

Background

Spotlight Initiative is the largest targeted effort by the United Nations to end all forms of violence against women and girls by 2030. Launched in 2017 with a “seed” investment by the European Union of 500 million EUR, Spotlight Initiative represents an unprecedented global partnership on ending gender-based violence, providing targeted investments across five regions (Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Pacific and the Caribbean) through 34 programmes: 26 country programmes and five regional programmes,¹ along with its two Civil Society Grant-Giving Programmes.² With a focus on addressing specific forms of violence (determined regionally) – intimate partner and family violence, sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices, femicide, trafficking and sexual exploitation, Spotlight Initiative promotes a comprehensive, rights-based approach to drive transformative change across six interconnected outcome areas or pillars below. The Initiative’s comprehensive model has been found to be 70-90 percent more effective at reducing the prevalence of violence than siloed or piecemeal approaches and small scale interventions.³



¹ Africa: Liberia, Mali, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Mozambique, Uganda, Zimbabwe. Central Asia: Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan. Caribbean: Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago. Latin America: Argentina, El Salvador, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico. Pacific: Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu. Regional Programmes: Latin America Regional Programme, Africa Regional Programme, Caribbean Regional Programme, Pacific Regional Programme, ASEAN Regional Programme.

² In partnership with the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women for programmes in Africa and Latin America and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund for programmes in Africa, Afghanistan, Haiti and Papua New Guinea.

³ “Imperative to Invest: How addressing violence against women and girls today reduces violence over time, fosters peace and stability, and enables people to reach their full potential - all of which advances us towards the SDGs” (Dalberg, 2022).

A flagship programme of the United Nations Secretary-General, Spotlight Initiative is a demonstration fund for UN Reform, capitalising on the collective strengths of the UN system to support the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and accelerate progress not only on Goal 5 (pursuing real and sustained gender equality), but across all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Spotlight Initiative is a proven model of multilateralism and multi-stakeholder partnership and engagement towards ending violence against women and girls. Committed to the principle of leave no one behind,⁴ particularly those who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, Spotlight Initiative engages in meaningful and sustained collaboration with civil society organisations, with a focus on women's rights organisations who are integral partners of the Initiative. By partnering with donors, civil society, the private sector, academia and all relevant UN entities, Spotlight Initiative leverages different types of expertise and capacities and takes a more integrated approach to achieve common goals. Spotlight Initiative employs a whole-of-society approach, which places ending gender-based violence at the heart of national development priorities and plans, while also giving local communities and civil society the tools they need to address violence in their specific context.

Spotlight Initiative's results to date have been transformational, with the conviction rate for perpetrators of gender-based violence doubling across 12 countries; 500 laws and policies having been signed to end violence against women and girls; national budgets to address gender-based violence having increased 10-fold across 14 countries; and 2.5 million women and girls having accessed gender-based violence services, as of 2022.

In recognition of its unprecedented results, Spotlight Initiative was selected as a high-impact initiative and an SDG accelerator by the UN Secretary-General. Gender equality is at the heart of achieving progress on the SDGs, and by deeply addressing violence against women and girls, efficiencies are unlocked, impacting progress on all of the other SDGs.

After five years of implementation, various innovative and good practices have emerged and are demonstrating the effectiveness of Spotlight Initiative's model of coordination, delivery of comprehensive programmes and multi-stakeholder ownership, with a strategic vision that eradicates the drivers of violence, involving women and girls in designing their own futures free of violence.



⁴ The leave no one behind (LNOB) principle describes the commitment of all UN Member States to eradicate poverty, end discrimination and exclusion and reduce inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind, undermining the potential of individuals and of humanity as a whole. [Universal Values - Principle Two: Leave No One Behind \(UNSDG\)](#).

Compendium objectives

Spotlight Initiative commissioned ImpactMapper to produce a compendium of innovative and good practices and lessons learned across its six outcome areas, as well as other relevant and cross-cutting themes.⁵

The Compendium covers Spotlight Initiative's work from 2018 to 2023 and includes information from all regions in which Spotlight Initiative is being implemented.

The Compendium's overall purpose is to synthesise and document innovative and good practices, as well as lessons from the implementation of Spotlight Initiative to support programmatic learning, improve interventions and contribute to the broader evidence and knowledge base on ending violence against women and girls. The Compendium also documents the new way of working with the one UN system in implementing a comprehensive and rights-based programme on ending violence against women and girls. The aim is to build practice-based knowledge and share practices that can be scaled up more widely.



⁵ Some cross-cutting themes relate to UN reform, partnerships, leave no one behind, female genital mutilation, child marriage, sustainability, etc.