FUTURE PROOFING EQUALITY

A just world for women and girls

Organizational Strategy | 2022-24
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At the start of our last 2017 Strategic Plan, we were overjoyed to report that women’s rights were progressing in all parts of the world. Somehow, today, this is no longer the reality faced by millions of women and girls. The world is reeling from multiple seismic shocks, causing confusion and a disturbing lurch to the extreme right. Previously distinct factors are compounding each other; from COVID-19 to climate change, the collapse of failed states to increased migration and income inequality. This conglomeration of global crises has expedited the rise of the ‘strongman’ leader in many countries, feeding off and promoting nationalism, xenophobia and the chronic abuse of human rights.

We know that investing in women’s equality and a more gender equal society has a vital role to play in solving many of the problems the world is facing today, advancing peace, security, prosperity and controlling climate change and migration. Investments in equality for women, which were already low, are now decreasing at alarming rates as funds are re-prioritised and agendas changed with new, reactionary leaderships. Decreased funding means that not only do women suffer, communities can’t benefit from the wider outcomes of gender equality, for example, more money in economies, less violence and less instability.

On our 30th anniversary, we need to double down on the commitment to our vision, and scale up to meet the growing assault on justice for women and girls around the world.

Reflecting on our progress has shown us the path ahead. We know we can create the most impact through globalizing our work, expanding our influence and connecting our networks as we move into new contexts. We must galvanize people around shared goals to attract and mobilize more resources. And we will invest in ourselves to become ever more effective and united as One Equality Now.

“These ideas; Globalize, Galvanize and Lead underpin our work for the next three years.”

**GLOBALIZE**

We will work harder and do more for women and girls around the world, ensuring we deliver long-term impact and positive change in everything we do. We will seek out, confront and challenge inequality and oppression in every area, from age-old constructs including religion and traditional practices to new, digital environments. Increasing resources to the overall women’s equality sector will be a priority, helping to grow and empower a women’s rights movement that is vibrant, energized and free to speak out and collaborate with each other.

**GALVANIZE**

True equality under the law must go hand in hand with social awareness of injustice and the positive impact of equality. We will be a flag bearer of this message, engaging and provoking audiences around the world to take action, leading in new and diverse contexts through our expertise, tenacity and influence.

**LEAD**

As we grow, we will create the reality of One Equality Now, where the collective power of our people and teams are united by shared values and ways of working. We have become a fully dispersed organization during the pandemic and One Equality Now will power us to get maximum impact from each individual and shared effort.

This is my last year at Equality Now. I have been honored to serve over the last 13 years. Now it is time for new leadership to accelerate our impact, and continue the journey with increased momentum and energy.

In the coming pages you will read what we’re setting out to achieve, how we’re going to do it and the difference we expect to deliver. Thank you for being part of this journey.

In solidarity and with gratitude,

Yasmeen Hassan
Global Executive Director
Equality Now elevates women’s rights and gender equality as an essential part of international human rights. When we started, 30 years ago, domestic violence was an acceptable part of life, sex trafficking was not named as a matter of international concern, female genital mutilation and child marriage were just cultural practices and rape was merely a by-product of war, but not a war crime. Since then there has been a sea change in the recognition of women’s rights and equality that we have contributed to, but our work is far from done. Our vision, mission and values remain the same.
OUR PURPOSE
To make, change and apply the law to establish enduring equality for women and girls everywhere.

OUR VISION
A world in which all women and men have equal rights under the law, and full enjoyment of their human rights.

OUR MISSION
To achieve legal and systemic change that addresses violence and discrimination against women and girls around the world.

OUR VALUES
Equality Now is bound by our commitment to gender equality and our shared values of integrity, inclusiveness, tenaciousness and perseverance.

OUR TEAM
Using the full weight of human rights mechanisms, our global team holds governments responsible for their international obligations to prohibit all forms of violence and discrimination against women. You’ll find us across the world in Benin, Beirut, Delhi, London, Geneva, San Jose, New York, Nairobi, Tbilisi, Washington DC among others.

OUR COMMITMENT TO INCLUSIVENESS AND INTERSECTIONALITY
We believe that discrimination against women based on sex and gendered roles is inextricably linked with other factors that affect women and girls, such as race, ethnicity, religion or belief, disability, status, age, class, caste, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Discrimination on the basis of sex or gender may affect women belonging to such groups to a different degree or in different ways to men. Therefore, we recognize and seek to address intersecting forms of discrimination.

OUR PROGRAMME AREAS
We work in four thematic areas to:

Achieve Legal Equality. Governments and legal systems, nationally, regionally, internationally, treat all women and men and all girls and boys equally.

End Sexual Violence. There are better laws, policies, practices and procedures on rape and sexual assault, and better implementation of such laws and policies. Including by ensuring that all survivors’ needs are met, particularly those facing additional discrimination and marginalization.

End Sexual Exploitation. Women and girls are free from sexual exploitation and abuse, in physical and online spaces. National governments meet their responsibility to enact and implement international and national laws to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls, and end the impunity of exploiters and abusers.

End Harmful Practices. Women and girls are free from harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage and honor killings. Women’s and girls’ rights to live with full protection from harmful practices are upheld, and they have access to justice when threatened by or subjected to them.
COVID-19 HAS NEGATIVELY IMPACTED WOMEN’S EQUALITY
The global response to COVID-19 has been a shocking reminder at how fragile progress in women’s equality can be. In every sphere of life, women and girls have come under increasing threat. Resourcing for women’s equality decreased as funds were diverted to the ongoing health and care emergency. Women’s education and employment took a hit as schools closed and women were expected to leave the workforce to care for families. We witnessed an alarming escalation in domestic violence as women in lockdown were trapped in their homes with violent partners. One in two women report they, or a woman they know, have experienced violence since the pandemic. (Source UN Women, Measuring the Shadow Pandemic, November 2021). In the Global South, increasing numbers of girls were subjected to child marriage, FGM and sexual exploitation. And across the globe predators quickly took advantage of more children spending more time online to connect in unregulated and unmonitored digital spaces to groom children for sexual abuse.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IS NOT DECREASING DESPITE THE ENACTMENT OF LAWS, AND LEGAL SYSTEMS ARE NOT PROVIDING ACCESS TO JUSTICE
Since we began, significant legislation has come into force across the world, designed to protect women and girls. At least 158 countries have passed laws on domestic violence, and 141 have laws on sexual harassment in employment. However there is still substantial legal reform needed, particularly with regard to sexual assault and issues of consent. Women and girls deserve good laws that comply with international standards and are implemented properly. Legal systems often fail to provide women and girls access to justice, and an urgent overhaul of legal procedures, training and enforcement of laws is long overdue.

THE RISE OF EXTREME CONSERVATISM HAS CHALLENGED GENDER EQUALITY NORMS
The past decade has witnessed “strong men” elected into power around the world. These men ignore long-established and globally recognized human rights frameworks, using nationalism, xenophobia, and religious and ethnic identity to divide people and promote hatred and violence. They co-opt religion and...
tradition to justify oppression of women and reinforce inequality in communities where family law is determined by religion and tradition. Historically, the women's rights movement has been slow to face this specific challenge. For women and girls this has meant a roll back on rights to sexual and reproductive health, education, employment, political and economic participation, and their right to freedom from violence and exploitation.

**ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY HAVE INCREASED EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS**

The reliance on, unchecked advances in, and open and cheap access to digital platforms have created a fertile ground for online harms. Sexual violence, sex trafficking and sexual extortion have flourished alongside new forms of misogynistic cybercrime and abuse, such as ‘deep fake’ imagery and live streaming of sexual violence against women and children. Artificial intelligence and machine learning have amplified age-old biases that feed misogyny, racial and religious divisions and data biases that exacerbate inequality. Targeted misinformation and manipulation to reinforce ideologies has led to an increase in social division, hate and the rise of conspiracists and conservative forces across the world. Current laws and legal systems are applied to a digital, multijurisdictional space in a way that they are not fit for purpose, especially as tech giants cannot be trusted to self-regulate, which poses significant risk to women and girls.

**CLIMATE CHANGE HAS ADVERSELY IMPACTED WOMEN’S SECURITY AND EQUALITY**

The environmental crisis affects us all, but impacts women and girls more acutely, in terms of displacement, security and loss of family livelihoods. At the same time, analysts rank women's equality and empowerment (resulting in increased political and economic participation and better policies, better educational outcomes and more control over reproduction) amongst the top solutions to the climate crisis. Yet there is a significant funding gap for development/climate change in the women’s rights sector. It is imperative to explicitly make the connections between women’s equality and curbing climate change so that there is enhanced focus and increased resources to our sector.

**BUT THE WOMEN’S MOVEMENT IS READY FOR WHAT’S NEXT**

Just as these disruptive forces are coming together, so are people determined to fight against them to protect and secure their rights, and the rights of others. Women and girls have risen up against sexual violence and exploitation under the banner of #MeToo. There was visceral public support of #BlackLivesMatter in response to police violence against Black people in the USA and then discrimination against Black people everywhere. These causes have resonated and connected women and other marginalized groups around the world. This coming together into cohesive, inclusive and diverse movements is critical to creating sustained equality, underlining our crucial role as a convenor and champion of intersecting voices everywhere.

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1 World Bank Gender & Climate Change: 3 Things You Should Know
2 Our Voices, Our Environment the state of funding for women’s environmental action
MAKING GENDER EQUALITY A REALITY

Since 1992, Equality Now has held true to our purpose. Our award winning legal and advocacy work has changed the lives of millions of women and girls worldwide. It can take years for systemic change to take hold, and our perseverance and tenacity pays tribute to the impact we have made so far.

ACHIEVING LEGAL EQUALITY: MILLIONS MORE WOMEN AND GIRLS EQUAL IN THE EYES OF THE LAW
Equality Now is seen as a leader in the field of achieving legal equality for women and girls.

In 2000 we were an integral part of a campaign to make the repeal of sex discriminatory laws a key global priority via the Beijing Platform for Action. Working with The Solidarity for African Women’s Rights (SOAWR) Coalition as its secretariat, Equality Now has been a driving force behind the drafting, adoption and implementation of the Maputo Protocol in Africa. Which is regarded as one of the most progressive women’s rights treaties in the world, and ratified by 42 of the 55 African states. We still need to ensure the final thirteen states adopt the protocol, and that every single state domesticates and implements it to its full effect.

ENDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE: SETTING INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR SEXUAL VIOLENCE LAWS
Our expert reports which evidence the need for significant legal reform, along with our collaboration with the UN to develop a model law and various groundbreaking campaigns, have resulted in reform to sexual violence laws. Working with our partners, we have achieved incredible results including:

- Since 2014, six countries in the Middle East (Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia) repealed their “marry your rapist” laws, protecting thousands of women and girls from further abuse.
- We have trained over a thousand criminal justice duty bearers to ensure survivors’ access to trauma informed services.
- The Maldives amended its law reducing the evidentiary burden for rape victims, and criminalized marital rape.
- In Mexico, Equality Now is helping to get the definition of rape changed from force-based to consent-based in their proposed sexual violence Bill.
- The Kenyan government made a commitment to fully implement its laws on rape, influenced by our multi-sectoral approach.

> 60% of the discriminatory laws we’ve highlighted have been repealed or amended
ENDING HARMFUL PRACTICES: GENERATIONS OF GIRLS FREE FROM FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION AND CHILD MARRIAGE

We have always fought to get female genital mutilation recognized as a human rights violation, rather than a cultural practice, and we’ve played a significant role in getting it recognized as a global issue by the UN.

We secured the first ever convictions under FGM laws in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Kenya and Liberia, and helped the Kenyan government defend and improve the implementation of its anti FGM law.

Our campaigning with partners has ensured 18 is the minimum age of marriage without exception in many countries around the world, helping millions more girls stay in school, and escape poverty and abuse. In Yemen and Saudi Arabia, we won divorces for child brides and helped establish a regulation in Saudi Arabia preventing the marriage of girls under 17.

ENDING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: PROTECTING VULNERABLE WOMEN AND GIRLS FROM EXPLOITATION

Our work on the Palermo Protocol enshrined protection from trafficking in international law, and our recommendations to address the demand that drives sex trafficking and prostitution, both digitally and physically, have been incorporated into General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence under the Istanbul Convention.

Our advocacy contributed to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women’s (CEDAW) adoption of a General Recommendation (38) on trafficking in women and girls reinforcing the understanding that trafficking and exploitation of prostitution of women and girls “is unequivocally a phenomenon rooted in structural sex-based discrimination, constituting gender-based violence.”

LITIGATING FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS: LEGAL CASES THAT MOVED THE DIAL ON GENDER EQUALITY

Strategic litigation is a powerful way to hold governments to account for their commitments to women and girls. Equality Now has conducted or intervened in several strategic litigation cases that have resulted in new precedents being set including:

- In Sudan, we supported the appeal, and secured the release of, a young woman, forced into marriage, who was given the death penalty for killing her husband as he raped her.
- In Africa, the decision on a case we led on regarding the abduction, rape and forced marriage of an adolescent girl resulted in a regional precedent and now forms part of our training for judges and lawyers across Africa.
- In Pakistan incest case, we helped secure the highest legal penalty against the perpetrator as well as strengthening legal procedures in the case.
- In Sierra Leone, following our successful prosecution at the ECOWAS court, the government lifted the ban on pregnant girls’ education.

We have helped shut down tour operators and websites that have facilitated commercial sexual exploitation and who have been cited in many child trafficking cases. Equality Now brought the first federal law suit in the US for sex tourism.
Our Theory of Change provides a framework for all our work, enabling us to analyse, organize and implement effectively. It was built on three core pathways; Legal, Collaboration and Advocacy, that help us bring about the change we want to see. But, as we developed this strategy we saw resourcing for women’s rights shrinking and advocacy spaces we work in becoming more polarized. Global priorities shifted towards new other challenges including climate change and COVID-19. And the rise of reactionary forces and fundamentalism has significantly impacted our ecosystem of change. This situation has highlighted two things:

The urgent need for sustained investment in gender equality, and as such we have integrated a Resourcing pathway, identifying investors as key actors, into our Theory of Change.

The need for deeper feminist intersectional analysis and practice to be built into our Theory of Change to overcome the increasing divisions. This goes hand in hand with our advocacy and multisectoral approaches that are less adversarial and more collaborative.
Collaboration

Mutual partnerships and collective action with groups on the ground are essential to bring about sustainable change for women and girls. We work in partnership with a diverse range of actors to increase our reach and impact. We recognize that change must come from the ground up, and that local groups are best placed to understand how to make that change happen. Along the collaboration pathway we provide support and solidarity, from opportunities for those most affected to be heard and for women's rights organizations and others to listen and learn. We also bring groups together around common causes, enabling them to strategize and plan collective action to amplify each group’s efforts through international advocacy.

Legal

The law signals society’s values: equality in the law is the first step to equality for women and girls. Our goal is to facilitate legal and thus systemic change that addresses violence and discrimination against women and girls in all their diversity. Along the legal pathway, we use our expertise, influence and reputation in international human rights legislation and law, and our knowledge of how to leverage legislative change. We engage in legal advocacy and strategic litigation, and hold governments accountable to their obligations under regional and international law.

Advocacy

A diversity of people working together to advocate can change the world. Raising awareness of how to end women’s inequality, and getting diverse networks to advocate for change will bring about change. We aim to build the constituency of people advocating for progressive regional, national and international laws, standards and jurisprudence by giving the people who matter and who are most affected the most powerful information and a more powerful voice. We use social media and mainstream outlets, influencers, artists and activists to engage the public, the media and governments, so we can influence public awareness, education, attitudes and ultimately support for legislative and systemic change.

Resourcing

Resource contributors are an essential part of the ecosystem of change. Just as feminist activists, lawyers and partners, are all essential to bringing about equality for women and girls, so are funders who invest resources to support the work. The women’s rights sector is woefully underfunded, representing just 1.6% of charitable giving in the United States, with giving to women and girls’ civil rights and advocacy representing just 0.3% of this amount. To hold governments accountable, stand up to power, and change the systems that repress women and girls, women’s organizations need financial resources. If we inspire more people to invest in justice for women and girls, encourage funders to make sustained and lasting investments and develop a deep understanding of our change process, we know they will engage their networks in supporting Equality Now and our peers. Our goal is a fully-capitalized women’s sector, in which the movement has the resources it needs to achieve its goals.
STRATEGIC GOALS 2022-24

The world in 2022 is as unstable as in any period in recent history. As global trends and priorities are changing rapidly, a three year strategic plan will give us focus and flexibility. It will continue to tackle current challenges, and respond to new and emerging issues. In this age of mistrust and constant attacks on women’s rights, it will enable us to secure more resources, even in this scarce environment.

Our goals for the next three years can be summarized in three core areas:

**GLOBALIZE**
Support and strengthen women’s rights movements around the world by adapting and responding to the new threats they face and find better ways to solve entrenched issues so we can futureproof equality for women and girls.

**GALVANIZE**
Create a stronger, more secure and sustainable women’s rights movement by increasing engagement with activists, decision makers and funders who will invest in a global community for change.

**LEAD**
Invest in our own organization and staff so that we are poised to meet increasing demands for our work as One Equality Now.
Make the digital world a safe, secure and equal place for women and girls

We have been working to regulate the internet and hold tech companies to account for enabling sex trafficking and exploitation online. The online space is a dimension that reproduces and amplifies the sexism and misogyny of the physical world but with limited legal and regulatory safety and security. The current pandemic has accelerated the need to bring new, powerful laws and regulation to the digital world, so we can prevent further harm and stop further exploitation of women and girls.

We have decades of experience in women’s human rights but are not experts in digital. That’s why we are proud to collaborate with the Women Leading in AI network to define, craft and advocate for the adoption of a Universal Declaration of Digital Rights. This Declaration will set the standards of equality, non violence and accountability for online spaces. Working in coalition, we will use our unique position and the full force of our experience on ending sex trafficking and online exploitation, and our global influence with global policymakers.

In the next three years we will:

- Together with Women Leading in AI, create and campaign for the adoption of a Universal Declaration on Digital Rights that articulates and guarantees the rights of all people in the digital space, and holds those responsible for digital spaces to account.
- Advocate for the inclusion of digital rights within existing international and regional laws and standards (i.e. CEDAW, Palermo Protocol, Maputo Protocol) so that women and girls are guaranteed freedom of expression, privacy and safety.
- Advocate for national laws on online sexual exploitation and abuse in Kenya, India, UK and US.

Ensure equality in the family for women and girls

While there has been progress in amending many sex discriminatory laws, family laws underpinned by religion and tradition remain largely untouched. We know that if women and girls are not equal in the family, the primary unit of society, they cannot progress in other areas. There has been a rise in radical religion and conservatism and women’s rights activists have not historically worked within religion and tradition.

Over the past two years, we have shaped and popularized the Global Campaign for Equality in the Family at the United Nations, among member states and with civil society actors. We will continue to fight for equality within family, religious law and pluralistic legal systems, and use our unique experience, legal expertise and global and regional influence to lead the community in a coalition for change.

In the next three years we will:

- Provide a secretariat to support the development and strategic direction of the Global Campaign for Equality in Family Law.
- Strengthen regional networks of women’s rights organisations to advocate for equality in family law in countries across the MENA (in Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Iraq) and Africa.
- Identify national level partners working on family law reform in countries in Africa and Asia and bring them into the Global Campaign.
Ensure access to justice for survivors of sexual violence

Sexual violence against women and girls is a global phenomenon. Our experience of the issue, directly informed by the experience of survivors of sexual violence, has highlighted the inadequacy of laws and legal systems to provide justice to survivors. Systems regularly re-victimize survivors, deterring crucial reporting.

Our comprehensive understanding of sexual violence laws and justice systems and our decades of experience makes us a critical force to overhaul of the world’s understanding of and response to rape.

In the next three years we will have better laws and legal procedures for survivors of rape and sexual assault, with an emphasis on marginalized groups, to facilitate better access to justice and end impunity for perpetrators. We will seek to have survivor-centered, trauma informed reform. The goal is to have functioning legal systems that lead to prevention through deterrence.

- **Eurasia and Central Asia**: In Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan work for the amendment of rape laws in line with international and regional law and best practices; provide training for law enforcement and prosecutors and guide reform of legal procedures and practices to ensure access to justice, including for women with disabilities.

- **South Asia**: In India, The Maldives and Nepal, support the reform of rape laws and legal procedures, including through strategic litigation and with a focus on marginalized women and girls (Dalit, Muslim) in India. Conduct an assessment of rape and sexual assault laws in Pakistan and create a plan for reform.

- **MENA**: Publish a report on all rape laws in the region as an evidence base for reform advocacy with a particular focus on Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon and Tunisia, including repeal of any continuing laws that allow rapists to escape punishment by marrying their victims.

- **Latin America**: In Bolivia and Mexico, amend the legal definition of rape to be based on consent rather than use of force and work to repeal provisions that impose lesser sentences for rape of adolescent girls. Maintain a focus on adolescent girls and on indigenous women.

- **North America**: In the United States, work on reform of the criminal justice system as it relates to sexual violence with the aim of addressing both racism and misogyny in the criminal justice system with a focus on marginalized and indigenous women and girls.

- **Africa**: Research and publish an Africa rape laws report.

- **Global**: Recognizing that many forms of violence happen to adolescent girls and that legal systems are ill-equipped to deal with girls that are judged as neither...
children nor adults, leading to the victimisation of girls and impunity for perpetrators, we will invest in and strengthen the work of the Adolescent Girls Legal Defence Fund that aims to make laws and legal systems responsive to the experiences of girls.

**Promote better implementation of laws to protect women and girls through a multi-sectoral approach**

The implementation of the laws enacted around the world to address violations against women has been inadequate. Though implementation is a national/local level issue, we need models and principles of effective implementation that can be adapted for different contexts. In particular, we know that implementation of laws on violence against women and girls requires not just action from law enforcement and courts but a Multi-Sectoral Approach (MSA), including the health, education and community development sectors, working with civil society.

We will develop a model for implementation of laws that can be used in different contexts, based on our pilot MSA project in Kenya, that focuses on the implementation of child marriage, FGM and sexual violence laws.

*In the next three years we will:*

- Promote an MSA to implementation of sexual violence laws relating to adolescent girls in Sierra Leone.
- Integrate MSA into the work of the SOAWR coalition that has members from 32 countries.
- Integrate learning from our MSA in Africa to other regions, starting with Eurasia and Latin America.

**Facilitate regional movements**

Women's movements flourish when women come together to explore common challenges and share strategies. Bringing women together around common goals, and providing them access to regional and international fora can push advocacy forwards, leading to life-changing societal reform.

In Africa, following the success of the SOAWR Coalition, which we spearheaded, we are now investing in the development and growth of similar coalitions in MENA, Eurasia and Asia, and supporting existing coalitions in the Americas.

*In the next three years we will:*

- **Africa:** Continue to support SOAWR to go from strength to strength in ensuring the ratification, domestication and implementation of the Maputo Protocol throughout Africa and its criminal justice systems. Build a presence in West and Southern Africa.
- **MENA:** Develop a regional coalition of diverse women's organisations in the MENA, initially addressing family law. Invest in communications strategies to amplify women's advocacy for equality in the region.
- **Eurasia:** Facilitate the development of a strong network of women’s rights experts and activists focused on sexual violence and the law across Eurasia. Invest in building on our success in the region, to expand into new countries and build a strong Eurasia partner network.
- **South Asia:** Support the development of coalitions of marginalized women's groups seeking justice for sexual violence in India (Dalit, Adivasi and Muslim women) and across the region. Invest in a presence in Pakistan to spearhead work there and in the region.
- **Americas:** Invest in work to ensure criminal justice reform works for marginalized groups, particularly African-American and indigenous women.
- **East Asia:** Explore ways to support the movement in East Asia and the Pacific.
Continue our ongoing critical campaigns aligned with four global thematic strategies

At the end of 2021, we had 28 active campaigns across our four thematic areas. We will continue to work with partners to deliver this work in Africa, Eurasia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, North America and South Asia. We will work globally through wider campaigns that contribute to one or more of our four thematic strategies.
FUTURE NEWSCASTER
Positive change doesn’t happen by accident. It takes people, hard work and resources to create it.

In 1992 Equality Now began with three people who challenged human rights violations against women and mobilized public pressure to stop the abuse of laws, of power and of women and girls. By 1993, they were joined by 1,000 activists in 25 countries, and we have steadily grown, until today where we have galvanized 300,000 activists and donors across every country in the world into action. With the support of this network, we are influencing governments and decision makers around the world.

Thirty years on and the world is presenting us with dynamic challenges, that means we need to operate differently. We don’t have the luxury of facing one problem at a time, problems that have distinct boundaries and fixed agendas. And in an age of misinformation, mistrust and polarized debate, we need to evolve. We must stand out as an innovative and trusted expert, an evidence based, and balanced organization that facilitates critical dialogue and works with a diverse network of people to achieve our goals.

Central to that network are funders. The women’s rights sector is severely undercapitalized and underfunded. Increasing and mobilizing resources is critical to success. The change we make has its roots in small groups spread out around the world, who rely on resources to sustain their research, advocacy and activism. We need to provoke, persuade and galvanize the people with the resources – philanthropists, the general public, corporations with a commitment to social impact, foundations, and bilateral agencies – by creating awareness of the issues, telling stories of change and directly and unequivocally asking for support.
We will be a home for those who want to invest in and achieve enduring change

We have always known achieving gender equality will not be delivered by one person or one organization. The principles of collaboration and co-creation are baked into Equality Now. And we know that a vibrant, thriving and well-resourced women’s rights movement is critical to our end goal. By leveraging our global reach we will attract and engage with individuals, funders, companies and organizations that believe in lasting change for women and girls. We will use our platform as a leading organization on women’s and girls equality to interact with donors and other stakeholders to make the case of gender equality as a solution to the world’s challenges such as climate change, conflicts, insecurity and poverty, to drive more resources to the movement.

To reach our ultimate goal we must ensure the women’s movement has the resources and capitalization it needs to challenge traditional power structures and systems, and make sustainable and lasting change.

*In the next three years we will:*

- Increase resources for the movement by: Thought leadership, including with donors, to position gender equality as a solution to the world’s challenges and to drive more resources to the field. Specifically positioning gender equality as a solution to climate change and driving resources dedicated to addressing climate change to women’s rights groups.
Increase unrestricted resources to Equality Now by:
Designing and delivering best-in-class stewardship that deepens and strengthens relationships, so our donors understand the impact of their support and become authentic partners in progress.
Defining and building an inspirational annual fund program that will clearly articulate our case for support and guarantee meaningful supporter engagement, enabling us to sustainably grow our donor base.
Raising $50 million by 2024 through a three-year fundraising and engagement campaign, focused on the most vital programs that need urgent funding.
Build a culture of philanthropy across the organization, empowering staff to understand the essential role and impact of fundraising, and our fundraising priorities. Become known influencers and thought leaders for the sector, and thereby influencing philanthropy for women and girls.

In the next three years we will:
- Produce, promote and deliver more measurable, innovative, efficient and funded advocacy communications, aligned to our Theory of Change
- Sharpen the focus of advocacy communications to engage decision makers with specific and impactful calls to action.
- Reinforce our sector leadership role by shifting our campaigning position towards collaborative activism, employing longer term strategies rooted in dialogue, expertise and inclusivity.
- Create a higher impact brand and international marketing strategy using storytelling and amplifying the voices of women and girls to become the preeminent international women’s and girls rights organization for funders, decision makers and partners.

Be a champion and advocate for those that progress new solutions to achieve gender equality
We will use our global reach and voice to bring together, learn from and lift up the changemakers of today. Building on 30 years of expertise and experience, we will be the go-to organization for innovation and evidence based thought leadership on gender equality and the law.

In the next three years we will:
- Develop a collaborative and forward looking thought leadership strategy that amplifies new fresh thinking.
- Launch the Op-Ed Project by June 2022, that capitalizes on our strength as a convenor of diverse and new ideas and our unique, solution based expert approach.

We will continue to embody inclusivity
To counter the rise in division and hate, we must be inclusive, collaborative, feminist and non-adversarial.

In the next three years we will:
- Provide robust, validated and trusted evidence and thought leadership for advocacy and change
- Become and be known as trusted legal experts on intersectional legal equality and feminist analysis of law
- Promote collaborative approaches to the implementation of laws where possible, working closely with WROs, CSOs, governments, the UN and regional bodies
- Foster partnerships that enable women’s movements to thrive

We will be an innovative and influential campaigner and beacon of change for women and girls
We will use our strong, trustworthy campaigning voice, underpinned by evidence, to inspire and influence governments and international bodies to deliver gender equality through the law. We will amplify the voice of survivors and partners in the women’s rights sector to hold those in power to account when they fail to protect women and girls.

In the next three years we will:
- Be intentionally intersectional in our analysis and approach.
- Be a champion and advocate for those that progress new solutions to achieve gender equality
- Develop a collaborative and forward looking thought leadership strategy that amplifies new fresh thinking.
- Launch the Op-Ed Project by June 2022, that capitalizes on our strength as a convenor of diverse and new ideas and our unique, solution based expert approach.
LEAD

The demand for our expertise and influence is increasing. Our organization is growing. Concurrently we have evolved with the pandemic to become fully dispersed with staff working around the world. While this opens many doors for our program reach and ability to attract diverse talent, it requires us to function as One Equality Now.

To ensure the organization meets the demands of leading, upholding and promoting women and girls' equality in a changing world, we will sharpen our operations. From investment in state of the art systems to policies and practices that support a dispersed growing organization and build staff capacity, we will hone and streamline our ways of working to help us deliver maximum impact towards our mission. We will improve our impact reporting and ensure the strategic focus of our campaigns, allowing us to attract more supporters, funders and investors. We will prepare Equality Now for a new leader in 2022, and for full strategic planning in 2024.

Current Equality Now Team
Develop improved strategic decision-making and enhance our impact reporting

In order to integrate sustainable funding into our Theory of Change, we must improve and better communicate our impact in a way that inspires our donor base. To achieve this, we will better understand what inspires people so we can capture and regularly report our impact accordingly, whilst building a new framework to help us make decisions of what campaigns to take, based on the projected impact.

In the next three years we will:
- Understand and define what impact our audiences find motivating, crafting communications to highlight these impacts
- Efficiently, effectively and consistently capture and report impact across our different stakeholder groups
- Create a decision making matrix based on campaign impact to help the Senior Leadership Team make strategic decisions about what campaigns to invest in

Establishing user-focused systems to support a growing, flexible and dispersed organization

While Equality Now has become a dispersed organization, enabling us to invest in excellence across the globe and support staff around the world, our strength lies in the fact that we are One Equality Now, sharing the same vision, mission and values. It is essential that we work and function in harmony across regions and across practice areas, supported by unified and consistent policies, procedures, systems and values.

In the past decade, we have grown from 17 to 54 staff and from a budget of $2.5 million to $13 million. Our continued focus on programs must now be matched by an investment in organizational infrastructure to support our growing organization. We will invest in financial management, budgeting, subgranting, human resources, IT, documentation and compliance systems that will serve a dispersed organization. We will consolidate our databases, create a system of internal communications and update our policies and procedures. All these investments will stand us in good stead to better deliver our work and grow the organization.

In the next three years we will:
- Establish state of the art financial, document and knowledge management systems.
- Consolidate our main databases to improve the security and integrity of our data and make cost savings.
- Implement a new internal communications strategy to ensure Equality Now staff have the support, information and relationships they need to excel in their roles.
- Update our IT ecosystem and support for staff as we become fully dispersed.
- Update and consistently implement our policies and procedures across all offices, supporting all staff to feel part of One Equality Now.
■ Improve partnership among the development, program, and business offices to streamline proposal development, budget development, and reporting.

Upskilling staff to succeed

Our staff are incredible individuals. Highly skilled, passionate and dedicated to delivering a better world for women and girls. We value every member of our growing staff, and know that our organization is nothing without their hard work, insight and expertise. To keep us delivering the impact we need, we will invest in continual development of their skills, provide more leadership training for manager level staff, more communications training for outward facing staff, and opportunities for staff to upskill.

In the next three years we will:
■ Invest in leadership training for staff with management responsibilities.
■ Upskill and reformat the Communications and Finance and Administration teams.
■ Invest across the organisation in training for strategy, research, legal, communications and gender and intersectional analysis.

Evolve our diversity, equality and inclusion policies and practices

We aspire to be a truly anti-racist, intersectional, and feminist organization that actively challenges all forms of discrimination in our own organizational culture and through our work. We believe that discrimination against women based on sex and gendered roles is inextricably linked with other factors that affect women, such as race, ethnicity, religion or disability. In the past two years Equality Now established a staff led anti-racist taskforce (ART Force) to ensure we are set up to achieve all of the above. We will evolve our current policies and ways of working to ensure that we are all best prepared to address the intersecting forms of discrimination women and girls face.

In the next three years we will:
■ Update our Staff Handbook integrating recommendations and principles of ARTForce.
■ Create an inclusive workplace culture that recognizes and values all backgrounds, voices, roles, and contributions.
■ Foster practises to help us build a globally and culturally diverse workforce, empowered and supported to perform at their highest potential.
■ Integrate ARTForce principles into programme design through investment in reflective practice.

Preparing the organization for a leadership transition

Our Global Executive Director (GED) Yasmeen has been in her role for 10 years and will be leaving in 2022. We will plan to ensure that the transition is seamless, and an opportunity rather than a disruption. The strategic refresh will inform and guide the new GED’s first year in office and will strengthen and consolidate the organization for strategic planning in 2024.