



Women for Women International

Delivering the Global Goals

Democratic Republic of the Congo
report card 2017



The Challenge: No one left behind

Since 2004, Women for Women International has worked with more than 91,000 marginalised women survivors of war in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Our core work is centred on a holistic, year-long programme to address the needs of marginalised women in conflict-affected countries around the world. We define marginalisation based on three crucial areas of vulnerability: affected by conflict, living in extreme poverty and experiencing social exclusion.

The UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development (the 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 important opportunity to implement catalytical changes for those who need them most. The Goals make the specific commitment to 'leave no one behind', meaning that they cannot be considered a success unless they are met for everyone, including the women we serve.

Reporting on progress towards the Goals faces multiple and significant challenges. These relate both to the way that data is collected (often unreliable, infrequent or patchy) and what data is collected. In both cases, insufficient data is collected for vulnerable groups, including women and girls. For example, indicators under the Goals have been set and graded on a three-tier system by the UN, with Tier I being the strongest in terms of methodological development and the availability of data. More than a third of the Goal's indicators are classified as Tier III.¹

This document situates key data gathered from women graduates of our work in DRC in 2016² within the framework of the Goals. By sharing this data, we aim to highlight the magnitude posed by the 'leave no one behind' challenge and how it can be effectively addressed. For example, at the start of our programme, **all** (100%) of the women we work with in DRC report earning less than \$1.25 per day. At the end of our year-long programme, the proportion of women earning less than \$1.25 a day drops to **68.8%**.³ Whilst both these figures are still far higher than the global average of **13%** living below the international poverty line (\$1.90 USD per day),⁴ the impact for the women we serve from being able to increase their average daily personal earnings from **\$0.74 to \$1.22** within the course of a year is important. Investing in the women we serve is vital and there is much more to do.

The data we collect are focused exclusively on marginalised women survivors of conflict and are therefore not nationally representative. But the data do provide a valuable snapshot of the lives of some of the most marginalised women in the world. This data should help national and international policymakers to understand hard-to-reach populations and support a more nuanced analysis of progress to gauge the extent to which the Goals really are leaving no one behind.



Claudine's story

Claudine lost her parents when she was a child. Aged 17, she met a young man at church and they fell in love and got married.

"At first, we had a good marriage and were fortunate to raise our children in a loving environment" says Claudine.

But after a few years of marriage, her husband started drinking.

"Things got out of hand when one day he came home in the evening and started yelling at me. He took the pan in which I was cooking beans outside and threw it away. In our custom, this meant, 'I no longer want this woman in my house.' He started beating me until I was bleeding

everywhere. It was the very first time I was beaten and the last time that I entered that house."

Claudine returned to live with her relatives, but life was hard. "I was left with very little means when I went back to my family. I had to go to work on other people's farms to earn money to feed my children. It was very hard and I could only send the youngest two to school."

Claudine joined the Women for Women International programme, where she met women who had experienced similar situations. "We love each other in the class and when we are all there, we are very happy. We are like sisters."

For reasons of security and privacy, we are using a photo of a different Women for Women International graduate to represent the woman in the story

Meeting the challenge:

Women for Women International was founded on the belief that stronger women build stronger nations. Our work focuses on providing women survivors of conflict with the opportunity to build crucial knowledge and skills to develop their economic and social empowerment through our year-long programme. Through this programme, participants also receive access to resources including a monthly cash transfer,

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 to help break the isolation caused by war and insecurity.

We collect in-depth data from a large sample of participants to gauge women's progress through the programme as well as at one and two years after graduation.

The data presented here compares data gathered from the same sample of women at enrolment (in 2015) and at graduation (in 2016). The data we gather from the women we serve focuses exclusively on changes in four key areas of women's social and economic empowerment: **earning and saving money, health and well-being, decision-making,** and **building networks.**

As acknowledged by the Goals, the lived experience of marginalisation or extreme poverty is multidimensional and interlinked – it is not defined by earnings alone. The data presented here also reflects the complexity of leaving no one behind. Whilst the results of our work are promising, there is still much more to do to ensure progress for the women we serve, including in the Global Goals' framework.

Goal and selected target	Our indicator	At enrolment (2015)	At graduation (2016)
1 NO POVERTY 1.1: By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day	Share of women participants who report average personal earnings of at least \$1.25 per day (in current USD). ⁵	0%	31.2%
2 ZERO HUNGER 2.1: By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.	Share of women who report not worrying about food running out in the last three months.	23.9%	99.6%
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 3.7: By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes.	Share of women who report sometimes or frequently practicing family planning (if applicable).	1.0%	79.9%
4 QUALITY EDUCATION 4.1: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.	Proportion of school-aged girls in school (5-17 years).	69.2%	82.7%
	Proportion of school-aged boys in school (5-17 years).	72.2%	83.0%

Goal and selected target	Our indicator	At enrolment (2015)	At graduation (2016)
5 GENDER EQUALITY 5.6: Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.	Share of women who report being involved in family planning decisions (if applicable).	21.7%	82.8%
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.	Share of women who report being employed.	0.1%	0.6%
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.	Share of women who reported running for a leadership position in the last 12 months (if applicable).	10.5%	19.3%

Recommendations for governments and donors:



Prioritise and invest in those left furthest behind

Our work highlights how important our support is for the women we serve. Our data also highlights how much more support is needed to ensure the Goals' targets are met for marginalised women survivors of conflict. Investing in those left furthest behind must be an immediate priority.



Provide comprehensive and long-term support for women's empowerment

The Goals present a comprehensive framework which recognises the complex needs faced by the most marginalised people. The women we work with are faced with the legacy of conflict that poses multiple and intersecting challenges. Holistic support is essential to addressing these needs and long-term investment is essential for supporting behavioural changes and women's empowerment.



Listen to and support the most marginalised people

The success of all of the Goals will be dependent on listening to those people left furthest behind and supporting them to drive forward the changes that they want to see. Amplifying the voices of marginalised groups will also be crucial in meeting the specific targets around representation and leadership.



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 (including Women for Women International) should be considered by the international community as it reviews progress under the Goals. Such data will help governments and donors to better understand marginalised groups.

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!

womenforwomen.org.uk/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

Endnotes

- 1 As of April 2017, 84 of the 232 (36%) of the official indicators for the Goals are Tier III, meaning that "No internationally established methodology or standards are yet available for the indicator, but methodology/standards are being (or will be) developed or tested." <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/tier-classification/>
- 2 The data presented here were provided by 1,351 participants who graduated from Women for Women International's core programme between January and December 2016 in DRC. This dataset only includes baseline and endline data for sampled graduates who were interviewed in both survey rounds. Of the 4,480 participants who graduated in 2016, approximately 30% are included in these analyses. These are weighted averages and N/A responses have been excluded. **Please note that since the publication of this 2016 data, our survey instrument has been revised to capture participant data with greater reliability and precision. Thus, future indicators will differ substantially in the way they are worded, as well as the corresponding data that is presented.** <http://www.womenforwomen.org.uk/what-we-do/impact>
- 3 Data on personal earnings is based on the real exchange rate (not purchasing power parity).
- 4 The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016 (published July 2017): 1 in 8 people live below the international poverty line is \$1.90 (PPP), not aggregated by sex. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2016/>
- 5 Please note that we are currently integrating the new international poverty line (\$1.90) into our monitoring instruments, our data here was gathered based on \$1.25 a day. It should also be noted that this data is about women's personal (not household) earnings in current USD.

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.

Get in touch

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