

The CEDAW Index

A Global Dashboard to Track Government Action on Women's Rights & Gender Equality

Proposal for Funding





About this project

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is one of the most powerful mechanisms for encouraging state action to protect women's rights and reduce gender inequities globally. The 189 countries that have ratified the Convention commit to changing their laws to uphold women's rights, including health-related rights, through reviews and recommendations provided by the CEDAW Committee every four years.

Despite more than 40 years of CEDAW reviews, there has been no systematic assessment of the effectiveness of the CEDAW review system in motivating government action to implement recommendations aimed at improving women's health. Consequently, The UN treaty body system, including CEDAW, lacks clarity on the actual implementation of their recommendations, and their overall effectiveness in achieving health and social outcomes.

This is due to:

- 1 The absence of a systematic monitoring tool to track implementation,
- 2 A reliance on government reports, which may not always reflect the full picture,
- 3 An emphasis on constructive dialogue as a key outcome, sometimes without clear follow-up on actions taken, and
- 4 Limited resources for civil society organisations, which play a crucial role in providing independent assessments.

We are developing the CEDAW Index, a globally unique tool that collates all gender-based violence recommendations and determines the nature, scope and extent of their implementation, tracking the effectiveness of the review system in order to distil key lessons and insights and to strengthen government accountability.

Our pitch, in a nutshell

A unique, time-sensitive opportunity

- A rare opportunity to create **impact on a global scale**, using rigorous research and advocacy to make a meaningful contribution to advancing human rights and health equity.
- We have a **unique methodology and global dataset**, creating a niche tool for researchers and social innovators in this space.
- We have built **relationships with key stakeholders** including the CEDAW Committee, leading civil society groups, all of whom have recognised the importance of this work and its potential to drive change.
- We have created **significant momentum** and need to strike while the iron is hot.

Potential to pioneer a new data-driven approach to human rights monitoring

- Pioneering this new digital tool could address a critical need: to **measure the implementation** of human rights-aligned laws, policies and programs, and **evaluate their impact**. Currently there is limited visibility over what is being implemented globally, and a lack of expertise to undertake global, multi-country analyses.
- The research will address a critical gap in the UN infrastructure, and have a **direct impact on the reform of health laws for women**, and potentially other groups including Indigenous communities, children and young people, contributing to a more equitable and just world for all.

Significant, measurable impact

- The impact of the work will be **substantial and measurable**. We would be able to evaluate its success based on a range of metrics, including changes to the design of UN CEDAW recommendations in response to project findings; and references to the project's data and analyses in civil society, UN and government reports.
- We could also track changes to the **rate of implementation** of the CEDAW Committee's recommendations after the data is made public, to further demonstrate tangible impact.

Background

Why CEDAW?

The UN CEDAW Committee has been operational for over 40 years, providing a structured system for monitoring and promoting women's rights. Every four years, the Committee issues periodic recommendations to 189 governments. Governments are required to submit reports outlining their efforts to meet their obligations under the CEDAW Convention and progress towards achieving gender equality. The Committee reviews these reports, engages in constructive dialogue with State representatives, and issues Concluding Observations – recommendations aimed at improving national laws, policies, and programs related to women's rights.

As the body responsible for overseeing the most comprehensive international treaty on women's rights, the CEDAW Convention, the Committee's initiatives have positively altered the health trajectory of populations across the globe. One characteristic that makes the Committee a powerful agent for change is its legally binding nature. Unlike global initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals, CEDAW is an international treaty that imposes legal obligations on ratifying countries. This distinction is significant, as it creates leverage in motivating government action.

An additional strength is the Committee's capacity to recommend multiple, cross-sectoral government actions within the same forum. For example, by requiring action across education, health, justice and the workforce. In the context of GBV, this enables the Committee to use periodic reviews to advocate for essential infrastructure, including domestic violence shelters and specialised courts. The Committee can also address related issues, laws preventing women from accessing abortion care and contain no exceptions for rape and incest. Furthermore, CEDAW can promote targeted GBV interventions, such as domestic violence legislation aimed at preventing violence and providing remedies for victim-survivors. The broad scope afforded by the CEDAW Convention allows for a comprehensive approach that recognises the interconnectedness of economic, social, cultural, and legal factors affecting survivors and those at risk. This enables the development of strategies that simultaneously work toward meeting victim-survivors' immediate needs, tackle root causes and promote systemic change.

The CEDAW Committee's track record on gender-based violence includes encouraging the establishment of new or reforming existing legal institutions (e.g. mandating training on GBV for prosecutors and civil servants), strengthening legal protections and remedies (e.g. criminalising domestic violence) and increasing access to health care and social support (e.g. by establishing a national victim support system). After receiving these recommendations, such interventions have been implemented in countries as diverse as Paraguay, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Uzbekistan and Mexico. The Committee achieves these outcomes by highlighting the costs of violations or non-conformity with women's rights norms, encouraging "social learning" and the uptake of evidence which can lead states to re-examine current practices and positions, and pressuring States to assimilate to common human rights norms and adopt the beliefs and values at the bedrock of the CEDAW Convention. At a time when gender regressive discourse is rife, mechanisms with the ability to encourage governments to align their laws, policies and programs with international human rights standards are critical.

About the CEDAW Index

The CEDAW Index offers a systematic approach to tracking and analysing the recommendations of the Committee, government actions, and responses from CSOs. Findings are visualised through a digital dashboard that consolidates recommendations from periodic reviews, categorising them by nature, scope, and extent of implementation, while distilling key insights from local, regional, and global contexts.

The CEDAW Index is designed for advocates, researchers, and government decision-makers. It offers a unique opportunity to monitor government actions on women's rights by providing robust data and insights. The Index supports advocates in crafting evidence-based arguments to mobilising women's movements at local, national and international levels. We believe these insights will be instrumental in informing GBV advocacy and in shaping the UN treaty body process.

Primary Data Sources

The Index draws from three key data sources: periodic reports submitted to the CEDAW Committee by governments, shadow reports submitted by civil society organisations, and the Concluding Observations issued after review by the Committee. All reports publicly accessible through the UN Treaty Body Database, hosted by the UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR).



CEDAW Index

Visualisation Data Methods Country

Key Features of the CEDAW Index Dashboard

The Index provides both summary and raw data for each CEDAW recommendation and corresponding government action. An implementation status – categorised as implemented, not implemented, unacknowledged, or inadequate response - is assigned by analysing government actions in relation to the recommendations. Each recommendation and action is tracked across multiple variables, including country/region, income status, humanitarian crisis status, form of gender-based violence, and subgroups. Analyses using these variables, conducted using pilot data informing the dashboard have revealed useful insights.

Our 2023 report revealed that based on a sample of 117 countries, during their last CEDAW reviews between 1997 and 2020, governments implemented or amended 423 laws in response to law-related CEDAW Committee recommendations, 85 of those relating to GBV, refugee, asylum seeker or migrant status, and/or identifying as LGBTQI+. Interestingly, countries across all income groups implemented similar proportions of recommendations, suggesting high-income status does not necessarily lead to a greater capacity or motivation to implement health-promoting laws. Further, countries experiencing a humanitarian crisis implemented 34% of recommendations, compared to 53% in non-crisis countries.

Analyses will be undertaken through a combination of health and human rights expertise, alongside AI and machine learning models. AI language models capable of processing vast amounts of data suggest statuses based on defined criteria and previous examples, which are subsequently reviewed by a panel of experts prior to publication on the dashboard. Where available, civil society insights on government actions accompany each recommendation and action, capturing nuances related to the quality, scale, resources, and reasons for implementation failures that may not be reflected in official government reporting. This dual perspective offers a more comprehensive view of the implementation process and highlights persistent barriers to effective action.

Additionally, the Index features case studies that illustrate real-world examples of both successes and challenges in implementation. Informed by data from CSOs, and empirical research findings, these case studies provide detailed insights into the impact of policies, programs, and laws. In doing so, the Index can identify successfully implemented legislative and policy models (as reported by governments) that can be replicated or scaled in other jurisdictions. Over time, showcasing the ongoing effectiveness and acceptability of interventions years after their introduction ensures that implementation is not treated as a final goal, but rather as an ongoing process requiring evaluation and refinement.

CEDAW Index designs

In the data visualisation view, users can filter data by Implementation status; Sub-group [of women]; Form of violence; and/or Disputed reviews/Flagged accuracy.

This example demonstrates the information available when status implementation options and map view are selected.

This example demonstrates the information available when users select Visualisation 'Table' and search by country.

Country	CEDAW recommendation	State action	Implementation status	Sub-group	Form of violence	Flag Accuracy	Submit report
Australia	Implement strategies in the national plan to address violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, including funding culturally appropriate legal services for indigenous women.	"Australian Government programmes include the Indigenous Family Safety Programme, Family Violence Prevention Legal Services, and Indigenous women's projects through the Commonwealth Community Legal Services Programme... The Australian Government also funds Family Violence Prevention Legal Services in 31 rural and remote areas, and eight organizations across Australia specifically to operate Indigenous women's projects that provide legal services for Indigenous women."	Implemented	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women	Gender-based violence	Report_1226.pdf	Submit report
Australia	Develop strategies to prevent domestic violence-induced homelessness and support women affected by domestic and family violence.	"In 2013, the Tasmanian Women's Plan 2013-2018 was launched. It focuses on six priority areas: economic security and financial independence; education and training; health and wellbeing; housing and homelessness; leadership and community participation; and safety and justice" (2.38) "The Australian Government provides states and territories with approximately AUD \$250 million annually under the NAHA (National Affordable Housing Agreement), including approximately AUD \$250 million to address homelessness. (11.14)"	Partial	Women experiencing homelessness	Domestic violence/IPV	Report_1AEG.pdf	Submit report
Australia	Enact legislation to criminalize, prosecute, and punish perpetrators of domestic violence acts.	"In 2011 the Australian Government amended the Family Law Act 1975 (Cth) to improve the family law system's response to family violence and abuse. The changes introduced a new definition of family violence, which includes examples of harmful behaviours such as physical assault, emotional manipulation, economic abuse, and threatening behaviour."	Implemented	No subgroup	Domestic violence/IPV		Submit report
Australia	Adopt, implement, and adequately fund the National Action Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Their Children, incorporating an independent monitoring mechanism.	"All governments in Australia are currently implementing the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022. These efforts complement a \$100 million women's safety package"	Partial	No subgroup	Gender-based violence; children		Submit report

CEDAW Index designs

UN CEDAW Report

This example demonstrates the information available when users select Country and Infographics view.

Visualisation | Data | Methods | **Country**

Map | Table | **Infographics**

Implementation status

- Implemented
- Partially implemented
- Inadequate response
- Unacknowledged

Sub-group

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
- Adolescents
- Children
- Children and adolescents
- Domestic workers
- Refugee and asylum seeker women
- Women experiencing homelessness
- Women from marginalized communities
- Women living in slums and informal settlements
- No subgroup

Form of violence

- Domestic violence/IPV
- Female genital mutilation
- Gender-based violence
- Gender-based violence: children
- Sexual violence
- Sexual violence: sexual harassment

Disputed reviews/Flagged accuracy

- Funding doesn't exist
- Implemented but not reached women
- Not accurate

Summary of South Africa

Number of recommendations
4

Time between receiving CEDAW Committee recommendations and reporting on progress
8 years
2011 received | 2019 reported

Country income status
Upper middle

Humanitarian crisis status
No

Laws that have been introduced

- Gender based violence
- ◆ Gender based poverty

Laws that have been introduced by sub group

- No sub group
- Children and adolescents
- Refugee and asylum

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UN CEDAW Report

This example demonstrates the information available when users select the Methods tab.

Visualisation | Data | **Methods** | Country

Methods

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[Link to published protocol](#)

1/ All CEDAW signatory UN Member States in Asia-Pacific (World Bank East Asia and Pacific regions) included, if at least 11 periodic review cycle complete.

2/ CEDAW reports retrieved for each UN Member State from UN Treaty Body Database (two most recent reporting cycles)

- CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations Report (Cycle 1)
- UN Member State full periodic State Report (Cycle 2)

3/ Health-related CEDAW Committee recommendations extracted in full for each country from Cycle 1 Concluding Observations Report.

4/ Individual recommended state actions extracted from each full CEDAW Committee recommendation

5/ CEDAW Committee recommended state actions categorised by nature of recommendation (e.g. data collection, legislation/policy change, reservation removal).

6/ a) UN Member State full periodic State Report (Cycle 2) reviewed.
b) Actions matched to Cycle 1 CEDAW Committee health-related recommended state actions.

7/ Implementation status (full, partial, inadequate, unacknowledged) noted for each Cycle 1 CEDAW Committee recommended state action.

8/ Key Analyses:

- a) Participation of UN Member States in CEDAW review process
- b) Nature, scope and distribution of recommendations across CEDAW Articles and General Recommendations
- c) Nature, scope and distribution of government actions in response to recommendations
- d) Extent of implementation and non-implementation of CEDAW Committee recommendations
- e) Alignment of Committee recommendations and government actions with the SDGs
- f) Nature and scope of legal interventions implemented by UN Member States.

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Why now?

The erosion of women and girls' autonomy due to the rollback of their rights in the global north and south make clear that gender inequality is not only persisting but deepening. Accelerating progress on gender inequality is critical, and the time is now.

As we approach the 2030 deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), not a single indicator under Goal 5 – gender equality – has been fully achieved. Further, between 2019 and 2022, nearly 40% of countries, home to over 1.1 billion women and girls, experienced stagnation or regression in advancing gender equality.

47% (n=9)
low-income countries

48% (n=53)
lower-middle and upper-middle countries

53% (n=23)
high-income countries

Why gender-based violence?

One of the most pervasive manifestations of gender inequality is gender-based violence (GBV). An estimated 736 million women – almost one in three – have been subjected to physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, or both at least once in their life. Women face risks at every stage of their life course and in every space they occupy, including their own homes. In 2022, almost fifty thousand women and girls worldwide were killed by their intimate partners or other family members – on average more than five women or girls every hour.

Patriarchal, cultural and social norms that reinforce discriminatory practices, insufficient support services and inadequate legal protections all contribute to the burden of GBV. Further, new threats are always emerging, including technology-facilitated violence such as cyberstalking, online harassment, surveillance and monitoring without survivor-victims knowledge or consent. UN Women highlights that the many 'interlocking crises' occurring worldwide - including economic crises, conflicts, and climate change - intensify such violence.

The impact of violence on women's health are significant. Women at risk of violence face a disproportionate burden of ill health including being twice as likely to be diagnosed with cervical cancer, experiencing depression and anxiety, suicidal ideation and poor access to life-saving, quality services that provide health and psychosocial support and financial and livelihood opportunities.

What has been achieved to date?



Consultations

We have undertaken consultations with over 30 members of civil society organisations around the world and global health and human rights researchers. The insights were analysed and shaped the focus areas of the dashboard.



CEDAW Committee briefings

We have briefed the Committee about the reports during official sessions in Geneva, and received an overwhelmingly positive response, along with requests to continue and expand the project.



Dashboard prototype

The dashboard has been designed, and the backend dataset supporting the dashboard's data visualisations have been developed for 5 countries.



AI modelling

A proof of concept language model has been developed and we have conducted experiments to test the feasibility of the dashboard including AI language models and machine learning scripts for accurate data extraction from the UN Committee and government reports. The model is being trained to extract government actions from reports submitted to the UN CEDAW Committee when provided with the Committee's recommendation by a human assessor. Additionally, it is being trained to predict the implementation status of the government action, enhancing the system's ability to track and assess more effectively.



Funding

The data set has already generated an AUD\$650,000 grant from Co-Impact, a global philanthropic collaborative, which has funded a three-year project to explore what drives the effectiveness of the CEDAW Committee's recommendations in different contexts by identifying CEDAW-aligned legal and policy interventions that reduce and prevent gender-based violence. In South Africa, for example, where CEDAW was key to the design and implementation of the Domestic Violence Act, the project seeks to secure amendments to the Act that would make it easier for women to access the justice system. In Indonesia, the project is targeting a fabric of laws to address the lack of legal protections for domestic workers experiencing, or at risk of, abuse and exploitation.



Publications

Two reports, *Launching the CEDAW Implementation Map* (2021), and *Redressing the Balance* (2023), have been launched to date, with support from the Committee itself and from civil society organisations involved in the CEDAW review process. In addition, a commentary on the Index (including its GBV) focus titled [*Count Her In: The Road to Economic Empowerment*](#) was co-written and published by Jan Shanthosh and Emma Feeny for International Women's Day 2024.

What outcomes can we expect?

Short term outcomes

- **Increased awareness and engagement** (CSOs, researchers and the UN CEDAW Cttee gain a clearer understanding of the limitations in the current monitoring of women's rights implementation.
- **Enhanced data availability** and accessibility through the complete and organised dataset and data visualisations

Medium term outcomes

- **Improved monitoring and reporting** CSOs and researchers are able to use the dashboard to systematically monitor and report on the implementation of women's rights recommendations. Increased credibility and accuracy of the data reported by governments as the dashboard provides an independent verification tool.
- **Enhanced engagement and dialogue** More informed and constructive dialogue occurs between civil society organisations, based on insights derived from the dashboard. Increased use of the dashboard's education hub resources in training and advocacy efforts by CSOs.
- **Strengthened research and analysis** Researchers use the dashboard for in-depth analysis, contributing to the development of new insights, interventions and strategies for advancing women's rights.

Long term outcomes

- **Enhanced effectiveness of women's rights interventions** The dashboard significantly improved the tracking and evaluation of the effectiveness of women's rights interventions, leading to more targeted and impactful government action. Increased accountability and transparency in the implementation of women's rights recommendations
- **Sustained and scalable impact** The dashboard becomes a widely adopted tool by CSOs, researchers, and the UN CEDAW Committee, influencing policy and practice on a global scale. Continuous improvement and adaptation of the dashboard leads to expanded use cases and applications.

Testimonials

"I am overwhelmed and awed by this data... We need to disseminate this – to as many stakeholders as possible. I would like to congratulate you."

"This is so inspiring..." "This will be very useful for us..." "Please continue this work."

"No one is actually looking at the impact of (the Committee), but that's what gives us the impetus to carry on. Your work constitutes part of that – it's crucial."

Comments from expert members of the CEDAW Committee on our work



Small to Medium-Scale Funding

1. Development of the CEDAW Index Dashboard

Objective: Transform graphic designs into a fully functional, user-friendly digital platform. This dashboard will allow stakeholders to easily navigate and visualize key data on the implementation of gender-based violence recommendations from CEDAW reviews.

Key Activities:

- Development of an operational prototype for the dashboard, including interactive features for users to filter and explore data by country, region, and specific recommendations.
- Initial testing with a select group of civil society organisations and policymakers to ensure usability and identify improvements.

Impact: A fully functional dashboard that provides actionable insights for researchers, advocates, and policy makers.

Costing:

- AI development: \$150,000 - \$200,000
- Data collection & cleaning (including partnerships): \$50,000 - \$80,000
- Hiring data analysts & researchers: \$80,000 - \$150,000
- Expanding scope to other health areas: \$50,000 - \$100,000

Total estimate: \$330,000 - \$530,000

2. Pilot Training & Capacity Strengthening for civil society organisations

Objective: Design and host initial training sessions for civil society organisations on how to use the CEDAW Index effectively for advocacy, policy development, and monitoring in their local contexts.

Key Activities:

- Develop training materials and host virtual or in-person workshops, focusing on how civil society organisations can leverage the Index to hold governments accountable and push for changes in gender-based violence laws and policies.
- Facilitate civil society contributions to the dashboard, specifically commenting and providing data on the reach, effectiveness, and acceptability of government actions in response to CEDAW recommendations.

Impact: Support civil society organisations with the skills and knowledge to use the CEDAW Index in their ongoing advocacy work. Amplifying civil society insights regarding the implementation of government actions to address gender-based violence.

Costing:

- Training material development: \$15,000 - \$30,000
- Facilitators and trainers: \$5,000 - \$10,000
- Workshop hosting (Virtual/In-person) - \$10,000 - \$30,000
- Travel and accommodation for CSOs - \$20,000 - \$50,000
- Stipends for CSO contributors: \$30,000 - \$50,000

Total estimate: \$80,000 - \$170,000

Medium to Large-Scale Funding

3. Comprehensive data collection & AI modelling

Objective: Expand data collection to a broader set of countries and enhance the methodology for tracking CEDAW recommendations, including the development of AI models to scale globally.

Key Activities:

- Develop AI-driven models to automate data collection and analysis, allowing for faster processing of large datasets and enhancing the ability to track trends sustainable over time.
- Expand the scope of the Index from gender-based violence to other areas including non-communicable disease prevention and sexual and reproductive health.
- Collaborate with local partners in diverse country contexts to document the implementation of recommendations and evaluate their effectiveness on the ground.

Impact: Achieve more granular, real-time insights into how CEDAW recommendations are being implemented across different regions and countries.

Costing:

- AI development: \$150,000 - \$200,000
- Data collection & cleaning (including partnerships): \$50,000 - \$80,000
- Hiring data analysts & researchers: \$80,000 - \$150,000
- Expanding scope to other health areas: \$50,000 - \$100,000

Total estimate: \$330,000 - \$530,000

4. Establishing a community of practice & academic collaborations

Objective: Scale the project to include all 189 countries where CEDAW has been ratified (where data is available), offering comprehensive training for researchers and advocates on how to use the CEDAW Index in collaborative research projects.

Key Activities:

- Host global workshops and training sessions for women's health and human rights researchers, focusing on how to use the dashboard for collaborative, cross-country research.
- Develop advanced tools for in-depth data analysis, including capabilities for evaluating the broader impact of CEDAW recommendations on health and social outcomes.

Impact: Strengthen the capacity of global researchers and advocates to use the CEDAW Index in their work, creating a network of informed, skilled users who contribute to advancing gender equality and women's health globally.

Costing:

- Webinar & workshop organisation: \$100,000 - \$150,000
- Development of academic research grants: \$70,000 - \$110,000
- Report writing & analysis: \$110,000 - \$180,000
- Advocacy & engagement with UN & governments: \$30,000 - \$50,000

Total estimate: \$310,000 - \$490,000

Large-Scale Funding

5. Global rollout and advanced capacity strengthening for researchers

Objective: Scale the project to include all 189 countries where CEDAW has been ratified (where data is available), offering comprehensive training for researchers and advocates on how to use the CEDAW Index in collaborative research projects.

Key Activities:

- Host global workshops and training sessions for women’s health and human rights researchers, focusing on how to use the dashboard for collaborative, cross-country research.
- Develop advanced tools for in-depth data analysis, including capabilities for evaluating the broader impact of CEDAW recommendations on health and social outcomes.

Impact: Strengthen the capacity of global researchers and advocates to use the CEDAW Index in their work, creating a network of informed, skilled users who contribute to advancing gender equality and women’s health globally.

Costing:

- Global training workshops and travel costs: \$150,000 - \$300,000
- Developing advanced research & analytical tools: \$200,000 - \$400,000
- Local partner collaboration & data collection in new countries: \$250,000 - \$500,000

Total estimate: \$600,000 - \$1,200,000

6. Policy Advocacy & Long-Term Sustainability

Objective: Advocate for the integration of CEDAW Index findings into UN policies and national legislative frameworks, ensuring that the data is used to influence long-term change.

Key Activities:

- Produce high-quality, policy-oriented reports that detail the findings of the Index, highlighting areas for improvement and proposing specific policy changes.
- Engage in direct advocacy with UN bodies, national governments, and international organisations to ensure that the findings lead to measurable changes in law, policy, and practice.

Impact: Establish the CEDAW Index as a key resource for international human rights monitoring, driving global policy changes that improve health and social outcomes for women worldwide.

Costing:

- Long-term hosting & maintenance of the Index: \$100,000 - \$200,000 (annually)
- High-quality policy reports & advocacy campaigns: \$150,000 - \$300,000
- Ongoing engagement with governments & UN bodies: \$100,000 - \$250,000

Total estimate: \$350,000 - \$750,000

This is a pivotal moment for the CEDAW Index.

With growing global recognition of the need for robust, data-driven tools to track and evaluate progress on women's rights, funding now will ensure that we can scale our impact.

By supporting this project, you are contributing directly to the advancement of gender equality worldwide.

We invite you to engage with us further through meetings, discussions, or collaborative partnership, as we continue to refine and expand the tool. Together, we can drive systemic change in how women's health, safety, and rights are understood, tracked, and addressed on the global stage.

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