POWER 4 Girls

Powerful girls transform the world

# POWER4Girls One Year On

## Bridging gaps and building girls' power

# POWER4Girls: A ground breaking initiative bridging systems and movements for adolescent girls

POWER4Girls offers a model unique to the funding ecosystem, where scaled systems-level programming meets social movement financing. Rooted in a commitment to cross-sectoral partnership, robust evidence generation and collective alliance-building, POWER4Girls combines UNICEF's scale-based programming model with Purposeful's expertise in moving money directly to adolescent girl change makers across the world.

## How it Works:

### Systems programming at scale

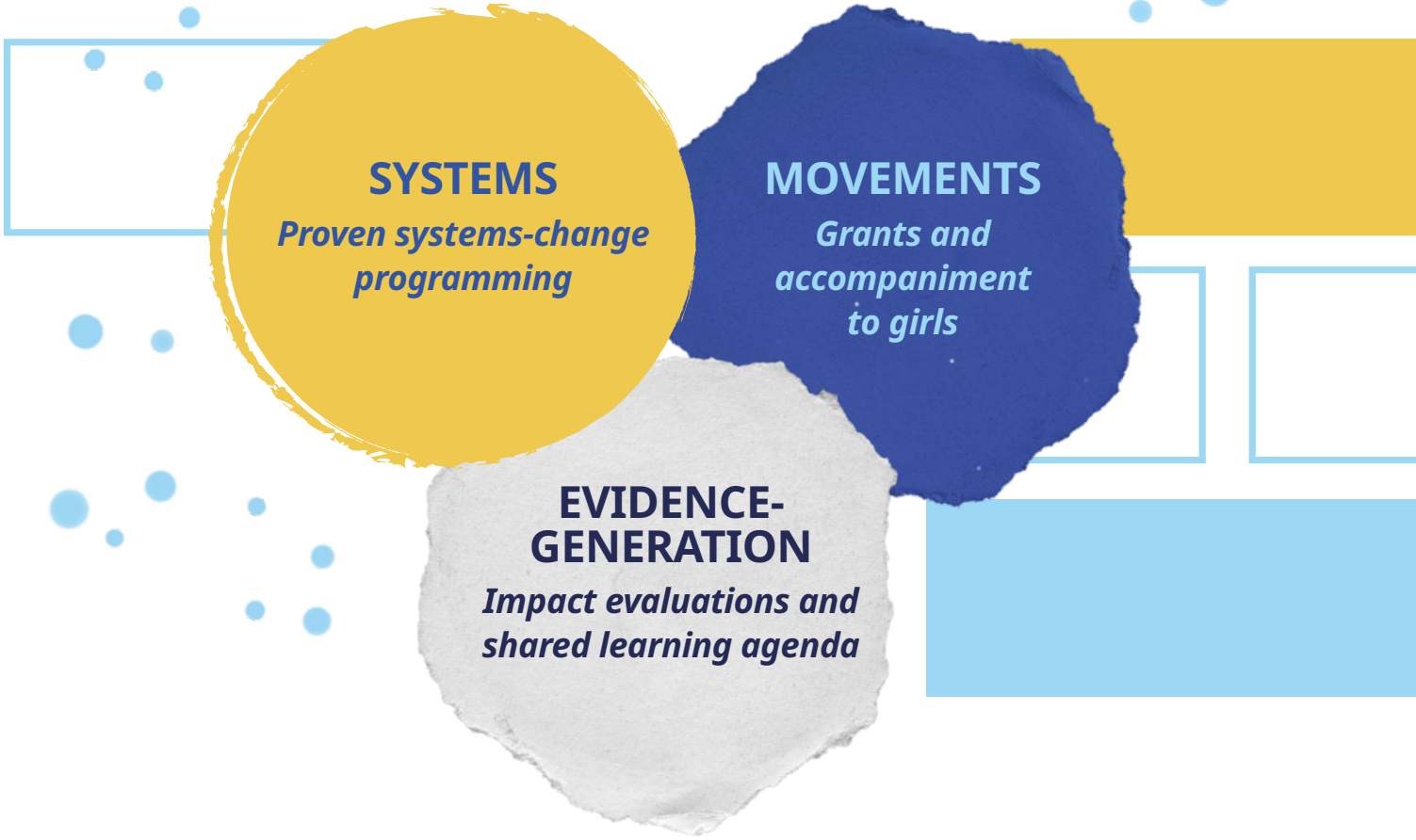
UNICEF delivers at-scale systems-change programming for girls and their communities, including multi-sectoral interventions that cut across education, skills building, economic empowerment, social protection, care and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response and beyond. These programmes are being integrated into national systems in countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Indonesia, Dominican Republic and Iraq, strengthening sustainability and reach. Governments are also mobilizing public finance, such as investments to tackle the barriers that hold girls back from transitioning to livelihoods, and expanding services for adolescent girls. Designed to build from national programmes and systems to adapt, improve or add to deliver what girls need, this approach can reach millions and make population-level change.

### Flexible funding to girl-led movements

Purposeful complements this approach by providing flexible grants to girls and their allies alongside tailored accompaniment, such as peer learning and network-building. As the world's first Africa-rooted global hub for girls' activism, Purposeful has a long track record in non-traditional grant-making, recognizing the diverse and unique ways girls and young activists organise. Since its founding, Purposeful has mobilised over $90 million dollars and made over 5,000 grants to groups in 120 countries across the world. Applying lessons from history and principled practice, this approach puts girls, their leadership and their agendas at the heart of financing.

### Shared evidence and influencing

POWER4Girls is moving the adolescent girls influencing agenda from theory into practice - through collectively conceptualised field-level learning and influencing agendas, to targeted impact evaluations and high-profile events and campaigns, we are raising the visibility of adolescent girls' needs, solutions, and bringing more and better resources to girls work at scale.




## The POWER4Girls Bridging Model is Needed Now More than Ever

Today, in the face of fiscal constraints, rising debt burdens, conflict and the climate crisis, adolescent girls are at even greater risk of being deprioritized. Girls often fall into a gap between programmes for children and those aimed at women, despite evidence indicating that experiences of gender inequality become more pronounced during adolescence. Girls face high - and often the highest - risks when it comes to manifestations of gender inequality and issues that intersect with it, including GBV, maternal mortality, and new infections of HIV. Even before the significant ODA cuts, funding for adolescent girls' issues was decreasing as a proportion of ODA- and from an already disproportionately low base (now less than 5% of ODA). The amount going directly to girl-led groups and collectives is miniscule.

Launched at the United Nations in March 2025, POWER4Girls is a global partnership co-led by UNICEF and Purposeful in coalition with many partners, that aims to address these gaps. Together, we are working to accelerate at-scale action to advance the rights, wellbeing and leadership of adolescent girls around the world. By combining large scale integrated programmes with investment in girls' movements, we seek to shift power, transform norms and change systems. In this way, POWER4Girls offers a practical way to rethink how ODA and private funding flows so that they reach proven programme models and girls directly - breaking siloes in ambition and scale.

**One year on, POWER4Girls is scaling the best evidence-based solutions to expand essential services and programmes for girls, aligned with priorities identified by girls themselves.** The initiative is delivering results across four key pillars: 1) girls' transition to economic empowerment, a neglected yet transformative sector for at-scale change for girls and a programmatic anchor for POWER4Girls; 2) quality skills and access to education; 3) supporting the enabling environment for girls and addressing structural barriers they face – including prevention and the underlying drivers of gender-based violence; and 4) policy reforms and advancing financing to scale nationwide proven solutions. Through the partnership between UNICEF and Purposeful, alongside at-scale programmes that build intentional through systems where-ever feasible, POWER4Girls will ensure resources and support reach girl leaders, advocates, movements and networks around the world, from Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Lebanon, to Kenya and Egypt, to Mali and Tanzania.

# What POWER4Girls is achieving: A Snapshot

From defining our theory of change and evidence agenda, to actively identifying new grantee partners led by and working with girls in communities where UNICEF is programming, the shift from conceptualization to implementation in this past year has been an exciting one. In 2025, we began at-scale programming for adolescent girls alongside direct grant-making to resource girls' movements.

## The year in numbers

**US $10 million**

mobilized for girls from individuals, governments and the private sector

**1000+ people**

convened for advocacy and learning, including high-profile events at the United Nations with UNICEF Global Ambassadors

The POWER4Girls programme reached **5.4 million girls** and over **11 million people** across **15 countries** in its pilot phase alone.

**189 million people** people reached through the associated #GirlGoals campaign, including **77 million parents** and caregivers, and over **39 thousand decision-makers** in priority programming countries.

## What Comes Next

- Impact evaluations in two countries linked to POWER4Girls programming.
- A shared learning agenda to document stories of change and impact across contexts.
- New POWER4Girls programming in DRC, Lebanon, Ukraine, Kenya, Mali, Tanzania and Egypt with more countries coming soon.
- Ongoing girl and young feminist leadership, voice and participation in programme design, learning and evaluation as well as funding decisions.
- Shared strategic advocacy with co-hosted funder-activists events at Women Deliver, London Climate Action Week and beyond!
- With financing commitments made since launch alone, POWER4Girls is already projected to reach an additional 7.3 million girls and millions of adolescent boys, caregivers, teachers, community health workers and other groups as part of the multisectoral and holistic programming model – with a target to reach at least 20 million girls.

## What You Can Do

We invite you to join this ground-breaking partnership and help us unlock $50 million dollars over the next 3 years that will help transform the world with and for girls.

Funding partners will have the opportunity to join a curated engagement and learning space, where insights from the programme, evaluations and learning agenda will be shared and partners will have space to reflect and strategise together.

## POWER4Girls Country Snapshot – Lebanon

In Lebanon, POWER4Girls is building girls' power by supporting them to co-design solutions that work for them, including a skills training, innovation seed funding and network-building package that builds from government-led programmes. The skills training targets refugee communities as well as Lebanese girls, aiming to reach over 800,000 people, including at least 360,000 girls. The programme also engages boys to challenge harmful gender norms and provides seed funding for older adolescent girls to implement community initiatives. Girls are also participating as designers, advisers and evaluators.

In parallel, Purposeful has provided grant renewals to young feminist groups, as well as grants to two new partners working with refugee and internally displaced girls and their families. With the guidance of a shared young feminist partner, UNICEF and Purposeful will map and build links to groups and collectives working with girls. Insights from this work will inform UNICEF's Adolescent Girl Strategy and the shared POWER4Girls learning agenda and impact evaluation.

## POWER4Girls country snapshot – Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

In Tanganyika province, UNICEF's programming is expanding girls' access to education by supporting girls who are out of school, at risk of dropping out, and in safe spaces and accelerated learning centres. The programme also engages boys, young men and caregivers. Programme interventions include financial literacy, digital skills and vocational training to support out-of-school girls' transition to the local job market, leadership, safe spaces and girl-centred advocacy.

Purposeful complements this work by providing flexible funding and accompaniment to girl-led partners while working with young feminist advisers to identify new groups. One such partner is Kongo Mwinda, which works to strengthen the resilience of girls and young women by promoting digital safety and online advocacy, safe spaces and economic justice initiatives. In 2025, displaced activists and survivors of violence were supported to strengthen their understanding of digital and physical safety, humanitarian rights, protection policies and digital advocacy during crises. Together, partners are building stronger networks and linking girls to formal humanitarian coordination spaces to ensure they can help shape the decisions that affect them.

## POWER4Girls country snapshot - Kenya

Following a successful pilot, with support from UNICEF and other partners, the Government of Kenya's cash transfer model will be scaled in 6 counties and linked with childcare efforts for young mothers and efforts to build girls' leadership and voice, including connecting girls to national policy and advocacy opportunities. Similarly, Purposeful has been working in consortium to move resources to young and adolescent mothers in Kenya over the past three years. POWER4Girls Kenya aims to connect both programmatic initiatives by providing grant renewals to existing young mothers groups and identifying new partners in the communities where UNICEF is programming. Where there is interest in policy and advocacy, we will connect young feminist and women-led civil society organisations with the programme to support design and evaluation of this new 'cash plus care' model, and support skills building, capacity development on strategic advocacy and policy influencing and access to advocacy processes at the local, national and regional levels.

To begin to build the evidence case for moving resources to girls, matched with community-based programming, we will conduct an initial study, which we anticipate will lay the foundation for a robust impact evaluation.

# Co-designing with girls and young feminists

By building on existing girl-centered and youth leadership platforms in each organisation, the partnership ensures the meaningful participation of girls and young feminists.

Purposeful works with movement-rooted girl and young feminist advisers who represent diverse, often marginalized constituencies and bring critical insights into the needs, risks, and funding barriers at the hyper-local level in both development and crisis contexts. Advisors help identify partners, strengthen staff analysis, guide participatory grant-making, flag gaps in funding and accompaniment, and improve accessibility. The UNICEF Global Girl Leaders Advisory Group (GGLAG) brings together girl leaders from across seven regions, each of whom are working to address a range of issues affecting girls in their countries. GGLAG members are actively involved in shaping strategy, advocacy efforts and provide advice and feedback on UNICEF's work with girls, including policy, programming and overall strategic direction - including reviewing proposals to advise on funding allocations across the Global POWER4Girls initiative.

As the programme model crystalizes, we are building a cohesive model where girls and young feminists from both organizations can come together and connect with funders and decision-makers.

unicef
for every child

Purposeful

Resourcing Adolescent Girls' Learning Circle