



Fund for Innovation  
and Transformation

Fonds pour l'innovation  
et la transformation

# FIT's Approach to Evaluating Gender Equality

## in Short-Term Innovation Projects



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# INTRODUCTION



## Fund for Innovation and Transformation

The Fund for Innovation and Transformation (FIT) supports Canadian small and medium-sized organizations (SMOs) to test, advance the effective use of, and learn from innovative solutions to global development challenges.

FIT is a national program of the Inter-Council Network of Provincial and Regional Councils (ICN), FIT is made possible through funding from Global Affairs Canada (\$16.5 million), and administered by the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation (MCIC).

FIT has funded and supported the capacity of 52 Canadian SMOs and their local partners to test innovative solutions within 6 to 15-month timeframes and \$150,000 to \$250,000 in budget. FIT also fosters collective learning around innovations, by creating and disseminating learning resources based on the SMOs' experiences, supporting their participation in conferences and webinars, and other opportunities with the broader sector. *See Annex 1 for the list of FIT-funded SMOs.*

## Gender Evaluation Framework for Innovation

FIT developed a Gender Evaluation Framework for Innovation (GEFI) to capture whether and how FIT (programmatically and through funded SMOs) has advanced gender equality and empowered women and girls. The GEFI was developed to evaluate FIT-funded SMOs who have tested innovative solutions that aim to advance gender equality in short testing timeframes (less than 15 months). Thus, the GEFI had two objectives: (1) to evaluate if SMOs could advance gender equality and empower women and girls during their testing projects, and (2) to assess where SMOs showed progress in their gender equality outcomes and strategies.

The GEFI aimed to answer two questions:

- (1) Did the FIT-funded SMOs and their testing projects advance gender equality and empower women and girls? And
- (2) If yes, how was this possible in the innovation space?

The GEFI was specifically developed to evaluate FIT-funded SMOs, which include civil society organizations (CSOs), post-secondary institutions, social enterprises, and private sector organizations. It was designed to capture progress from all FIT-funded SMOs across various sectors, innovations, types of organizations, and different types of progress indicators and reporting data. The limitations that SMOs face in testing new solutions in a short timeframe were also considered.

The GEFI outlines three core areas, **Commitment**, **Access**, and **Agency**, which aim to evaluate an SMO's progress toward gender equality and empowering women and girls.

**Commitment** assessed the extent of an SMO's gender responsive approach and design and overall commitment to advancing gender equality. Commitment encompasses several important organizational practices and capacities including an SMO's Gender Equality Marker (GEM), whether they developed a Gender Equality Strategy (GES), conducted a Gender Scan, and collected gender disaggregated data. Additionally, the extent to which an SMO utilized gender expertise, maintained a budget for gender activities, and developed a policy for

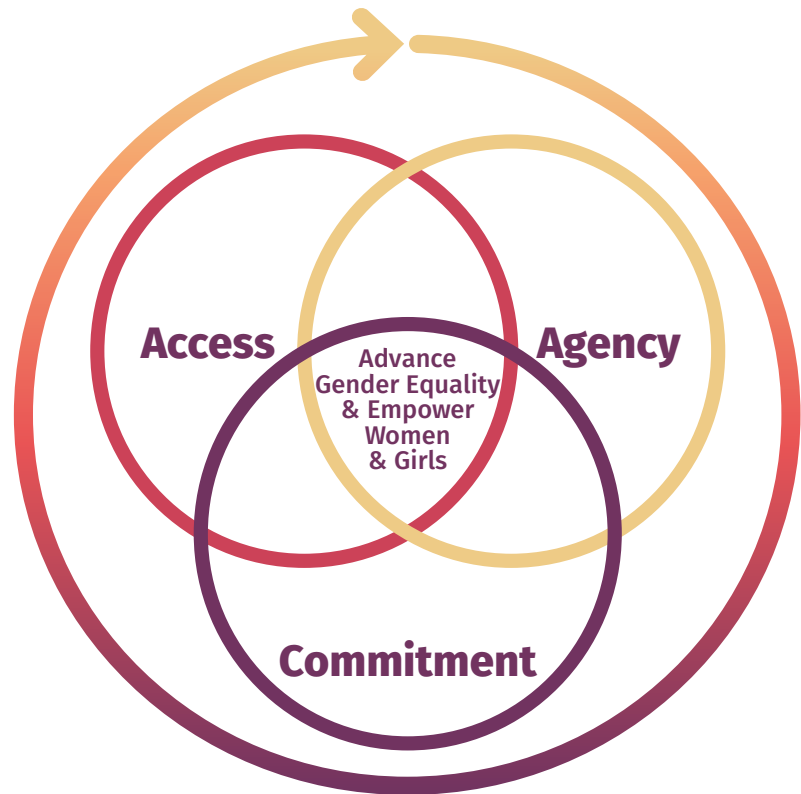
the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) was considered as part of an SMO's commitment. It is important to note that many of these components were mandatory criterion to be considered for FIT funding but notwithstanding these elements still reflect a commitment to be gender responsive.

As innovations and indicators varied greatly across FIT-funded SMOs, progress was assessed using SMOs' **Access** and **Agency** strategies and project targets. Access strategies ensure that women and girls have the necessary information, skills, and resources required to advance gender equality and empowerment. Across the entire portfolio, examples of access strategies (and outcomes) were seen such as increasing access to information, skills, finance, networks, equipment, and

technology. Agency strategies ensure that women and girls have power and agency to receive benefits, the ability to make and act on decisions, and control over resources and profits to advance gender equality and empowerment. Across the entire SMO portfolio, examples of agency strategies (and outcomes) included the promotion of human rights or shifting gender stereotypes on child marriage, for instance.

Using the GEFI, the evaluation also captured **Drivers**, which are critical components for an innovation's success. Drivers were identified as success factors that have contributed to an SMO's progress toward advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls. Drivers are often key learnings for future innovations but can also be a pivot that was identified by the SMO and implemented within the testing timeframe. It was generally seen that an SMO's progress or success may not have been feasible without the driver(s). Finally, the evaluation captured **Challenges** that SMOs faced during the testing period. SMOs generally were not able to address all challenges due to the short testing timeframe. These key drivers and challenges may serve as helpful guideposts for future innovations.

## Gender Evaluation Framework for Innovation (GEFI)





# Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy

The initial development of the FIT Program and FIT's overarching Gender Equality Strategy were guided by *Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP)*, which recognizes the critical importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls for achieving sustainable development goals and reducing global poverty. To ensure Canada's international assistance is best able to achieve the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, FIAP focuses its efforts on six action areas:

- 1. Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls** – examples include reducing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and strengthening women's organizations and movements that advance women's rights;
- 2. Human Dignity** – examples include improving access to healthcare, nutrition, education, humanitarian actions for women and girls, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR);
- 3. Growth that Works for Everyone** – examples include increasing women's access to economic opportunities and resources, and promoting sustainable agriculture, green technology, and renewable energy;
- 4. Environment and Climate Action** – examples include supporting women's environmental resilience, water management, initiatives to mitigate and adapt to climate change, water management, advancing women's leadership and decision-making in the renewable energy sector, and creating economic opportunities for women in clean energy;
- 5. Inclusive Governance** – examples include promoting and protecting human rights, particularly the rights of women, greater political participation of women and girls, good governance, and stronger institutions; and
- 6. Peace and Security** – examples include greater participation of women in peacebuilding, increasing women's representation in the security sector, and enforcing zero-tolerance policy for sexual violence by peacekeepers.

SMOs that were selected for FIT funding aligned with both the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and FIAP's action areas. All innovations aimed to address key barriers to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and often engaged women as participants of an innovation or as innovators themselves.

To evaluate results from 52 testing projects with varying outcomes, indicators, and progress across several sectors, FIAP action areas were integrated into the evaluation framework and FIT projects and results were categorized and evaluated based on the action areas.

# Gender Equality Pathway for Innovation

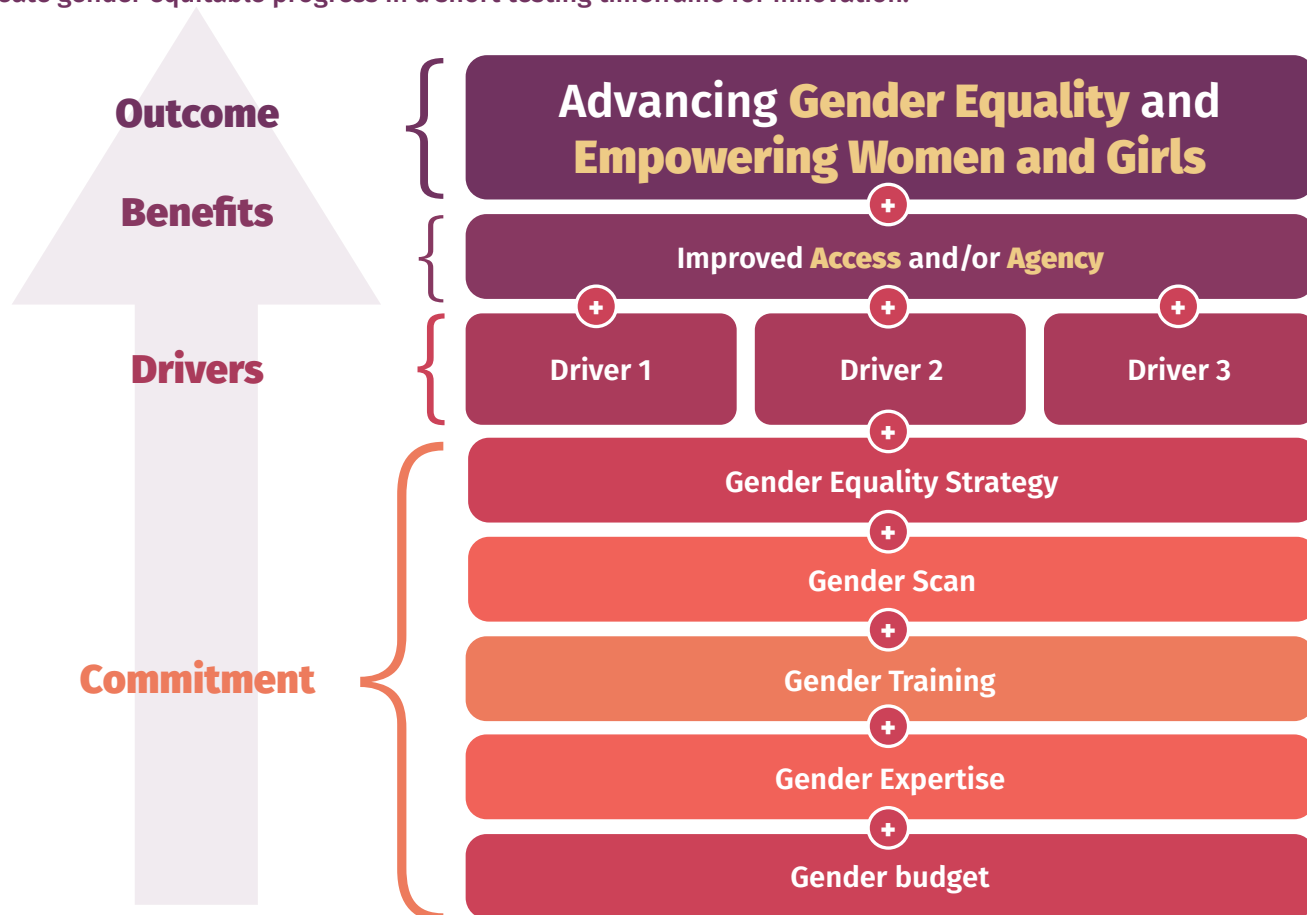
FIT has also developed a **Gender Equality Pathway for Innovation (GEPI)**, which outlines the path a FIT-funded SMO can take to advance gender equality and empower women and girls (within a particular FIAP action area).

Firstly, it is important that an SMO has a strong foundational commitment to advancing gender equality. This requires that SMOs and their partners have gender budget for activities, engage gender expertise, provide gender equality training, and conduct a Gender Scan (or gender analysis). Additionally, SMOs should develop a Gender Equality Strategy, all of which make up their gender responsive testing approach.

In addition to these core commitments, key success drivers were identified and used to improve progress towards gender equality within a short testing timeframe. These can include locally driven initiatives, increased gender knowledge and capacity or local gender expertise, collaborating with local women’s groups, and/or ensuring there is a supportive testing environment (at multiple levels such as the household, local context, and innovation sector).

Finally, the GEPI highlights that SMOs can utilize both access and agency strategies to support gender responsive or transformative change to improve gender equality benefits and impacts, to achieve the overall intended outcome of the project or innovation.

The GEPI is intended to be a starting point for projects. The pathway can feed into the initial design of an innovation to help ensure it is gender responsive, by ensuring a foundational commitment to gender, knowing the relevant success drivers in the sector, and having a combination of focused access and agency strategies that lead to your desired outcome. The GEPI can provide a more mindful and strategic approach in how to create gender equitable progress in a short testing timeframe for innovation.



\*Adapted from WGEA Business Case to Gender Equality Figure

# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Gender Evaluation Framework for Innovation (GEFI) aimed to answer two questions: (1) Did the FIT-funded SMOs and their testing projects advance gender equality and empower women and girls? And (2) If yes, how was this possible in the innovation space?

The data demonstrated that FIT-funded SMOs and their testing projects made progress through innovation to advance gender equality and to empower women and girls, and in many cases, significant progress was made. While not all SMOs made progress where they aimed or intended to make progress, often in agency areas, this is to be expected in testing projects and testing new innovations. Collectively, progress was made toward each FIAP action area.

Specific to the innovation space, one key learning was that progress was most effective and significant when SMOs used a combined approach of both access and agency strategies. For instance, many SMOs provided access to information and skills, combined with improving knowledge of gender equality and shifting norms for agency progress.

Another key finding was that SMOs must have a strong foundational commitment to advance gender equality in the innovation space. This involved having a gender budget for gender activities, engaging gender expertise, providing gender training, conducting a gender scan, and developing a gender equality strategy— all of which make up their gender responsive testing approach. One element of commitment which resulted in varying progress, was where local gender expertise was engaged. Thus, utilizing both Canadian and local gender expertise led to more progress and a more successful innovation.

Several innovation drivers emerged as the most pertinent success factors for short-term projects across all portfolios: engaging women leaders and groups, engaging men and boys, designing locally and being context appropriate, utilizing gender expertise, and collaborating with local partners.

Finally, the evaluation results also identified a Gender Equality Pathway for Innovation (GEPI) for each portfolio of SMOs, which outlined the path a FIT-funded SMO took to advance gender equality and empower women and girls within a particular FIAP action area. These pathways can also serve as guidance for future projects.



# FIT GENDER EQUALITY RESULTS

## Action Area 1:



## Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls

### Gender Equality Results Summary

FIT's **Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls** portfolio had nine (10) small and medium organizations (SMOs) (19% of the fund) who worked towards improving gender equality by reducing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), strengthening women's organizations and movements that advance women's rights, improving government's capacity to address gender equality and providing services to women and girls. In total, **21,061** participants were impacted (63% of which were women and girls) and **\$2,038,270** FIT funding was spent on this portfolio.

**Commitment** to gender equality varied across the portfolio. All SMOs were gender responsive or gender transformative. All SMOs developed a gender equality strategy (GES) based on their gender scans and most had budget dedicated to gender activities. While six SMOs engaged gender expertise, four SMOs did not engage any gender expertise. All SMOs implemented a policy for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).

The prominent **access strategy** that led to progress towards advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls was increasing access to information and awareness. Increasing access to information involved various strategies such as direct training and public awareness campaigns. Capacity building training for women was provided along with access to a mobile clinic for legal and psychological support at the participant level, for instance.

The prominent **agency strategies** were improving knowledge on gender equality, improving self-confidence and self-esteem, and shifting gender norms. For example, improving knowledge on gender equality or gender-related issues included a combination of approaches to raise awareness and build capacity among teachers and students on the dangers of "sexually transmitted grades".

Six SMOs in this portfolio used both access and agency strategies, whereas four SMOs used only agency strategies, and one used only access strategies. Significant progress was made for most of the SMOs that used a combination of both access and agency. While one SMO that used agency only did not make any progress, the other three made significant progress. Progress was made at both the participant and community level.



Three innovation **drivers** were identified across the portfolio including engaging men and boys, engaging women leaders and groups, and utilizing gender experts. Engaging men and boys (including fathers and entire families) was seen to catalyze change rather than working with just girls themselves to address the violence and inequities faced by girls. Moreover, engaging women leaders and groups was another important driver where strategies ranged from engaging adolescent girls as workshop facilitators to involving leaders from key women’s organizations, which improved both effectiveness and project legitimacy. Finally, utilizing gender experts was also key in improving innovations by allowing for further integration of sensitization materials and tailored messaging, for instance.

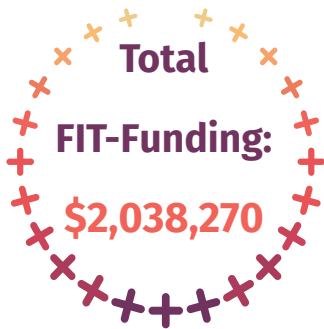
Two cross-cutting **challenges** were identified within the portfolio, which were having a short testing timeframe for achieving gender equality progress and mitigating resistance to gender equality. The short testing timeframe was the primary challenge as it was found that changing patriarchal beliefs and stereotypes or shifting gender norms is a complex and often lengthy process. Furthermore, mitigating resistance was another challenge experienced during the testing period, which required more sensitization efforts and gender education than initially expected.



## Portfolio Snapshot

### Number of SMOs

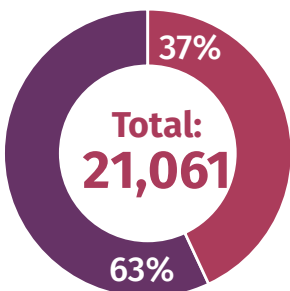
**19%** (10/52)



Within the **Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls** FIAP Action Area, SMOs in this portfolio worked towards one or more of the following:

- **Reducing** sexual and gender-based violence
- **Strengthening** women’s organizations and movements that advance women’s rights
- **Improving** government’s capacity to address gender equality and to provide services to women and girls

### Total Participants Reached



13,320 7741  
women/girls men/boys

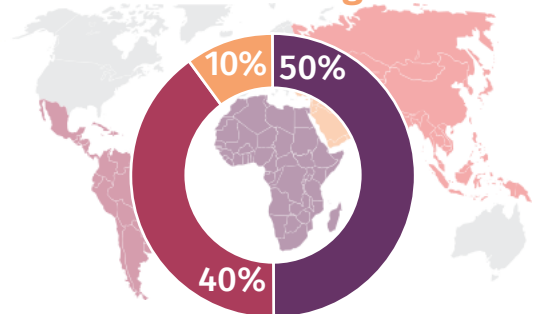
### SMO Profiles

**100%**  
(10/10)

**Civil Society Organization (CSO)**

0 Post-Secondary  
0 Private Sector  
0 Social Enterprise

### Innovation Regions



**Africa**  
**Latin America**  
**Middle East**

# Commitment to Gender Equality

Commitment to gender equality varied across the **Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls** portfolio. Eight SMOs in this portfolio were gender transformative and had a Gender Equality Marker (GEM) of 3 since all indicators and outcomes focused on gender equality. The other two SMOs were gender responsive and had a GE2 with at least one high-level outcome and indicator focused on gender equality. All SMOs developed a GES based on their findings from their In-Depth Gender Scan (IGS). Most SMOs had a portion of their budget dedicated to gender expertise and gender training, for example focused on the prevention of SGBV. Three SMOs engaged both Canadian and local gender expertise, a few engaged either local or Canadian gender expertise, and four SMOs did not engage any gender expertise. All SMOs implemented a PSEA policy.

- Gender Equality Marker..... GE2: 20% (2/10) , GE3: 80% (8/10)
- Gender Equality Strategy ..... Yes, 100% (10/10)
- In-depth Gender Scan ..... Yes, 100% (10/10)
- Gender disaggregated data..... Yes, 100% (10/10)
- Gender expertise..... Canadian: Yes, 30% (3/10)  
Local/Country: Yes, 60% (6/10)  
Both Canadian and local/country: Yes, 30% (3/10)  
No gender expertise: 40% (4/10)
- Gender Budget ..... Yes, 100% (10/10)
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) ..... Yes, 100% (10/10)

# Access and Agency

The following table highlights the prominent access and agency strategies that led to progress towards advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls across 50% or more of the FIT-funded SMOs in the Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls portfolio. Where the SMO achieved their project targets, progress was defined as “significant”. Where the SMO did not achieve their project targets but made progress nonetheless, progress was defined as “some”. The impact of access and agency progress was achieved at the participant or community level, or both. Where progress was made using access and agency strategies, benefits were seen as a result of those strategies.

	Strategies	Progress	Impact Level
<b>Access</b>	Increasing access to information and awareness	Varying progress: some, significant	Participant & Community
<b>Agency</b>	Improved knowledge on gender	Varying progress: some, significant	Participant
	Improving self-confidence and self-esteem	Significant	Participant
	Shifting gender norms on rights, child marriage, SGBV, gender roles	Varying progress: some, significant	Participant & Community

Six SMOs in this portfolio used both access and agency strategies, whereas four SMOs used only agency strategies, and one used only access strategies. Significant progress was made for most of the SMOs that used a combination of both access and agency. While one SMO that used agency only did not make any progress, the other three made significant progress. The only access strategy that cut across was providing access to information and raising awareness for both participants and community members. Some SMOs made progress using other access strategies such as access to health services, equipment and technology, legal services or women’s organizations but these strategies were project specific and did not cut across the entire portfolio. Most SMOs used agency strategies with a focus on shifting gender norms, either on rights, women’s work, SGBV, or child marriage.

## Access Examples

### Increasing Access to Information and Awareness

Across the **Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls** portfolio, strategies to increase access to information or to build awareness on key issues ranged from direct training to public awareness campaigns, at both the participant and community level. At the participant level, **Sombrilla International Development Society** provided capacity building training for women and provided access to a mobile clinic for legal and psychological support. Through in-person training, **PeaceGeeks’** participants gained knowledge and increased their willingness to engage with communities in local efforts to challenge discrimination against women. They aimed to raise awareness on gender equality and trained on how to challenge persistent discrimination against women. **Alitus Femina** worked with schools and school authorities, including men, to collect and enter evidence and by the end of the innovation, there was markedly higher involvement of all school authorities.

At the community level, **Sombrilla International Development Society’s** public awareness campaign contributed to increasing awareness of gender-based violence among all community members. The campaign used the catchy phrase “Basta Ya” (“Stop Now”) in items provided to beneficiaries (e.g., cups, reusable bags, t-shirts, water bottles) and other public facing spaces (e.g., murals, street banners, signs, TV spots, radio spots, social media posts).



Sombrilla International Development Society

Likewise, **Alternatives’** work received extensive coverage in the country’s media and social networks even despite limitations imposed by the patriarchal context. The project was published in newspaper articles, radio programs and television programs, which aimed to raise awareness about the problem of violence against women journalists. In addition to participant training, **PeaceGeeks** engaged with Jordanians more broadly at the community level through platforms. Content created by women and men artists interacted with adults and youth with varying societal and socioeconomic backgrounds. **Alitus Femina** also improved access to information at the community level by creating an evidence base (for “sexually transmitted grades”) that was used by participating schools through the Ministry of Education. They were able to collect both quantitative and qualitative data anonymously using digital tools.

## Agency Examples

### Improving Knowledge on Gender Equality

Often in the form of training, SMOs aimed to improve knowledge on gender equality or gender-related issues in numerous ways. **Canada SOS** found that addressing barriers to Indigenous women’s civic participation and leadership combined with modelling of women’s capacity to voice opinions (and demonstrate leadership) resulted in improved gender equality. For example, **Canada SOS** emphasized women’s participation and leadership through a specific campaign to raise awareness about Guatemala’s constitution, which drove participation among women that resulted in noticeable changes in their willingness to come forward. **Sombrilla International Development Society** provided capacity building and other activities that included self-help groups and access to a mobile clinic, which increased women’s knowledge and awareness of their rights. The capacity building sessions were facilitated by experts on sexual and gender-based violence and women’s rights. The sessions covered two days and several topics (e.g., types of SGBV, how to identify SGBV, etc.). Moreover, participants learned about the reporting mechanisms available to them if they experience SGBV.

**PeaceGeeks** conducted a series of community resilience workshops that aimed to engage women and men in dialogues that challenge gender inequality and discrimination, starting from awareness and leading to real change. Trained artists were able to confidently create content that supports women’s rights and eliminates forms of discrimination against women. **CAUSE Canada** worked towards improving knowledge on child marriage. Changes included improving men’s and families’ knowledge on the risks of child marriage for girls themselves, entire communities including girls’ families, and increasing families’ willingness to keep girls in school. **Make Music Matter’s** awareness raising activities started at the beginning of the program for both participants and community

members. These activities included community meetings, and workshops on gender and positive masculinity. Sensitization efforts were also put in place to increase the participation of males in the program to break down some of the resistance to experiencing trauma. Combining therapy and music was employed throughout the program.



**Alitus Femina** worked with students to increase their knowledge of

“sexually transmitted grades” through a Reflection and Strategy Workshop where girls showed extraordinary commitment to the issue and a high aptitude on knowledge and integration of gender equality. Finally, **Mer et Monde** worked towards improving knowledge of gender equality in local government departments and within their microprojects/CSOs where they saw an improvement in the CSOs’ ability to implement successful strategies for improving gender equality in their beneficiary communities. Training on gender mainstreaming improved CSOs’ knowledge and skills so that they can better plan for future gender equality actions and initiatives.

### Improving Self-Confidence and Self-Esteem

**Canada SOS** saw advances in their participants’ self-confidence. One strategy was to move away from group workshops, towards a home-visit model, which provided more personalized support for women to express



themselves and build their confidence. *Real Humanitarian* found during closing interviews with participants and focus groups with groups of girls reported that they feel more liberated from limiting gender roles and patriarchal belief systems, especially regarding power-dynamics in relationships and decision-making from the innovation's approach. *Make Music Matter* successfully organized and conducted a concert, which was central to changing perceptions of participants and community wide. For the first time on their stage, they had a group of men singing with self-confidence and pride, singing their songs with messages of positive masculinity, equality and human rights.

### Shifting Gender Norms

SMOs in the **Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls** portfolio work towards shifting gender norms on various topics such as human or women's rights, SGBV, child marriage, and gender roles and responsibilities. *Canada SOS* worked towards shifting gender norms on rights with male participants to shift their thinking about women in their households and community after the innovation. They also worked towards shifting gender norms on roles and responsibilities of women. *Canada SOS* saw improvement in civic engagement among Indigenous women and girls, where women would now consider taking on leadership roles in community-wide committees (instead of only women's organizations/committees) where they would work alongside men or be competing with men for positions.

*St. Mary's Road United Church* also worked towards shifting gender norms on rights where they saw changes in men's ability and willingness to advocate for women and girls, and to openly share with other men. *St. Mary's Road United Church's* also saw changes in women's perceptions around whether women should have the

choice to work outside the home, and that women's definitions of femininity and masculinity have changed. Additionally, their work on changing roles and responsibilities demonstrated positive changes in men's behaviour, where men started to share in one or more behaviours like cooking, prepping, fetching firewood, or water, along with women starting to take on new roles and activities. At the end of the innovation, household tasks



were being shared more equitably, which was having a positive effect on the family unit. *Make Music Matter's* innovation was based in a traditional culture where men are shunned or would distance themselves from social circles following a trauma due to being stigmatized as survivors of sexual violence. Even though initial perceptions of equality in gender roles and human rights within households was discouraging, *Make Music Matter* saw positive improvements over time in artist's perceptions of gender and masculinity.

*Alitus Femina* worked towards shifting gender norms on SGBV. Their strategy was multi-pronged and included activities for awareness-raising, capacity-building among teachers, implementation of student initiatives, implication of whistle-blowing measures, and development of key protection policies. *Alitus Femina* compared the approach of using only awareness-raising against using a combination of approaches and saw a large difference

in the fight against “sexually transmitted grades” when a combination of approaches is used and the involvement of girls as agents of change. For *Real Humanitarian’s* innovation, gender norms on SGBV also shifted because of the approach including weekly workshops. Parents shared that one of the biggest shifts they had seen in their home was improvements within the parent-child relationships within families. Historically, many parents employed violence (physical and verbal) to discipline their children and in closing interviews, parents shared how they are working towards having more conscious dialogue with their children in lieu of resorting to violence when they misbehave. Fathers specifically shared that their relationships with their daughters were improving as they were adopting more equitable attitudes and moving away from more “machismo” attitudes, while their daughters were simultaneously learning the importance of using their voice and employing more assertive communication.

## Drivers

**Engage men and boys.** Engaging men and boys was a key innovation driver seen across the Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls portfolio. For example, *St. Mary’s Road United Church* found that engaging couples was preferred and more effective (over individuals). Initially, they had planned to teach solely men/husbands how to cook on their own but at the request of women/wives, their wives preferred that a facilitator help their husbands learn at a common meeting place, together with their wives. They found that this approach exposed the couples to new tools and a fresh way of interacting together that improved their relationship. Similarly, *Real Humanitarian* found that working with entire families catalyzed change. By not focusing on just the girls, but by working with their entire family, all family members better understood the importance of supporting girls and addressing the violence and inequities that they face, which was more impactful ultimately in addressing sexual and gender-based violence. *Make Music Matter* also found that it was effective to use

testimonials from men who had already participated in the program to improve uptake by men/male youth trauma survivors (particularly when men were hesitant to participate). *Alternatives* and *Mer et Monde* both highlighted the learning that there is a need to work with (more) men and from the beginning of their initiative. Although *Alternatives’* work focused on working with women’s organizations, they found that trying to identify and work with



male allies throughout the process strengthened their efforts overall.

**Engage women leaders and groups.** Across the Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls portfolio, it was also found that engaging women leaders and groups was an important innovation driver. *Canada SOS* engaged adolescent girls as workshop facilitators, which was effective in promoting their leadership while also building their confidence as agents of change. *Sombrilla International Development Society* involved women organizations and other key stakeholders, which they found improved the project’s legitimacy. They highlighted that gaining stakeholders’ support required building relationships and trust, which is a process that took time (and that they focused on this for the first half of their project). One of *Real*

*Humanitarian's* key learnings was understanding the value and power of not only seeing women's empowerment as individual but also as a collective, and the importance of collective advancement (where women and girls improve as a group and support one another). One of their most documented positive shifts felt by the women and girl beneficiaries was the improvement of solidarity among women in the community and the value of creating networks of "women helping women". Collective empowerment was seen as both a successful result and as a catalyst for increased empowerment overall.

*CAUSE Canada* shared that the needs of families and girls, particularly those at risk of child marriage can be complex and referrals were an important part of the innovation. OneStop, a small department of the Ministry of Social Welfare helped survivors of SGBV and was critical in helping respond to cases uncovered because of the project. *CAUSE Canada* also found that a good practice for presenting convincing arguments was to use testimonies. For instance, staff invited a woman beneficiary to share her story (i.e., she was married at 13 years of age and widowed some years later, left with two young children, and had no education or resources to help her survive). Her story helped families to better understand the issues of child marriage and to refrain from marrying off their young girls. *Alitus Femina* also found that integrating women's organizations was critical in consolidating gains and combating the harmful practice of "sexually transmitted grades". They worked with influential figures and artists through activities such as organized café debates and open days to educate more widely.

**Utilize gender expertise.** Another key innovation driver was the importance of utilizing gender expertise, which was seen in various forms. For instance, *St. Mary's Road United Church* made an important change which was the addition of homestead visits by two gender specialists which had several unexpected learnings. Firstly, the participants gave a lot of weight to the sessions because they were being visited (i.e., since no one had ever done this before, come to their home, asked for their thoughts, and listened to them), which gave them increased motivation to attend trainings and learn new skills. It also gave participants the time and space to discuss matters that they would not have normally been able to do in a group setting. Thirdly, it provided the gender specialists opportunities and space to share technical advice based on what they were seeing in the home. Finally, it allowed women to show how they were branching out into activities that they had not done before (i.e., showing structures they have built to assist the farm, men showing their home gardens, etc.). *Make Music Matter* also increased the usage and engagement of their gender specialist during the testing period, which helped to combat the hesitancy of males to participate in the program and increase the number of men/male youth trauma survivors that would participate in the program. Also, the gender specialist's role changed across the testing period (from being more of a consultant to a full-time team member for training and mentoring), which allowed for further integration of sensitization materials, increasingly tailored positive masculinity messaging to the changing circumstances, and maximizing the use of key stakeholders and ambassadors within the community. Another





best practice emerged, which was that the gender specialist should be included from the start of any project as a full-time member, rather than in an advisory role, which would help to clarify and implement not only the GES but also to ensure that adjustments can be made quickly on an ongoing basis.

Similarly, *CAUSE Canada's* Gender Advisor accompanied the intermediaries during home visits to beneficiaries to support them in making referrals for adolescent girls. Early on, intermediaries had identified this gap in the project, related to the intersection of adolescent pregnancies, motherhoods, and cohabitation, so further training was provided along with a mechanism for the Gender Advisor to provide referrals when required. *Alitus Femina* found that working together with local Gender Specialists from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Education provided an extraordinary advantage as they had the ability to integrate the concept of gender equality into the local culture.

## Challenges

**Short testing timeframe to achieve gender equality progress.** The short testing timeframe was the primary challenge across the **Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls** portfolio. *Sombrilla International Development Society* found that many people in the marginalized communities they worked within had limited or no awareness of the role or benefits of psychological services and hence, adoption of these services required both education and building trust, which takes time, for instance. They also discussed how changing patriarchal beliefs and stereotypes (that ultimately lead to sexual and gender-based violence) is a complex and often lengthy process. Although the innovation challenged these existing beliefs during the testing period, it was difficult to observe systemic changes because the testing timeframe was short. *Real Humanitarian* similarly found that although they made significant progress towards eradicating gender-based

violence, there is still ongoing work to be done. Eradicating violence in a community as deeply rooted in generational violence and patriarchy is a long-term and ongoing work in progress.

*Make Music Matter* found that the changes in gender perceptions were encouraging for both women and men but that the culture and society remain relatively fixed regarding gender roles, which is

something that needs to be addressed over a longer period (and they plan to continue working on this after FIT funding). *Mer et Monde* similarly thought that their work would have benefited from a longer training and implementation cycle, and that their microprojects ended up being quite large in scope.

**Mitigate resistance to gender equality.** Another key innovation driver was the importance of recognizing, expecting, and mitigating resistance to gender equality, which multiple SMOs faced. *PeaceGeeks* found that there were mixed reactions from attendees during their Community Resilience Workshops, and they observed noticeable differences in openness and the levels of acceptance during discussions depending on the region. During community workshops, the concept of gender equality was applied to social life in Jordan in a counter-narrative to society's traditions and way of life, hence there was sensitivity and skepticism about discussing



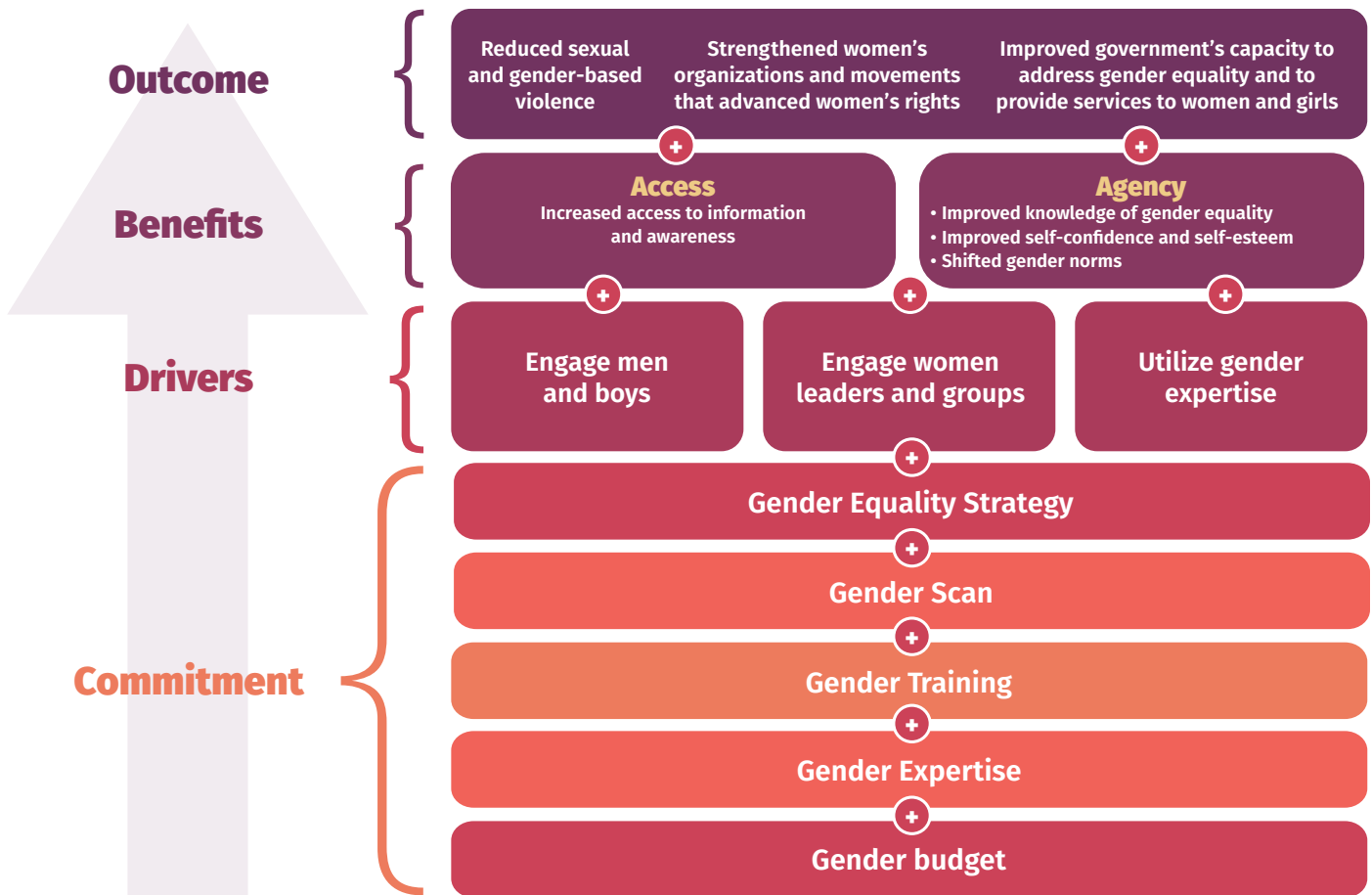


gender-related topics. Thus, the session was designed to encourage discussion so that concepts could be applied in a mindful way to help reform the participants' knowledge without imposing a particular point of view, which helped attendees become more open to discussing their values towards women and gender issues. Participants reported after the session that they gained more knowledge about the forms of discrimination against women. *PeaceGeeks* thought more community workshops would help to mitigate resistance to changing gender and social norms and to provide a space for more community members to express themselves freely.

*Make Music Matter* also found that more sensitization campaigns and gender education are needed at various levels of society to promote gender equality and positive masculinity. For example, they observed significant changes in gender perception because of a concert by their artists, but more project cycles are needed to alter gender and masculinity perception ideals community wide firmly and sustainably. Finally, *Alitus Femina* highlighted the challenges around the fact that there are taboos surrounding certain practices affecting girls and women. For instance, practices that are harmful to girls' education such as "sexually transmitted grades", remain taboo and nobody talks about them. As a result, the primary, essentially girls and women, have no space to talk about it, no institutional protection, no support from parents or school authorities, and even less, no real data on this practice that affects them year after year.

### Gender Equality Pathway to Innovation (GEPI)

Based on the evaluation of the FIT-funded SMOs in the **Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls** portfolio, the following gender responsive pathway to advance gender equality and empower women and girls was used:



\*Adapted from WGEA Business Case to Gender Equality Figure

## FIT-Funded Projects

The following table lists the FIT-funded SMOs in the **Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls** portfolio.

No.	FIAP Sub-category	Testing Country	SMO Name	Org Type	Testing Timeframe (Months)
1	Engagement of men and boys to advance gender equality	Democratic Republic of Congo	Make Music Matter	CSO	15 months
2	Engagement of men and boys to advance gender equality	Zimbabwe	St. Mary's Road United Church	CSO	13 months
3	Improve government's capacity to address gender equality and to provide services to women and girls	Guatemala	Canada SOS: Students Offering Support	CSO	12 months
4	Reduce sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) (including child, early, and forced marriage)	Burkina Faso	Alitus Femina	CSO	12 months
5	Reduce sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) (including child, early, and forced marriage)	Sudan	Alternatives	CSO	15 months
6	Reduce sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) (including child, early, and forced marriage)	Guatemala	Real Humanitarian	CSO	15 months
7	Reduce sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) (including child, early, and forced marriage)	Sierra Leone	CAUSE Canada	CSO	15 months
8	Reduce sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) (including child, early, and forced marriage)	Honduras	Sombrilla International Development Society	CSO	15 months
9	Strengthen women's organizations and movements that advance women's rights	Jordan	PeaceGeeks	CSO	12 months
10	Strengthen women's organizations and movements that advance women's rights	Nicaragua	Mer et Monde	CSO	15 months

## Action Area 2:



# Human Dignity

## Gender Equality Results Summary

FIT's **Human Dignity** portfolio had twenty-two (22) small and medium organizations (SMOs) (42% of the fund) who worked towards improving education; healthcare; health, nutrition, and nutritious food; humanitarian action/assistance; maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH); sexual and reproductive health and rights (including menstrual health) (SRHR); and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). In total, **42,714** participants were impacted (62% of which were women and girls) and **\$4,317,116** FIT funding was spent on this portfolio.

**Commitment** to gender equality was high across the portfolio. Three SMOs were gender transformative, while nineteen were gender responsive. Most SMOs developed a gender equality strategy (GES) based on their gender scans and had a budget dedicated to gender activities, whereas all SMOs engaged gender expertise. All SMOs implemented a policy for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).

The prominent **access strategies** that led to progress towards advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls was increasing access to skills development, healthcare, and improving knowledge/educational attainment. Increasing access to educational attainment included supporting girls to stay in school during menstruation, for instance. Strategies included providing reusable pads and cups, educating on how nutrients can help to decrease fatigue, and educating boys on the harm of menstrual stigma and bullying.

The prominent **agency strategies** were improving knowledge on gender equality, improving SRHR, shifting gender norms on health behaviour, and shifting gender norms on health behaviour, rights, and SRHR. For example, improving norms on health behaviour involved a family-centred approach to improve knowledge and attitudes around cervical cancer and human papillomavirus (HPV) to increase cervical cancer screen uptake among women.

Both access and agency strategies were used by the SMOs and their local partners. In most innovations, the combined approach of using both access and agency strategies resulted in significant progress, primarily at the participant level. In some innovations, lower progress toward access also coincided with lower agency progress.

Three innovation drivers were identified across the portfolio, which were engaging women leaders and groups, designing locally and being context appropriate, and providing compensation (where appropriate). Engaging women leaders and groups was a critical driver where innovations engaged various women leaders from

government, built women’s committees to influence health education, and involved both elders and women teacher to improve health education services for girls. Moreover, designing locally and being context appropriate was another important driver which included providing training remotely to secure the most equipped Arabic speaking instructors with dealing with limiting travel logistics. Finally, compensation, various forms, reflected the importance of responding to the needs of participants. For instance, compensation strategies spanned providing childcare, transport, lunch and snacks, and per diems for time/travel, which was deemed critical to supporting the success of each innovation.

Two cross-cutting **challenges** were identified within the portfolio, which were having a short testing timeframe for achieving gender equality progress and mitigating resistance to gender equality. The short testing timeframe was highlighted that despite positive changes being seen in WASH behaviour, for instance, more time is needed to see the full benefits of an innovation at overall population level. Furthermore, mitigating resistance was another challenge experienced during the testing period because many innovations are based in contexts ideas around gender equality and girls’ education, for instance, may not be widely accepted. Forward looking recommendations included working with local organizations that have pre-existing relationships and sensitization materials.



## Portfolio Snapshot

### Number of SMOs

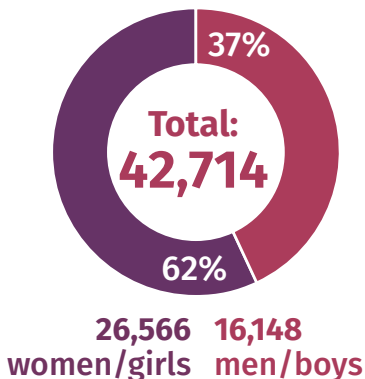
**42%** (22/55)

Within the **Human Dignity** FIAP Action Area, SMOs in this portfolio worked towards one or more of the following:

- Education
- Healthcare
- Health, nutrition, and nutritious food
- Humanitarian action/assistance
- MNCH
- SRHR
- WASH



### Total Participants Reached



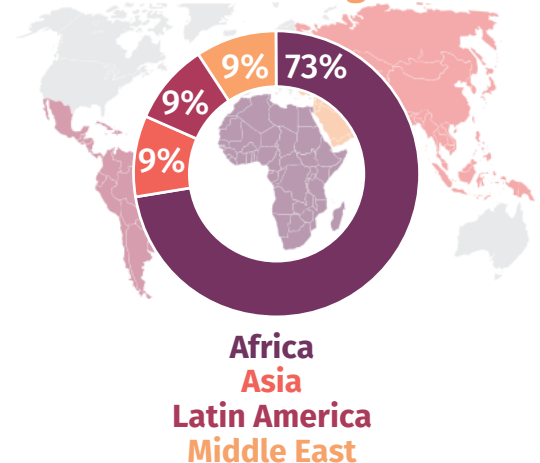
### SMO Profiles

**64%**  
(14/22)

**Civil Society Organization (CSO)**

**13.5%** (3/22) **13.5%** (3/22) **9%** (2/22)  
Post-Secondary Sector Social Enterprise

### Innovation Regions





## Commitment to Gender Equality

Commitment to gender equality was high across the **Human Dignity** portfolio. Nineteen SMOs in this portfolio were gender responsive and had a Gender Equality Marker (GEM) of 2 since they had at least one high-level outcome and indicator focused on gender equality. The other three SMOs were gender transformative with a GE3 with all indicators and outcomes focused on gender equality. The majority conducted an In-depth or Rapid Gender Scan (IGS) and used the findings to develop a Gender Equality Strategy (GES). Three SMOs did not develop a GES. While seven SMOs engaged both Canadian and local gender expertise, the remaining engaged one or the other. All SMOs had a portion of their budget dedicated to gender expertise and activities, such as improving knowledge on gender equality regarding attitudes around menstrual health management, knowledge of SRHR, gender responsive lesson planning, or gender sensitive and responsive healthcare. All SMOs implemented a Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) policy.

- Gender Equality Marker..... GE2: 86% (19/22) , GE3: 14% (3/22)
- Gender Equality Strategy ..... Yes, 86% (19/22)
- In-depth Gender Scan ..... Yes, 82% (18/22)
- Gender disaggregated data..... Yes, 100% (22/22)
- Gender expertise..... Canadian: Yes, 41% (9/22)  
Local/Country: Yes, 91% (20/22)  
Both Canadian and local/country: Yes, 32% (7/22)
- Gender Budget ..... Yes, 100% (22/22)
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) ..... Yes, 100% (22/22)



## Access and Agency

The following table highlights the prominent access and agency strategies that led to progress towards advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls across 50% or more of the FIT-funded SMOs in the **Human Dignity** portfolio. Where the SMO achieved their project targets, progress was defined as “significant”. Where the SMO did not achieve their project targets but made progress nonetheless, progress was defined as “some”. The impact of access and agency progress was achieved at the participant or community level, or both. Where progress was made using access and agency strategies, benefits were seen as a result of those strategies.

	Strategies	Progress	Impact Level
Access	Increasing access to skills development	Varying progress: some, significant	Participant & Community
	Increasing access to healthcare	Varying progress: some, significant	Participant
	Improving knowledge/educational attainment	Significant	Participant
Agency	Improved knowledge on gender equality	Varying progress: some, significant	Participant
	Improving SRHR (including menstrual health)	Significant	Participant
	Shifting gender norms on health behaviour	Varying progress: some, significant	Participant
	Shifting gender norms on rights	Significant	Participant & Community
	Shifting gender norms on rights	Significant	Participant & Community

Both access and agency strategies were used by all the SMOs and their local partners in this portfolio. In most innovations, the combined approach of using both access and agency strategies resulted in significant progress, primarily at the participant level. In some innovations, lower progress toward access also coincided with lower agency progress. In many innovations, increasing access to healthcare was addressed ahead of improving SRHR and shifting norms on health behaviour and SRHR. Many education-focused innovations made progress towards access by improving knowledge or educational attainment for students but also had training for teachers, which focused on providing gender responsive education. Similarly, access to healthcare coupled with gender training on various topics resulted in agency progress, not only for improved knowledge on gender but also in shifting norms and attitudes around menstrual health management.

### Access Examples

#### Improving Knowledge/Educational Attainment

The most prominent access strategy in the **Human Dignity** portfolio, where significant progress was made, was improving access to knowledge/educational attainment. *Girls of Tomorrow (GOT) Foundation’s* innovation also found that menstruating girls skip class for a variety of reasons including fatigue, bullying, and having no access to menstrual supplies. Different strategies to improve knowledge so that school attendance improved

included: teaching girls how specific plants and nutrients can be used to decrease fatigue and increase health and mental wellness during menstruation; educating boys on the harm of menstrual stigma and bullying and helping them to better understand their role in supporting female health; and teaching girls and boys how banana fibers can be used to make menstrual pads, making sanitary pads more accessible.

## Agency Examples

### Improving SRHR (Including Menstrual Health)

Improving SRHR was often linked to supporting students to stay in school. For example, the *Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CPAR)*'s innovation was focused on improving girls' access to school by addressing challenges with menstruation. Strategies to do this included improving access to the availability and usage of sanitary pads and cups and raising awareness of menstrual health amongst boys. Positive changes were seen and attributed the availability of reusable sanitary pads and menstrual cups. Girl participants shared that the pads and cups gave them the freedom and dignity to attend school even during their monthly periods. They felt comfortable using these sanitary products, which has resulted in girls having more classroom learning time just like their male counterparts. Focus group discussions also revealed that there was an improvement in the performance of girls during the project period. Improved availability of menstrual services also reduced stigma and discrimination.

To improve menstrual health, *GOT Foundation* worked on improving girl's security and confidence around menstruation. Feeling secure includes feeling safe to talk about one's period with others, not being worried about changing pads at school, and/or not being worried about getting stains on one's uniform. In addition to school attendance, *GOT Foundation* looked at supporting girls to participate in sport and non-sport extracurriculars and while on their period. Focus groups indicated that one of the key reasons girls stop participating is that they either do not have menstrual supplies or are not confident in the quality of their menstrual supplies, and therefore reported having access to a reusable menstrual pad was a key part of the solution.



### Shifting Gender Norms on Health Behaviour

*Toronto Met University (TMU)*'s innovation aimed to shift gender norms on health behaviour, which resulted in increased cervical cancer screening (self-screening and follow-up pap tests) uptake among women. *TMU* also found that women are at higher risk of being stigmatized due to entrenched gender norms and stereotypes associated with infections. Thus, *TMU* utilized a family-centred approach in their innovation to improve knowledge and attitudes to also reduce stigma around cervical cancer and HPV (a commonly sexually transmitted infection (STI)). Sexual health education sessions, attended by both women and men participants, led to improved knowledge about cervical cancer, HPV and stigma reduction by promoting open dialogue between women and men.



## Drivers

**Engage women leaders and groups.** Across the **Human Dignity** portfolio, it was also found that engaging women leaders and groups was an important innovation driver. SMOs engaged various leaders, for instance, *The Wellspring Foundation for Education* invited the female Joint Action Development Forum Secretary to participate in session to speak about the importance of ICT skills in the future of Rwanda, especially for women. Whereas *Canadian International Scientific Exchange Program (CISEPO)* built women’s committees and influencers into health education and empowerment training rather than just focusing it on community health workers. Moreover, *CPAR* found that inclusion and involvement of female teachers increased ownership over the project interventions. They also found that the presence of female teachers made it easier to deliver health education services because the girls felt closer to their teachers and could talk more openly about issues with menstruation.

*GOT Foundation* initially overlooked the importance of involving elders during the planning stages but found that menstrual stigma is deeply rooted, in part, in the current generation’s misinterpretation of certain cultural practices related to menstruation. For example, it is customary in regions of Uganda for girls to separate from other or to be isolated from their parents when they are menstruating for the first time, which they thought was because they are dirty or “impure”. However, elders explained that this tradition is about marking the transition into adulthood. Involving the older generation women to teach the younger generations was helpful in correcting misunderstandings. Going forward, *GOT Foundation* involves elders who take a very active role in speaking at all workshops.



Canadian International Scientific Exchange Program

**Design locally and be context appropriate.** Designing locally was found across the **Human Dignity** portfolio. *CISEPO* delivered a portion of their technical training remotely with women together in one gathering space, but instructors delivered pre-selected sessions within the module remotely to ensure that they could work with the best equipped Arabic speaking instructors without limiting travel logistics. This local

approach also allowed for extended takeaways regarding remote delivery of technical health education in low resources or conflict settings. Another example of being context appropriate was that *CISEPO* found that the communities they worked with were not comfortable with discussions around SRHR, so they modified their teaching format to focus on health awareness and used language that was acceptable to communities. Finally, *CISEPO* also identified that most traditional health education is done in English, which is a source of frustration for participants who are not-English speaking or illiterate. It is of the utmost importance to utilize native language instruction and to have linguistic adaptability of materials.



**Provide compensation, where appropriate.** Compensation, in various forms, was found across multiple innovations as important to their success. For example, *The Wellspring Foundation for Education* provided safe secure childcare spaces, paid transport, and provided snacks and lunch for caregivers. *GOT Foundation* learned that there is an expectation in Uganda that adult project participants receive a small, customary per diem for participating in non-profit research to reimburse for time and travel. Parents in the region where they worked also expected that meals (not just snacks) would be provided for children’s participation. Similarly, *CEED Concordia* also felt that remunerating project managers would have generated greater efficiencies in the project. Although they did garner the commitment of some individuals (without compensation), they identified that more attention to this would have helped the project to be more successful. Finally, *CISEPO* highlighted that communities expected medications (due to the history of non-profit medical providers providing free medicines in the communities they worked) and this, if they were not provided then there was disappointment and frustration. *CISEPO* highlighted the importance of recognizing this and setting expectations from the start to look for ways to build on efforts to improve access to medicines within from providers who can potentially partner with to extend reach.

## Challenges

**Short testing timeframe to achieve gender equality progress.** *Royal Roads University* found that a confounding factor for results was the short testing timeframe relative to the length of time needed for changes to be seen in WASH behaviour at the patient and healthcare facility level, which go beyond the scope of the testing timeframe. *Royal Roads University* highlighted that it was clear that positive changes were occurring, especially at the individual patient level along with changes in practices and policies within healthcare facilities, but more time was needed to see the full benefits of the innovation across the overall population.

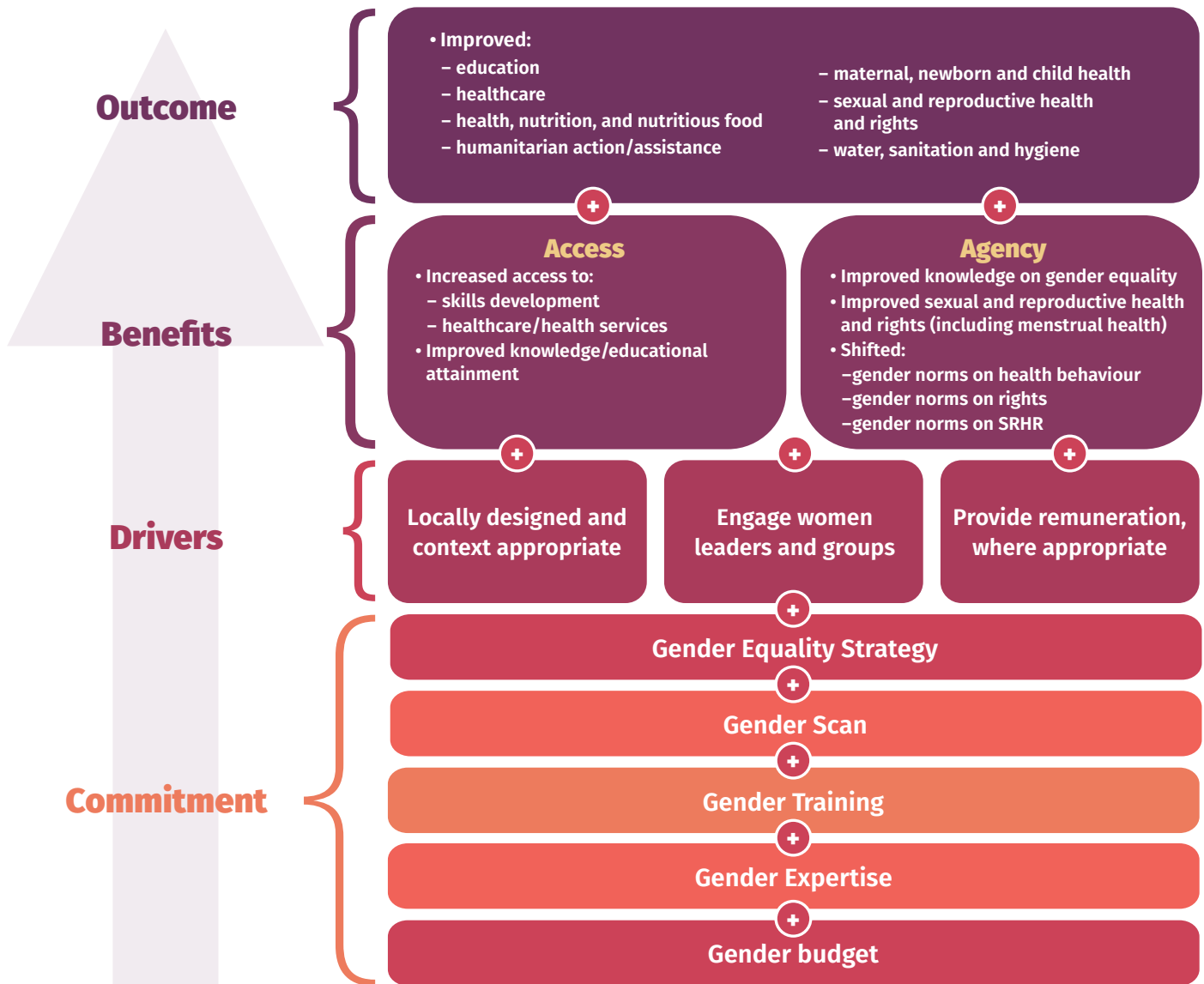
**Mitigate resistance to gender equality.** Another key innovation driver was the importance of recognizing, expecting, and mitigating resistance to gender equality. *Lessons Learned Simulations and Training’s (LLST)* participants shared that it was difficult to negotiate the integration of gender equality in the context of restricted social attitudes, beliefs, and limited understanding (or acceptance) of gender, gender

roles, and gender equality. As an example, one participant’s simulation addressed the difficulties experienced by refugee girls in education and she shared that gender equality and girls’ education were not widely accepted ideas in her context or culture. However, she was still able to be integrate cross-cutting themes of gender and inclusion by framing them through the experiences of refugee children including the marginalization that they face. She plans to use the simulations to change the attitudes and beliefs of educators about girls’ access to education. Due to this ongoing challenge, *LLST* highlighted forward-looking recommendations for future implementations that could include co-presenting sensitive materials with a local organization that has pre-existing relationships in the community or circulating resources on sensitive materials to participants in advance to ensure they are informed prior to the training.



# Gender Equality Pathway to Innovation (GEPI)

Based on the evaluation of the FIT-funded SMOs in the **Human Dignity** portfolio, the following gender responsive pathway to advance gender equality and empower women and girls was used:



\*Adapted from WGEA Business Case to Gender Equality Figure

## FIT-Funded Projects

The following table lists the FIT-funded SMOs in the **Human Dignity** portfolio.

No.	FIAP Sub-category	Testing Country	SMO Name	Org Type	Testing Timeframe (Months)
1	Education	Guatemala	Canada SOS: Students Offering Support	CSO	15
2	Education	Gambia	Canadian Teachers Federation Trust Fund	CSO	15
3	Education	Nicaragua	Change for Children	CSO	15
4	Education	Uganda	CEED Concordia	CSO	11
5	Education	Uganda	Embrace International Foundation	CSO	12
6	Education	Democratic Republic of Congo	Learning for Humanity	Private Sector	12
7	Education	Rwanda	The Wellspring Foundation for Education	CSO	12s
8	Healthcare	India	NorQuest College	Post-Secondary	12
9	Health, nutrition and nutritious food	Benin	Lucky Iron Fish	Social Enterprise	15
10	Humanitarian action/ assistance	Jordan	Lessons Learned Simulations and Training	Private Sector	12
11	Maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH)	Israel/Palestine	Canadian International Scientific Exchange Program	CSO	12

No.	FIAP Sub-category	Testing Country	SMO Name	Org Type	Testing Timeframe (Months)
12	Maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH)	Nigeria	Canadian Network for International Surgery	CSO	15
13	Maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH)	Ethiopia	Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief	CSO	15
14	Maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH)	Somalia	Liss Technologies	Private Sector	10
15	Maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH)	Somalia	OGOW Health	Social Enterprise	13
16	Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) (including menstrual health)	Malawi	Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief	CSO	12
17	Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) (including menstrual health)	Kenya	KIDS Initiative	CSO	14
18	Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) (including menstrual health)	Uganda	Girls of Tomorrow Foundation	CSO	11
19	Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) (including menstrual health)	Mali	Journalists for Human Rights	CSO	15
20	Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) (including menstrual health)	India	Toronto Metropolitan University	Post-Secondary	15
21	Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)	Malawi	Royal Roads University	Post-Secondary	15
22	Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)	Mozambique	Waterlution	CSO	8



## Action Area 3:



# Growth that Works for Everyone

## Gender Equality Results Summary

FIT's **Growth** portfolio had 14 small and medium organizations (SMOs) (27% of the fund) who worked towards improving gender equality by increasing women's access to economic opportunities and resources, women's access to skills, and sustainable agriculture. In total, **5,058** participants were impacted (81% of which were women and girls). **\$2,888,300** FIT funding was spent on this portfolio.

**Commitment** to gender equality was high across the portfolio. Six SMOs were gender transformative, while the other eight were gender responsive. All SMOs developed a gender equality strategy (GES), had budget dedicated to gender activities, and engaged local gender expertise. All SMOs implemented a policy for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).

The prominent **access strategies** that led to progress towards advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls were increasing access to financial literacy, information and awareness, jobs or employment, skills development, and increasing income. Increasing income focused on primarily entrepreneurial innovations where women had (increased/new) profits that led to positive changes for themselves and their families, for instance.

The prominent **agency strategies** were improving decision-making over household decisions, improving decision-making over business decisions, and improving knowledge on gender equality. For example, improving knowledge on gender equality or gender-related issues included changing men's knowledge on gender equality and their perceptions of women taking on leadership positions and increasing awareness of gender for both community leaders and members.

Four SMOs in this portfolio used only access strategies while the other ten used both access and agency strategies though focused heavily on access. While significant progress was made towards access, agency progress varied substantially across innovations. Progress was made primarily at the participant level.

Two innovation **drivers** were identified across the portfolio including collaborating with local partners and providing flexible learning opportunities for women. Collaborating with a strong local partner allowed for SMOs to tap into additional expertise, which improved community trust and helped to navigate challenges or

conflicts that emerged. Also, providing flexible learning opportunities, especially for women, was another important driver in ensuring women can balance their household or domestic responsibilities (and resulted in higher training attendance).

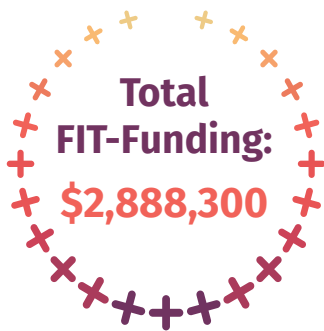
One cross-cutting **challenge** was identified within the portfolio, which was having an unrealistic or short testing timeframe to achieve gender equality progress. This was particularly pertinent for innovations that were introducing a new concept to a community such as menstrual cups or farming insects.



## Portfolio Snapshot

### Number of SMOs

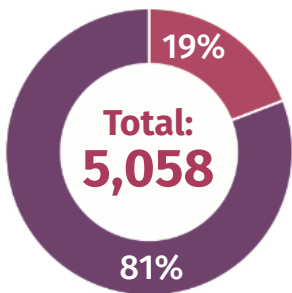
**27%** (14/52)



Within the **Growth** FIAP Action Area, SMOs in this portfolio worked towards one or more of the following:

- Increasing women’s access to economic opportunities and resources (including livelihoods)
- Increasing women’s access to skills (including technical, vocational training, and entrepreneurship)
- Sustainable agriculture

### Total Participants Reached



4109 women/girls 949 men/boys

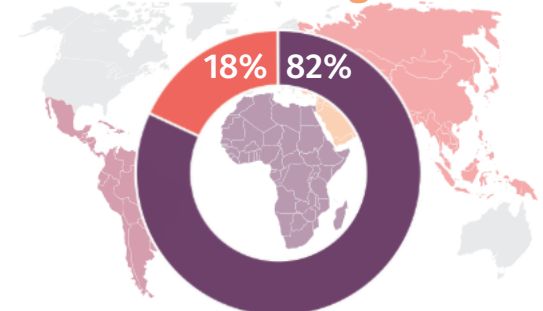
### SMO Profiles

**57%**  
(8/14)

**Civil Society Organization (CSO)**

<b>29%</b> (4/14)	<b>14%</b> (2/14)	<b>0</b>
Post-Secondary	Private Sector	Social Enterprise

### Innovation Regions



**Africa  
Asia**

## Commitment to Gender Equality

Commitment to gender equality varied across the **Growth** portfolio. Six SMOs in this portfolio were gender transformative and had a Gender Equality Marker (GEM) of 3 since all indicators and outcomes focused on gender equality. The other eight SMOs were gender responsive and had a GE2, with at least one high-level outcome and indicator focused on gender equality. Fifty percent (50%) of SMOs conducted an In-Depth Gender Scan (IGS) while the other 50% conducted a Rapid Gender Scan (RGS). Findings were used to develop a gender equality strategy (GES) by all SMOs in this portfolio. All engaged local gender expertise, whereas 57% engaged both Canadian and local gender expertise. The SMOs had a portion of their budget dedicated to gender expertise and activities, such as awareness-raising, gender training focused on gender equality as well as women's decision-making in the house and in business. All SMOs implemented a PSEA policy.

- Gender Equality Marker..... GE2: 57% (8/14) , GE3: 43% (6/14)
- Gender Equality Strategy ..... Yes, 100%(14/14)
- In-depth Gender Scan ..... Yes, 50%(7/14)
- Gender disaggregated data..... Yes, 100% (14/14)
- Gender expertise..... Canadian: Yes, 50% (7/14)  
Local/Country: Yes, 100% (14/14)  
Both Canadian and local/country: 57% (8/14)
- Gender Budget ..... Yes, 100% (14/14)
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) ..... Yes, 100%(14/14)



Humber Institute of Technology and Learning



## Access and Agency

The following table highlights the prominent access and agency-oriented strategies that led to progress towards advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls across 50% or more of the FIT-funded SMOs in the **Growth** portfolio. Where the SMO achieved their project targets, progress was defined as “significant”. Where the SMO did not achieve their project targets but made progress nonetheless, progress was defined as “some”. The impact of access and agency progress was achieved at the participant or community level, or both. Where progress was made using access and agency strategies, benefits were seen as a result of those strategies.

	Strategies	Progress	Impact Level
<b>Access</b>	Increasing access to financial literacy	Significant	Participant
	Increasing access to information and awareness	Significant	Participant & Community
	Increasing income	Significant	Participant
	Increasing access to jobs or employment	Varying progress: some, significant	Participant
	Increasing access to skills development	Significant	Participant
<b>Agency</b>	Improving decision-making over household decisions	Varying progress: some, significant	Participant
	Improving decision-making over business decisions	Varying progress: some, significant	Participant
	Improving knowledge on gender equality	Significant	Participant & Community

Four SMOs in this portfolio used only access strategies while the other ten used both access and agency strategies though focused heavily on access. While significant progress was made towards access, agency progress varied substantially across innovations, with some making no progress towards certain agency strategies, and others making significant progress. In this portfolio, access to skills and information related to financial knowledge and economic opportunities was the foundational knowledge required to achieve agency progress resulting in participants improved decision-making confidence and ability at the household and/or business level.

### Access Examples

#### Increasing Access to Financial Literacy

As an example of increasing access to financial literacy, *Coady Institute’s* innovation aimed to increase access to financial literacy. Their tools helped women farmers to document farm-level income and expenditures, analyze that information, and compare it with their peers to make informed decisions, which ultimately also improved their productivity. In addition to the financial literacy skills, the *Coady Institute* found that women beneficiaries valued many intangibles such as recognition as an economic contributor to the household, increased economic independence, mobility, inclusion in decision making, respect, and self-confidence.



### Increasing Access to Information and Awareness

Across the **Growth** portfolio, strategies to increase access to information or to build awareness on key issues ranged from direct training to promoting activities. **OVO Solar Technologies** marketed to women by sharing information through radio announcements that were recorded in female voices and featured conversations on women's issues that would resonate with female farmers. They also designed posters to spread awareness throughout the community and to attract more rural women. Whereas, **Vets Without Borders** increased access to information on nutritional knowledge via trainings, where participants were better able to identify healthy foods at the end of the project. **Humber Institute of Technology and Learning's** aimed to improve participants' awareness and perception around digital knowledge, entrepreneurship, and the online business environment. At the end of the project, participants were better able to access business opportunities using digital platforms for their creative business ventures.

### Increasing Access to Skills Development

Various skills were developed across numerous innovations in the **Growth** portfolio. **Emmanuel International's** participants increased their skills through training on solar irrigation demonstrations, environmental impact training, and agricultural training. Their training also increased interactions exposure to facilitators (both agricultural and gender), other local women farmers, and local service providers. Participants also learned how to access a new phone-based government farmer assistance service that links farmers with markets as well as agricultural experts, which has helped to improve their farming through better pest control and good farming methods. The **University of Alberta's** participants improved their ability to write passbook (bankbook) entries and read them, and other skills development included the ability to read and write two- and four-digit numbers.

### Increasing Income

Increasing income can lead to many positive changes, particularly for women and their families. Across the **Growth** portfolio, incomes increased from a range of entrepreneurial innovations including insect farming (**Vets Without Borders**) and the transport sectors (**Union for Progress**). **Union for Progress'** women participants gained access to employment by providing a more reliable means of transport and subsequently, were better able to cover their needs at the end of the project.



**Emmanuel International** improved incomes through dry season farming on intervention plots and home gardens. Major crops now grown during the dry season are horticultural, okra, and various leafy greens. **Humber Institute of Technology and Learning's** innovation supported women refugee entrepreneurs to monetize their artistic talent through online business practices and leveraging an online digital marketplace, in which they saw an increase in their disposable income and could contribute to household income and purchases.

**World Neighbours'** project improved women's economic empowerment through the innovative solution's family-based animal-fattening enterprise approach by structuring their animal-fattening activities as informal

business, sustainable modes of income-generation, and ways of strengthening their social esteem agents of development. *Women's Global Health Initiative's* participants also saw profit increases for both female and male refugee champions from the sale of menstrual cups. Female refugee champions who made profits used the funds as capital for new businesses, transport, to start new businesses, school fees, or to buy more menstrual cups to sell. Similarly, *OVO Solar Technologies'* egg incubators had a positive effect on farmers' financial and food security where poultry-related profits increased for incubator owners.

## Agency Examples

### Improving Knowledge on Gender Equality

Often in the form of training, SMOs aimed to improve knowledge on gender equality or gender-related issues in numerous ways. *Emmanuel International* worked to change men's knowledge on gender equality, which ultimately impacted their perceptions of women doing business and taking leadership positions in the household and within the community. Similarly, *Vets Without Borders* trained community leaders and members on gender equality and as a result, participants reported increased knowledge and awareness of gender equality. *Union for Progress'* participants (both women and men) demonstrated an increase in their knowledge and gender equality and were able to apply the principles of gender equality by integrating notions of access to family resources, contribution, and sharing of domestic tasks relatively equally with their husbands. *Université de Sherbrooke* created three agroforestry enterprises and two common interest groups for Indigenous women where women hold 100% of the decision-making positions.



OVO Solar Technologies

## Drivers

### Collaborate with local partners.

One of the primary innovation drivers across the **Growth** portfolio was the importance of collaborating with local partners. *Union for Progress* highlighted the importance of having good collaboration across all stakeholders (e.g., Canadian organization, local partners, provincial offices, Gender ministry, the public transport sector, and other key local actors). While *Roll a*

*Hippo Foundation* found that it was critical to have a local partner whose staff are familiar with the community and local customs so that they can help to navigate challenges and conflicts that emerge.

The *Women's Global Health Initiative* highlighted their involvement with other district departments, such as the Education and Community Services Department as important because they were able to tap into useful resources such a Community Development Officer as a support. The Community Development Officer also helped the innovation to gain further community trust. Finally, *OVO Solar Technologies* highlighted that one significant change to their GES, which included the addition of a key local project partner. This local partner supports private investment in the agricultural market, while also placing a strong focus on supporting interventions with a gender impact lens to support women and youth.



**Provide flexible learning opportunities for women.** Another key innovation driver across the **Growth** portfolio was the significance of being flexible, which can take on many different forms. *Emmanuel International* switched to an offline video curriculum to help more participants gain access to the training, for reasons such as poor connectivity, distance, etc. Whereas, *Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning* had initially planned for a 30-day full day training but feedback from trainees informed the team that many would not be able to commit full day (eight hours per day) for the training because they already worked or had household duties, or both. Subsequently, they modified the training to take place over 65 half-days (or 4 hours per day) to accommodate participants' schedules, which helped to ensure attendance rates remained high.

Similarly, *Vets Without Borders* took into consideration the cascading tasks and gender roles among both women and men beneficiaries during the testing period, which resulted in adapting to the beneficiaries' schedules especially during training sessions. Subsequently they found that adaptable and flexible training dates and times translated into good attendance (e.g., afternoon hours were chosen as the appropriate time for the trainings, which left the morning hours for other household activities such as farming and reproductive roles. Finally, *Coady Institute* found that women preferred agriculture over other non-agriculture work opportunities as it provides flexibility in working hours, allowing them to manage their household responsibilities, and it is close to home.

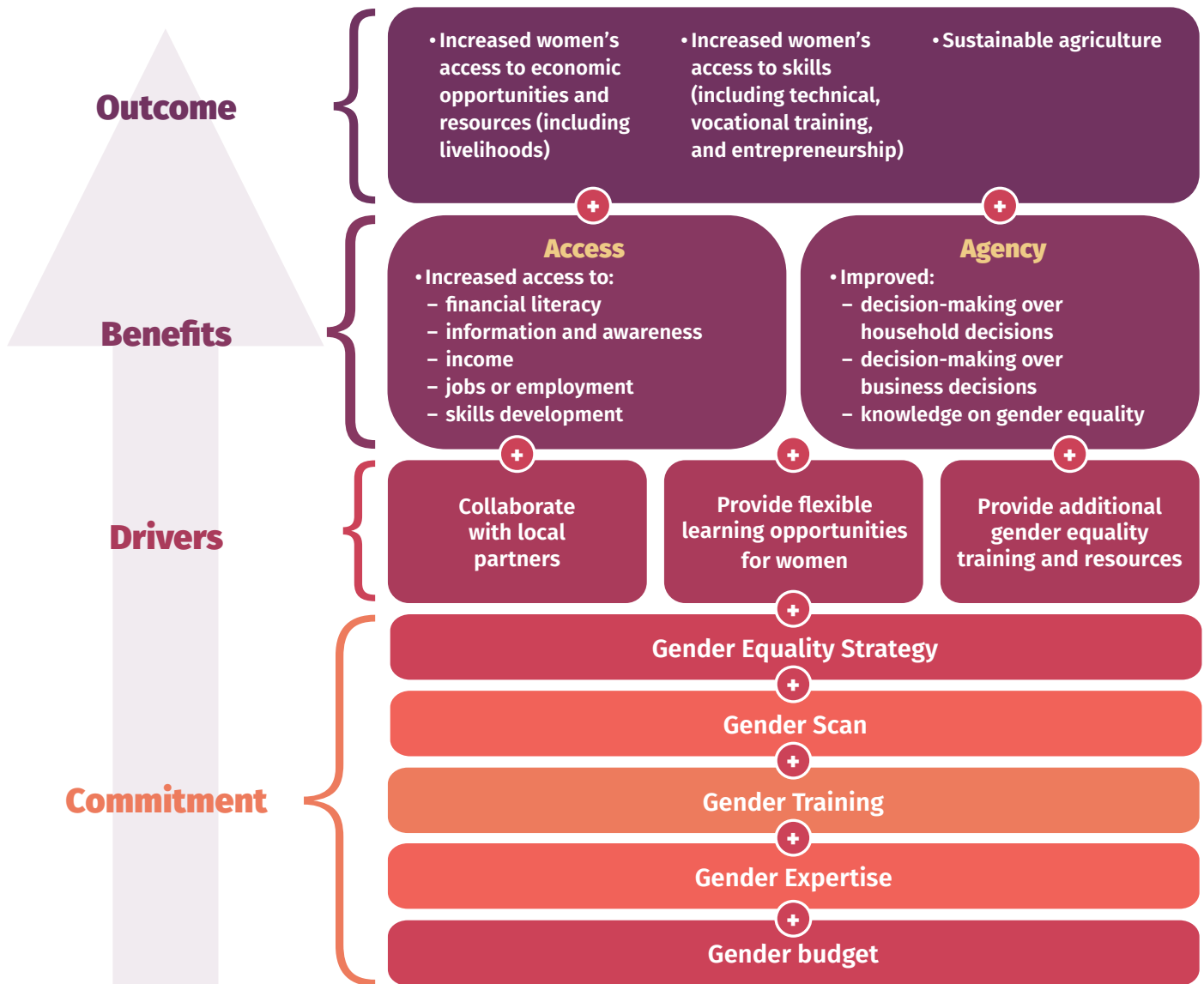
## Challenges

**Short testing timeframe to achieve gender equality progress.** The short testing timeframe was the primary challenge across the **Growth** portfolio especially for innovations who were introducing something new like a menstrual cup or farming of insects. For instance, *Women's Global Health Initiative* found that the testing period was too short for their work, despite recognizing that it was a testing project. But specific to menstrual health, they have found that it can take a minimum of two to six months for girls and women to become comfortable using a menstrual cup, which is why it might take longer to see greater uptake. Similarly, *Vets Without Borders* learned that the idea of farming insects needs more time to be fully adopted. For example, certain varieties such as the commonly eaten grasshopper (to the community) takes eight months to mature and was not economically feasible or able to be produced in small scale farms.



# Gender Equality Pathway to Innovation (GEPI)

Based on the evaluation of the FIT-funded SMOs in the **Growth** portfolio, the following gender responsive pathway to advance gender equality and empower women and girls was used:



\*Adapted from WGEA Business Case to Gender Equality Figure

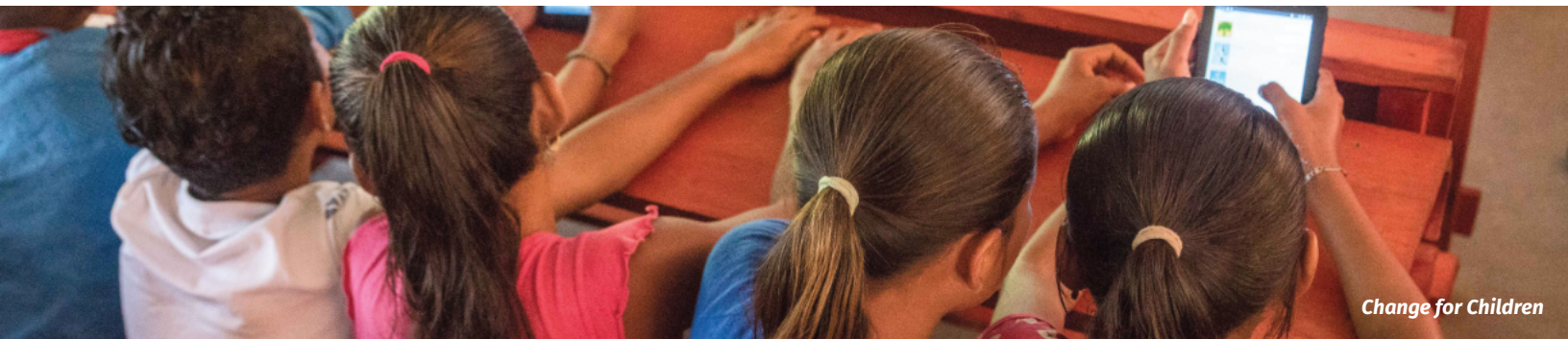


## FIT-Funded Projects

The following table lists the FIT-funded SMOs in the **Growth** portfolio.

No.	FIAP Sub-category	Testing Country	SMO Name	Org Type	Testing Timeframe (Months)
1	Increase women's access to economic opportunities and resources (including livelihoods)	Kenya/ India	Coady International Institute at St. Francis Xavier University	Post-Secondary	15
2	Increase women's access to economic opportunities and resources (including livelihoods)	Nepal	iDE Canada	CSO	14
3	Increase women's access to economic opportunities and resources (including livelihoods)	Rwanda	L'AMIE	CSO	14
4	Increase women's access to economic opportunities and resources (including livelihoods)	Uganda	Women's Global Health Innovations	Private Sector	15
5	Increase women's access to economic opportunities and resources (including livelihoods)	Burkina Faso	World Neighbours Canada Society	CSO	15
6	Increase women's access to economic opportunities and resources (including livelihoods)	Democratic Republic of Congo	Union for Progress	CSO	10
7	Increase women's access to skills (including technical, vocational training, and entrepreneurship)	Kenya	Humber Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning	Post-Secondary	12s
8	Increase women's access to skills (including technical, vocational training, and entrepreneurship)	Kenya	My Oral Village	CSO	12
9	Increase women's access to skills (including technical, vocational training, and entrepreneurship)	Cameroon	Université de Sherbrooke	Post-Secondary	15
10	Increase women's access to skills (including technical, vocational training, and entrepreneurship)	South Sudan	Veterinarians Without Borders	CSO	12
11	Increase women's access to skills (including technical, vocational training, and entrepreneurship)	Pakistan	The Governors of the University of Alberta	Post-Secondary	12
12	Sustainable agriculture	Tanzania	Emmanuel Relief and Rehabilitation International of Canada	CSO	10
13	Sustainable agriculture	Zambia	OVO Solar Technologies	Private Sector	12
14	Sustainable agriculture	South Africa	The Roll a Hippo Foundation	CSO	7

## Action Area 4:



Change for Children

# Environment and Climate Action

## Gender Equality Results Summary

FIT's **Environment and Climate Action** portfolio had two (2) small and medium organizations (SMOs) (4% of the fund) who worked towards improving gender equality by advancing women's leadership and decision-making in the environmental sector, supporting women's environmental resilience, and supporting government planning and initiatives to adapt and mitigate to climate change. In total, **1,311** participants were impacted (63% of which were women and girls) and **\$425,000** FIT funding was spent on this portfolio.

**Commitment** to gender equality was high across the portfolio. One SMO was gender responsive, while the other was gender transformative. Both SMOs developed a gender equality strategy (GES) based on their gender scans, had budget dedicated to gender activities, and engaged both Canadian and local gender expertise. All SMOs implemented a policy for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).

The prominent **access strategies** that led to progress towards advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls were increasing access to skills development and improving knowledge/ educational attainment. Increasing access to skills involved developing participants' skills on a range of topics such as medicinal plants and usage, territorial mapping, and climate-smart coffee farming through training.

The prominent **agency strategy** was improving knowledge on gender equality. For example, improving knowledge on gender equality or gender-related issues included reigniting a territorial women's organization and training on the importance of inclusive, participatory, gender-equitable, local governance, and community planning.

Both **access** and **agency strategies** were used by the SMOs and their local partners. The combined approach of using both access and agency strategies resulted in significant progress being made in each project, primarily at the participant level.

Three innovation **drivers** were identified across the portfolio including designing locally and being context appropriate, engaging men and boys, and engaging women leaders and groups. Designing locally involved using local specialists and facilitators, which was helpful in supporting capacity-building and inclusive planning in the community. Moreover, engaging men and boys was also identified as a critical innovation driver. For example, it was found that when both husband and wife participated in gender equality training

(where possible and appropriate), the communication and flexibility around gender roles improved. Finally, engaging women leaders and groups was seen across the portfolio, where women leaders were engaged in varying ways including as caretakers of demonstration plots to participating in local governance structures.

One cross-cutting **challenge** was identified within the portfolio, which was having an unrealistic or short testing timeframe to achieve gender equality progress. It was emphasized that more time was needed to address all identified gender equality issues or to be successful with certain types of innovations. For example, land-based innovations may need more than one year for testing due to the seasonal and agricultural cycles.



## Portfolio Snapshot

### Number of SMOs

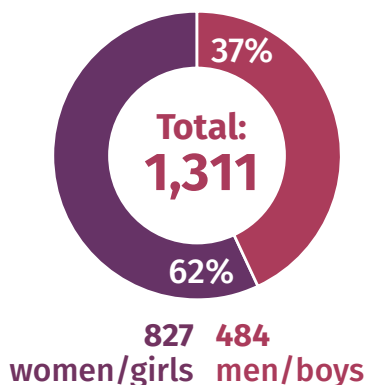
**4%** (2/52)



Within the **Environment and Climate Action** FIAP Action Area, SMOs in this portfolio worked towards one or more of the following:

- Advancing women’s leadership and decision-making in the environmental sector
- Supporting women’s environmental resilience
- Supporting government planning and initiatives to adapt and mitigate to climate change

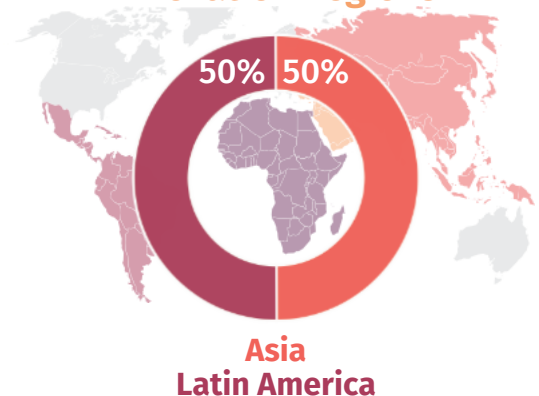
### Total Participants Reached



### SMO Profiles



### Innovation Regions



# Commitment to Gender Equality

Commitment to gender equality was high across the **Environment and Climate Action** portfolio. One SMO was gender transformative and had a Gender Equality Marker (GEM) of 3 since all indicators and outcomes focused on gender equality. The other SMO was gender responsive and had a GE2 with at least one high-level outcome and indicator focused on gender equality. Both FIT-funded SMOs developed a GES based on their findings from their In-Depth Gender Scan (IGS) and engaged both Canadian and local gender expertise. SMOs also had a portion of their budget dedicated to gender expertise and activities such as gender training. They both implemented a PSEA policy.

- Gender Equality Marker..... GE2: 50% (1/2) , GE3: 50% (1/2)
- Gender Equality Strategy ..... Yes, 100% (2/2)
- In-depth Gender Scan ..... Yes, 100% (2/2)
- Gender disaggregated data..... Yes, 100% (2/2)
- Gender expertise..... Canadian: Yes, 100% (2/2)  
Local/Country: Yes, 100% (2/2)  
Both Canadian and local/country: Yes, 100% (2/2)
- Gender Budget ..... Yes, 100% (2/2)
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) ..... Yes, 100% (2/2)

# Access and Agency

The following table highlights the prominent access and agency strategies that led to progress towards advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls across 50% or more of the FIT-funded SMOs in the **Environment and Climate Action** portfolio. These SMOs used both access and agency strategies. Where the SMO achieved their project targets, progress was defined as “significant”. Where the SMO did not achieve their project targets but made progress nonetheless, progress was defined as “some”. The impact of access and agency progress was achieved at the participant or community level, or both. Where progress was made using access and agency strategies, benefits were seen as a result of those strategies.

	Strategies	Progress	Impact Level
Access	Increasing access to skills development	Significant	Participant & Community
	Improving knowledge/educational attainment	Varying progress: some, significant	Participant
Agency	Improving knowledge on gender equality	Significant	Participant

Both access and agency strategies were used by SMOs and their local partners in this portfolio. The combined approach of using both access and agency strategies resulted in significant progress overall across innovations, primarily at the participant level (except for varying progress for one of the access strategies).



In both innovations, access to skills was required to increase the capacity of participants to address climate-related challenges and increase resilience. In addition, training to improve participant knowledge on gender equality was specifically tailored to the local context and provided by local gender experts led to significant improvements in agency for participants.

## Access Examples

### Increasing Access to Skills Development

**Change for Children** improved access to skills through training workshops with local partners on medicinal plants and usage to increase the capacity of Indigenous healers, midwives, and traditional medicine practitioners. Model medicinal plant gardens were also established on the grounds of a local health centre to further improve skills. Using MAPEO software, **Change for Children** also built local capacity for territorial mapping through digital mapping of important sites in the Miskito Territory. Forest rangers, students, traditional medicine practitioners and women healers were trained on the use of MAPEO to map the Miskito territory, important sites in the community, areas of risks or threats to the Miskito people, as well as locations of plants used for traditional medicine. Numerous important territorial sites were georeferenced and registered and are now used by the Indigenous government for decision making. These are the first digital maps ever to exist of the Miskito territory. **Lestari Sustainable Development Consultants Inc.** taught farmers about drought-tolerant coffee varieties so that their resilience to cope with climate change impacts would improve. Farmers also had a chance to practice what they learned during field school where they were introduced to good coffee farming and how processing practices affect coffee taste and quality. Farmers also learned about the different varieties that come from Indonesia.

### Improving Knowledge/ Educational Attainment

In addition to improving access to skills development, **Change for Children** worked to improve access to local knowledge and educational attainment. **Change for Children** along with local partners and experts (gender, pedagogical, etc.) conducted training on various important subjects such as on climate change and mitigation, medicinal plants, on the history and territory of the



Miskito Indigenous People in the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve as well as on the significance of territorial mapping for the survival, development and protection of the Miskito People.

## Agency Examples

### Improving Knowledge on Gender Equality

As an example of improving knowledge on gender equality, **Change for Children's** innovation included the reactivation of a local women's organization that is focused on the rights of Indigenous women, which had been dormant for ten years. Also, **Change for Children** trained on the importance of inclusive, participatory, gender-equitable local governance, and community planning. The women-only board of directors also participated in a series of capacity-building workshops focused on rights, legislation, administration, and

community development. Women community coordinators were elected to represent each community alongside the currently elected male coordinators. Together, one male and one female coordinator, now participate in regional Indigenous government assemblies, enabling women to contribute their perspectives and priorities to local governance and community planning.

## Drivers

**Design locally and be context appropriate.** Designing locally, in various ways, was found across the **Environment and Climate Action** portfolio as critical to the success of innovations. For instance, *Change for Children* was planning to invite an Indigenous person from Canada (which was the process utilized by Canadian Indigenous communities), but this turned out to be unrealistic given the innovation's remote context and timeline limitations. Alternatively, they decided on a more localized process to achieve the same objectives by utilizing local specialists and facilitators to support capacity-building and inclusive planning in the community.

**Engage men and boys.** Engaging men and boys was another key innovation driver seen across the **Environment and Climate Action** portfolio. For instance, *Change for Children* found that a sustainable strategy for gender transformation was to strengthen existing community structures along with a policy of having both a male and female coordinator elected in each community. Similarly, *Lestari Sustainable Development Consultants Inc.* found that improving gender equality awareness within farmer households and institutions should involve both women and men (within both the household and institution). It was also found that when both the wife

and husband participate in gender equality training (where possible and appropriate), the communication and flexibility around gender roles improved.

### **Engage women leaders and groups.**

Across both SMOs it was found that engaging women leaders and groups was an important innovation driver. For example, *Change for Children* engaged women farmers as caretakers of demonstration plots to educate other women farmers, while *Lestari*

*Sustainable Development Consultants Inc.* strengthened existing community structures, which provided avenues for women's participation in local governance.

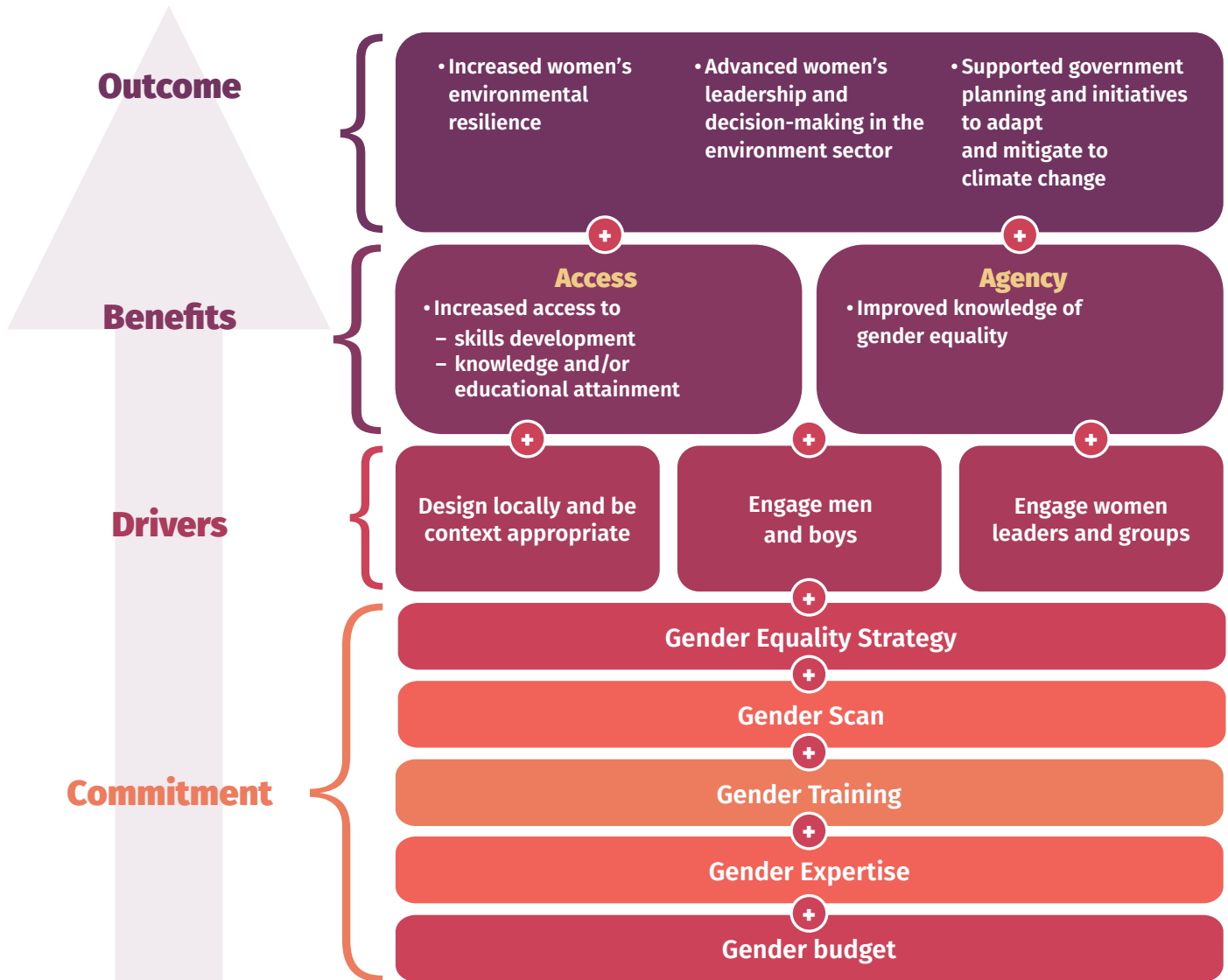
## Challenges

**Short testing timeframe to achieve gender equality progress.** The short testing timeframe was the primary challenge across the **Environment and Climate Action** portfolio. For example, *Change for Children* highlighted that their initial intention to address issues in the gender scan such as enhancing women's productivity would take more time to achieve than they expected but still served as important guideposts for their work (even if they could not address them at the time). Moreover, *Lestari Sustainable Development Consultants Inc.* highlighted that land-based innovations often require more than one year for testing as the seasonal and agricultural cycles impact timelines.



# Gender Equality Pathway to Innovation (GEPI)

Based on the evaluation of the FIT-funded SMOs in the **Environment and Climate Action** portfolio, the following gender responsive pathway to advance gender equality and empower women and girls was used:



\*Adapted from WGEA Business Case to Gender Equality Figure



# FIT-Funded Projects

The following table lists the FIT-funded SMOs in the **Environment and Climate Action** portfolio.

No.	FIAP Sub-category	Testing Country	SMO Name	Org Type	Testing Timeframe (Months)
1	Support women’s environmental resilience	Indonesia	Lestari Sustainable Development Consultants	Private Sector	15
2	Support women’s environmental resilience	Nicaragua	Change for Children	CSO	12





## Action Area 5:



# Inclusive Governance

## Gender Equality Results Summary

FIT's **Inclusive Governance** portfolio had three (3) small and medium organizations (SMOs) (6% of the fund) who worked towards improving gender equality by promoting and protecting human rights or achieving greater political participation by women and girls. In total, **4,321** participants were impacted (68% of which were women and girls) and **\$558,103** FIT funding was spent on this portfolio.

**Commitment** to gender equality was high across the portfolio. All SMOs were gender transformative. All SMOs developed a gender equality strategy (GES) based on their gender scans, had budget dedicated to gender activities, and engaged local gender expertise. All SMOs implemented a policy for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).

The prominent **access strategies** that led to progress towards advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls were increasing access to dialogue and sharing, information and awareness, and skills development. Increasing access to dialogue and sharing involved increasing collaboration between policymakers and vulnerable groups to improve participatory policy processes, for instance.

The prominent **agency strategies** were improving knowledge on gender equality, improving leadership and self-efficacy, and shifting gender norms on rights. For example, improving knowledge on gender equality or gender-related issues included increasing families' awareness and knowledge on the rights of girls with disabilities.

Both **access** and **agency strategies** were used by SMOs and their local partners. The combined approach of using both access and agency strategies resulted in significant progress being made in each innovation, at both the participant and community level.

One innovation **driver** was identified across the portfolio, which was compensation (where appropriate). Compensation, in various forms, reflected the importance of responding to the needs of participants, especially women. For instance, compensation strategies spanned providing childcare, mobility devices, eyeglasses and eye exams, and stipends for trainers, which was deemed critical to supporting the success of each innovation.

Two cross-cutting **challenges** were identified within the portfolio, which were poverty and having a high triple burden, particularly for women participants. Extreme poverty and having limited economic resources, along with women's high triple burden, impacted some participants' ability to attend trainings or to buy required materials.



# Portfolio Snapshot

## Number of SMOs

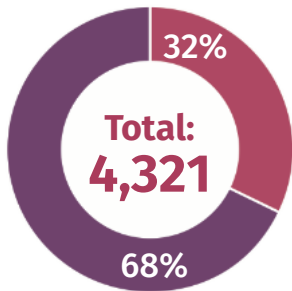
6% (3/52)

Within the **Inclusive Governance** FIAP Action Area, SMOs in this portfolio worked towards one or more of the following:

- Promoting and protecting human rights
- Greater political participation by women and girls



## Total Participants Reached



2932 women/girls 1389 men/boys

## SMO Profiles

67%  
(2/3)

Civil Society Organization (CSO)

33%  
(1/3)

Post-Secondary

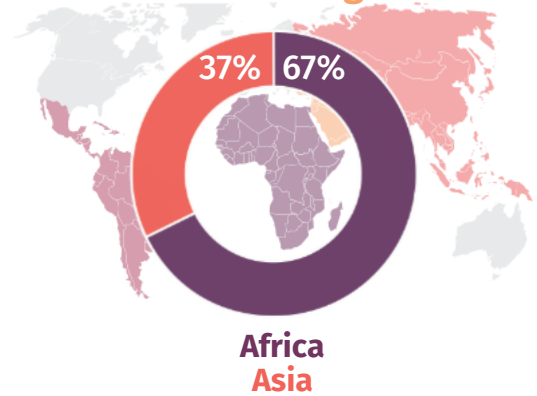
0

Private Sector

0

Social Enterprise

## Innovation Regions



## Commitment to Gender Equality

Commitment to gender equality was high across the **Inclusive Governance** portfolio. The SMOs in this portfolio were gender transformative and all had Gender Equality Marker (GEM) of 3 since all indicators and outcomes focused on gender equality. These SMOs developed a GES based on their findings from their In-Depth Gender Scan (IGS). All engaged local gender expertise, whereas they did not all engage Canadian gender expertise. The SMOs had a portion of their budget dedicated to gender expertise and activities, such as awareness raising, gender training focused on policy, advocacy, and rights. All SMOs implemented a PSEA policy.

- Gender Equality Marker..... GE3: 100% (3/3)
- Gender Equality Strategy ..... Yes, 100%(3/3)
- In-depth Gender Scan ..... Yes, 100%(3/3)
- Gender disaggregated data..... Yes, 100%(3/3)
- Gender expertise..... Canadian: Yes, 100% (3/3)  
Local/Country: Yes, 100% (3/3)  
Both Canadian and local/country: Yes, 33%(1/3)
- Gender Budget ..... Yes, 100%(3/3)
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) ..... Yes, 100%(3/3)

## Access and Agency

The following table highlights the prominent access and agency strategies that led to progress towards advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls across 50% or more of the FIT-funded SMOs in the **Inclusive Governance** Portfolio. Where the SMO achieved their project targets, progress was defined as “significant”. Where the SMO did not achieve their project targets but made progress nonetheless, progress was defined as “some”. The impact of access and agency progress was achieved at the participant or community level, or both. Where progress was made using access and agency strategies, benefits were seen as a result of those strategies.

	Strategies	Progress	Impact Level
<b>Access</b>	Increasing access to dialogue and sharing	Significant	Participant & Community
	Increasing access to information and awareness	Significant	Participant & Community
	Increasing access to skills development	Significant	Participant
<b>Agency</b>	Improved knowledge on gender equality	Significant	Participant & Community
	Improving leadership and self-efficacy	Significant	Participant
	Shifting gender norms on rights	Significant	Participant & Community

Both access and agency strategies were used by the SMOs and their local partners. The combined approach of using both access and agency strategies resulted in significant progress being made in each innovation. While SMOs focused on building the skills of their participants, activities were also focused on providing access to information and encouraging dialogue and conversations on human rights issues and improving knowledge on gender for the participants and the surrounding community. Using both access and agency strategies led to improved leadership capacities and self-efficacy among innovation participants, as well as a positive shift in gender norms among participants and within the community; all of which allowed SMOs to achieve their innovations ultimate outcome.

## Access Examples

### Increasing Access to Dialogue and Sharing

The *Bhutan Canada Foundation* utilized dialogue and sharing strategies to increase collaboration in participatory policy processes between vulnerable groups and policymakers. Such strategies proved effective in generating social protection policy recommendations. Similarly, the *University of the Fraser Valley's* participants developed advocacy presentations for community events and demonstrated an ability to share and present advocacy materials including speeches, songs, skits, dances, poetry, and prayers.

### Increasing Access to Information and Awareness

As an example of improving access to information and awareness, the *University of Fraser the Valley* involved stakeholders in community engagement events to learn more about human rights. Post-event surveys indicated that stakeholders were commitment to integrating the rights of persons with albinism into their work. Whereas the *Bhutan Canada Foundation* worked with government officials to improve policy options to better address the social protection needs of marginalized women by developing policy recommendations to be submitted to the Bhutanese government.

### Increasing Access to Skills Development

In addition to strengthening access to information, the *Bhutan Canada Foundation* worked to improve skills by training participants in a design thinking approach for policy review. Empathy is at the heart of the design thinking policy approach and subsequently, this was the most cited skill from participants. Participants spoke about developing new empathy for the experiences of people with disabilities and the LGBTQ+ community. Within the *University of the Fraser Valley's* innovation, female participants developed sewing and tailoring

skills, and were able to produce cloth products by the end of the project to increase their income.



## Agency Examples

### Improving Knowledge on Gender Equality

*CAUSE Canada's* innovation aimed to improve knowledge on gender equality. For instance, families of out-of-school girls were educated and supported to develop practices that would improve the wellbeing

of girls with disabilities. With the help of a Champion, families designed and implemented family action plans with tailored strategies to improve the girls' well-being. Additionally, girls with disabilities themselves were empowered to exercise their rights both as women and as a person with disability.

### Improving Leadership and Self-Efficacy

The *University of the Fraser Valley* found that all participants clearly expressed confidence in their ability to be leaders in their communities, in advocating for the rights of persons with albinism by the end of the project. Participants also identified themselves as community role models and could now actively participate in community meetings after being involved with the innovation.



## Shifting Gender Norms on Rights

**CAUSE Canada's** innovation led to shifting gender norms on rights for girls with disabilities in improving their access to education at the participant level. Strategies and actions of families of out-of-school girls ranged and depended on the specific needs and capacities of the family but examples included raising funds to buy a mobility device (e.g., crutch, wheelchair, special shoes, etc.), appointing family to walk girls to school, addressing instances of discrimination, and raising funds to buy uniforms or school materials. Moreover, **CAUSE Canada** saw shifts in gender norms around protection of SGBV. Prior to the innovation, SGBV was largely hidden and normalized but through their Champions who increased awareness of the need to protect their girls from SGBV, many families started to understand when a girl might be unsafe in her daily life and how to provide protection from various types of violence.

At the community level, **CAUSE Canada's** Champions led the creation of Community Working Groups (CWGs), which were formed with an average of 15 leaders from the community. The CWGs developed community action plans that aimed to increase the protection and inclusion of women and girls with disabilities and all CWGs were committed to monitoring all forms of discrimination to mitigate challenges faced by families. The **University of the Fraser Valley** also saw changes at the community level when stakeholders shared that their willingness to address gender and albinism had improved, along with their perspectives had changed on whether albinism was a disability or not, after attending educational events.

## Drivers

Provide compensation, where appropriate. Compensation, in various forms, was found across all SMOs in the portfolio as critical to the success of their innovation. The **Bhutan Canada Foundation** found that testing required responding to the childcare needs of participants. Their design thinking workshops each lasted several days, which created challenges for those with children. The original intent was to provide external childcare during the workshops but later realized that this reflected Canadian practices. Alternatively, the local partner embedded a more culturally appropriate notion of childcare into the workshop and participants were able to bring their children. Food was also provided for children. This driver also highlights the importance of using a culturally appropriate lens when addressing gender-based needs.

**CAUSE Canada** also found that their Champions and girls with disabilities had restricted mobility and were unable to buy mobility devices (e.g., crutch, wheelchair, special shoes, etc.), while also struggling to cover other urgent needs. Subsequently, they bought mobility devices for girls with disabilities and Champions who needed them. Similarly, the **University of the Fraser Valley** utilized several compensation strategies including eye checks and eyeglasses for trainers as it became apparent that many were unable to carry out detailed sewing/tailoring tasks (and were switching to weaving) due to poor eyesight. All the trainers expressed that eyeglasses helped them to learn better so that they could complete the training and complete satisfactory goods. They also made accommodations for women's gender-based needs including childcare, stipends, and adjusted the timing and duration of training for female trainers.

## Challenges

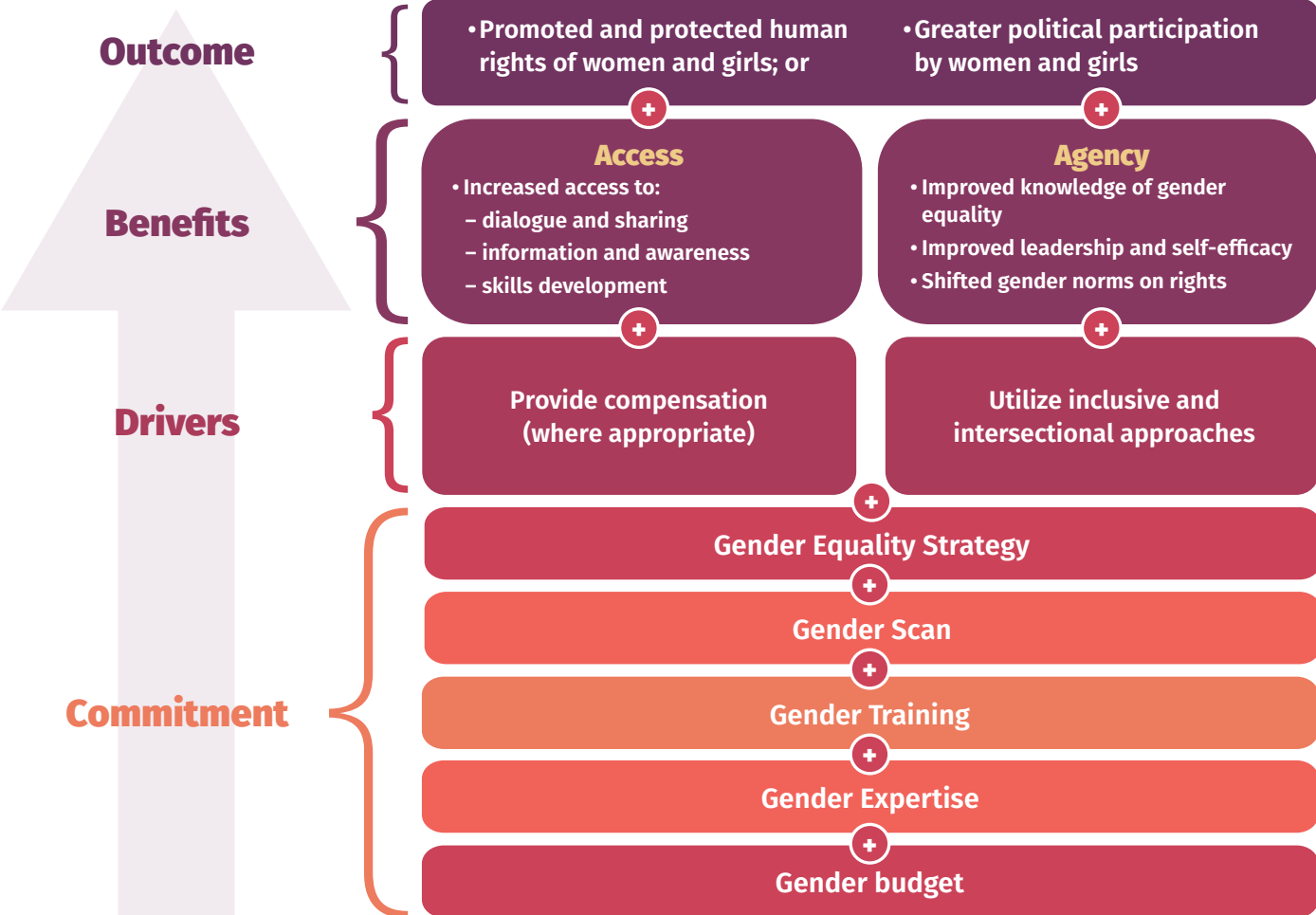
**Poverty.** Poverty and limited economic resources were seen within the **Growth** portfolio for two SMOs (both for participants and across communities). The **Bhutan Canada Foundation** realized that extreme poverty characterized the targeted communities would impact the innovation as well as families' efforts and commitment in being able to support their girls' education. Although families substantially increased their

awareness of their daughters’ needs and rights through the innovation, in some cases the realization of these rights was challenged by their precarious economic situation, which in this case included the acquisition of mobility devices (e.g., crutch, wheelchair, special shoes, etc.), learning materials, and uniforms as ongoing needs for the girls so they can complete their education. The *University of the Fraser Valley* also found that despite stipends being provided, it was not enough for those who faced extreme poverty. Due to poverty and stigma, many participants engaged in prostitution, struggled with gender-based violence, insecure housing, and transport.

**High triple burden.** High triple burden was another challenge experienced by women participants in the Growth portfolio. As seen within the drivers, The *Bhutan Canada Foundation* provided childcare for participants to address the triple burden challenge for women so that they could attend training sessions. Similarly, The *University of Fraser University* found that some female trainers struggled to attend all the training sessions due to their unpaid, domestic work responsibilities so the innovation strengthened its focus on how best to support female trainers given their gender-based challenges.

### Gender Equality Pathway to Innovation (GEPI)

Based on the evaluation of the FIT-funded SMOs in the **Inclusive Governance** portfolio, the following gender responsive pathway to advance gender equality and empower women and girls was used:



\*Adapted from WGEA Business Case to Gender Equality Figure



# FIT-Funded Projects

The following table lists the FIT-funded SMOs in the **Inclusive Governance** portfolio.

No.	FIAP Sub-category	Testing Country	SMO Name	Org Type	Testing Timeframe (Months)
1	Promoting and protecting human rights, and particular support of the rights of women	Sierra Leone	CAUSE Canada	CSO	12
2	Promoting and protecting human rights, and particular support of the rights of women	Bhutan	The Bhutan Canada Foundation	CSO	12
3	Promoting and protecting human rights, and particular support of the rights of women	Sierra Leone	University of the Fraser Valley	Post-Secondary	15



University of the Fraser Valley



## Action Area 6:



# Peace and Security

## Gender Equality Results Summary

FIT's **Peace and Security** portfolio had one (1) small and medium organization (SMO) (2% of the fund) who worked towards improving gender equality by increasing women's representation in the security sector and greater participation of women in peacebuilding. In total, **108** participants were impacted (59% of which were women and girls) and **\$248,963** FIT funding was spent on this portfolio.

**Commitment** to gender equality was high. The SMO was gender transformative. They developed a gender equality strategy (GES) based on their gender scan, had budget dedicated to gender activities, and engaged both Canadian and local gender expertise. The SMO also implemented a policy for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).

The prominent **access strategies** that led to progress towards advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls were increasing access to dialogue and sharing, information and awareness, and skills development. Increasing access to information involved increasing participants' awareness on the prevention of the recruitment and use of boys and girls as soldiers and prevention of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) against children in South Sudan, for instance.

The prominent **agency strategy** was improving knowledge on gender equality. For example, improving knowledge on gender equality or gender-related issues included increasing knowledge on child protection and recruitment prevention through platforms such as roundtable meetings.

Both **access** and **agency strategies** were used by the SMO and its local partners. The combined approach of using both access and agency strategies resulted in significant progress being made in the innovation, primarily at the participant level.

Three innovation **drivers** were identified including employing inclusive communication and outreach strategies, collaborating with local partners, and utilizing gender expertise. Employing inclusive communication and outreach strategies strengthened community policing through organized community dialogues where leaders identified and shared potential policing strategies that could enhance systems in place. Moreover, collaborating with local partners was a key innovation driver that helped to bridge the gap



between women-led civil society organizations (CSOs) and police officers. Finally, utilizing gender expertise was also key in strengthening community policing through the establishment of gender desks within police stations so that stakeholders are free to report issues and share information.

Two cross-cutting **challenges** were identified within the portfolio, which was having a lack of incentives and limited budget. Lack of incentives, especially monetary, impacted participation and turnout for innovations. Furthermore, limited budget was another challenge experienced during the testing period as it related to being able to implement all the GES' proposed activities.



## Portfolio Snapshot

### Number of SMOs

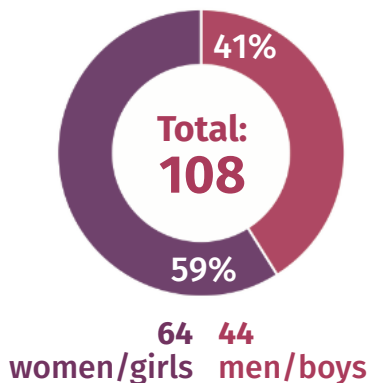
2% (1/52)



Within the **Peace and Security** FIAP Action Area, the SMO in this portfolio worked towards one or more of the following:

- Increasing women's representation in the security sector
- Greater participation of women in peacebuilding

### Total Participants Reached



### SMO Profiles

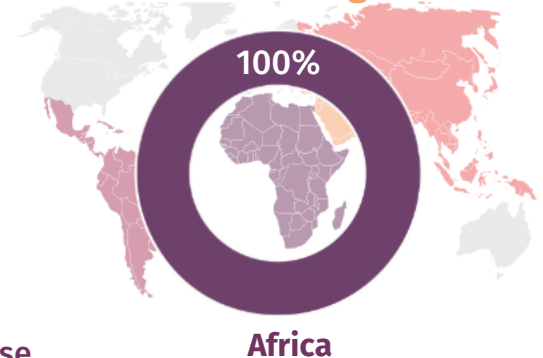
100%

(1/1)

Post-Secondary



### Innovation Regions



# Commitment to Gender Equality

Commitment to gender equality was high across the **Peace and Security** portfolio. This SMO was gender transformative and had a Gender Equality Marker (GEM) of 3 since all project indicators and outcomes were focused on gender equality. They developed a GES based on their findings from their In-Depth Gender Scan (IGS) and engaged both Canadian and local gender expertise. The SMO also had a portion of their budget dedicated to gender expertise for guidance on testing activities and implemented a PSEA policy.

- Gender Equality Marker..... **GE3: 100% (1/1)**
- Gender Equality Strategy ..... **Yes, 100% (1/1)**
- In-depth Gender Scan ..... **Yes, 100% (1/1)**
- Gender disaggregated data..... **Yes, 100% (1/1)**
- Gender expertise..... **Canadian: Yes, 100% (1/1)**  
**Local/Country: Yes, 100% (1/1)**  
**Both CAD and local/country gender expertise: Yes, 100% (1/1)**
- Gender Budget ..... **Yes, 100% (1/1)**
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) ..... **Yes, 100% (1/1)**

# Access and Agency

The following table highlights the prominent access and agency strategies that led to progress towards advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls across 50% or more of the FIT-funded SMOs in the **Peace and Security** portfolio. Where the SMO achieved their project targets, progress was defined as “significant”. Where the SMO did not achieve their project targets but made progress nonetheless, progress was defined as “some”. The impact of access and agency progress was achieved at the participant or community level, or both. Where progress was made using access and agency strategies, benefits were seen as a result of those strategies.

	Strategies	Progress	Impact Level
<b>Access</b>	Increasing access to dialogue and sharing	Significant	Participant
	Increasing access to information and awareness	Significant	Participant
	Increasing access to skills development	Significant	Participant
<b>Agency</b>	Improved knowledge on gender equality	Significant	Participant

Both access and agency were used by the SMO and their local partner in this portfolio. The combined approach of using both access and agency strategies resulted in significant progress being made at the

participant level. Key activities focused on building the skills of their participants, as well as encouraging dialogue on peace and security issues to lead to improvements in knowledge on gender for the participants, particularly on gender-responsive approaches to the prevention of the recruitment and use of girls and boys as child soldiers, and of conflict-related sexual violence.

## Access Examples

### Increasing Access to Dialogue and Sharing

*Dalhousie University/Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security* increased access to dialogue through high-level meetings that were attended by a range of stakeholders including police officers, community leaders, youth and women leaders, along with key government departments and ministries. They also established platforms for information sharing on activities and issues related to the prevention of recruitment and use of child soldiers. These were both formal and informal and included the creation of WhatsApp groups, dialogues, meetings, writing feedback and evaluation forms, to enable beneficiaries, especially women, to raise concerns and provide meaningful feedback about women’s participation in the peace and security area.

### Increasing Access to Information and Awareness

*Dalhousie University/Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security* worked with CSO members to improve information and awareness on the prevention of the recruitment and use of boys and girls as child soldiers and prevention of CRSV against children in South Sudan. They also shared information through various means including training materials, toolkits, guidelines, and expert support during monthly meetings, along with mentorship and coaching to CSO members.

### Increasing Access to Skills Development

In addition to strengthening access to information, *Dalhousie University/Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security* worked to improve skills within the security sector. They provided tools and systems to develop skills that help prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers, as well as conflict-related sexual violence against children.



*Dalhousie University/ Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security*

## Agency Example

### Improving Knowledge on Gender Equality

*Dalhousie University/Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security’s* innovation aimed to improve knowledge on gender equality. For instance, they increased knowledge on child protection and child soldier recruitment prevention through platforms such as roundtable meetings, high profile engagements, and monthly consultative meetings. Information shared included the Vancouver Principles in South Sudan and women’s roles in preventing the recruitment and use of child soldiers. During community dialogues, police officers expressed how their understanding of the significance of applying age determination strategies during police force recruitment, including checking birth certificates, has improved due to participation in police training, which educated them about laws and legal instruments such as the South Sudan National Police Act.

## Drivers

**Employ inclusive communication and outreach strategies.** Employing inclusive communication and outreach strategies was a key innovation driver to strengthen community policing for *Dalhousie University/Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security's* innovation. During organized community dialogues, leaders shared that they were able to identify community policing strategies that could enhance monitoring, reporting, and prevention.

**Collaborate with local partners.** *Dalhousie University/Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security* also identified the importance of collaborating with local partners as a key innovation driver. For instance, increased engagement and collaboration during community dialogues, roundtables, and high-profile meetings allowed pertinent information to be shared more freely, which helped the innovation to bridge the gap between women-led CSOs and police officers.

**Utilize gender expertise.** To strengthen community policing, *Dalhousie University/Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security* also found utilizing gender expertise to be of the utmost importance. For instance, they established gender desks, which are now functional in police stations. Gender desks provided an opportunity for stakeholders to talk, report, and share information freely.

## Challenges

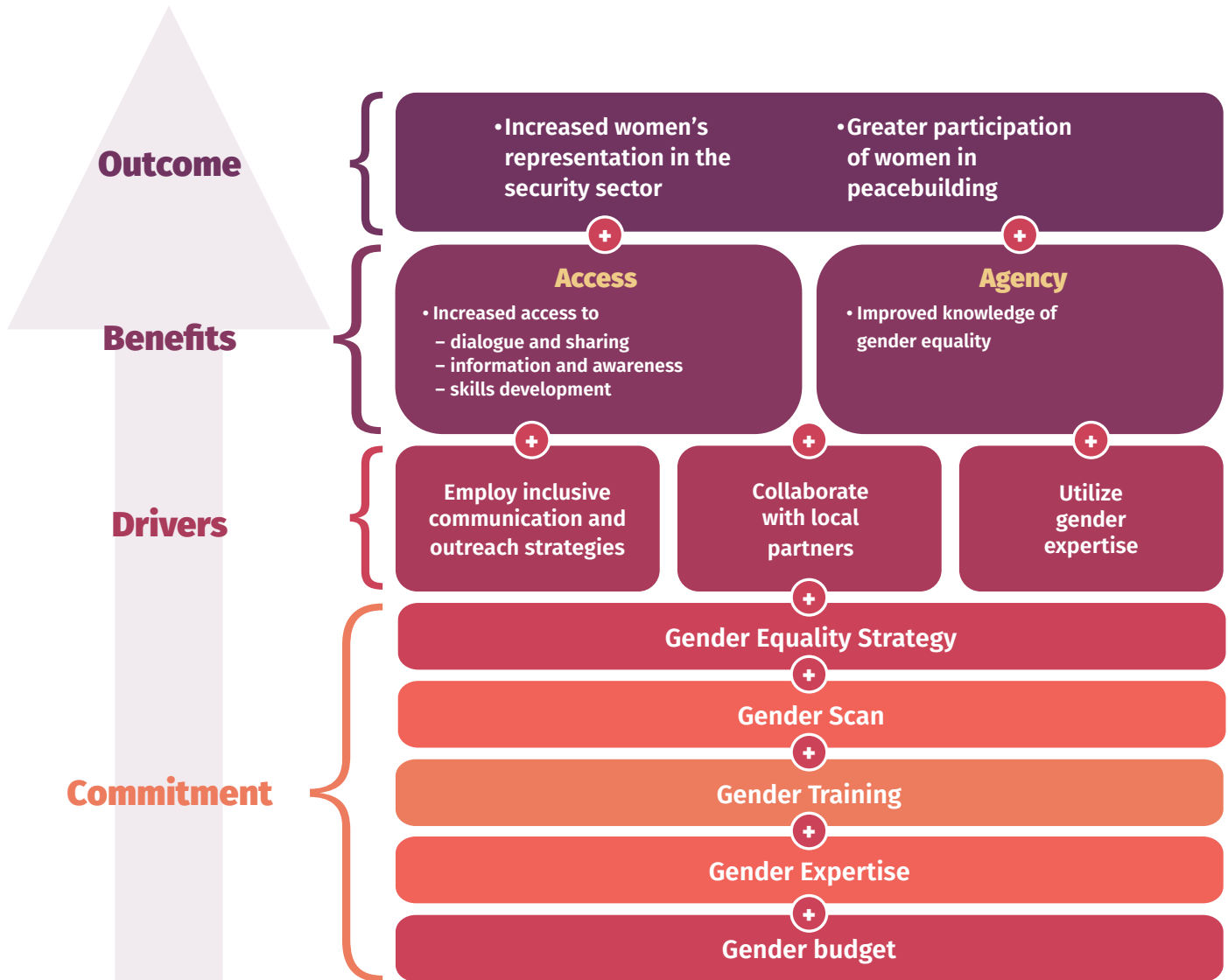
**Lack of incentives.** Lack of incentives was one of the challenges across the **Peace and Security** portfolio. *Dalhousie University/Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security* highlighted that a lack of incentives, especially monetary (as linked to logistics and sub granting) could lead to low turnouts among women-led CSOs in the testing period. This was mitigated however, via the FIT budget realignment to ensure adequate refreshments, meals, and transport reimbursements were provided during activities including the Women's National Network monthly consultative meetings and community dialogues, ensuring women were able to fully participate.

**Limited budget.** Limited budget was another identified challenge during the testing period as it related to the implementation of *Dalhousie University/Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security's* GES and the number of other proposed activities. For example, providing capacity building to numerous members of the community policing groups comprised of police officers, community leaders, youth leaders, women leaders, religious leaders, and CSO representatives at community level on their roles and responsibilities and support to the Department of Military Justice.



# Gender Equality Pathway to Innovation (GEPI)

Based on the evaluation of the FIT-funded SMOs in the **Peace and Security** portfolio, the following gender responsive pathway to advance gender equality and empower women and girls was used:



\*Adapted from WGEA Business Case to Gender Equality Figure

## FIT-Funded Projects

The following table lists the FIT-funded SMO in the **Peace and Security** portfolio.

No.	FIAP Sub-category	Testing Country	SMO Name	Org Type	Testing Timeframe (Months)
1	Increase women's representation in the security sector	South Sudan	Dalhousie University/ Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security	CSO	11

## INNOVATION SPOTLIGHTS



### CAUSE Canada – Eradicating Child Marriage in Sierra Leone

#### Innovation Spotlight

This innovation spotlight showcases how CAUSE Canada aligned with Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), explicitly targeting the action area of reducing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) by directing its efforts toward addressing child, early, and forced marriage. It also highlights results from FIT’s *Gender Evaluation Framework for Innovation (GEFI)* and specifically focuses on commitment, access, and agency. It also delves into the critical drivers that are essential components for the success of an innovation.

#### Innovative Solution

**CAUSE Canada** Sierra Leone Partnership, with support from the Fund for Innovation and Transformation, implemented an innovative strategy addressing child marriage in Sierra Leone. This innovation entailed educating men seeking child brides about the detrimental effects of child marriage on themselves, the girls, their families, and the broader community. The innovative solution incorporated training of community leaders, empowerment of advocates, organization of community events opposing child marriage, and systematic data collection to assess the effectiveness in preventing marriages compared to those that persisted despite the intervention.

#### Showcasing Commitment to Advancing Gender Equality

Sierra Leone has the 18th highest child marriage rate globally, with 800,000 child brides documented, and 400,000 of these girls enter marriage before reaching the age of 15 (UNFPA-UNICEF, 2020). Girls are more at risk

of child marriage than boys, and these risks are increase in poor and rural areas. Ending child marriage by 2030 is a crucial goal and target of SDG 5, which centers on promoting gender equality. Addressing this substantial challenge places a responsibility on the global community to implement effective interventions, emphasizing the necessity for coordinated efforts and **commitments**.

“Mi Small Wef” No More (“My Little Wife” No More) stands as a noteworthy example of gender-transformative innovation, playing a vital role in reducing child marriage rates in 30 targeted communities, especially in the rural regions of Sierra Leone. Aligned with FIAP, this innovation engaged in multi-level initiatives aimed at challenging prevailing attitudes and harmful gender norms associated with child marriage.

The innovation fostered gender-transformative attitudes by enhancing the family and community environment by involving male leaders, girls’ parents, men, and community residents. In response to the perception that girls transition to womanhood in adolescence, where physical development is considered readiness for marriage, CAUSE Canada initiated gender-responsive training on sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and child abuse education in numerous communities. There were no reported cases of sexual exploitation, harassment, or abuse during the testing period, highlighting a shift in attitudes.

The innovation spurred movement-building by giving rise to advocates against child marriage. The growing number of advocates in the 30 communities played a pivotal role in promoting the mainstream idea that adolescent girls and women have equal worth and rights as men. Consequently, the welfare of women and girls should not be compromised for the comfort of men and families.

The innovation ignited a renewed **commitment** from male leaders, girls’ parents, men, and community residents, resulting in a substantial reduction in child marriages during the testing period – from an average of 14 to less than one per month.

## Strategies to Enhance Agency for Women and Girls

Child marriage is a multifaceted practice contingent on context, is non-linear and is influenced by interwoven structural, household-level, and interpersonal factors, such as cultural, historical, status-related, economic insecurity, and forced displacement (Lokot et al., 2021). Thus, empowering women and girls to exercise their **agency** requires a multifaceted and collective approach. In the context of child marriage, **agency** is therefore associated with a girl’s ability to decline or refuse marriage. CAUSE Canada acknowledges that addressing child marriage is not a straightforward yes or no situation in Sierra Leone.

The innovation utilized various **agency**-oriented strategies to diminish the vulnerability of adolescent girls to child marriage, such as girl-centred programming aimed at enhancing the knowledge of women and girls regarding their human rights and gender equality. Despite legal prohibitions against child marriage in Sierra Leone, weak implementation persists (Save the Children, n.d.). The innovation took a proactive approach by involving the families of girls and men, educating them about the rights of girls and the violations of girls’ rights associated with child marriage. This initiative facilitated discussions and actions geared towards identifying alternative ways to alleviate the impact of poverty, as financial gains for meeting the basic needs of parents are a significant factor contributing to the prevalence of child marriage (Samantha Marie-Louise, 2020). The involvement of intermediaries in knowledge mobilization played a pivotal role as they actively sought a nuanced understanding of child marriage and its socio-economic and socio-cultural impacts. This



relationship fostered a trust-building environment between intermediaries and communities, enabling participants to feel at ease reporting incidents of child marriage. In some instances, this proactive approach even prevented child marriages from occurring.

The success of employing a multifaceted approach to address child marriage was evident as families became more willing to keep girls in school, communities were more supportive in acting as girls' allies and advocates, and notably, men demonstrated a greater willingness to abstain from child marriage.

## Drivers for the Innovation's Success

Child marriage is influenced by various factors including socioeconomic, tradition and culture, and gender norms. Nevertheless, distinct drivers can contribute to its cessation. Several drivers that contributed to the innovation's success included using inclusive and intersectional approaches, engaging women and girls' groups/leaders, collaborating with a local partner, utilizing gender expertise and gender training, and incorporating arts. Participatory approaches, including role-play, drama, and public discussions, helped reduce stigma among high school students, especially girls. These activities created peer mentorship, which in turn galvanized a unified effort in advocating against child marriages among their peers. In this innovation, intermediaries played a role beyond being mere go-betweens. They catalyzed transformative change, fostering collaboration in the 30 communities. The referral to the One Stop Program, an initiative addressing cases of SGBV, notably increased, particularly in instances where child marriages were cancelled. Having a local gender advisor embedded also played a crucial role, providing support in cases complicated by adolescent pregnancies, teenage motherhood, and cohabitation.

Most importantly, the innovation opted not to employ a top-down approach; instead, it actively engaged with communities, seeking to comprehend the barriers and facilitators that contribute to the prevalence of child marriage in these specific contexts.

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## International Development Enterprises (iDE Canada) – Safer Farming for Nepali

### Innovation Spotlight

This innovation spotlight illustrates how iDE Canada in alignment with Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy promotes women's economic empowerment in Nepal. iDE Canada champions gender equality by promoting women's participation in climate resilient farming practices and facilitating equitable access to and control over socioeconomic resources. It also highlights results from FIT's **Gender Evaluation Framework for Innovation (GEFI)** and specifically focuses on access.

This innovation spotlight showcases how CAUSE Canada aligned with Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), explicitly targeting the action area of reducing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)

### Innovative Solution

iDE Canada, with support from the Fund for Innovation and Transformation, implemented the "Safer Farming for Nepali Women" project in the district of Kaski. This region has experienced heightened agricultural activity, spanning individual farming, cooperative establishment, and commercial farming. This increase is primarily attributable to its cold climate zone in the hills, conducive to cultivating high-value vegetables. iDE's engagement with women farmers in Kaski has particularly emphasized Integrated Pest Management (IPM) training for high-value vegetable crops, underlining the organization's commitment to sustainable and effective farming practices in the region.

Challenges related to agriculture in Nepal include the overuse of pesticides, issues within the value chain, loss of biodiversity, and the excessive use of chemical pesticides. These challenges pose significant threats to sustainable and environmentally friendly farming practices, impacting both the agricultural ecosystem and

the overall quality of produce. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach, including promoting alternative farming methods, improvements in the value chain infrastructure, and measures to mitigate the impact on biodiversity.

IPM is a sustainable approach to pest control that harnesses ecosystem services to protect crops. By reducing pre- and post-harvest losses, IPM enhances farm productivity and food availability. It also minimizes pesticide residues, promoting food and water safety by decreasing chemical residues in various elements. Beyond pest control, IPM actively contributes to ecosystem preservation, conserving natural resources and enhancing services like pollination. Economically, IPM lowers production costs, and higher-quality crops with fewer residues enable farmers to command better prices, fostering increased profitability. Moreover, IPM serves as a knowledge-enhancing tool, promoting farmer stewardship and deepening their understanding of ecosystem dynamics in their local context. This knowledge empowers farmers to make informed decisions, strengthening their ability to manage pests sustainably.

iDE Canada/Nepal implemented IPM training so women farmers could attain a price premium for vegetables produced using IPM techniques. The initiative connected women farmers to collection centers and the farmer's market. The innovation trained women farmers in effective marketing techniques, which included labelling the produce, offering information about IPM production methods and associated health benefits, and incorporating story-based narratives about the women farmers cultivating the crop.

## Strategies to Enhance Access for Women farmers

The innovation provided support to a total of 1,643 farmers, consisting of 1,268 women and 375 men directly, along with an estimated 3,286 women and 3,286 men family members indirectly. Post-assistance, a significant majority, with 95% of women and 100% of men farmers, reported having enhanced and viable choices and access for cultivating commercially sold vegetables. This improvement stemmed from the knowledge gained through IPM training. Beyond economic empowerment, the initiative contributes to the broader societal aspect by enabling women farmers to generate more income from vegetable production. This financial independence, in turn, empowers women to actively participate in decision-making roles within their households and engage in various forums where advocating for their rights and well-being is crucial.

The innovation facilitated connections between women farmers and collection centers, creating pathways to farmer's markets. These collection centers are pivotal in gathering locally produced vegetables from associated members and other farmers, streamlining sales to traders linked to larger markets. They are designed to empower socially and economically disadvantaged farmers, predominantly women, including single women, impoverished Dalits, and Janajatis, in commercial vegetable cultivation. Despite the relatively novel concept of farmer's markets, women farmers needed more awareness of how these markets could enhance earnings. Participants in the project reported improved market management and increased vegetable sales through the collection centers and farmers' markets. Furthermore, membership for the collection centers increased substantially during the testing project, with women constituting 84% of the total members.

The innovation also worked with women farmers to increase their marketing strategies in selling their IPM produce. IPM vegetable marketing approaches resulted in high rates of sale for the women farmers. IPM vegetable marketing materials, stories about farmers growing these IPM crops, and information about health benefits increased customers' exposure to and awareness of IPM vegetables, which increased demand for IPM

vegetables. For example, 84% of the 45 customers (25 women) interviewed said they preferred to purchase chemical/pesticide-free produce and recognized IPM vegetables as pesticide-free. 92% of women customers bought IPM vegetables, compared to 80% of men customers. 73% of customers say they are most likely to trust the farmers themselves when learning about how the vegetables are grown.

The innovation involved diverse stakeholders and adopted a trust-building relational approach from the project's inception. This approach played a pivotal role in shaping the development and testing of innovations for safer farming for Nepali women.

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## Toronto Metropolitan University - Prevention of Cervical Cancer in India Through Self-Sampling

### Innovation Spotlight

This innovation spotlight demonstrates Toronto Metropolitan University's (TMU) alignment with Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) focusing on gender equality and empowering women and girls by addressing sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) through a non-traditional approach to cervical screening. It also highlights results from FIT's Gender Evaluation Framework (GEFI) for Innovation and specifically focuses on access and agency.

### Innovation Solution

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the primary cause of cervical cancer, a disease that can be prevented through screening and early treatment. Traditional screening methods, done in clinical settings, have reduced the rate of cervical cancer in high-income countries. Unfortunately, these screening methods are not readily accessible to women in low- and middle-income countries, particularly women in rural areas (Vahabi et al., 2022).

In India, various factors contribute to lower cervical screening rates, creating a complex scenario. These include limited knowledge and awareness regarding cervical cancer and screening, cultural barriers related to modesty, difficulties in accessing screening services (such as cost, transportation, childcare, and work-related time constraints), and the stigma attached to sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HPV, the primary cause of cervical cancer. Deep-rooted gender norms and stereotypes around STIs in India are a barrier to screening. Individuals, especially women, are stigmatized as deviants, immoral, corrupted, and tainted, which presents significant challenges to screening uptake. Addressing these issues requires engaging both men and women, normalizing discussions, destigmatizing the subject, and encouraging open dialogue about cervical cancer and screening—a vital approach to reducing cervical cancer prevalence and mortality.

The project *Prevention of Cervical Cancer in India through Self-Sampling (PCCIS)* sought to enhance cervical cancer screening among rural Indian women through a family-centered approach. This approach involved HPV self-sampling (HPV-SS), complemented by culturally appropriate sexual health literacy interventions incorporating art-based creativity. The overarching goal was to elevate the participation of rural women in HPV and cervical cancer screening. The project increased women's participation in cervical cancer screening, emphasizing the use of HPV self-sampling. It also targeted improved awareness and sexual health literacy and reduced stigma when engaging men and women.

## Strategies to Enhance Access for Cervical Cancer Screening for Rural Women in India

The findings revealed that the conventional methods of cervical cancer screening are both more expensive and less efficient compared to the HPV-SS strategy. A central goal of TMU's initiative was to foster gender equity through collective empowerment and capacity building. Equitable strategies included enhancing women's access to life-saving tests, health resources, programs, and inclusive decision-making while transforming attitudes through the engagement of both men and women within families.

**Access** to knowledge about sexual health, HPV, cervical cancer, and screening among women and men played a crucial role in dispelling misconceptions and reducing the stigma associated with HPV and cervical cancer. Furthermore, the project created opportunities to boost women's capacity for leadership roles as community champions, health workers, or research personnel. The acquired skills are transferable, enhancing these women's employability and community engagement, ultimately contributing to long-term gender equity. The fact that 98% of women chose to undergo screening with the encouragement of their male partners underscores the success of their approach in advancing gender equity.

## Enhanced Screening Access

In regions lacking screening facilities, 118 women underwent cervical cancer screening, with ten testing positive for HPV. Among them, one declined further follow-up, and nine underwent additional diagnostic tests. One woman was diagnosed and successfully treated for a cervical precancerous lesion. As part of the program's sustainability, TMU's collaborators conducted a Continuing Medical Education (CME) session for service providers in the region, ensuring the continued uptake of cervical cancer screening beyond the project life.

## Enhanced Agency for Women in Rural India:

### Collective Knowledge building, Shifting Attitudes, and Reducing Stigma

Following participation in the Sexual Health Education (SHE) sessions, all 120 women and their male partners exhibited a notable increase in knowledge about cervical cancer. Additionally, there was a significant improvement in understanding HPV infection as a cause of cervical cancer and its transmission among all participants. Both male and female participants demonstrated a substantial increase in knowledge about the PAP test and VIA from pre- to post-intervention.

Although there was a notable decline in STI-related stigma among male participants, a corresponding trend was not evident among female participants. These observations suggest that addressing deeply ingrained gender and social norms related to STIs may require more time and sustained effort.

However, the positive shift in male attitudes, particularly as heads of households, is crucial in combating biased attitudes and fostering women's active participation in screening. Moreover, the communities

displayed an equitable attitude toward gender roles, promising cancer screening promotion in these regions.

Focus group discussions highlighted the existing stigma surrounding cervical cancer and HPV, underscoring the necessity of increasing awareness and dispelling misconceptions within society.

Thus, TMU's project employed a family-centred approach, wherein both men and women participants engaged in sexual health education sessions, resulting in heightened awareness about cervical cancer, HPV and a stigma reduction. This culturally tailored family-centred strategy represents a positive stride towards establishing more equitable gender norms and encouraging open communication between men and women.

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## References

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## Canada SOS: Students Offering Support – Lights + Camera + Action for Equality

### Innovation Spotlight

This innovation spotlight showcases how Canada SOS: Students Offering Support, aligned with Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), tested a pioneering and scalable innovation to amplify civic engagement and leadership. It also highlights results from FIT’s Gender Evaluation Framework for Innovation (GEFI), and specifically illustrates strategies to empower the agency of Indigenous girls and women within Mayan communities in rural Guatemala.

### Innovation Solution

Equality is realized when women can take up roles in community organizations. In the Guatemalan context, this signifies that women have equal opportunities to contribute and are acknowledged for their contributions to civic engagements, including holding positions in the auxiliary mayor's office, the COCODE (Community Councils for Urban and Rural Development), schools, and other relevant institutions.

Lights, Camera, Action for Equality (LCAE) was an innovative and short testing project that used evidence-based interventions to test a transformative approach centred on gender. This innovative methodology employed digital storytelling techniques, podcasts, videos, and photo essays to educate Indigenous girls and women from Alta Verapaz and Quiché regarding human rights, gender equity, leadership, and advocacy. The LCAE testing project enabled participants to create digital artifacts expressing their local interpretation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and ways to action the SDGs. These creations were then shared with national duty-bearers and key stakeholders. The project also facilitated dialogues between rights holders and duty-bearers to discuss the content of the produced digital artifacts.



The fundamental hypothesis of this Canada SOS project was posited on the principle that community-led creation and sharing of digital artifacts addressing local concerns, facilitated with a gender-sensitive and culturally appropriate approach (accompanied by training on human rights, leadership, gender equality, and political advocacy), will enhance the capacity of Mayan women to participate as civic leaders. Ultimately, this increased engagement is expected to elevate the prioritization of gender equality and Indigenous rights within policy-making processes.

## Strategies to Enhance Agency

Indigenous women and girls in Guatemala face compounded inequalities, including ethnic discrimination, restrictive gender norms, poverty, and violence, which hinder their participation in politics. Their limited engagement is not a result of disinterest but rather stems from institutional barriers, with socioeconomic conditions compelling them to prioritize survival over civic engagement. However, women and girls can be empowered to become active citizens engaged in political processes and influence more inclusive and beneficial policies. In this regard, promoting knowledge about their rights, fostering their **agency**, encouraging public participation, and enabling advocacy for increased gender equality in their communities are some ways to increase visibility and civic participation. The LCAE project strategically enhanced knowledge and capacity related to gender equality, human rights, self-expression, and self-efficacy. This was achieved through workshops leveraging digital tools, empowering participants to share their stories authentically.

The implemented strategies have proven effective, evidenced by a notable uptick in the endline results. There's a substantial increase in Indigenous girls and women currently holding or aspiring to formal leadership roles within community organizations. Impressively, 86% of surveyed women and girls either intend to take on or already hold a leadership position in their community. This marked a significant advancement from the baseline, where only 55% indicated current or intended leadership roles. Furthermore, 85% intend to assume a new leadership position, showcasing an increase since the midline evaluation. The percentage of those already in leadership roles rose from 13% at midline to 19%, indicating that many women have already embraced leadership. Additionally, 91% of surveyed women assert that their participation in the project makes them 'more likely' to take on leadership roles in their community.

A notable shift was also observed in the types of leadership roles women aspire to, with more expression of an intention to take on positions in community-wide committees like water and health committees, as opposed to traditional women's committees. Even more exciting was the emergence of 32 women expressing their intent to run for mayor or deputy mayor positions in their communities. These findings indicate that women are contemplating and pursuing a much broader and significant scope, ultimately influencing policy change, breaking down institutional barriers, and promoting gender equality as a central axis in democracy.

The civic participation workshops and political campaign simulation improved their teamwork skills and deepened participants' comprehension of how women can actively participate in their communities. It boosted their confidence in expressing ideas and opinions, underscoring their importance. The program coordinators and facilitators noted a significant enhancement in participants' motivation, self-assurance, civic engagement, and the recognition of the importance of exercising their right to vote. Findings from the survey and program coordinator's home visits demonstrated an increased intention to participate in community matters, particularly in expressing the intention to vote. For example, from the endline reporting, a remarkable shift was evident, with 97% expressing the intention to vote in the June 2023 election, compared to 74% at baseline.

The LCAE project proved transformative, with 97% of women perceiving a shift in attitudes and greater gender inclusivity in their communities (endline survey). Additionally, an overwhelming majority of both female and male leaders, at least in principle, support the importance of Indigenous women's participation in civic matters and recognize that they, too, have a role to play in ensuring women's voices are included in decision-making. In conclusion, promoting civic participation and gender equality requires specific strategies and partnerships. These may include training on gender equality, translating important documents, and facilitating access to information to encourage active participation.

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## References

Women's Justice Initiative (n.d) *Inclusion of Indigenous Women: A Fundamental Pillar for True Democracy*. Retrieved from <https://womens-justice.org/indigenous-womens-rights-are-political/>.

# ANNEX

## List of FIT-Funded SMOs

SMO name	Org Type	Country	FIAP Action Area	FIAP Sub-category	Testing Timeframe (Months)
<b>Alitus Femina</b>	CSO	Burkina Faso	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls	Reduce sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) (including child, early, and forced marriage)	12
<b>Alternatives</b>	CSO	Sudan	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls	Reduce sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) (including child, early, and forced marriage)	15
<b>Canada SOS: Students Offering Support</b>	CSO	Guatemala	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls	Improve government's capacity to address gender equality and to provide services to women and girls	12
<b>Canada SOS: Students Offering Support</b>	CSO	Guatemala	Human Dignity	Education	15
<b>Canadian Humanitarian</b>	CSO	Guatemala	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls	Reduce sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) (including child, early, and forced marriage)	15
<b>Canadian International Scientific Exchange Program</b>	CSO	Israel/Palestine	Human Dignity	Maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH)	12
<b>Canadian Network for International Surgery</b>	CSO	Nigeria	Human Dignity	Maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH)	15
<b>Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief</b>	CSO	Ethiopia	Human Dignity	Maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH)	15
<b>Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief</b>	CSO	Malawi	Human Dignity	Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) (including menstrual health)	12
<b>Canadian Teachers Federation Trust Fund</b>	CSO	Gambia	Human Dignity	Education	15
<b>CAUSE Canada</b>	CSO	Sierra Leone	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls	Reduce sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) (including child, early, and forced marriage)	15
<b>CAUSE Canada</b>	CSO	Sierra Leone	Inclusive Governance	Promoting and protecting human rights, and particular support of the rights of women	12

SMO name	Org Type	Country	FIAP Action Area	FIAP Sub-category	Testing Timeframe (Months)
<b>CEED Concordia</b>	CSO	Uganda	Human Dignity	Education	11
<b>Change for Children</b>	CSO	Nicaragua	Human Dignity	Education	15
<b>Change for Children</b>	CSO	Nicaragua	Environment and Climate Action	Support women's environmental resilience (of their crops, access to water and/or other natural resources)	12
<b>Coady International Institute at St. Francis Xavier University</b>	Post-Secondary	Kenya	Growth that works for everyone	Increase women's access to economic opportunities and resources (including livelihoods)	15
<b>Dalhousie University/ Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security</b>	Post-Secondary	South Sudan	Peace and Security	Help to increase women's representation in the security sector	11
<b>Embrace International Foundation</b>	CSO	Uganda	Human Dignity	Education	12
<b>Emmanuel Relief and Rehabilitation International of Canada</b>	CSO	Tanzania	Growth that works for everyone	Sustainable agriculture	10
<b>Girls of Tomorrow Foundation</b>	CSO	Uganda	Human Dignity	Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) (including menstrual health)	11
<b>Humber Institute of Technology &amp; Advanced Learning</b>	Post-Secondary	Kenya	Growth that works for everyone	Increase women's access to skills (including technical, vocational training, and entrepreneurship)	12
<b>iDE Canada</b>	CSO	Nepal	Growth that works for everyone	Increase women's access to economic opportunities and resources (including livelihoods)	14
<b>Journalists for Human Rights</b>	CSO	Mali	Human Dignity	Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) (including menstrual health)	15
<b>KIDS Initiative</b>	CSO	Kenya	Human Dignity	Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) (including menstrual health)	14
<b>L'AMIE</b>	CSO	Rwanda	Growth that works for everyone	Increase women's access to economic opportunities and resources (including livelihoods)	14



<b>SMO name</b>	<b>Org Type</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>FIAP Action Area</b>	<b>FIAP Sub-category</b>	<b>Testing Timeframe (Months)</b>
<b>Learning for Humanity Inc.</b>	Private Sector	Democratic Republic of Congo	Human Dignity	Education	12
<b>Lessons Learned Simulations and Training</b>	Private Sector	Jordan	Human Dignity	Humanitarian action/ assistance	12
<b>Lestari Sustainable Development Consultants</b>	Private Sector	Indonesia	Environment and Climate Action	Support women's environmental resilience (of their crops, access to water and/or other natural resources)	15
<b>Liss Technologies</b>	Private Sector	Somalia	Human Dignity	Maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH)	10
<b>Lucky Iron Fish</b>	Social Enterprise	Benin	Human Dignity	Health, nutrition and nutritious food	15
<b>Make Music Matter</b>	CSO	Democratic Republic of Congo	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls	Engagement of men and boys to advance gender equality	15
<b>Mer et Monde</b>	CSO	Nicaragua	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls	Strengthen women's organizations and movements that advance women's rights	15
<b>My Oral Village</b>	CSO	Kenya	Growth that works for everyone	Increase women's access to skills (including technical, vocational training, and entrepreneurship)	15
<b>NorQuest College</b>	Post-Secondary	India	Human Dignity	Health care	12
<b>OGOW Health</b>	Social Enterprise	Somalia	Human Dignity	Maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH)	13
<b>OVO Solar Technologies</b>	Private Sector	Zambia	Growth that works for everyone	Sustainable agriculture	12
<b>PeaceGeeks</b>	CSO	Jordan	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls	Strengthen women's organizations and movements that advance women's rights	12
<b>Royal Roads University</b>	Post-Secondary	Malawi	Human Dignity	Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)	15
<b>Sombrilla International Development Society</b>	CSO	Honduras	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls	Reduce sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) (including child, early, and forced marriage)	15

<b>SMO name</b>	<b>Org Type</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>FIAP Action Area</b>	<b>FIAP Sub-category</b>	<b>Testing Timeframe (Months)</b>
<b>St. Mary's Road United Church</b>	CSO	Zimbabwe	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls	Engagement of men and boys to advance gender equality	13
<b>The Bhutan Canada Foundation</b>	CSO	Bhutan	Inclusive Governance	Promoting and protecting human rights, and particular support of the rights of women	12
<b>The Governors of the University of Alberta</b>	Post-Secondary	Pakistan	Growth that works for everyone	Increase women's access to skills (including technical, vocational training, and entrepreneurship)	12
<b>The Roll a Hippo Foundation</b>	CSO	South Africa	Growth that works for everyone	Sustainable agriculture	7
<b>The Wellspring Foundation for Education</b>	CSO	Rwanda	Human Dignity	Education	12
<b>Toronto Metropolitan University</b>	Post-Secondary	India	Human Dignity	Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) (including menstrual health)	15
<b>Union for Progress</b>	CSO	Democratic Republic of Congo	Growth that works for everyone	Increase women's access to economic opportunities and resources (including livelihoods)	10
<b>Université de Sherbrooke</b>	Post-Secondary	Cameroon	Growth that works for everyone	Increase women's access to skills (including technical, vocational training, and entrepreneurship)	15
<b>University of the Fraser Valley</b>	Post-Secondary	Sierra Leone	Inclusive Governance	Promoting and protecting human rights, and particular support of the rights of women	15
<b>Veterinarians without Borders</b>	CSO	South Sudan	Growth that works for everyone	Increase women's access to skills (including technical, vocational training, and entrepreneurship)	10
<b>Waterlution</b>	CSO	Mozambique	Human Dignity	Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)	8
<b>Women's Global Health Innovations</b>	Private Sector	Uganda	Growth that works for everyone	Increase women's access to economic opportunities and resources (including livelihoods)	15
<b>World Neighbours Canada Society</b>	CSO	Burkina Faso	Growth that works for everyone	Increase women's access to economic opportunities and resources (including livelihoods)	15



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