on what additional resources are needed to meet the ambitious goals of the SDGs. As the OECD and OCHA data shows, governments persistently give insufficient amounts, both in absolute funds and as a percentage of funds, to address GBV and gender empowerment and equality. When considering the extreme costs that violence has on societies, increasing the investment in GBV is not only the right thing to do, it is also a fiscally sound expenditure. The ICGBV adds its voice to the broad range of partners who have demonstrated that flexible, unrestricted, multi-year funding is essential to enable the comprehensive work of changing norms, attitudes, and behaviours necessary to reduce gender-based violence.

In addition to increasing their volume of ODA, governments should also continue to invest human and financial resources into strengthening the platforms that track funding, which are critical for understanding the scope of GBV work and associated needs. This can include: (i) introducing additional coding to allow for tracking of funding around the distinct phases of prevention, mitigation and response activities; (ii) introducing additional coding to allow for tracking of funding for typologies of investment, such as research and programming; (iii) refining existing codes to allow for tracking of women's rights organisations and movement separate from government institutions; (iv) increasing staffing and training across multilaterals and in humanitarian settings for real-time reporting, including multisectoral efforts; (v) further developing the formal and informal links between OECD and OCHA platforms with UN

and WB data portals, including resourcing the necessary staff to maintain collaboration while sharing and harmonising data; (vi) introducing a requirement that government-funded global programme partnerships whose works has multisectoral components related to GBV—such as GAVI, the Global Partnership for Education, Safe to Learn, Education in Emergencies, Scaling Up Nutrition, The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, the Partnership on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative—include standardised GBV reporting; (vii) providing dedicated funding for research that can accelerate best-practises around prevention, mitigation and response and that is aligned with the Global Shared Research Agenda developed by the Sexual Violence Research Initiative.<sup>xxii</sup>

Much of the work that is required for shifting norms around GBV is highly localised and requires long-term support to community groups and organisations. Often these groups do not have the time or resources for the business practises that increasingly dominate the international development space. While there is value in integrating and implementing trainings and business support for on the ground practitioners, there is a demonstrable risk of over-valuing traditionally conceived metrics, particularly around scale and impact, for the critical and less-easily measured work of changing beliefs and practises. Local women's organisations and domestic and international non-governmental organisations have a particularly important role to play in advancing this work and need to be prioritised for funding.

Policymaking and funding authorities from all typologies of donor organisations must first and foremost centre the lived experiences and self-identified needs of the individuals, survivors, and communities on the ground. This includes general principles of:

- Shifting giving to civil society and local organisations, particularly in the global south;
- Removing unnecessary application and reporting barriers that prevent women-led and women-centred grassroots organisations from accessing money;
- Providing unrestricted, multi-year funding that enables flexibility and sustains long-term social and normative change initiatives.

Audience or Organisation	Suggested Actions
<b>Governments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardise multisectoral coding</li> <li>• Improve linkage between tracking of humanitarian and development funding</li> <li>• Resource the necessary staffing for improving reporting and coding on the ground and in Headquarter divisions</li> <li>• Require reporting by Global Programme Partnerships and multilateral hosted Trust Funds</li> <li>• Require commissioned research to be open-sourced and made accessible for practitioners</li> <li>• Provide multi-year, unrestricted, core funding</li> </ul>
<b>Multilateral Organisations &amp; International Banks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where missing, introduce and harmonise coding across organisations for multisectoral work related to GBV</li> <li>• Require reporting by Global Programme Partnerships and hosted Trust Funds</li> <li>• Publicly commit to investing endowments to advance gender equality and reduce GBV</li> <li>• Dedicate human and financial resources to increase GBV technical specialists within sectors and deployed in humanitarian crises</li> <li>• Dedicate human and financial resources to staff coordination, collaboration, and knowledge dissemination around funding trends and needs</li> <li>• Require commissioned research to be open-sourced and made accessible for practitioners</li> </ul>
<b>Private Philanthropic Foundations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand giving into GBV, currently, several of the largest private foundations giving in international development do not have dedicated GBV programming, despite its relationship to existing portfolios of work</li> <li>• Where missing, introduce and harmonise coding across organisations for multisectoral work related to GBV</li> <li>• If not yet participating, begin self-reporting to both the OECD CRS and OCHA's FTS</li> <li>• Publicly commit to investing endowments to advance gender equality and reduce GBV</li> <li>• Require commissioned research to be open-sourced and made accessible for practitioners</li> <li>• Require multilateral and international non-governmental grant recipients to report on GBV</li> </ul>



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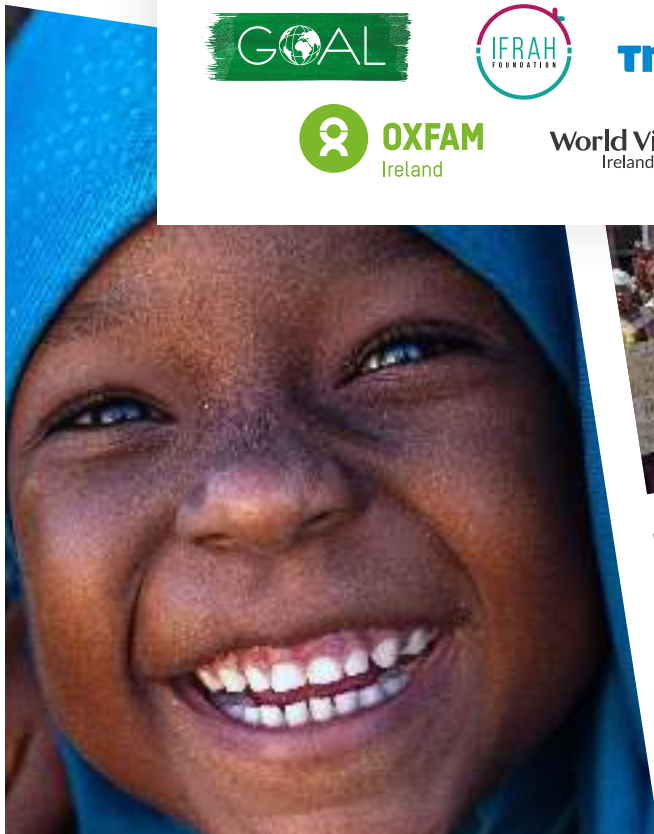
Crois Dhearg na hÉireann  
Irish Red Cross

OXFAM Ireland

World Vision Ireland

PLAN INTERNATIONAL

Óglaigh na hÉireann  
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES



Alexina Lameck in Malawi as part of Self Help GBV response programme. **Photo Credit: Self Help Africa**

National womens rights form in Nepal **Photo Credit: ActionAid**

Rights of the childs club programme educating children on the practice of FGM, Kenya **Photo Credit: AidLink**

An Umodzi session for couples in Mangochi on GBV as part of Concern's programme giving wider support to families living in extreme poverty. Malawi **Photo Credit: Concern**

Working with the elderly, using participatory methodologies to identify and address the risks and causes of GBV in the Bullima District, Zimbabwe **Photo Credit: GOAL**

Authentic portrait of happy rural african girls wearing burka are smiling in camera. **Photo Credit: Shutterstock**

Sensitising security personnel and empowering community leaders as agents of change to address negative social norms contributing to GBV, The Democratic Republic of the Congo **Photo Credit: Christian Aid**

Veronica Brown (43) and her daughter Linda Kampira (18) in Kuma Village as part of Self Help GBV response programme. Kuma Village, Malawi **Photo Credit: Self Help Africa**

Paul Frank and Jumia Yusuf, Umodzi participants of GBV/Intimate Partner Violence programming. Malawi **Photo Credit: Concern**