



A just world for all women and girls

Impact Report 2024

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From our Global Executive Director

S. Mona Sinha

In 2024, the world witnessed a pronounced shift toward authoritarianism, accompanied by sweeping restrictions on the rights of women and girls. Yet, in the face of this increasingly challenging environment, Equality Now continued to make significant strides toward global gender equality. Our work is driven by an unshakeable belief: change is not only possible - it is inevitable when we persist. That belief propels us forward, even as we navigate a geopolitical landscape increasingly dominated by fear, regression, and resistance.

Our optimism is grounded not in wishful thinking, but in lived experience. We believe in progress because we have seen it.

Over the past three decades, we have seen abortion liberalized in 60 countries. We've seen child marriage banned, and new laws introduced to protect millions of women and girls from gender-based violence, exploitation, and systemic discrimination.

This progress has not happened by chance. It is the result of the relentless hard work by women's rights organizations holding governments to account, including Equality Now. Since 1995, we've published our Words and Deeds report every five years to monitor commitments made under the Beijing Platform for Action and to expose discriminatory laws still on the books.

As we prepare to launch our sixth edition in March 2025, we choose to focus not on the global backslide - the rollback of progressive legislation, the closing of civic space, or the disproportionate funding cuts affecting women and girls.

Instead, we are choosing to spotlight progress.

We are celebrating the security gained in 2024 by millions of women and girls in Malawi, through the adoption of a National Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons.

We are recognizing the justice secured for survivors of sexual violence in Kyrgyzstan, thanks to new, protective legislation.

And we are honoring the freedom achieved for future generations of girls in Colombia, through the long-overdue ban on child marriage.

These are not small wins. They are transformative shifts, proof of what's possible when we work in partnership toward a shared vision of equality. The impact featured in the pages that follow is a testament to Equality Now's role as expert, catalyst, and reformer.

We are clear-eyed about the road ahead. The political will required to achieve global gender equality is under threat. In response, we will continue to rise to the challenge. We will broaden and diversify our funding base to remain resilient in an increasingly volatile climate. We will amplify the call for more women in decision-making roles, to challenge the dominance of authoritarian "strong men."

We will deepen our partnerships with grassroots movements and global coalitions because lasting change is only possible when it is collectively built and collectively defended.

“ Above all, we will continue to shout from the rooftops a truth we know to be enduring and unshakable:

When women's lives improve, the world does too.”

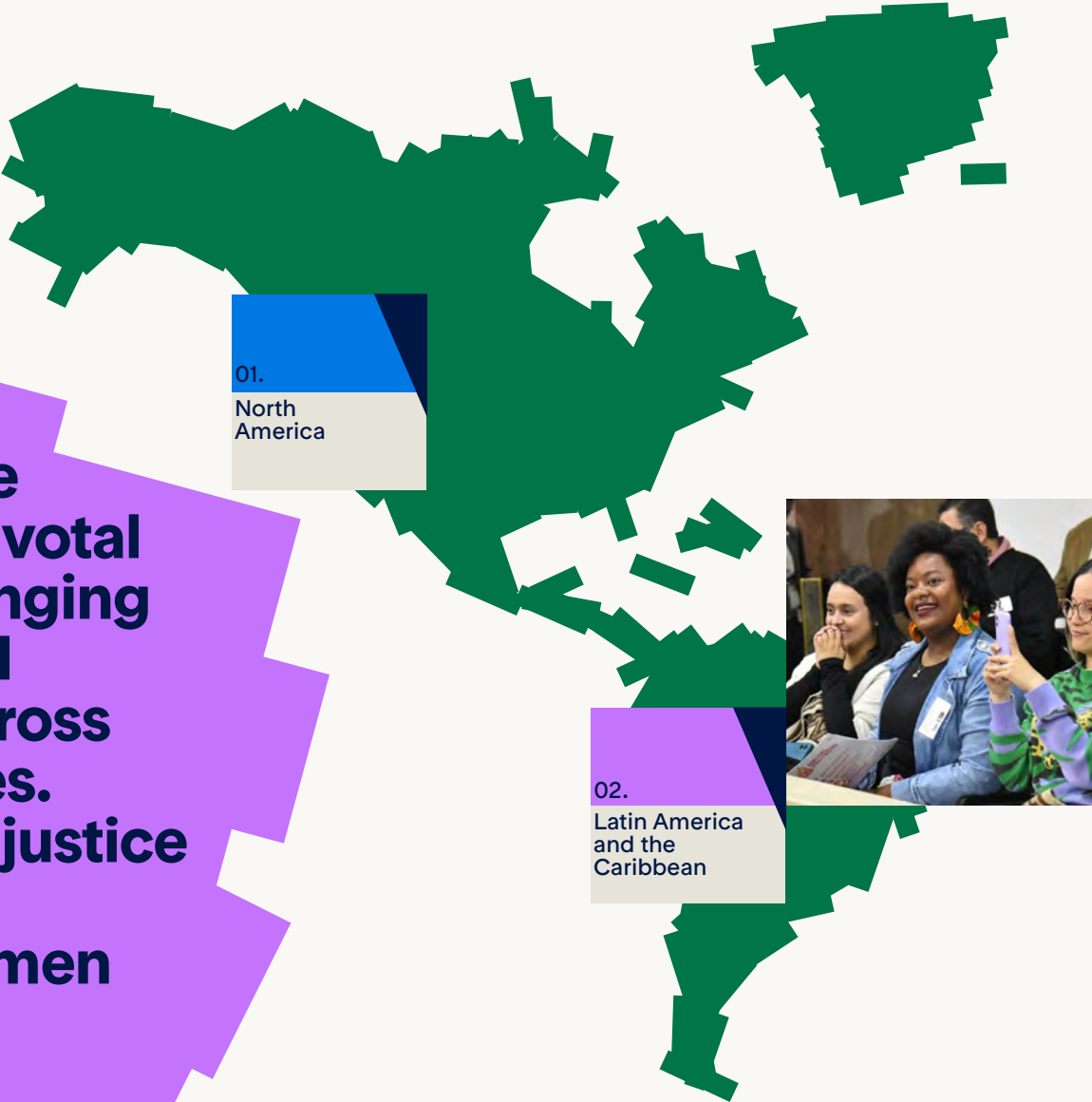
What changed for women and girls in 2024

Among the most notable changes we contributed to were Colombia’s abolition of child marriage, Kyrgyzstan’s strengthened Gender-Based Violence protections (including added protections for women and girls with disabilities), and the progressive integration of a gender lens into the UN’s Pact for the Future and Global Digital Compact.

In each case, our contributions were pivotal - not just in securing legal change, but in ensuring its quality and impact for all women and girls worldwide.

- 500 girls a year in North America
- Over 1.5 million girls and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean
- Over 1 million women and girls in Europe and Central Asia
- 37.4 million women in Asia
- 12.1 million girls and women in Africa

In 2024, we played a pivotal role in changing 15 laws and policies across 10 countries. Improving justice for over 52 million women and girls.



In Focus

Our work on The Global Digital Compact and the Pact for the Future

In September, world leaders adopted the Pact for the Future to modernize international cooperation for future challenges. As part of this Pact, the Global Digital Compact (GDC) outlines shared principles for an open, free, secure, and inclusive digital future and addresses key issues such as safety, privacy, and human rights in the digital realm.

Through the AUDRI coalition, we collaborated with the UN and partners to advocate for a gendered lens in shaping the GDC, helping to ensure that the particular experiences of women and girls are increasingly reflected in future UN-level digital regulations.

Find out more at audri.org



01. North America

Reforming child marriage law in the United States

Our work to eradicate exceptions to child marriage law across all states in the US continued in 2024, along with our partner Unchained at Last, and Washington State, Virginia, and New Hampshire enacted amendments to marriage law that will close loopholes that left girl children vulnerable to this harmful practice.

These three amendments reduce the number of states in the **US with child-marriage exemptions from 40 to 37**, and although relatively few girls are subjected to child marriage in these states (199¹², 311¹³, and 9¹⁴ per annum respectively across the three states included here for example) these amendments send a clear message that child marriage is a human rights violation and there can be no loopholes or exceptions that remove protection from this practice in the law.

02. Latin America and the Caribbean

Colombia’s landmark Child Marriage Bill November brought more good news for the abolition of child marriage when Colombian lawmakers approved a bill to eradicate marriage for anyone under the age of 18. With child marriage rates that sit at around 1 in 4 Colombian girls affected, when enacted this new law will **protect the 1.4 million¹⁰ girls and adolescents currently at risk** of this harmful practice in Colombia.

Eliminating the statute of limitations for sexual abuse of minors in Oaxaca, Mexico
The southern Mexican state of Oaxaca passed a bill to eliminate the statute of limitations in cases related to the sexual abuse of minors. Although the law change will not apply to past cases, this change will allow the estimated **175 thousand¹¹ girls and adolescents** in Oaxaca who will face childhood sexual abuse to more easily access justice. At the same time, we continue to work with partners for increased prevention of abuse.

03. Europe and Central Asia

Amending violence laws in Kyrgyzstan

In August, Kyrgyzstan adopted the Amendment to Legislative Acts for Protection from Domestic, Sexual, and Gender-Based Violence.

This law will offer greater protection to the estimated **897,000⁸ women and girls in Kyrgyzstan** who are subjected to violence in the country every year. Critically, the amendments included additional protections for women and girls with disabilities, who face elevated rates of sexual and physical violence and who make up **81,200⁹** of Kyrgyzstan’s population.

Removing barriers to justice in Georgia

In February 2024, Georgia amended its Criminal Procedure Code to remove discriminatory provisions that had previously prevented persons with disabilities from testifying as witnesses in their own cases. This change is a significant step toward ensuring equal access to justice, particularly for the estimated **198,000 women and girls with disabilities in Georgia**, who face heightened risks of sexual violence and other forms of abuse.

04. Asia

Japan abolished discriminatory waiting period before marriage

April 2024 saw the abolition of the discriminatory waiting period for re-marriage imposed on women in Japan come into effect, **freeing Japan’s 37.4 million⁷ women from a discriminatory marital status law** that supports the subordination of women.

What changed for women and girls in 2024

05. Africa

Adoption by the African Union of New Protocol

Our efforts for equal nationality rights for women in Africa were bolstered by the adoption of a new Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Specific Aspects of the Right to a Nationality and the Eradication of Statelessness in Africa in February.

Once it comes into force it will have the potential to offer **greater protection of nationality rights to the 332 million women and girls in the 20 African countries that still have sex-discriminatory nationality laws** which could potentially prevent them from acquiring, retaining or transferring nationality children and/or spouses on an equal basis with men.

Protecting the Anti-FGM law in The Gambia

July saw the Gambian parliament reject an attempt to repeal the 2015 ban on female genital mutilation (FGM) which offers legal protection to the **386,000 girls in the country** who are at greatest risk from the practice. The repeal attempt was led by religious leaders and supported by parliamentarians in favor of the practice, and was in response to the first successful prosecution of perpetrators of FGM using the law.

Protecting women and girls from SGBV in Busia, Kenya

Kenya’s Busia County passed a comprehensive SGBV Bill into law in December 2024 offering much **greater protection to the estimated 177,612 women and girls** that will face sexual or gender-based violence in their lifetime.



Enactment of new trafficking policy in Malawi

January 2024 saw an important boost to our work in Malawi focused on eradicating sex trafficking when the Malawian State adopted the ‘National Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons (2024-2028)’ policy.

The National Action Plan will support the implementation of the Trafficking in Persons Act (2015), and help the law to better **protect Malawi’s 10.5 million women and girls** from trafficking in all of its forms.

Sierra Leone’s Child Marriage Bill

Our work to protect girls from child marriage was boosted significantly in July when the President of Sierra Leone signed The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2024 into law. The Act sets the age of marriage at 18 without exception, harmonizing civil and customary law and **offering legal protection to the 243 thousand⁵ of Sierra Leone’s girls and adolescents** currently at risk from this practice. The law also allows for those married as children before the law was in place to apply for an annulment of the marriage and to seek compensation for their suffering.

This legal protection applies to approximately **800,000⁶ girls and women in Sierra Leone** who were married as children, including those who are still minors living with adult men as their husbands, and those who were married before turning 18 and are now adults.

How Equality Now is driving global change for women and girls

In 2024, we:

Improved justice for over **52 million** women and girls, helping to change **15 laws and policies** in **10 countries** across four continents.

Networking globally and locally

85 Countries

Championed women’s rights in **85 countries**, with 80 team members across 23 countries leading legal and policy reforms for a more just world.

52 Countries

Sustained powerful partnerships with **267 organizations** in **52 countries**, combining global expertise with local knowledge to deliver lasting change from the ground up.

34 new partnerships

Expanded our global reach by forming **34 new partnerships** across six regions. These new alliances include civil society groups, women’s rights organizations, academic institutions, coalitions, and government-related bodies- each bringing unique expertise and local insight.

Together, they strengthen our ability to drive gender justice in diverse contexts, reinforcing our commitment to collaboration as a catalyst for lasting change.

38 Coalitions

Collaborated for global change as a member of **38 coalitions**, working alongside more than 3,000 organizations and individuals. We played a key role in 24 of these, helping to launch new coalitions, funding essential work, and leading as secretariat, advisors, and steering group members.

Investing in change

\$1.1m

Invested in **59 partners for change** in **40 countries**, with over \$1.1 million in subgrants, co-funding vital initiatives led by women’s rights organizations worldwide.

Driving conversations on equality

120

Offered important thought leadership on gender equality in over **120 spaces**, including delivering keynote speeches, hosting webinars, joining podcasts, and speaking as panelists across digital, national, and global platforms. Our voice was further amplified through awards received and presented- ensuring that gender justice remained at the forefront of international discourse and achievement.

7000 Media placements

Secured high profile media coverage with nearly **7,000 media placements** across international, regional, and national outlets, covering issues from sexual violence to family law. This widespread media presence underscores the increasing global recognition of our work and the impact of our advocacy efforts.

47 Workshops

Trained over **1,200 changemakers** – from officials to young activists – across **47 workshops**. Topics ranged from tech accountability to sensitive reporting on FGM.

132

Pushed for change in **132 high-level spaces**-including **43** official meetings, **58** informal ones, and **31** convenings with leaders in law, government, and human rights.

36 Reports

Published **36 reports to drive change**, with our research covering topics from child marriage to digital abuse, spanning six world regions. Our landmark report on rape laws in **47 African countries** exposed urgent gaps in justice-and called on governments to act.

Advocating for legal change

78

Made **78 legal submissions** covering **38 countries** to UN, regional, and national bodies and authorities. So far, over half have directly shaped official recommendations. We are still awaiting responses to **23** more.

15 legal cases

Advanced **15 groundbreaking legal cases**, delivering real-world impact and tackling systemic injustice through strategic litigation. Two major wins in Bolivia and Kenya -reparations for survivors and mandatory sentencing for sexual violence.

Our work in-depth

At Equality Now we bridge the gap between the global and the local, using our detailed knowledge of international law and our extensive access to diplomatic spaces to equip and mobilize a vast network spanning a diverse range of political, social, and cultural contexts.

Our unique approach involves combining our strengths as experts, catalysts, and reformers:

- As **experts**, we inform and advise; working with governments, legal professionals, and policy-makers to craft better laws and guide their implementation in every part of the world.
- As **catalysts**, we convene and connect; building coalitions based on a shared understanding and by supporting collaboration between a wide range of partners at every level of society.
- As **reformers**, we challenge and champion; holding power to account through targeted advocacy and campaigns, while platforming and amplifying the most marginalized voices.

The following pages illustrate just some of the many ways in which we used each of these unique strengths during 2024 to achieve meaningful, sustainable progress toward global gender equality.



From expertise to influence: Shaping gender equal laws

At Equality Now, our legal expertise is at the core of how and why we create change. In 2024, we worked side-by-side with governments, civil society organizations, and legal institutions to shape legislation that upholds the rights of women and girls. Whether offering technical guidance, drafting legal frameworks, or publishing influential reports, our knowledge translates into meaningful legal reform that will benefit millions worldwide.

Strengthening legal protections for women in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan

During the legislative amendment process, we, together with partners, provided the authorities in Uzbekistan with recommendations on the introduction and formulation of articles addressing violence against women and sexual violence. Many of these suggestions were incorporated into the newly adopted legislation to protect women and children from violence, which significantly strengthened protections for women and girls. In 2024, this law was included as one of the important reforms for Uzbekistan to be recognized by the World Bank as one of the top five global improvers in gender equality. In a country where civil society voices have historically been marginalized, the government’s active engagement with our network of civil society organizations in Uzbekistan represented real progress in terms of civic involvement in the legislative process.

Progress was also achieved during 2024 in neighboring Kyrgyzstan. We worked with our partners to build constructive relationships with legislators and policymakers following a positive response to our earlier report on sexual violence against women and girls with disabilities in Kyrgyzstan. An amendment to the Law on Protection from Domestic, Sexual, and Gender-Based Violence included specific protections for persons with disabilities.

Improving the implementation of anti-sex-trafficking laws in Kenya

In Kenya, trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation is one of the most common forms of human trafficking, yet the rate of prosecution for this type of crime remains low. In 2024, Equality Now partnered with the International Association of Women Judges Kenya Chapter (IAWJ Kenya Chapter) to support the effective implementation of anti-trafficking laws in Kenya and to ensure that perpetrators are held to account, through the joint publication of **The Kenya Judicial Bench Book on Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation**. Designed specifically for officers in the Kenyan Judicial System but also drawing jurisprudence from comparable jurisdictions around the world, this comprehensive guide is now being used to facilitate the successful prosecution of cases of trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation and improve access to justice for women and girls across Kenya.

Promoting universal digital gender equality

As a founding member of the Alliance for Universal Digital Rights (AUDRi), Equality Now has been at the forefront of global efforts to promote digital equality and to shape national and international initiatives against new forms of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), such as online sexual violence, technology-enabled trafficking, deep-fake imagery, and cyberstalking. In 2024, our work in this area contributed to the successful adoption by the UN of a Global Digital Compact (GDC) – a set of shared principles aimed to guide global digital governance and cooperation and regulations that uphold digital rights and reduce digital harms, thus establishing the foundations for a safer, more equitable digital space for women and girls.



Building movements, driving momentum: Catalyzing global action

Change happens when people come together. At Equality Now, we are proud to serve as a hub of connection, collaboration, and movement-building. In 2024, we continued to act as a catalyst for progress, uniting voices across sectors and regions to challenge inequality at its roots. Through our growing network of coalitions, regional alliances, and community-based organizations, we amplified local action and embedded human rights principles into global dialogues. By fostering inclusive partnerships and championing intersectional perspectives, we helped spark momentum for gender justice that reached from grassroots to global institutions.

Tackling sexual violence in Latin America and the Caribbean

In recent years we have made significant strides in addressing sexual violence against women and girls in Latin America and the Caribbean, including through our publication in 2021 of a report highlighting gaps in legislation and implementation, as well as through our strategic litigation efforts leading to the alignment of national laws with the standards set by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. In 2024, we built upon the success of our previous work by partnering with ParlAmericas, an inter-American network of 35 national legislatures that promotes dialogue and exchange of good parliamentary practice to incorporate gender equality at the core of their work. Together, we presented our **Guide for Legislating on Sexual Violence with a Consent-Based Approach** to align national reforms with international standards.

During 2024, we also participated in the 66th Executive Committee of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held at the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

headquarters in Santiago, Chile. We worked alongside our civil society allies and regional leaders to drive a stronger gender agenda, promote the inclusion of diverse voices, and ensure an intersectional perspective that reflects the realities of women in Latin America and the Caribbean. Along with our partner the Regional Network for the Follow-up to the Belém do Pará Convention, we delivered training for CSOs, regional networks, and activists on building effective alliances to improve measures against gender-based violence in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Uniting voices against sexual violence in South Asia

In 2024, in response to the interest generated by the publication of an Equality Now and Dignity Alliance report into the prevalence of sexual violence across South Asia and the barriers to justice faced by survivors, we convened a group of like-minded organizations from across the region to form the South Asian Movement for Accessing Justice (SAMAJ). This new network aims to unite voices against sexual violence in South Asia, driving legal reforms and supporting essential services for survivors.

Promoting equality in family law in the Middle East

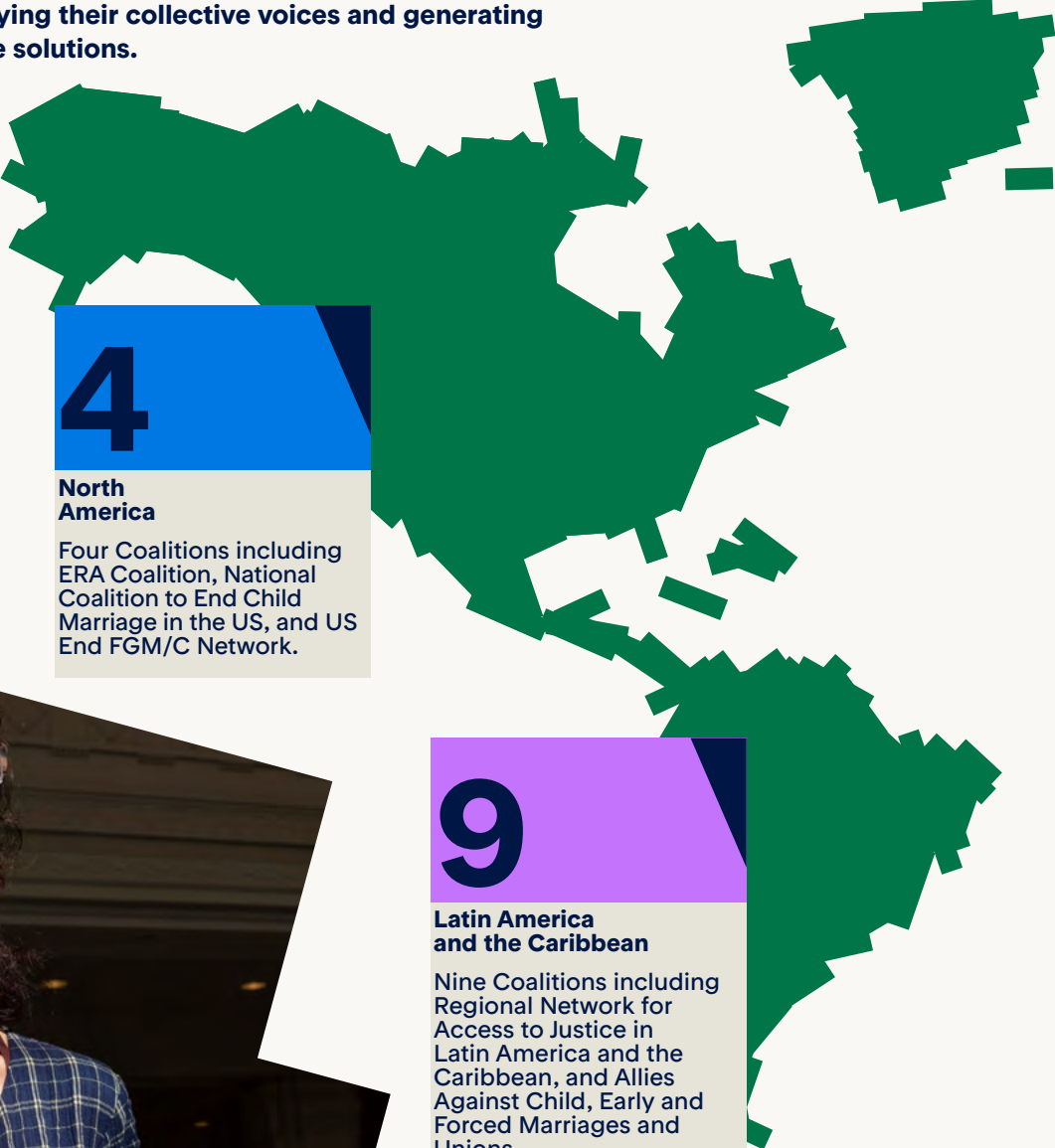
The Hurra Coalition is a diverse, intersectional group of active women's rights organizations in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region that works on reforming family laws in compliance with international human rights standards. As Secretariat to the Coalition, Equality Now has supported and reinforced the capacity of the network since its inception by advising on campaign strategy, providing legal and media advocacy, engaging with policy and decision-makers, and facilitating participation by young activists from marginalized communities. In 2024, the Hurra Coalition grew to 13 members in nine countries, and became formalized through bylaws and a five-year strategic plan.



Collaborating for global change

Those who are best placed to address gender inequality are often the people whom it most profoundly affects and who understand and appreciate the cultural context in which it exists. We bring together a diverse community of women and partner organizations from around the world, amplifying their collective voices and generating collaborative, sustainable solutions.

In 2024, we collaborated for global change as a member of 35 coalitions, working alongside more than 3,000 organizations and individuals. We played a key role in 24 of these, helping to launch new coalitions, funding essential work, and leading as secretariat, advisors, and steering group members.



Justice and accountability: Driving reform through advocacy

At Equality Now, we believe that laws must reflect the dignity and rights of every person, especially women and girls, who are so often excluded or overlooked by legal systems. In 2024, we advanced reform by working alongside survivors, civil society allies, and legal experts to challenge discriminatory policies and support those advocating for change from within. From bolstering constitutional equality in the United States to protecting essential laws against harmful practices in The Gambia, our advocacy is rooted in evidence, driven by collaboration, and committed to long-term impact. We know that when institutions are held to account and equipped to do better, they can help build a more just future for all.

Moving the dial forward for constitutional equality in the US

The US is one of the few UN Member States and the only democracy in the world that does not explicitly guarantee gender equality in its constitution. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was proposed 100 years ago and ratified by the required number of states in 2020, but the efforts for its recognition and incorporation have become increasingly politicized, leaving women’s rights, health, safety, and economic status in a constant state of risk. In recent years, we have highlighted the importance of constitutional inequality in the US, to support national and grassroots allies, including the ERA Coalition and the American Bar Association, to effectively advocate for universal recognition of the ERA, and to support the call for implementation of the UN’s 2023 recommendations to the US on this issue at the White House Domestic Policy Council. In 2024, in recognition of our significant contributions to the wider ERA movement, we became a founding member of the ERA Coalition’s National Strategy Task Force.

Putting CEFM (Child, Early and Forced Marriage) on the agenda

Our work on CEFM (Child, Early and Forced Marriage), including our publication in 2024 of a report, **Breaking Barriers: Addressing CEFM in Eurasia**, has led to increased discussion of this issue at local, regional, and global levels.

We also achieved significant legal progress as a result of our existing child marriage campaigns during 2024, including in Colombia, where the closure of a legal loophole permitting children to be married off under certain circumstances finally brought the country’s laws in line with international standards, as well as in the US, where our persistent joint advocacy with partners resulted in three more US states (Washington State, Virginia, and New Hampshire) enacting legislation to set the legal age of marriage at 18 years old without exception.

Defending anti-FGM laws in The Gambia

In 2024, in response to a motion brought before the National Assembly of The Gambia to repeal anti-FGM provisions in its laws, we joined with local civil society organizations, UN agencies, survivors, and activists in a successful campaign to protect the country’s anti-FGM laws. Following the defeat of this motion, Equality Now convened this campaign coalition and its allied stakeholders to look back at why and how the law was challenged, and to strategize on how best to champion its future protection. With pushback on the country’s anti-FGM laws having since shifted from Parliament to the courts, (through a legal challenge to the law filed before the Gambian Supreme Court) this important mission also served a critical secondary purpose: to support the mobilization of a formidable legal force to respond to the imminent threat to the law.



Looking ahead - our plans for 2025

Achieving Legal Equality

When our laws treat everyone equally, everyone benefits.

In every part of the world, women and girls are prevented from fully participating in society by legal discrimination, including in terms of economic access, personal status, family law, nationality rights, and many other areas. The impact of this is felt most directly by girls, women, and their families, but the wider economic and social consequences affect everyone: research has shown that if women were to achieve full parity in the workforce, the global economy would increase by \$7 trillion USD.

All women and girls are entitled to equality before the law, and to equal protection of the law against any discrimination. This is affirmed in many international and regional treaties, as well as in most constitutions. Governments are each responsible for ensuring that their laws provide equality for all.

Looking ahead

Our immediate priorities within this theme are as follows:

- Keeping legal equality on the global agenda and securing the repeal or amendment of the sex-discriminatory laws highlighted in our Beijing + Words & Deeds reports and policy briefs, especially those that contribute to the vulnerabilities associated with our other thematic areas, across all regions of the world.
- Strengthening our collective voice for family law reform through the **Global Campaign for Equality in Family Law** to secure the repeal or amendment of discriminatory family laws, including those related to marriage, divorce, custody and guardianship of children, property rights, and inheritance.
- Securing the repeal or amendment of discriminatory nationality laws, especially those that impact women and girls in Africa and the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) regions where these are most prevalent.
- Continuing to advocate for full constitutional equality, with a focus on the United States and South Sudan, among other countries.
- Resisting the emerging anti-rights agenda and advocating for multilateralism and the rule of law in all parts of the world, including by supporting the development of positive international legal instruments.
- Championing political representation of women, and supporting feminist leaders and law-makers.
- Continuing to advocate for the full adoption of feminist-informed Universal Digital Rights.

Ending Sexual Violence

We all deserve the right to live in peace and safety.

Sexual violence is an everyday reality that impacts millions of people around the world. The vast majority of victims are women and girls, while almost all perpetrators are men. Despite the global prevalence and gendered nature of sexual violence, many countries still do not have sufficient laws in place to address it, or the laws they do have are inconsistently applied and ineffectively enforced.

Over the past decade, recognition has been growing of the need to have a definition of rape based on free and voluntary consent, rather than one that requires the complainant to have fought back her attacker. While this has resulted in improved jurisprudence and better alignment of international and regional treaty bodies' recommendations, governments around the world are still failing to fulfil their obligations to protect women and girls from rape, to make criminal justice systems fully accessible, and to hold perpetrators to account.

Looking ahead

Our immediate priorities within this theme are as follows:

- Learning from good practice in other countries, including through national exchanges from all corners of the globe which value and take account of alternative experiences.
- Amplifying the voices of survivors of rape whose experiences have historically been marginalized, including disabled women, indigenous women, and adolescent girls.
- Advocating for feminist-informed changes to laws and to the systems and legal processes that facilitate access to justice for survivors.
- Developing universally accessible protocols that are informed by international standards and that can be adapted to local contexts.
- Building strong, connected constituencies of support, to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and advocacy tools, and to enable sustained focus on specific issues.
- Collecting knowledge and developing strategies to support the improvement of safety and accountability within institutions such as care homes, schools, and religious establishments.

Looking ahead - our plans for 2025

Ending Sexual Exploitation

We all deserve the freedom to choose our own path.

The sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls, in both physical and digital spaces, is on a disturbing upward trajectory. The UN has highlighted the growing role of the internet and digital technology in the trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and girls, with more than half of all sex trafficking cases now involving a digital or technological component.

Other forms of gender-based violence are also increasing exponentially in the digital space. In a survey spanning 18 countries, nearly 60% of women with internet access reported encountering at least one form of tech-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), including cyber-harassment, stalking, doxing, and/or image-based sexual abuse and exploitation.

Governments are obligated under international human rights law to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and abuse. However, national laws often fail to address the gendered nature of these crimes, enabling perpetrators to act with impunity and trapping survivors in cycles of exploitation.

Looking ahead

Our immediate priorities within this theme are as follows:

- Championing the enactment and enforcement of laws that address sexual exploitation.
- Using an ecosystems approach to legal advocacy and highlight the impact on adolescent girls.
- Strengthening existing alliances and forge new ones, including with civil society organizations, government agencies, international bodies, digital technology companies, and the media.
- Building and implementing an annual ‘Digital Rights Scorecard’ based on AUDRI’s Feminist Principles to assess countries’ performance on a range of issues critical to women’s and girls’ digital rights.
- Examining the role of technology and AI within the criminal justice system.
- Exploring and addressing the ways in which misogyny is linked to, and intersects with, violent extremism and algorithmically driven behavioral advertising.
- Maximising the influence and impact of AUDRI by growing the coalition and recruiting a broader range of members, including digital rights activists, businesses, and academics.

Ending Harmful Practices

We all deserve equal dignity within our communities.

The term ‘harmful practices’ describes ritual forms of violence or discrimination that have become culturally normalized, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage, ‘honor’ crimes and killings, virginity testing, and female infanticide. Harmful practices are violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and are primarily used to reinforce the subordination of women and girls.

UNICEF estimates that at least 230 million women and girls have been affected by FGM, and the number of girls at risk annually is likely to increase from 4.4 million in 2024 to 4.6 million in 2030. Child marriage, or Child, Early and Forced Marriage and Unions (CEFMU), affects approximately 12 million girls every year, with the total number of survivors worldwide estimated to be 640 million. To meet the 2030 SDG targets that have been set by the UN for fully eliminating these harmful practices, the rate of global progress needs to increase by 27 times for FGM, and by 20 times for child marriage.

Looking ahead

Our immediate priorities within this theme are as follows:

- Advocating for the enactment of specific, strong, and comprehensive laws on FGM, and intervening to support and uphold the constitutionality of anti-FGM laws that are threatened.
- Pushing for governments to adopt a comprehensive legal and policy framework to address CEFMU, including by setting the minimum legal age of marriage at 18 with no exceptions.
- Engaging in strategic litigation to hold governments accountable for ending FGM and CEFMU, as well as to support survivors in individual cases to access justice.
- Advocating for the enforcement of existing anti-FGM legislation and promoting the implementation of the multi-sectoral approach to fully eliminate FGM; and intensifying our work against FGM in Kenya, Mali, Liberia, The Gambia, and Sierra Leone.
- Developing our work against FGM in South Asia (India, Pakistan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka) and South-East Asia, and in Colombia through engagement with Embera indigenous leaders.
- Expanding our work on ending CEFMU in Africa at the regional level, focusing on seven priority countries across the continent.
- Strengthening the work of the Hurra coalition on CEFMU in the MENA region, and building the capacity of its members to advocate for stronger laws on the minimum age of marriage.

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Sweet Justice Foundation
Together Women Rise
UN Women
UNFPA
Urgent Action Fund Africa
Wallace Global Fund
Wellspring Philanthropic Fund
William & Flora Hewlett Foundation
Winifred Stevens Foundation

In 2024 Equality Now received the following recognitions:

Comms ChangeMaker - Charity Comms

NY Bar Association Award

Women Moving Millions Catalyst Award

NY Women’s Foundation Award

A Call to Men Visionary Award

Clinton Global Initiative Spotlight

Grace Institute Inspiration Award

Apolitical 50 Women Gender Equality Champions

Politics NY’s 2024 Non-Profit Power Players List

→
Global Executive Director, S. Mona
Sinha received A Call To Men’s
Visionary Award in 2024.
Pictured here with Chief
Development Officer, Ted Bunch
and Chief Executive Officer,
Tony Porter of A Call to Men.



Footnotes

- 1

Impact number based on World Bank 2023 population data for Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Madagascar, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tanzania, Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Mauritania, Togo, Mauritius, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan.
- 2

Impact number based on UNICEF data 2016, The Gambia (528,372) and the Demographic and Health Survey 2019 prevalence rate of FGM/C (73%). 73% of 528,372 is 385,711.
- 3

Impact number based on Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, Busia County population 2019 statistics (467,401 female population) and Kenya demographic health survey 2022 (38% of women age 15-49 who have ever experienced physical violence since age 15). 38% of 467,401 = 177,612.
- 4

Impact number based on World Bank 2022 female population, Malawi (10,480,456).
- 5

Impact number based on Sierra Leone youth dashboard UNFPA - 900,514 girls and adolescents. Remove approximate 10% who are 19 – 810,462 – 30% of which is 243,139.
- 6

Impact number based on UNFPA 2020 report which uses data from Sierra Leone Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2017 (800,000 child brides).
- 7

Impact number based on World Bank 2022 female population, Japan (64,314,912) and Statistics Bureau of Japan 2020 (58.2% of women over the age of 15 in Japan are married). 58.2% of 64,314,912 = 37,431,279.
- 8

Impact number based on official statistics that state 1 in 4 women will experience GBSV – <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/o-sostoyanii-femitsida-v-kyrgyzstane/viewer>. One quarter of 3,589,460 is 897,365.
- 9

Impact number based on Equality Now's Disability report 40% of the estimated 203000 people with disabilities in Kyrgyzstan are women and girls, 40% of 203,000 is 81,200.
- 10

Impact number based on Unicef 2023 population data which states there are 6,437,864 females under the age of 18 in Colombia. Unicef prevalence figures which uses data from Demographic and Health Survey 2015 has prevalence at 23%. 23% of 6,437,864 is 1,408,709
- 11

Impact number based on Statistica 2020 population data (175, 2630) and Unicef global childhood sexual abuse prevalence figures (1 in 5 females). 175, 2630 divided by 2 equals 876,315. 876315 divided by 5 equals 175,263.
- 12

Impact number based on Unchained at Last progress map (number of minors wed in Washington State 2000-2021 - 5,048) and Frontline 2017 statistics (87% of minors married in 40 U.S. states and 1 county were girls). The Unchained at Last figure was divided by the amount of inclusive years the report covers which is 22, to estimate the per annum figure = 229. 87% of 229 = 199.
- 13

Impact number based on Unchained at Last progress map (number of minors wed in Virginia State 2000-2021 - 7,876) and Frontline 2017 statistics (87% of minors married in 40 U.S. states and 1 county were girls). The Unchained at Last figure was divided by the amount of inclusive years the report covers which is 22, to estimate the per annum figure = 358. 87% of 358 = 311.
- 14

Impact number based on Unchained at Last progress map (number of minors wed in New Hampshire 2000-2021 - 212) and Frontline 2017 statistics (87% of minors married in 40 U.S. states and 1 county were girls). The Unchained at Last figure was divided by the amount of inclusive years the report covers which is 22, to estimate the per annum figure = 10. 87% of 10 = 9.

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy, completeness, and reliability of the information presented in this report, the data is provided “as is.” Equality Now has taken diligent steps to verify the data through internal checks and validation processes. However, due to the complexity and volume of information collected, occasional errors or omissions may occur.

We welcome feedback and corrections to help us continually improve the quality and integrity of our reporting. Please contact impact@equalitynow.org with any concerns or suggested amendments.





A just world for all women and girls

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