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WHAT COUNTS?

Executive Summary

The state of funding for the prevention of gender-based violence against women and girls.



ABOUT US

The Accelerator for GBV Prevention

The Accelerator for GBV Prevention (the Accelerator) was co-created by a group of dedicated feminists, researchers, and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention experts from UN agencies, donors, activists, and governments, to coordinate collective advocacy to mobilise more and better resources for evidence-based, practice and feminist-informed GBV prevention policy and programming.

The Equality Institute

The Equality Institute (EQI) is a global feminist agency working to advance gender equality and end violence against women and girls. We conduct research, provide guidance on policies and programmes, and build creative ways to incite social change.

AUTHORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Produced by the Equality Institute and the Accelerator for GBV Prevention with the generous financial support of Wellspring Philanthropic Fund.

Our deep gratitude to the interviewees and stakeholders who generously provided their time, expertise, and insights to help shape this report.

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SUGGESTED CITATION

The Equality Institute & The Accelerator for GBV Prevention (2023) What Counts? The State of Funding for the Prevention of Gender-based Violence Against Women and Girls. Executive Summary.

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INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girls in all their diversity⁴ is a fundamental violation of human rights.⁵ 1 in 3 women experience violence in their lifetime. However, rates of violence are much higher for women and girls who are marginalised and who experience intersecting forms of discrimination.⁶

GBV is a precondition to the achievement of gender equality and with the right actions and investments, it's eradication can be achieved within years, rather than lifetimes. Achieving this goal requires a focus on programs and policies that prevent violence before it begins.

In 2021, the Accelerator for GBV Prevention and the GBV prevention community came together to develop a multistakeholder Shared Advocacy Agenda that advances two high level goals:

Goal 1:

Increased direct investment in evidence-based programs and policies by private donors, governments, bilaterals, and multilaterals for the prevention of gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity by at least \$USD 500 million of new money by 2026 in low and middle-income countries.

Goal 2:

Funded policy and program commitments to evidence-based, practice-informed GBV prevention, by 50% of all national governments by 2026, in addition to or outside of international assistance, through one or more specific budget lines.

The Shared Advocacy Agenda was formally adopted as a collective commitment under the Generation Equality Forum's GBV Action Coalition as part of its ambitious 5-year agenda to accelerate progress towards ending GBV and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.⁷

With less than three years to achieve the 2026 GBV Action Coalition commitments and seven years until the end of the SDGs, there is an urgent need to understand and track progress towards the target of \$USD 500 million in new money for evidence-based prevention programs and policies in Low- and lower-middle incomes countries (LLMIC). This report focuses on Goal 1 and is the first step in understanding the existing donor funding landscape, the opportunities to drive future investment and the proposed approach to tracking new money for GBV prevention towards 2026.

⁴ Women and girls in all their diversity, for the purposes of our report, includes any person that identifies as female and/or gender non-conforming. We recognise the limitations of the term 'gender-based violence' and the cisgendered, heteronormative origins of the term.

⁵ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), CEDAW General Recommendation No. 19: Violence against women, 1992.

⁶ WHO (2021) 'Violence against women Prevalence Estimates, 2018. Global, regional and national prevalence estimates for intimate partner violence against women and global and regional prevalence estimates for non-partner sexual violence against women.'

⁷ GBV Action Coalition, global outcome target 9.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- This report provides an estimated baseline of direct investment by donors in GBV prevention between 2018-2023 in LLMICs.
- It identifies the current trends in the funding landscape and the gaps and opportunities for funding prevention.
- It proposes an approach for tracking progress towards the GBV prevention goals in the Shared Advocacy Agenda and Generation Equality GBV Action Coalition blueprint.
- It provides recommendations and opportunities for donors to increase investment in prevention.

Establishing an estimated baseline in investment by donors will enable the Accelerator and EQI to track funding trends and new and additional investment over the next three years, providing a clear picture of progress towards the \$USD 500 million prevention target. Funding trends, case studies and good practice by donors will be shared in the Accelerator's Global GBV Prevention Funding Report in 2024 and 2026.

The data and analysis from this report and future reports will feed into the accountability framework for the Generation Equality Forum and provide much-needed data on progress made on collective commitments in the Shared Advocacy Agenda.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO TRACK GBV PREVENTION INVESTMENT?

Preventing the underlying drivers of violence such as gender inequality is crucial to ending GBV and requires comprehensive strategies working across sectors, within a feminist and intersectional framework of change. This differs to GBV response work which is focused on strengthening service provision as well as legal and justice responses. Investment in response is critical yet, alone, it will not achieve the large scale, transformative changes needed within families, communities and whole populations that will lead to the elimination of GBV.

For a long time, GBV prevention and response funding has been counted under the one umbrella. In order to achieve the large scale, catalytic changes needed to end GBV, we need ambitious investments in prevention. This report is the starting point for understanding who is investing in GBV prevention, the levels of funding, the limitations in existing data and finding ways to count and track prevention investment more effectively.

METHODOLOGY

A detailed explanation of the report methodology is included in the What Counts? Full Report. In summary, the report is based on both quantitative data collection and 12 key informant interviews. Our research sought to identify a baseline of direct investment in GBV prevention from fifteen bilateral governments, multilateral agencies including the World Bank and select United Nations agencies, philanthropic trusts and foundations known to support GBV prevention, the European Union - Spotlight Initiative, the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, the Sexual Violence Research Initiative research grants and a sample of five feminist funds.

We collected and analysed data from the OECD Creditor Reporting System and government open aid portals, using a range of key word searches to identify GBV prevention investments.

Establishing a baseline in direct investment in evidence-based prevention is a difficult and complex task as prevention work is not systematically recorded and disaggregated from larger programs of work. The limited information on program approaches means this is a study of quantity rather than quality and effectiveness. Given the complexity of the task, this baseline should be considered a broad estimate based on an analysis of OECD and open aid data sets and information available online.

KEY STATISTICS

From the data gathered as part of this baseline study, it is broadly estimated that:

- **With overall overseas development assistance in 2022 totalling \$USD 204 billion,⁸ investment in GBV prevention was a mere 0.2% of overall aid and development spending.⁹**
- **Over the five-year period of 2018-2023, donors have invested an average of approximately \$USD 410 million per year in GBV prevention (\$USD 2.06 billion in total).**
- **Some regions are missing out on prevention investment – approximately 1% of donor government investment for GBV prevention reaches the Caribbean and 5% reaches the Middle East and North Africa.¹⁰**
- **Approximately 98% of donor government funding for prevention goes through INGOs, private contractors, multilaterals, and government agencies.¹¹**

When compared to other areas of ODA spending, prevention of GBV sits low on the list of priorities for donors. In 2021 alone, \$USD 14.38 billion was spent on health, \$USD 10.12 billion on education, \$USD 1.84 billion on social protection, and \$USD 4.14 billion on environmental protection, in aid and development.¹²

⁸ Preliminary OECD data 2022 (April 2023), *Official Development Assistance*.

⁹ This is the estimated yearly average investment in GBV prevention (\$USD 410 million) as a percentage share of overall ODA in 2022 (\$USD 204 billion).

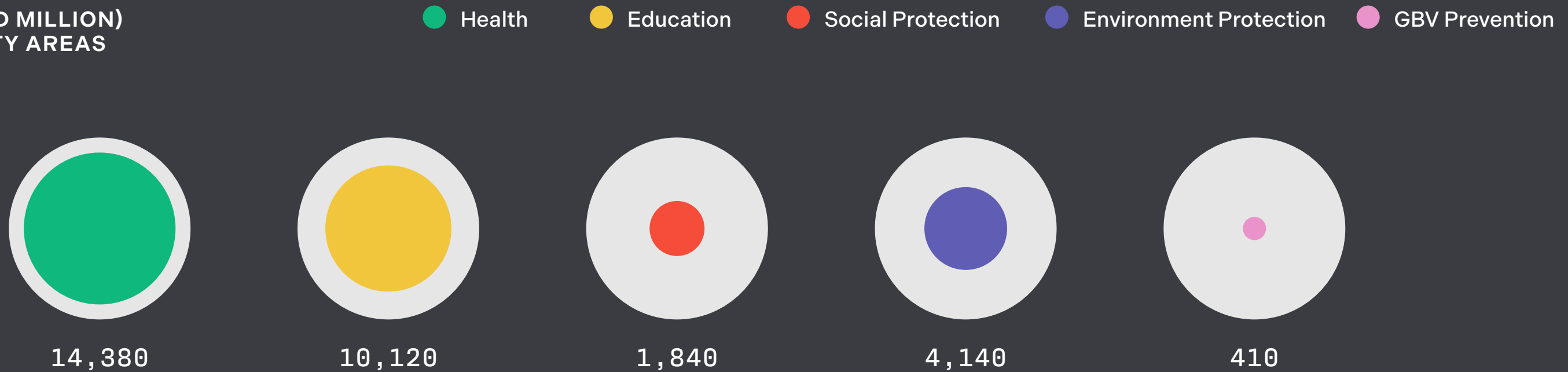
¹⁰ Calculation is based on an analysis of the data collected for this baseline study.

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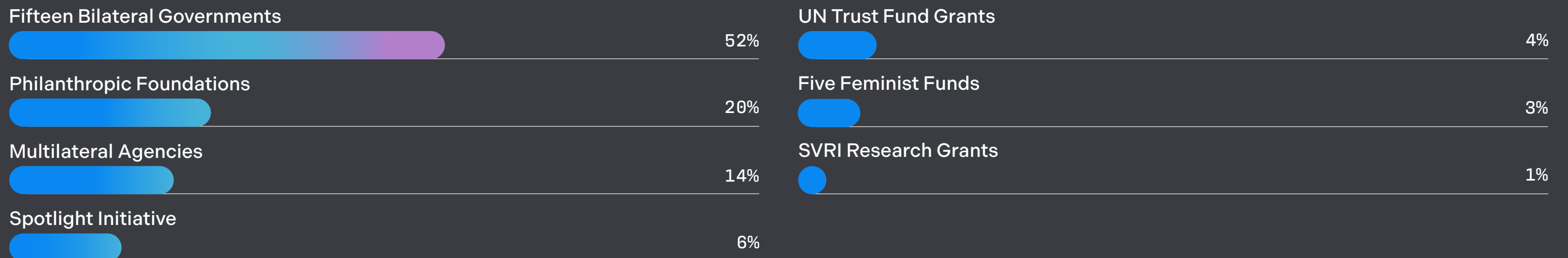
¹² OECD, Creditor Reporting System as accessed on 15 July 2023.

If donors consistently ear-marked an additional 0.1% of health and education budgets for GBV prevention work, it could radically transform the funding landscape, meeting the target of \$USD500 million of new money by 2026.

**SPENDING (\$USD MILLION)
ON ODA PRIORITY AREAS
IN 2021**



**THE FUNDING LANDSCAPE FOR
GBV PREVENTION 2018-2023**



KEY FINDINGS

DATA

- Tracking GBV prevention funding is a complex and difficult task, limited by existing data sets, lack of disaggregated data, and inconsistency in recording and reporting on prevention-specific work.
- There are examples of good-practice in donor-led reporting with some donors publishing stand-alone reports on their investments in GBV and GBV prevention.

BUDGETING

- Despite GBV prevention sitting across a range of portfolios such as health, education, livelihoods, and social protection, funding for prevention continues to be primarily drawn from GBV budgets.
- Donors can drive increased investment in GBV prevention through specific allocations in budgets across portfolios and sectors including education, climate change, health, agriculture, livelihoods, and social protection.
- There is a need to broaden and diversify philanthropic funding, bringing in new partners and recognising that GBV prevention sits across thematic areas and not in a single portfolio.

KNOWLEDGE OF GBV PREVENTION WITHIN DONOR AGENCIES

- There is a knowledge gap across teams in relation to what evidence-based prevention is and how to integrate prevention into non-GBV programs.
- To build a multi-sectoral approach to GBV prevention, strengthening knowledge and expertise within donor agencies is critical.

FUNDING

- The existing level of funding for GBV prevention is currently not sufficient to deliver the high-quality, evidence-based prevention programming and policies that will have an impact across entire populations.
- Short-term funding cycles are a barrier to the successful implementation of evidence-based prevention programs impacting on communities, relationships, and individuals, who begin a change process but are not supported to complete it.
- There is an overwhelming need for funding by WROs in the Global Majority in order to deliver critical GBV prevention work in their communities. However, the majority of funding flows through INGOs, private contractors, governments and multilateral agencies. Most of the funding currently available is short-term and project-based.
- Funding is limited for prevention research and for networks based in the Global Majority. Local researchers and networks lack the visibility and profile and are competing against large universities and institutions in the Global North.

A MODEL FOR TRACKING GBV PREVENTION COMMITMENTS

The Accelerator and EQI will track and report on progress towards the GBV prevention goals in the Shared Advocacy Agenda and Generation Equality GBV Action Coalition blueprint, as part of its Global GBV Prevention Funding Report in 2024 and 2026. The three elements of the proposed model are:

Annual GBV prevention surveys for donors and national governments

Thematic reports on emerging trends and key issues in GBV prevention

Profiles of good practice by donors and national governments in GBV prevention

A ROADMAP FOR ALL DONORS TO INCREASE INVESTMENT IN PREVENTION

RECOMMENDATION 1

BUILD A MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH TO PREVENTION

a. Policies and programs

Build commitments to GBV prevention in National Action Plans¹³, international development policies, feminist foreign policies, strategies, and sectoral policies as well as evidence-based programme interventions.

b. Budgeting

Adopt a multi-sectoral approach to budgeting, ensuring GBV prevention is integrated in portfolio/sector budgets with allocations based on long-term flexible funding that support the whole life cycle of GBV prevention work.

c. Knowledge and convening

Strengthen donor collaboration to share knowledge of good practice and build a shared understanding of GBV prevention.

RECOMMENDATION 2

FUND WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS AND FEMINIST MOVEMENTS¹⁴

a. Directly fund WROs and feminist movements

Directly fund WROs and feminist movements, offering long-term, core and flexible funding to finance GBV prevention.

b. Increase funding to independent feminist funds

Increase funding to independent feminist funds that work across the globe, supporting WROs with core, long-term and flexible funding.

RECOMMENDATION 3

REPORTING AND TRACKING GBV PREVENTION FUNDING

a. Guidelines

The OECD and DAC countries develop GBV prevention-specific guidance and standardisation of terminology and naming conventions in Creditor Reporting System (CRS) reporting.

b. Reform to OECD coding

The OECD and DAC countries undertake an exploratory study to determine whether GBV prevention should be added as a DAC policy marker or stand-alone DAC purpose code.

c. Private philanthropy

Philanthropic foundations report annually on investment in GBV prevention funding.

d. Donor initiated GBV assessments

Major donors take a leadership role in self-reporting, providing regular audits and assessments of their GBV prevention and response spending.

¹³ Together for Prevention: Handbook on Multisectoral National Action Plans to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls provides practical and detailed guidance to governments, CSOs, development partners and policy makers on how to develop a multisectoral coordinated National Action Plan for prevention.

¹⁴ There is clear guidance for moving towards a feminist funding ecosystem. See Kellea Miller and Rochelle Jones, AWID (2019) 'Toward a Feminist Funding Ecosystem'; Mama Cash (November 2022) 'Policy Brief: Stronger Action Needed to Resource Feminist Movements'; Black Feminist Fund (March 2023) 'Where is the Money for Black Feminist Movements?'

