



Roseline's Story

When her husband died suddenly a few years ago, Roseline, age 50, knew she needed to find a way to support their eight children on her own.

What she didn't know was that she was going to have to fight for the right to her late husband's property, including the coconut, mango and palm trees growing on the land itself - which were a vital source of income for Roseline and her family.

After her husband's death, his family tried to claim the trees because, according to Nigerian tradition, widows cannot inherit their husbands' property, and only men have the right to own land.

Roseline didn't know what to do, or how to stand up to her husband's family. Increasingly

desperate, she enrolled in Women for Women International's programme.

"I learned about my rights, and this gave me the confidence and courage to approach my husband's brother about the trees."

The family held a series of meetings to discuss her claim, and even sent a delegation of women from the family to Roseline's home to try to intimidate her into backing down.

"But I stood my ground, knowing that it was my right to demand to have those trees. It took a while, but the family finally decided to hand them over. Today, they are mine. Women for Women International has helped me to stand on my own. It helped build my self-confidence. Now, sometimes other women come to me for advice."

The Global Goals

The Global Goals, also known as the Sustainable Development Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. The Goals represent an opportunity for the international community to implement catalytic changes for those who need them most, making the specific commitment to 'leave no one behind'. This means that the Goals cannot be considered a success unless they are met for everyone.

The Global Goals came into force on 1 January 2016 and the clock is ticking to reach them by 2030. Their realisation requires prioritising two key issues:

Women's rights: Women overwhelmingly bear the brunt of poverty and are often denied economic opportunities. Where women are employed in developing countries, they are more likely than men to be in vulnerable, informal sector, or low-paid jobs where they enjoy little protection from labour laws or policies.

Regardless of paid work, women (and girls) continue to bear overwhelming responsibility for household care. With this dual demand on their time, (paid and unpaid work), women have less time for education, political participation or other opportunities and their work and contributions are undervalued. Women's participation must be at the heart of the implementation of the Goals.

Conflict-affected countries: These countries consistently fall behind in development. The World Bank estimates that, by 2030 (the deadline for the Goals), the majority of people living in extreme poverty will be living in conflict-affected countries. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development estimates

this could increase to 62% (or half a billion people), with women disproportionately and overwhelmingly affected.

In conflict-affected countries, "gender-based discrimination and poverty are exacerbated. We have witnessed how conflict drives women into poverty and isolation, exposes them to various forms of gender-based violence, and worsens discriminatory social attitudes. Both directly and indirectly, conflict erodes women's health and wellbeing, access to educational opportunities for themselves and their children and fosters extreme poverty.

Women for Women International

works with women who live in extreme poverty in fragile contexts and who work their hardest to put food on the table and their children in school. They do so in the toughest of situations. In Afghanistan, women in some communities are not allowed to leave their house without an escort because they are women. In eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), women are prohibited from owning or making decisions about the land upon which they work because they are women. In Northern Iraq, Yezidi women have been forced to flee their homes. During ISIS' reign of abuse and terror, they have been specifically targeted for sexual violence because they are women.

Despite this discrimination, and when supported, women can be effective agents of change in building stronger households and stronger nations. The Global Goals provide us all with the opportunity to do more to support women affected by poverty and conflict, to enable them to determine the courses of their lives and reach their full potential.

Women for Women International

Since 1993, Women for Women International has worked with more than 447,000 marginalised women survivors of war in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the DRC, Kosovo, Iraq, Nigeria, Rwanda and South Sudan. We were founded on the belief that stronger women build stronger nations.

Our core work is centred on a holistic, rights-based programme to address the needs of marginalised women in conflict-affected countries around the world. We have tested and evolved our approach to fit the needs of women who have been denied access to education, have been affected by conflict and who seek inclusion and recovery. Our programme equips women with skills and resources to earn and save money, regain their confidence and actively participate in their communities.

Women for Women International's yearlong investment in individual women includes: building knowledge in areas such as the value of women's work, basic health education and rights information; skill development in numeracy, business skills and chosen vocational skill; resource provision through a monthly cash transfer and referrals to health and legal services; and connections to other women by training them in a safe space, in groups of 25, where they can form a tight support group that helps to break the isolation caused by war and insecurity.

"After learning about my rights, I started caring about my rights at home and I really understood that nobody can give you rights—you have to claim them yourself."

Euphraise, Rwandan graduate

Responding to the Syrian crisis

In response to the ongoing crisis in the region, we are working with local women's organisations in Northern Iraq to support Syrian and Yezidi women who have been forced to flee their homes as a result of conflict. We are supporting programmes that help displaced Syrian and Yezidi women overcome severe emotional trauma, teach them about their rights, acquire new business and vocational skills, and form networks for support and advocacy. Over the next three years, we will enable 3,000 Syrian and Yezidi women to access psychosocial support services, and life and business skills training to help them overcome trauma and find the resources needed to rebuild their lives.



We see sustainable change for the women we serve in four key outcome areas: earning and saving money; developing health and well-being; influencing decisions; and connecting to networks.

This progress is highlighted by the following indicators (global averages):1

	At enrolment (2012)	At graduation (2013)	At 2 years after graduation (2015)
Women participants who report average personal earnings of at least \$1.25 per day (in current USD)	6%	35%	48%
Women who report practicing nutrition planning ²	34%	89%	97%
Women who report attending community activities in the past 12 months ³	0-44%-0	90%	0 91% 0
Women who report educating another woman on her rights in the past 12 months ⁴	7%	65%	83%

Working with men as allies

As well as individual support, the women we work with need a more supportive environment to achieve sustainable change. By engaging men and male community leaders, we seek to address discrimination and promote opportunities for women.

We have been a pioneer in men's engagement activities aimed at targeting male community leaders and male family members of our women participants in Afghanistan, the DRC, Nigeria, South Sudan, Rwanda and Kosovo. We work with a variety of male leaders (e.g. traditional, military, or religious) and male family members of women participants, providing them with training in women's rights and gender equality. Almost 14,000 men have been reached since we began this work in 2002.

Our men's engagement activities vary between countries, but generally involve

a 'training of trainer' approach, so that male community members are engaged by male decision makers. This also multiplies the reach of the initial training. We aim to raise their understanding of violence against women, the value of women's work, girls' education and women's participation in community activities.

In each country, men's engagement activities and training content are tailored to the cultural and religious context. For example, in Afghanistan, male religious and community leaders, with their strong influence on community social norms and practices, are currently being trained on women's rights in Islam, quoting verses from the Qur'an to underscore specific aspects of women's rights.

"Before, we did not give inheritance to our daughters or wives, but now we have learned that they are also part of our inheritance."

Male graduate from Afghanistan.





With support from the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office, we recently revised and strengthened our monitoring and evaluation processes for our men's engagement work. The results in Afghanistan are promising⁵:



99% of Afghan men participants reported positive attitudes regarding women's role in family decision-making compared to only 6% at enrolment. At enrolment, 92% of Afghan men participants reported agreeing/partially agreeing that a woman's most important role is to take care of her home and cook. At graduation, this reduced

to 28%.



At graduation, 39% of Afghan men participants reported taking action to share information with their community about the effects of violence against women compared to only 15% at enrolment.

Our contribution – reaching marginalised women survivors of conflict

By signing up to the Global Goals, the international community committed to 'leave no one behind'. This commitment means that the Goals cannot be considered successful if they do not deliver for everyone.

Women for Women International works with marginalised women survivors of conflict. We work in communities where the type of support we offer is largely absent and we define 'marginalisation' based on crucial areas of vulnerability. In combination, these criteria help us to identify and reach the most marginalised women in the conflict-affected communities where we work.

Participants in our programme must satisfy at least two criteria in each of the following areas of vulnerability to be accepted onto the programme:

- Conflict-affected, such as surviving violence, being displaced, or the de facto head of the household. Approximately a third of women participants are single, i.e. never married (11.1%) or widowed, divorced or separated (12.7%). Women participants are responsible for 3 children under their care (2015 global averages).
- Social exclusion, as evidenced by signs of malnutrition or poor hygiene, poorer than average living conditions, restrictive traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, forced or early marriage, or no or limited education. At enrolment, three-quarters of women participants report no or limited reading and writing skills (2015 global averages, 74.8% and 75.5% respectively).

• Living in extreme poverty, perhaps due to unemployment, or limited to high risk or unsafe occupations, or responsible for dependents (children, elderly, disabled). At enrolment, only 4.2% of women participants report average personal earnings of at least \$1.25 and 90.4% report earning less than a \$1 a day (2015 global averages, in current USD).

The reality for many of the women we work with is that they are responsible for both providing and caring for their families, and are doing so despite having little access to educational or economic opportunities. Women who are widowed, divorced or separated are likely to be heads of households and are particularly vulnerable to abuse and discrimination from extended family members or the wider community.

As the Goals recognise, women's property rights and access to land are crucial for economic participation and empowerment but these are often stolen by their husband's family members upon his death.

"As we embark on this great collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind. Recognising that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, we wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society. And we will endeavour to reach the furthest behind first."

Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, paragraph 4.



Recommendations for donors and practitioners:

Identify and invest in the most vulnerable:

We have seen how important and effective it is to invest in the most marginalised people. Delivering the Global Goals requires a more nuanced understanding of who the most vulnerable members of society are. This requires looking at vulnerability across multiple sectors to identify those left furthest behind within and across different contexts. Investing in those left furthest behind should be an immediate priority as they require greater and longer term support to catch up with the average (i.e. someone living on USD \$0.70 a day will require more support to reach USD \$1.25 a day than someone living on USD \$1.20 a day).

Provide comprehensive and long-term support:

The Goals present a comprehensive framework which recognises the complex needs faced by the most marginalised people. The women we work with experience the legacy of conflict that poses multiple and intersecting challenges. Comprehensive support that works across sectors (economic, social, etc.) is essential to addressing these needs and long-term investment is essential for supporting behavioural changes and women's empowerment.

Engage men as allies:

Our work with men highlights how important it is to break down discrimination and increase the impact for women. Gender equality and women's rights is not a "women's issue" - they affect everyone. Working with men is both necessary and effective for supporting gender equality and women's rights by changing attitudes and behaviours to promote women's empowerment and challenge discrimination.

By providing marginalised women survivors of conflict with a comprehensive, foundational programme of support, our work directly supports the implementation of the Global Goals. In particular:

Key

- * At enrolment (2014)
- ** At graduation (2015) N/A responses excluded









Percentage of women

graduates who report

having medium/

high knowledge of

reproductive health

19.5%* > 96.6%**





knowledge of their

12.4%* > 89%**

Percentage of women

graduates who report

taking action to stop

violence against self

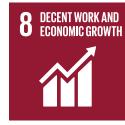
28.6%* 40.9%**

Percentage of women

graduates who report

running for any

own rights





Percentage of women graduates who earn at least or more than \$1.25 per day at graduation (in current USD)

4.2%* 47.1%**



Percentage decrease in women who report worrying about food running out in past three months

36.3%* 8.8%**



Percentage of women graduates reporting involvement in household family planning decisions

57.6%* **87.9%****



reporting vocational skills adoption for personal earnings

N/A* > 83.1**

Proportion of school-Percentage of women aged children in school graduates who report having medium/high

Boys 75.8%* **83.2%****

57.6%* **87.9**%**

Girls



Percentage of women

Percentage of women reporting that they are self-employed or employed

70.3%* > 91.5%**



Percentage of women graduates who report currently participating in marketing cooperatives or business groups

7.3%* 18.4%**

Percentage of women graduates who report attending community activities in the past

59.0%* **79.8%****

12 months

Percentage of women graduates who report currently participating in a neighborhood/ community group

29.6%* 60.4%**



Percentage of women graduates who report educating another woman on her rights in the past 12 months

4.6%* 84.1%**

Percentage of women who report saving a portion of their earnings

38%* > 88%**

Percentage of women reporting that they are self-employed or employed

70.3%* **91.5%****

Percentage of women graduates who report practicing nutrition planning (sometimes/ frequently)

23.8%* > 98%**

Percentage of women graduates who report practicing family planning/safe sex (sometimes/frequently)

21.1%* 63.1%**

in the past 12 months 4.8%* 12.9%**

leadership position





Our contribution – filling the data gap

In addition to agreeing upon the Goals, the international community identified key indicators to measure progress. These indicators make the most of currently available national data produced by governments and multilateral institutions like the UN. However, the Goals' report acknowledges that there are significant data gaps. These gaps relate both to the way that data is collected (often unreliable, irregular, and missing large segments of the populations) and what data is collected (with insufficient data collected for vulnerable groups, e.g. women and girls.)

Whilst national and international data collection efforts are improving, particularly by using more gender sensitive approaches to measuring change, national-level data will largely continue to exclude critical detail on the experiences of the most marginalised. Women for Women International collects data and commissions research that can contribute to closing this gap.⁶

The data we collect, through our monitoring and evaluation efforts, are intended to allow us to identify change in areas of marginalised women's economic and social empowerment, specifically: earning and saving money; health and well-being; decision-making; and networking. We collect in-depth data from a large sample of participants to gauge women's progress through the programme as well as one and two years after graduation.

While the data we collect are focused exclusively on marginalised women survivors of conflict (and therefore not nationally representative) it can provide a valuable snapshot to help national and

international policymakers understand hard-to-reach populations.

Our Monitoring, Research, and Evaluation team is engaged in ongoing efforts to establish the effects of our programmes more definitively. We have recently revised our core monitoring and evaluation instruments and have two rigorous impact evaluations in process on violence against women (Afghanistan) and women's agency (eastern DRC).

"The data requirements for the global indicators are almost as unprecedented as the SDGs themselves and constitute a tremendous challenge to all countries. Nevertheless, fulfilling these requirements through building national statistical capacity is an essential step in establishing where we are now, charting a way forward and bringing our collective vision closer to reality."

The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016.



Recommendations for governments and those monitoring the Goals (the UN, etc.):

Use alternative data sources to complement national-level data collection:

Progress for those left furthest behind is unlikely to be captured in official, national-level data, particularly whilst existing data collection efforts struggle to capture accurate or sufficiently aggregable data. In the short term, data from a range of sources (such as Women for Women International collects) should be included by the international community as it reviews progress under the Goals.

Include data that reflect the challenges of the most vulnerable:

The revisions we make to our monitoring and evaluation instruments are with an effort to more accurately measure progress in what matters for the women we work with and we are adapting our processes to include more indicators and other, more qualitative, feedback mechanisms. The emphasis on vulnerable, marginalised groups and inequality within the Goals provides an opportunity to rethink the data that is collected and to look for information that is more relevant to those left furthest behind. More qualitative indicators on women's empowerment, and indicators that capture women's exclusion, such as lack of access to social networks, are examples of data that should be collected in the future.



Our contribution – amplifying voices

In all countries, at all levels, women are underrepresented and marginalised in decision-making spaces. This is part of wider, systemic discrimination that also undervalues and underpays women in the workplace. Progress is unacceptably slow - the World Economic Forum, for example, estimates that it will take another 170 years for the economic gender gap to be closed. All countries have work to do in promoting gender equality and supporting women's economic, social and political participation is a keystone of this.

For the women we serve, being marginalised is a lived experience that includes being denied access to opportunities and having a say over the decisions that affect their lives. In many communities where we work, women are simply told not to speak in front of men. For example, if a woman in eastern

DRC wishes to make a complaint to her community elders about an abuse of her rights, she may need to find a male family member to speak for her. If a woman in Afghanistan wants to sell her products at market, she can be dependent on a male family member to take the products and return the profits to her.

Women's groups and networks are a powerful force for change. A recent multi-country study argued that feminist activism was more important than left-wing parties, numbers of women legislators or national wealth in reducing violence against women.⁷ Despite this evidence, local NGOs, particularly women's rights organisations, receive little support and funding. According to a forthcoming study by Gendernet, just 0.5% (USD \$192 million) of the USD \$35.5 billion provided by major donor governments went to women's groups in developing countries in 2014.

To support women to become drivers of change, Women for Women International is:

- Providing select women graduates with advocacy and leadership training to become
 agents of change in their communities. These Change Agents will provide peer
 support for other women in their communities and conduct advocacy activities to
 drive the changes they want to see in their communities.
- Continuing to work with men in communities to enable them to become champions for gender equality. We are further supporting women (including Change Agents) and male graduates to work together.
- Working with local NGO partners to join grassroots advocacy with national advocacy, creating a space for women to be heard both directly and through using our evidence and expertise.
- Influencing decision-makers and the debate internationally, using our evidence base and the voices of the women we work with to change policy and practice.
 We are determined to find more direct ways for the women we work with to be heard, including through consultations, research and innovative uses of technology.



Recommendations for decision-makers:

Identify and listen to the most marginalised:

We are committed to listening to and learning from the women we work with and we do this through a combination of our monitoring, evaluation, and learning as well as building women's capacity through our programmes. The success of the Goals is dependent on listening to those left furthest behind and supporting them to drive forward the changes that they want to see. The voices of those most marginalised must therefore be front and centre to both the implementation and review of the Global Goals, for example through meaningful consultation.

Increase funding for women's empowerment:

We welcome the recognition in the Goals that improving women's representation and participation is crucial for progress of all of the Goals: from the household to international decision-making platforms. Increasing women's participation requires a monumental increase of funding for women's empowerment, particularly to support change to break down the barriers that women face in accessing economic and political opportunities, services (such as health and education).

Our commitments

As Women for Women International, there is more that we can do to support governments and the wider international community to deliver on their commitment to end extreme poverty and inequality. We will:

Continue to learn and improve the support we provide for marginalised women survivors of conflict.



We will continue to monitor, evaluate and learn about the effectiveness of our support for women. We will share our lessons more widely with decision-makers and other practitioners.

Create strategic partnerships to reach more women and fill the data gap.



Women for Women International will create strategic partnerships with other practitioners, research institutions and others to increase our impact and strengthen an evidence-based approach to implementation and measurement of the Goals. For example, we are part of **No Ceilings: The Full Participation Project,** an initiative of the Clinton Foundation and a coalition of over 30 core partners from the public, private, and multilateral sectors.

Build more direct links between the women we work with and decision makers.



We want to see the voices of the women we work with being heard as part of an accountability framework for implementation of the Goals. To achieve this, we will continue to support women's advocacy in their countries. Their voices will inform our campaigns and we will continue to explore other ways of more direct influence, including through consultation and use of technology and media.

Produce annual report cards.

These will strengthen monitoring of the Goals and, over time, contribute a complementary narrative to national-level data. If the lives of marginalised women affected by conflict do not improve, then we cannot consider the Goals to be a success.



Join Our Movement

We can do so much more together and we urgently need more funding to help women survivors of war. There are more than 3,000 women currently waiting to enrol in our year-long training programme.



Sponsor a woman through our year-long training programme. Your monthly donation of £22 could help her learn the skills to support her family and transform her life. **womenforwomen.org.uk/sponsor**



Join the global sisterhood and lend your voice to create a chain of inspiration. We need to speak out against injustices that women survivors of war face. Show your support. Stand with us. Join the sisterhood!



Help us engage men as allies.

A donation of £1,000 could pay for the training of 10 male community leaders as champions for women's empowerment. womenforwomen.org.uk/donate



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Endnotes

- 1. This analysis includes a set of 30,360 women who graduated from Women for Women International's social and economic empowerment programme in 2013. Of this number, 2,574 participants had had data collected at all three points in time (enrolment, graduation and two years' post-graduation), representing approximately 9% of all 2013 graduates. Data are self-reported and are gathered on a geographically stratified sample of participants at enrolment and graduation. Reported personal earnings at graduation include the \$10 monthly stipend in all countries except Kosovo. For the question on reported practice of family planning, we exclude the respondents who report family planning as being N/A to them at the time of the survey. Our Monitoring, Research, and Evaluation team is engaged in ongoing efforts to establish the effects of our programs more definitively. For more information, please visit www.womenforwomen.org.uk/what-we-do/impact. For additional questions, please contact us at general@womenforwomen.org
- Reflects those who report practicing healthy behaviour in a given area 'Sometimes' or 'Frequently' on a four-point Likert scale (all N/A responses are excluded)
- 3. Excludes all N/A responses
- 4. Excludes all N/A responses
- Pre- and post-training surveys conducted with 560 male leaders trained by Women for Women International in 2015 in Afghanistan. 576 responses were taken at enrolment. Women for Women International - Afghanistan reached 1,060 men through engagement activities in 2015.
- 6. We regularly publish research that takes a closer look into areas of women's lives and our work, such as:
 - "The woman is a tractor": Marginalised women's access to land in South Kivu (Summary report, Women for Women International, December 2014) www.womenforwomen.org.uk/sites/default/files/WfWI_DRC_Research_Summary.pdf.
 Full report: www.womenforwomen.org.uk/sites/default/files/WfWI_DRC_Research_Report.pdf
- Afghanistan Learning Brief: Engaging men as allies to promote women's empowerment (Women for Women International, 2016) wfwmarketingimages.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/wfwi-learning-brief-afg-mep-fco-20160401-final.pdf
- Rwanda Learning Brief: A study of occupational and economic well-being among marginalised women in Rwanda (Women for Women International, September 2016) wfwmarketingimages.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/wfwi-rwanda-occecon-learning-brief-final.pdf
- Feminist mobilisation and progressive policy change: why governments take action to combat violence against women, S. Laurel Weldon and Mala Htun, Gender and Development Journal (volume 21, 2013). Available online: www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10. 1080/13552074.2013.802158

In countries affected by conflict and war, Women for Women International supports the most marginalised women to earn and save money, improve health and well-being, influence decisions in their home and community, and connect with networks for support. By utilising skills, knowledge and resources, she is able to create sustainable change for herself, her family, and community.

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