



SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE'S CONTRIBUTION TO DOMESTIC RESOURCE MOBILIZATION



**Spotlight
Initiative**

*To eliminate violence
against women and girls*



INTRODUCTION TO THIS REPORT

This report summarizes the findings of a study of Spotlight Initiative's contribution to domestic resource mobilization (DRM) to end gender-based violence (GBV) through the Initiative's 1.0 programming from 2019 to 2023 conducted in collaboration with Dalberg.

The DRM study took place from August to December 2024 and the report was finalized in February 2025. Although the Initiative focuses on eliminating violence against women and girls (VAWG), the DRM study scope was widened to ending GBV considering language used by interviewed actors to describe relevant Spotlight Initiative programming and encountered in country documents (e.g., national action plans, policies) to frame relevant budget allocations.

This report is organised into four main sections:

- An **executive summary** of our findings on the Initiative's support of DRM to end GBV and lessons for the future.
- **Background and context** on the criticality for DRM to end GBV and how the Initiative sought to strengthen DRM through its 1.0 programming.
- **Findings** on how, and how much, the Initiative contributed to DRM to end GBV drawing from a subset of 1.0 programmes.
- **Recommendations** on how the Initiative measures and communicates its contributions to DRM, and how it could influence DRM more effectively.

The study drew from analyses of over 90 Spotlight Initiative reports, the Initiative's reporting data (capturing in ActivityInfo), country-specific reports (e.g., national frameworks and policies) and country public spending data, focused on 10 of the 26 Spotlight Initiative 1.0 country programmes. It also drew from 18 virtual interviews and focus group discussions with 23 individuals including from the Spotlight Initiative Secretariat, the Initiative's Global Civil Society Reference Group, 10 country programme teams, as well as 83 in-person stakeholder conversations across 4 in-person country visits. The study was refined through discussions with the Secretariat team, including via standing check-in calls, offline exchanges to collect Secretariat member perspectives, and a two-part workshop.

Context

- Since its inception, Spotlight Initiative has worked to increase allocation of public funding (“domestic resource mobilization–DRM”) towards ending violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the countries it is present in.
- These efforts are in response to the massive global investment gap to effectively end VAWG and gender-based violence (GBV). This gap exists and persists for a number of reasons, including significant constraints national governments face in their efforts to adequately resource their development priorities. These constraints are both external (e.g., the legacy of colonialism and current-day patterns and constraints of international aid, debt, and trade) and endogenous (e.g., rigid gender norms, low political will to address GBV, bundling of GBV spending under broader social spending and lack of dedicated GBV budget lines, lower tax bases and higher tax leakage).
- Given the importance of DRM to the Initiative’s mission, and the inherent difficulties in mobilizing domestic resources for GBV, the Initiatives’ global Secretariat engaged Dalberg to help it understand its impact on DRM for GBV more clearly.

Methodology

- **This study explores the Initiative's contributions to DRM during its first programming cycle (2019-2023).** To build on existing insights from Spotlight Initiative 1.0, the study reviewed available Initiative data on DRM as well as over 90 Initiative reports (e.g., annual and global reports, mid-term assessments and review, interim final report, compendium of good practices, global results framework and indicator methodological notes) and relevant country publications (e.g., laws and national action plans) focusing in on ten countries.
- In addition, this study drew from 18 virtual interviews and focus group discussions with 23 individuals including colleagues from Spotlight Initiative Secretariat, the Global Civil Society Reference Group and 10 country programme teams.
- The study also collected new information from more than 80 in-person discussions in four countries: Ecuador, Liberia, Trinidad & Tobago and Uganda. These four countries were selected for deeper research after considering the existence of confirmed Spotlight Initiative 2.0 programmes (in Ecuador and Uganda, as well as Liberia, which was planning to launch a 2.0 programme at the time of this study) that would make learnings particularly actionable.
- **The study also elevates how the Initiative's activities impacted DRM to end GBV and what drove or limited success; pressure-tests how the Initiative measured and communicated its impact; and offers recommendations moving forward.** Findings draw from a detailed analysis of quantitative and qualitative insights from desk research and country visits, recognizing the following key limitations: 1) incomplete or inconsistent Initiative data due to reporting challenges 2) limited availability of public budgeting information 3) the need to focus more broadly on DRM to end gender-based violence (GBV) rather than VAWG specifically given how public budget allocations were tracked and characterized 4) inability to reach certain stakeholders (e.g., Ministry of Finance in all country visits), and 5) varied availability of public information to triangulate interview insights.

Findings – how the Initiative worked to impact DRM

- The Initiative's work to mobilize domestic resources included:
 - **Directly advocating for more budget to end GBV with government**, e.g., via awareness campaigns toward political leaders and policymakers and lobbying of key government officials. This study found evidence of this work in all ten countries analyzed, both in reports and mentioned during stakeholder interviews.
 - **Supporting effective coordination and collaboration among government actors and with civil society**, e.g., by convening meetings where different government entities could identify and act on their roles to end GBV and meetings where civil society could hold government accountable for progress against GBV goals. This study similarly found evidence of this work in all ten countries analyzed, both in reports and mentioned during interviews.
 - **Offering technical assistance (TA) and strengthening the capacity to budget for, and monitor, GBV spending** among key actors, e.g., via gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) training of government officials, parliamentarians, and civil society organizations (CSOs). This work was mentioned in reports for all ten countries analyzed, but only mentioned by interviewees in eight countries.

Findings – how the Initiative worked to impact DRM (continued)

- Analysis of these efforts across the ten countries showed that there were five main drivers of success:
 1. Forging and leveraging **strong relationships with influential senior government officials** like Ministers but also Heads of State.
 2. Building **cross-sectoral coalitions within and outside governments to address GBV**, bringing in entities not historically part of the work, and gaining their buy-in.
 3. Demonstrating **to government the need to include civil society** in decision-making and monitoring related to GBV efforts.
 4. Providing **tangible and actionable technical assistance and training related to budgeting for GBV** (e.g., GRB training) by tying it to existing trainings and policies as well as providing tools like booklets that made GRB and budget monitoring more accessible.
 5. Across efforts, **engaging at the local level**—for example, working with district and local governments to ensure GBV was a budgeted priority, which increased the likelihood of reaching budget decision-makers in decentralized governments, protected such budgeting if priorities at the national level shifted, and gave greater visibility into actual deployment of public funds from the national level.
- The Initiative on several occasions was able to **carry even more weight in influencing governments and their budgetary decisions** because: it **worked closely with powerful Ministers that had been championing ending GBV**, could sway their country leaders and kept elevating GBV on the agenda; it **supported the passage and implementation of effective mechanisms to hold government accountable** like laws and national action plans with specific GBV budget allocations; and it **harnessed heightened political will to act** to work even more closely with government.
- There were also **challenges and potential missed opportunities in this process**, mainly related to **sufficiently engaging government in designing country programme activities** to promote more government ownership and ensure feasibility of government continuing them after the end of the programme, **strengthening technical collaboration with government on DRM**, and **planning for sustainability adequately and early** (including to operationalize key efforts like new GBV funds or registries set up with the Initiative's support).

Findings – how much the Initiative contributed to DRM

- The Initiative **did a lot to understand changes in government resourcing of GBV and its own role in moving the needle**. Its Global Results Framework and associated reporting included an **indicator on change in government budget allocation toward VAWG**, and **relevant supplemental indicators** like number of stakeholders trained on GRB and number of costed national action plans and policies.*
- The Initiative's quantitative impact on DRM can be seen tangibly in the countries where it worked: **across the four countries visited (Ecuador, Liberia, Trinidad & Tobago, Uganda) the Initiative's efforts could be tied—to a smaller or greater extent, and more or less directly—to allocations reaching almost USD 50M.**
- However, a few common challenges emerged particularly with regard to availability (and accessibility) of public GBV budget information, and **data reliability challenges** tied to the **Initiative's reported data on DRM.**
- The Initiative could **more clearly trace how its work helped mobilize funds**: while annual reports captured compelling DRM narratives like supporting a national GBV action plan that received government budget, **the main DRM indicator on national budget allocation toward GBV did not fully capture how the Initiative's activities may have contributed allocation changes.**

Note: *The Initiative's main DRM indicator asks countries to report the percentage of national budgets dedicated to addressing GBV during each year of Spotlight programming. Using this indicator, the Initiative reports a "13-fold increase on average from 2018 to 2023 in the percentage of national budgets dedicated to addressing GBV across 13 countries." Supplemental indicators were similarly measured annually and capture changes that may have an indirect impact on budgets, such as the existence of costed and funded national action plans, the number of government stakeholders trained in gender-responsive budgeting, and the number of women's rights advocates with strengthened capacities to draft and cost action plans for ending VAWG.

Recommendations

- There are **five nearer-term shifts** the Initiative can consider in **how it measures and communicates DRM impact**:
 1. The Initiative can **increase the reliability of its reporting on DRM** by offering more specific guidance to **Spotlight programme teams** on how to address common challenges with calculating government budget allocations towards ending GBV, **strengthening their capacity for this analysis**, and **encouraging them to document their reporting methodology** thoroughly to retain institutional knowledge in case of staff turnover.
 2. It can work to **better understand and document drivers of change in budget allocations and how its own work fits in** by requiring Spotlight programme teams to document their perspectives, and those of government and civil society stakeholders, on why budget allocations changed. This will help Spotlight programme teams, and the Initiative altogether, develop more cohesive narratives on DRM impact that bring supplemental indicators and qualitative insights together with shifts in budget allocations.
 3. It can consistently **track budget execution alongside budget allocation** to confirm whether funds are spent effectively and identify where budget implementation could be further supported.
 4. It can **evolve its main DRM figure to focus on change in absolute monetary amounts** and ensure **global aggregation averages country-level changes**.
 5. It can continue to **amplify linkages between GBV and other national priorities** by highlighting the cross-cutting nature of GBV.

Recommendations (continued)

There are **two main strategic shifts the Initiative can consider in how it works to impact DRM**—one more attainable in the nearer term, while the other likely requiring deeper, longer-term changes:

1. In the **nearer term**, the Initiative can **formalize, as part of programme design, its approach to identify entry points to influence governments**. This should be done in line with ongoing UN Country Team efforts to support governments in achieving countries' national priorities and drive deeper coordination among donor partners.
 2. In the **longer term**, the Initiative can **make DRM more central to its partnership with government** in three ways:
 - i. By continuing to deliberately engage with government entities that have budget decision-making authority (e.g., Ministries of Finance) and to coordinate with others working to influence government on this issue—including the broader donor system—to leverage networks for government influencing.
 - ii. By making it a norm to consider local government power to shape budget allocations when designing DRM efforts sub-nationally, and to engage government and civil society in joint reporting of budget allocations and their implementation.
 - iii. By considering the possibility of embedding technical experts within key government institutions for a particular time frame, focused on capacity building and facilitating information transfer (e.g., Ministry of Gender for capacity building, Ministry of Finance to identify DRM opportunities).
- In addition, we **encourage as a good practice for the Initiative to have a diverse set of donors for country programmes—including local and national governments of the country in question**—which will make Spotlight Initiative more locally led and funded in the long term.

Directional considerations to implement the recommendations

- Adopting these recommendations has **resourcing and process-related implications**, including: **need for additional staff time and a potential small increase in staff headcount** at the country level; as well as **revisiting processes** on reporting and aggregating DRM indicators and deciding which government stakeholders and levels of government to engage.
- As the Secretariat considers which recommendations to adopt and how to go about doing so, it should take into account **capacity to drive organizational and operational change without overstretching**. Starting with smaller, “no regrets” near-term changes, like updating the methodological note for the main DRM indicator, can lead to tangible results more quickly. These results can in turn unlock capacity and desire to implement deeper strategic shifts.

INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a grave human rights crisis, yet efforts to address it are severely underfunded



GBV poses a major challenge to peace and development

- **GBV affects hundreds of millions of women and girls, violating their fundamental right to live free from violence.**¹
 - 1 in 3 women and girls aged 15+ globally have been subjected to violence.
 - 140 women or girls worldwide are killed every day by a family member.
 - 230M+ women and girls have undergone female genital mutilation globally.
- **GBV, which is both a product and a cause of gender inequality, severely restrict our ability to realize the 2030 Agenda.**²⁻⁴
 - It can be linked directly to achieving not only gender equality but also SDGs related to poverty, hunger, health, education, economic growth, inequality within and among countries, sustainability of cities and communities, peace and justice, and global partnership for sustainable development.*
 - GBV and gender inequality are also interconnected with achieving SDGs related to water and sanitation, energy, and innovation.*
 - A 2022 study estimated that investing in initiatives to end GBV and violence against women and girls like Spotlight Initiative can have social impacts like keeping 5 million more girls in school by 2050, safeguarding survivors from losing 30% of their annual earning potential, and adding back 43 million productive days a year.⁵



However, ending GBV is severely underfunded today

- **0.2%, or USD 410M**, of global aid and development spending targeted GBV prevention in 2022.⁶
 - 98% of this funding went to large aid groups or government agencies.²
- **0.0002%, or USD 55.12M**, of the USD 26.7T that governments and donors mobilized in 2020 for pandemic response went into combating GBV.

Sources: 1) UN Women, [Facts and figures: Ending violence against women](#) (includes physical and/or sexual IPV and non-partner SV; does not include sexual harassment), 2024; 2) UN Women, [Progress on the SDGs: The gender snapshot 2024](#), 2024; 3) The Equality Institute, [SDGs and Violence Against Women and Girls](#), 2021; 4) Remme et al., [Re-thinking Financing for Addressing Gender-based Violence](#), 2016; 5) Dalberg, [Imperative to Invest](#), 2022; 6) The Equality Institute & The Accelerator for GBV Prevention, [What Counts? The state of funding for the prevention of gender-based violence against women and girls](#), 2023; 7) Oxfam, [Ending gender-based violence is possible](#), 2021; 8) Donor Tracker, [A life free from fear](#), 2020. *GBV can be linked to SDGs 1-4 (No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and Wellbeing, Quality Education), 6-9 (Clean Water and Sanitation, Affordable and Clean Energy, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), 10-11 (Reduced Inequalities, Sustainable Cities and Communities) and 16-17 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, Partnerships for the Goals).

Adequate and sustained public funding to end GBV is critical, but historical inequalities combine with global constraints to make it especially difficult in low- and lower-middle-income countries

Dedicating public funds to end GBV is key for ownership and sustainability...



Signals political and national commitment

- Countries have primary responsibility for their economic and social development based on cohesive, nationally owned strategies that are supported by integrated national financing frameworks.¹
- Shifting toward domestic funds strengthens a country's ownership of its national development agenda and ensures it reflects citizen goals.⁸
- Allocation of public budget to advance an issue can demonstrate a government's commitment to it and respond to citizen (and voter) expectations and pressure for tangible results.⁶
- Strengthening a country's domestic resource mobilization (DRM) can bolster its citizen-state compact and broader social contract.^{2,6}

...but ending GBV, already-underfunded globally, faces particular resourcing constraints in low- and lower-middle-income countries



Historical legacy

- Aid flows, debt servicing obligations, geopolitics, and a history of colonialism has and continues to significantly constrain countries' fiscal space to invest in development objectives.⁹⁻¹⁰
- Access to global capital and international private debt markets may continue to be limited due to growing protectionism and other trade barriers that affect smaller, developing economies the most.⁹⁻¹²



Fiscal constraints

- A large informal sector and insufficient institutional capacity for tax administration yield a low revenue base.⁹
- Lack of economic diversification may increase vulnerability to external shocks (e.g., commodity price fluctuations, climate change).¹³

Sources: 1) UN, [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#), 2015; 2) Oxfam, [State of DRM](#), 2017; 3) CSIS, [Domestic Resource Mobilization](#), 2016; 4) Forus, [Statement on Recent Trends in ODA Budgets](#), 2024; 5) UNCTAD, [Global foreign investment weak in 2023, funding for sustainable development sectors drops over 10%](#), 2024; 6) Hujo (ed.), [The Politics of Domestic Resource Mobilization for Social Development](#), 2020; 7) UN, [Declining Aid, Rising Debt Thwarting World's Ability to Fund Sustainable Development, Speakers Warn at General Assembly High-Level Dialogue](#), 2019; 8) Bolch et al., [The arithmetics and politics of domestic resource mobilization for poverty eradication](#), 2022; 9) IMF and WB, [Stepping up domestic resource mobilization: A new joint initiative from the IMF and WB](#); 10) African Union, [Illicit financial flows, debt management, cost of capital, dominate discussions by African economists](#), 2023; 11) WB, [Why Is Trade More Costly For Poor Countries? A New Database Gives Us Some Answers](#); 12) UNCTAD, [Global Trade Update December 2023](#); 13) IMF, [Economic Diversification in Developing Countries – Lessons from Country Experiences with Broad-Based and Industrial Policies](#); 14) Equality Insights, [The role of gender-based violence data](#); 15) WB, ["Crowding In" Effect of Public Investment on Private Investment Revisited](#), 2024.

Constraints to funding GBV (continued)

Dedicating public funds to end GBV is key for ownership and sustainability...



Can provide the necessary resources to bring about systems change and shift norms

- Public domestic resources are the most important and stable source of development finance, exceeding private flows and foreign aid. They are also intended to be the most representative of public interest.^{2-7,*}
- Governments have room to grow public budgets not only via improved taxation, but also by strengthening collection of other fees and helping develop domestic debt markets.³
- Public spending on an issue can bring in other funding sources.¹⁵

...but ending GBV, already-underfunded globally, faces particular resourcing constraints in low- and lower-middle-income countries



Societal constraints

- Prevailing patriarchal norms, stigma for GBV survivors, low political will to address GBV and lack of dedicated GBV budget lines remain shared global challenges across countries.
- Limited data collection on GBV prevalence and weak monitoring of GBV-related spending hinder evidence on the need and positive benefits of resources towards ending GBV.¹⁴

Spotlight Initiative – the United Nations High-Impact Initiative to end violence against women and girls

– was designed and rolled out to reflect the criticality of DRM to end GBV

Key principles informing the Initiative's design:

Holistic work the Initiative would undertake



Promote and support frameworks and mechanisms for the government to allocate more funding toward ending VAWG (costed and budgeted national laws, policies, action plans).



Demonstrate the effectiveness of working on ending VAWG (both through serving survivors and advancing GBV prevention).



Strengthen country-level data showing the devastating effects and widespread nature of VAWG, the effect of ending VAWG on the country's broader development, and the need for more public funding.



Help build capacity to unlock more domestic resources toward ending VAWG (by training government officials, helping institutions mainstream gender in budgeting, supporting CSOs to advocate for more funding, etc.)

Future planning the Initiative would do to sustain its impact



At the individual country programme level, develop sustainability and exit plans with national policymakers and civil society to sustain the gains from Spotlight 1.0 programming, reinforcing integrated national financing frameworks (INFFs).



Engage closely with government: jointly assess the best options to fund ongoing work, provide guidance to government on financing tools and good practices, help government access data to inform its financing decision-making, and seek backing at the highest political level.

How the Initiative would measure and communicate impact



Include multiple indicators to measure changes in DRM to end VAWG in the Global Results Framework (both direct, like changes in the percentage of national budgets allocated, and indirect, like number of government stakeholders with strengthened capacity to engage in GRB).



Qualitatively capture impact on government funding to end VAWG in annual reporting.

Problem statement for this study:

How, and how much, has Spotlight Initiative contributed to mobilizing national domestic resources to end GBV?

Does the Initiative need to reconceptualize how it understands its own contribution to DRM, and in what ways?

The study's approach: Mixed Methods

10 country programmes among the Initiative's 26 1.0 country programmes were shortlisted for desk research and virtual stakeholder discussions based on:

- Data availability and quality
- Anticipated feasibility of reaching key stakeholders
- Interesting learnings or trends to further test related to DRM
- Sample provides diversity in country context

Shortlisted 10 countries: Argentina, Ecuador, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, and Zimbabwe

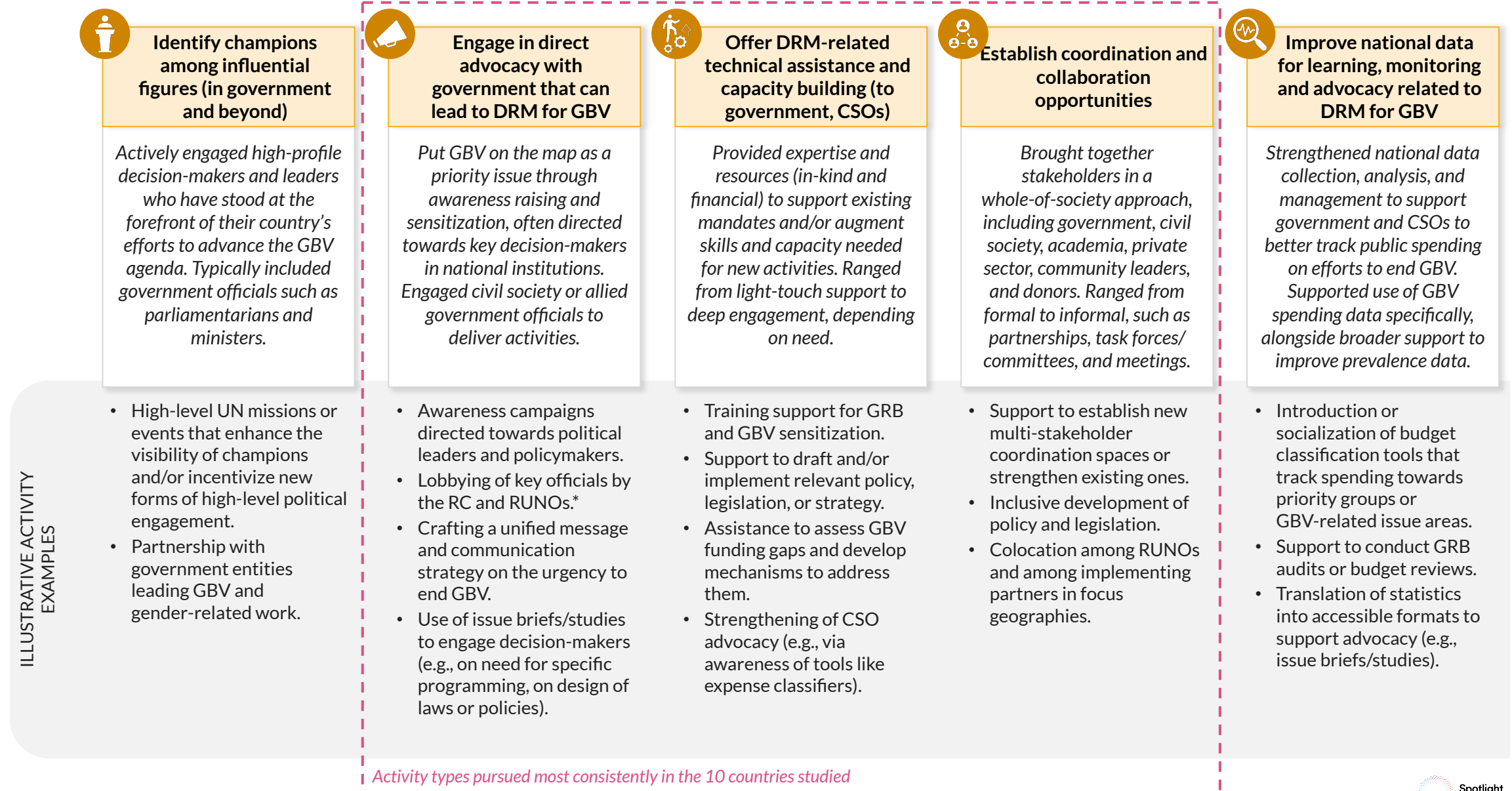
A subset of 4 countries were selected for visits to trace 2-3 specific findings related to the resources that the Initiative helped unlock. These were selected based on:

- Existence of a Spotlight 2.0 programme
- Secretariat guidance on countries that took an interesting approach to DRM

Shortlisted 4 countries:

*Ecuador
Liberia
Trinidad and Tobago
Uganda*

Spotlight Initiative engaged in 5 main activities that contributed to DRM – three of those more consistently (encased in the red dashed line)



Note: *RC = Resident Coordinator. RUNOs = Recipient United Nations Organizations.

Of the 6 activities Spotlight Initiative undertook more consistently, this research points to the following success drivers to amplify impact:

STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS



The Initiative worked closely in its advocacy with influential or politically powerful members of government, as well as Cabinet members who had long championed ending GBV and were publicly recognized leaders on the issue. For example, in Liberia with the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection under the Weah administration to develop and gain approval for the National Anti-SGBV Roadmap; in T&T with the Minister of Gender and Child Affairs to evolve and ultimately pass the National Strategic Action Plan on GBV and SV, building on a longstanding relationship with the UN Women Multi-Country Office.

MAKING GRPB TRAININGS MORE TANGIBLE AND CONNECTED TO EXISTING EFFORTS



The Initiative connected gender-responsible planning and budgeting (GRPB) training for government actors to specific policies/laws/action plans or existing training efforts, making it more tangible in purpose and applicability and increasing the chances of its sustainability. For example, In Uganda, it worked with the Equal Opportunities Commission and Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group to bring existing gender equity budgeting trainings to parliamentarians and district government officials. In Liberia, it used a Training of Trainer model to train the Ministry of Finance, Development, and Planning and the Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Protection on GRPB, who then trained staff of the Gender and Social Inclusion Units in nine line ministries.

GAINING BROAD BUY-IN



The Initiative intentionally engaged across government ministries, elevating GBV as a priority issue for entities that been on the periphery of efforts to address GBV or had not seen GBV as relevant. For example, in T&T the Initiative, through UN Women, supported the Ministry of Gender and Child Affairs (GAD) to engage diverse government stakeholders to develop and champion the NSAP. In Uganda, the Initiative invited diverse public departments, such as engineering and public works as well as natural resources, to deepen their understanding of how GBV impacts their sectors and their responsibility to address it.



CROSS-CUTTING: ENGAGING AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

For example, in Ecuador, the Initiative influenced subnational governments' fiscal and legal policies by working with Decentralized Autonomous Governments.

Success drivers (continued)

PROVIDING TOOLS THAT MADE GRB AND BUDGET MONITORING MORE ACCESSIBLE



The Initiative provided tools that made GRB and budget monitoring more accessible, both in terms of reach (e.g., via creation of online modules) and in terms of expertise (e.g., via materials that helped CSOs grasp concepts more effectively to advocate for funds and hold government accountable). In Ecuador, it developed a guidebook for public budget monitoring to support CSOs in their advocacy towards government. In Uganda, it provided TA to the Ministry of Public Service's Civil Service College to establish a multi-media studio used to develop a self-paced e-course on gender-responsive planning and budgeting (GRPB) for district government officials.

ELEVATING THE NEED FOR A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACH TO END GBV



The Initiative highlighted the need for a holistic multi-dimensional approach to end GBV that involves various actors, each with a key role to play, and created vibrant collaboration spaces. For example, in Uganda it strengthened district-level coordination on GBV across different district Departments, shifting beliefs that GBV was only relevant to the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development and its district-level Community Development Department. In T&T, the Initiative supported the GAD to reach ministers traditionally on the fringes of GBV efforts—today, the GAD coordinates NSAP implementation including such cross-sectoral meetings.

BRINGING CSOs TO THE TABLE



The Initiative created regular collaboration spaces between government and civil society, often setting a precedent for more inclusive decision-making and greater interaction between these actors—even if sustainability after the end of the Initiative was largely not achieved. For example, in PNG it brought together the UN DSG, Prime Minister, parliamentarians, development partners, civil society, youth, private sector, and community members in the first National Summit on Ending Gender-Based Violence in November 2020 which catalyzed further public hearings. In T&T, its National Steering Committee and Operational Steering Committee provided CSOs with a platform to offer inputs on every step of its implementation, collectively address bottlenecks, and hold government accountable.

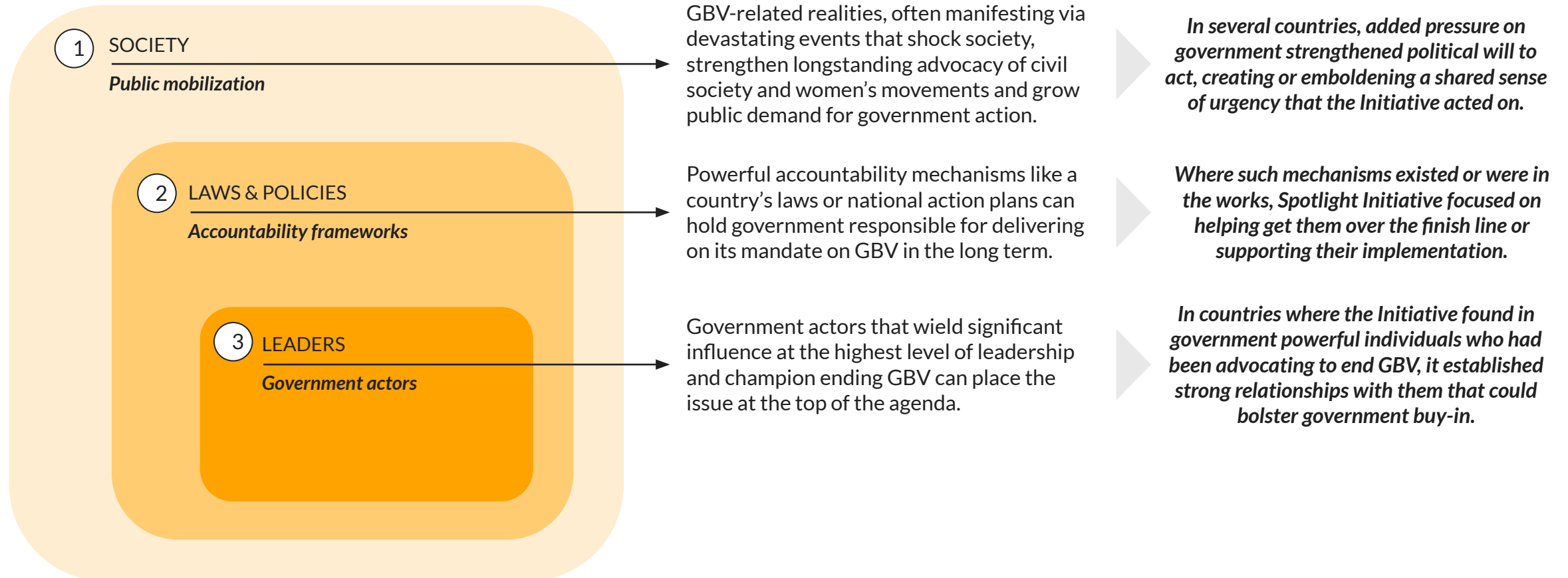


CROSS-CUTTING: ENGAGING AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

For example, in Uganda, where key budget planning and spending decisions occur at the district level, it engaged District Community Development Officials, Chief Administrative Officers, and technical leads across departments in gender-responsive budgeting training.

As noted previously, in doing its work, Spotlight Initiative leveraged effective entry points to bolster its ability to influence governments and their budgetary commitments

Spotlight Initiative identified and leveraged compelling entry points to find a more willing collaborator in government and encourage longer-term ownership of efforts to end GBV.



Country examples help illustrate these 3 entry points:

1

SOCIETY:
Public mobilization



In Uganda, **COVID-19 correlated with spikes in teenage pregnancy, heightening awareness and urgency among the broader public to end GBV.**¹ The Initiative amplified discussions on child rights, teenage pregnancies, and GBV via radio and talk shows and engaged cultural and religious leaders in condemning GBV. This culminated in a national prevention campaign “Protect the Girl, Save the Nation” led by the Offices of the First Lady, Vice President, and Prime Minister.²



In Liberia, civil society organized a three-day March for Justice protest in 2020 against widespread rape and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including female genital mutilation and cases affecting children.^{3, 4} The **protests and pandemic-related increases in SGBV prompted the President to declare rape as a national emergency and develop and launch a USD 6M Anti-SGBV Roadmap** with the Initiative's support.⁵

2

LAWS & POLICIES:
Accountability frameworks



In Ecuador, **implementation of the recently passed Comprehensive Organic Law for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women (LOIPEVCM) was a key focus for the Initiative as it created a mechanism for government to act on ending GBV and to be held accountable for its efforts, including meeting budgetary allocations outlined in the law. The law was also used as a basis for advocacy by civil society pushing the country's decentralized autonomous governments (GAD) to locally adopt the law, which ultimately led to local budget allocations for efforts to end GBV in two regions.**¹



In T&T, a **national action plan on GBV (NSAP) that had once failed in Cabinet was re-costed and strengthened.** UN Women, under Spotlight Initiative, supported the Ministry of Gender and Child Affairs to break down the cost of implementing the NSAP, identifying costs that existing national funding could cover, ones that development partners could cover, and the outstanding funding request to government.² Today, the **NSAP serves as a framework that organizes government activities and resourcing towards efforts to end GBV.**

3

LEADERS:
Government actors



In T&T, the **Minister of Gender and Child Affairs, a long-standing champion of gender equality and ending GBV, kept the NSAP alive after its failed first submission in 2016.** Building on a long, strong relationship between the government and the UN Women multi-country office leadership and leveraging the move of the Ministry of Gender and Child Affairs into the more visible and significant Office of the Prime Minister, **the Initiative—especially UN Women—identified opportunities to strengthen the Minister's platform to push for the adoption of an evolved NSAP in 2023.**²



In Liberia, the **Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) was politically powerful and “had the ear of the President.”** The UN RC had a strong relationship with the MGCSP and supported concerted efforts by the Minister to get the President to sign the Anti-SGBV Roadmap and declare rape as a national emergency.^{3, 4}

To quantify its impact on DRM, Spotlight Initiative had one main indicator as well as relevant supplemental indicators in its results framework, which it reported against

MAIN PROGRAMME DRM INDICATOR

Indicator 2.2: Percentage of national budget being allocated to the prevention and elimination of all forms of VAWG

Ending violence against women requires robust resources to deliver comprehensive programmes and services. This indicator is a measure of national commitment to ending VAWG, in the form of the proportion of the national budget. It will endeavor to capture resources allocated across all sectors to address VAWG prevention and service delivery.

GLOBAL AGGREGATION CALCULATION

Average % budget allocation for a specific year
(across countries that reported on 2.2 and were included in the analysis)

Average baseline % budget allocation
(across countries that reported on 2.2 and were included in the analysis)

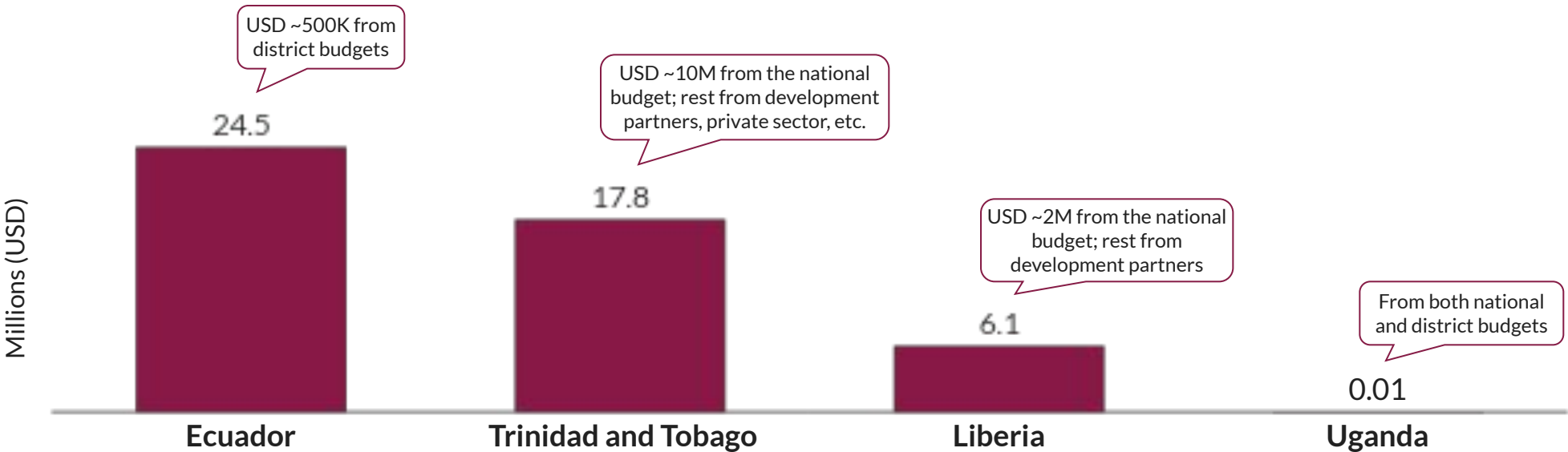
RELEVANT SUPPLEMENTARY INDICATORS

Action plans and frameworks		• The presence of a national and/or sub-national evidence-based, costed and funded action plans and M&E frameworks on VAWG in place that respond to the rights of all women and girls and are developed in a participatory manner
Capacity to engage in GRB, develop costed action plans and frameworks, and hold stakeholders accountable	Government Lawmakers Civil society	• Number of key actors with strengthened capacities to draft and cost action plans on ending VAWG and accompanying M&E frameworks • Number of key actors with strengthened knowledge and capacities to hold relevant stakeholders accountable to fund and implement multi-sectoral programmes to address VAWG • Number of key actors with greater knowledge, capacities and tools on gender-responsive budgeting to end VAWG
Coordination and collaboration mechanisms		• Number of national and sub-national multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms that are costed

This study found meaningful mobilization of public funds in-country that could be reliably linked to the Initiative’s work

Funds that were traced in-country based on specific lines of inquiry*

(Please see country case studies in Annex 1 for more details)



Relative level of Initiative involvement in mobilizing funds^	Very limited	Directly involved	Involved	Directly involved
	Role could only be confirmed for fraction of traced funding	Specific Initiative activities involved budgeting decisions for total traced funding	Clear role supporting individuals or institutions that shaped budgeting decisions for total traced funding	Specific Initiative activities involved budgeting decisions for total traced funding

Across 4 countries, this study’s data collection visits confirmed the Initiative contributed in varying ways to funding allocations reaching almost USD 50M.

Please see associated country case studies for more specifics on the role of the Initiative in each case.

Notes: *Please see Dalberg case studies for Ecuador, Trinidad and Tobago, Liberia and Uganda in the report appendix for more specifics and sources for the funding amounts shown in this graph. The four countries were selected based on availability of data, feasibility of data gathering via country visits, reported success stories, and the existence of 2.0 programmes (confirmed in Ecuador and Uganda, and planned in Liberia at the time of the study). Funds for each country were traced based on 1) a review of the Initiative’s narrative reports (e.g., annual and global reports and annex A global results framework data, thematic assessments, compendium of good practices) and the Initiative’s reporting of its main DRM indicator, which tracks a country’s national budget allocations to efforts to end GBV during each year of Spotlight programming; 2) a country visit to speak to government, civil society, and UN staff to validate data and insights and uncover additional findings on how budget allocations changed. Reported figures have been triangulated across Initiative reports, interviews, and desk research. The analysis did not consult national-level budget data since there was inconsistent availability of public budget information across countries and national budget analysis was beyond project scope.

^High-level qualitative scale of Initiative involvement is directional and based on collated perspectives from country programme staff, other UNCT staff, civil society and government stakeholders. See country case studies in appendix for more details and specifics on the Initiative’s role in each case. Broadly, the scale can be translated as: Very limited = the Initiative’s role in mobilizing funding could only be confirmed for a fraction of the total amount traced; Involved = the Initiative played a clear role supporting individuals or institutions that shaped the budgeting decisions for the total amount traced; Directly involved = specific Initiative activities informed budgeting decisions for the total amount traced.

Analyzing and reporting on changes in public budget allocations toward ending GBV is a challenging task for many reasons, including:

- Lack of dedicated GBV budget lines
- Difficulty determining with high confidence which parts of a budget are relevant.
- Difficulty consistently accessing government budgets
- Capturing the impact often-indirect nature of DRM-related efforts (e.g. support for gender-responsive budgeting or advocacy)

The Initiative's efforts to report on DRM changes and its own related impact stand out given how difficult the task is.

Still, improvements can be made, and potential changes to better capture efforts to increase domestic public resources to end GBV moving forward are laid out in the following sections.

Spotlight Initiative can bolster its DRM effectiveness by amplifying what it already does in 3 main ways:

DOUBLE DOWN ON STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT WITH GOVERNMENT

- **Collaborating with governments to co-create and co-lead country programmes is fundamental to the Initiative's approach and a key priority.** Still, in some cases, **the Initiative could have engaged government even earlier and more consistently in the country programme design process**—for example, ensuring a new government that came to power early in implementation bought into the design or inputted on revisions. This would promote even greater government ownership, including to fully take on the work after the programme end.
- **Multiple UN agencies efficiently and effectively collaborating under the RC was foundational to the Initiative's setup and ways of working.** Still, interviews suggest opportunities to **further streamline and harmonize UN agency messaging to government**, to avoid confusing or conflicting messages and help government prioritize.

FURTHER PRIORITIZE SUSTAINABILITY OF EFFORTS AND OF IMPACT

- **Sustainability planning was an essential piece of the Initiative's design and was undertaken by a number of Spotlight programme teams.** However, this research surfaced several cases where sustainability planning was not enough of a priority or was not pursued early enough.
- This was especially true for programmes that had to focus on accelerating delivery and spending in a short time frame once pandemic lockdowns eased.
- While the **Initiative helped create several frameworks and accountability tools** across countries, like NAPs, roadmaps, laws and policies, observatories and registries, it could have **further supported their operationalization, including through implementation planning.**
- In some cases, the Initiative's **capacity building and advocacy efforts could have engaged additional key actors to ensure long-lasting results**—for example, to address risk of lost technical capacity and know-how due to change in government, or of shift in government priorities following elections.

COLLABORATE MORE CLOSELY WITH GOVERNMENT ON DRM KNOW-HOW

- Even though the **Initiative and its partners consistently worked on strengthening government capacity for gender-responsive budgeting**, country team members in some of the countries visited suggested that even more rigorous government capacity-building efforts were needed and would be very beneficial.
- For example, **the Initiative could have embedded UN agency staff who are part of it within government units.** The value of such embedding includes hands-on mentorship to government staff to build long-lasting DRM-related skills, especially for institutions like the Ministry of Gender that often face significant capacity constraints.
- Embedding staff can also help identify opportunities to increase or optimize public resource allocations to GBV in entities that shape budgets (e.g., Ministry of Finance).

This study points to a set of five nearer-term recommendations to strengthen how Spotlight Initiative measures and communicates its impact on DRM...

Recommendations on measuring and communicating impact on DRM

Nearer-term shifts

1

Increase reliability of Spotlight programme reporting data

- Incorporate detailed information in the methodological notes on how to best report on DRM related indicators, including how to analyze different types of budgets, measure shifts at all levels of government, and address a lack of data.
- At Spotlight programme start, further support or train Spotlight programme teams on budget analysis and support them with global technical experts.
- Establish a best practice for Spotlight programme teams to document their methodology on capturing changes in DRM and ensure it is easily accessible to others.

2

Better understand and document drivers of increased DRM

- Create dedicated space (in reporting for example) for Spotlight programme teams to explain the “why” behind every observed allocation change/trend, including identifying any Initiative activities that contributed to the observed change.
- Support Spotlight programme teams to trace and communicate changes in public budget allocations from the bottom up (e.g., support longer-term tracking of GRB training results, situate policy change in broader efforts to shift budgets).

3

Track budget execution

- Provide guidance for reporting and monitoring spending of allocated budgets (e.g., using budget monitoring tools available from the government, partnering with CSOs who perform budget monitoring).

4

Evolve the Initiative’s main DRM indicator

- Require country staff to report not only the percentage change in budget allocations, but also the absolute monetary figure corresponding to that change, along with the full amount of public expenditure for that reporting cycle.
- Aggregate country staff-reported monetary figures into a total monetary figure at the global level corresponding to changes in budget allocations.
- Calculate the change in funds at the country level, then find the average change across countries. Deflate figures for year-to-year comparisons.

5

Amplify how addressing GBV advances national development priorities

- Better frame narratives on how investments in addressing GBV are investments in broader sustainable development and national priorities by, for example, identifying and quantifying the impact of GBV (and the benefits of addressing it) across sectors.

....and two strategic shifts that may be longer-term and can help Spotlight Initiative more effectively influence DRM

Recommendations on working strategically to influence DRM

Longer-term shift

1

Formalize and amplify entry points to influence government

- Early on (once a programme is likely), engage the RCO to lead RUNOs in gathering intelligence on government priorities related to GBV and identifying effective entry points through which to strengthen collaboration with government on ending GBV.
- This exercise can ensure programmes better anchor on national structures and momentum so that efforts are sustained. This exercise should happen as part of ongoing UNCT efforts to partner with government to support national priorities and the country's development agenda.

Longer-term shift

2

Make DRM more central to government partnership

- Early in programme design, country programmes identify key government institutions to engage to influence DRM (incl. Ministry of Finance, Office of the President/Prime Minister, National Planning Authority) and assess their appetite to engage and capacity to conduct gender responsive planning and budgeting.
- Programmes should identify the right actors within each institution who could be reached continuously and RUNOs with existing relationships who could own the engagement. Programmes should also coordinate with the wider donor system to promote shared DRM messaging and efforts.
- Early in programme design, understand a country's governance and budgeting system to focus DRM activities where budget decisions are made (e.g., decentralized governance, centralized budgeting). "Pilot and learn" ways to increase DRM sub-nationally, then scale best practices to other geographies.
- Jointly set practical DRM-related goals with each prioritized government entity/institution and work with them to monitor and report on progress toward these goals. Consistently bring in CSOs into monitoring and reporting to ensure transparency in impact reporting, including for DRM.
- Embed members of the Initiative's technical team within Ministries of Gender (or equivalent) and within Ministries of Finance to support government actor capacity building and identify opportunities to unlock more resources or allocate them more effectively toward GBV (e.g., by better understanding planned tax reforms and how those additional funds could be used).
- Early in programme design, bring together key government institutions, civil society organizations, and donor partners to build alignment on the timeline, owner, and resourcing need of planned activities. Develop a sustainability plan and establish a norm to revisit and update it as part of annual assessments.

ANNEX 1: Case Studies

CASE STUDIES FROM COUNTRY VISITS

- **Ecuador**
 1. Femicide as an entry point to strengthen collaboration with government
 2. Engaging subnational governments to allocate resources toward GBV
- **Trinidad and Tobago**
 3. Evolving a draft NSAP on GSBV and modularizing its budget to support its adoption
- **Liberia**
 3. Supporting development and implementation of an Anti-SGBV Roadmap
- **Uganda**
 3. Supporting district government capacity for gender-equitable budgeting to mobilize local allocations

ECUADOR

ECUADOR CASE STUDY 1 (1 of 2) | In Ecuador, preventing and eliminating femicide was the key effort through which stakeholders strengthened momentum to address GBV

WHAT CHARACTERIZED THE ENVIRONMENT AROUND DRM FOR GBV BEFORE THE INITIATIVE?

- **A robust legal framework through which to work for more policy and resourcing to end GBV**, with the Comprehensive Organic Law to Prevent and Eradicate GBV Against Women (LOIPEVCM) passed in 2018 and started implementation in 2020.¹
- **Limited political will of government**, in line with historical government attitudes toward the issue.²
- Purported **prior national government allocations to GBV of less than USD 2M per year**.³

HOW DID EFFORTS TO RESOURCE WORK ON ENDING GBV CHANGE DURING THE INITIATIVE (SPECIFIC TO THIS FINDING)?

THE CATALYST

- **Civil society and the broader public mobilized** in the aftermath of a femicide in 2022, **significantly amplifying public pressure** on the government and **increasing its political will** to act to end GBV.⁴

KEY EVENTS

- 1 The President elevated the Secretariat of Human Rights into a **new Ministry of Women and Human Rights (MWHR)**.
- 2 The President **committed USD 24 M** over his government's 4-year tenure to combat GBV. This commitment represented the entire budget of the newly formed MWHR over the 4 years, and was earmarked towards:
 - **High-visibility government initiatives like Violet Centers**, new centers for service provision to GBV survivors, which likely represent the bulk of these funds (USD 17.5M) and whose impact seems contested so far.^{2, 5-8}
 - The government's own **GBV prevention campaign**.
 - **Two LOIPEVCM instruments** to support more public spending on GBV: the **Single Registry for VAW (RUV)**, which compiles information on GBV cases across national institutions to inform service provision, public policy, and the femicide risk Early Warning System; the **National Observatory on VAW**, which informs LOIPEVCM policy design, implementation, and monitoring, and broader monitoring and data sharing on GBV.^{3, 9}

THE ROLE OF SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE

- **Leveraged the momentum** of the femicide case to call attention to GBV and urge government to implement the Organic Law as a shared priority (all RUNOs).
- **Supported the government to sensitize police officers on GBV** through training, led by UN Women.¹⁰
- **Provided TA to support the implementation of LOIPEVCM instruments**. For the Observatory, UN Women and UNDP supported on analysis of regulatory context, a cost assessment, and development of a concept note and management guide. For the RUV, UNDP helped develop a technical standard for its operational and government model and conducted a data quality assessment of the existing systems of various ministries to ensure interoperability.²
- **Provided TA to the National Council for Gender Equality***—a body comprising civil society representatives that advises government on integrating gender equality principles across public policy, including capacitating the MWHR to carry out its mandate through policy development support—led by UN Women and UNDP.

Sources: 1) Spotlight Initiative Country Programme Document, 2020; 2) Dalberg interviews; 3) Spotlight Initiative Ecuador Final Cumulative Report; 4) People's Dispatch, *Femicide of María Belén Bernal sparks outrage in Ecuador*, 2022; 5) El Comercio, *Ecuador tendrá 24 centros violeta, dice el Presidente Lasso*, 2022; 6) El Comercio, *Guillermo Lasso en Informe a la Nación habla de saneamiento de cuentas*, 2022; 7) El Informativo Ecuador, *Esmeraldas va cuenta con el primer Centro Violeta*, 2023; 8) El Oriente, *El primer centro violeta de la Amazonia fue inaugurado*, 2023; 9) UNDP, *Registro Único de Violencia (RUV) evitará la revictimización de mujeres frente a casos de violencia*, 2022; 10) UNW, *Apoyamos al Ministerio del Interior en el desarrollo de una APP móvil de consulta para otorgar MEDIDAS ADMINISTRATIVAS DE PROTECCIÓN INMEDIATA y ACCIONES URGENTES para mujeres víctimas de violencia*, 2022. Notes: **e.g., provided TA on development of cross-sectoral indicators for the National Agenda for Gender Equality 2021-2025.

ECUADOR CASE STUDY 1 (2 of 2) | Moving forward, the Initiative could identify the right entry points, provide TA to strengthen foundational institutions, and maximize the impact of existing budgets to advance DRM

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF RELEVANT EFFORTS AS SPOTLIGHT 2.0 IN ECUADOR KICKS INTO GEAR?

- **Nascent efforts to institutionalize and implement the LOIPEVCM**, though progress is constrained by limited funding.^{1,2}
- **Acute and existential threats to MWHR**, evidenced by the Noboa government suggestion to refocus the MWHR on criminal policy and due in part to:^{2,3}
 - **A MWHR whose capacity and political power are constrained** and is returning funds to the MoF because it is unable to spend all its allocated budget.
 - **Limited ability to track GBV efforts**, including lack of clarity and transparency on the funding status of the RUV and Observatory.
 - **Negative perception of key MWHR efforts**, such as the Violet Centers (that Spotlight 1.0 did not support), based on civil society and UN staff input (concerns include accessibility outside of urban centers, availability of intended services, hours of operation, responsiveness of services, perceived low utilization, etc.)

WHAT ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPACT FOR SPOTLIGHT 2.0 IN ECUADOR?

Identify entry points or common denominators of shared urgency with the next government, including the economic costs of GBV and GBV as part of the pressing internal security crisis facing Ecuador. As part of advocacy, continue exploring how other development partners (e.g., countries who provide key bilateral support to Ecuador, other multilaterals) may contribute to cultivating this shared urgency.

Provide TA to the MWHR to strengthen its capacity to deliver its mandate and execute its budget.

Provide TA and specialized support to evolve the Violet Centers **for greater impact**, as well as to get **implementation of the RUV and the Observatory over the finish line**, to support the full realization of ongoing government efforts

ECUADOR CASE STUDY 2 (1 of 2) | In Ecuador, engaging subnational governments to locally adopt national GBV infrastructure helped ensure GBV was a budgeted priority and that actions on GBV were tracked

WHAT CHARACTERIZED THE ENVIRONMENT AROUND DRM FOR GBV BEFORE THE INITIATIVE?

- A legal provision (Organic Code on Territorial Organization, Autonomy, and Decentralization) that **mandates local governments to allocate 10% of their non-taxable income to social programs** serving priority attention groups.¹
- **A more agile and responsive local governance system that could be leveraged for DRM** due to lighter bureaucracy, longer tenures, greater proximity to civil society, and higher transparency.
- **Slow or limited movement of budgets** from national government to autonomous decentralized governments (GADs)²

HOW DID EFFORTS TO RESOURCE WORK ON ENDING GBV CHANGE DURING THE INITIATIVE (SPECIFIC TO THIS FINDING)?

THE CATALYST

- **An enabling environment for DRM for GBV in Cuenca**, a district prioritized by the Initiative, due to:²
 - Alarming cantonal GBV statistics
 - Political will of local government
 - Strong women's movement and a strong civil society partner to lead the effort
 - Fairly high cantonal budget
 - 2019 local Ordinance requiring participatory budgeting and allocation of 10-25% of non-taxable income towards EVAW efforts³

KEY EVENTS

- 1 The Cuenca GAD reformed the 2019 Ordinance on the Prevention, Comprehensive Care, and Eradication of Violence Against Women in 2021 to **create a fiduciary fund that would invest USD 500K annually in efforts to address GBV**. Cuenca's Financial Department did not wish to commit to annual funding at the time, so the fund was dropped.²
- 2 In response to this outcome, in 2023 the GAD **created a cantonal financial allocation called the Violet Fund** to sidestep the bureaucracy and administrative challenges of the initial fiduciary fund. The Violet Fund invests in educational, health, legal, and economic empowerment support for GBV and femicide survivors.⁴

THE ROLE OF SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE

- **Provided specialized TA and consulting support** to the Cuenca cantonal government to reform the local ordinance and create the Violet Fund, led by UNFPA and partner SENDAS. The support included implementation considerations, e.g., key fund documents to carry out procurement for GBV survivor services.²
- **Provided broader TA** to territorialize the LOIPEVCM and its national system for the prevention and eradication of VAW in Cuenca, led by UNFPA.⁵
- **Brought together a diverse set of actors to the table and created space for productive dialogue and coordination** by leveraging the clout and credibility of powerful names (UN, EU) associated with the Initiative (led by UNFPA in Cuenca; all RUNOs for implementation of the LOIPEVCM more broadly).

ECUADOR CASE STUDY 2 (2 of 2) | Moving forward, Spotlight Initiative could provide TA to strengthen implementation and monitoring of local budget allocations and identify best practices for broader replication

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF RELEVANT EFFORTS AS SPOTLIGHT 2.0 IN ECUADOR KICKS INTO GEAR?

- **The Violet Fund has been implemented with a purported USD 300K initial allocation**, of which 33% has gone to legal services, 41% to psychological support, 10% to the provision of kits that support education and health access, and 16% to economic empowerment activities. Of note, in discussions, challenges to access grants because of long, bureaucratic procurement processes were noted, and flagged that 2 out of 3 grants went to the same area within the canton.^{1,2}
 - Discussions also surfaced initial fund implementation challenges: lack of technical know-how among government and civil society to manage the fund, limited awareness of the fund, and misaligned expectations around funding recipients given open procurement. Cantonal government representatives also noted that consultants hired to design the fund under the Initiative lacked context-specific knowledge on public administration and M&E in Cuenca, so their outputs required adjustments that delayed implementation.¹
- **Efforts to replicate the Cuenca ordinance in other cantons like Azogues have proven difficult** due to less robust political advocacy and civil society mobilization.¹

WHAT ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPACT FOR SPOTLIGHT 2.0 IN ECUADOR?

Strengthen the work already happening in Cuenca via specialized TA to improve the management and implementation of the Violet Fund. Address bureaucratic processes that hinder equitable access to funding and boost the capacity of Cuenca CSOs and government to monitor fund implementation and execution to increase its impact.

Identify best practices to replicate the Cuenca success in similar but non-identical cantonal contexts and continue work to localize national-level laws and policies. Potential cantons in which to replicate success include Morona-Santiago, where GBV prevalence is relatively high, or Quito and Guayaquil, where there are relatively higher cantonal budgets.

Invest in the enablers to mobilize local budgets, including a robust civil society, political will, data on GBV prevalence, strong legislation and policies anchored on budgets, and adequate local government resourcing capabilities. Identify and engage local government institutions that influence budgeting decisions.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO CASE STUDY (1 of 2) | In Trinidad and Tobago, the country’s first National Strategic Action Plan on Gender- and Sexual-Based Violence was passed, securing a funding commitment from national government

WHAT CHARACTERIZED THE ENVIRONMENT AROUND DRM FOR GBV BEFORE THE INITIATIVE?

- **Clear role for government to promote gender equity and gender justice** through a Gender and Child Affairs Division that was strategically placed under the Office of Prime Minister (OPM-GCAD).
- **Efforts, even amidst limited political will, to establish a national framework on gender and GBV**, including a 2018 Green Paper for a National Policy on Gender and Development and a 2016 draft five-year National Strategic Action Plan on Gender- and Sexual-Based Violence (NSAP-GSBV) with a cost of USD 20M (seen to be high).¹
- **Strong advocacy for more government resourcing to end GBV**, including from within government (Minister of Gender and Child Affairs), service providers, and CSOs.²

HOW DID EFFORTS TO RESOURCE WORK ON ENDING GBV CHANGE DURING THE INITIATIVE (SPECIFIC TO THIS FINDING)?

THE CATALYST

- Just as the Initiative began implementation, **the Cabinet had appointed an Inter-Ministerial Committee to review the 2016 NSAP-GSBV to propose a new path forward** due to consistent OPM-GCAD and CSO advocacy³

KEY EVENTS

- 1 **The draft NSAP-GSBV from 2016 was revised, including modularization of its budget** to clearly show what would constitute funds already being allocated and spent on the issue, what could be sourced from partners, and what would be new requests for government funding allocations.²
- 2 **The revised NSAP-GSBV for 2023-2027 with a budget of USD 17.8M**, including USD ~10M of new budget allocations towards GBV, **was approved** by Cabinet in June 2023.⁴ The NSAP guides government ministries/agencies, CSOs, the private sector, and communities on preventing and responding to GBV to drive towards five outcomes focused on increased awareness, more effective services, survivor-centered justice systems, improved reparation mechanisms, and stronger multi-stakeholder coordination on gender-responsive interventions.⁵ The NSAP specifies activities, the lead and supporting stakeholders for those activities, and indicators to track progress against activities, helping cross-sectoral actors understand their role in efforts to address GBV.

THE ROLE OF SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE

- **Provided TA to help draft and cost a revised NSAP-GSBV** by devising an assessment matrix of costs that are covered by existing gender efforts, costs that could be covered by donors and other partners, and costs that would require new government funding (led by UN Women).²
- **UN Women, as the leading RUNO, leveraged its existing strong relationships with government officials** to support coordination across ministries when drafting the NSAP to ensure it reflected cross-sectoral GBV-related activities.²
- **Developed an advocacy and lobbying strategy** to engage key Cabinet members and Parliamentarians and get buy-in for the NSAP’s approval (led by UN Women).^{2,6}

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO CASE STUDY (2 of 2) | Moving forward, the Initiative could identify the right entry points, provide TA to strengthen foundational institutions, and maximize the impact of existing budgets to advance DRM

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF RELEVANT EFFORTS IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO?

- **NSAP implementation has started though somewhat slowly**, due to multiple asks of the OPM-GCAD's capacity (as it needs to work with individual Ministries to identify and approve top priorities and activities for each year of the NSAP).¹
- **A National Steering Committee and Technical Working Group are being established** to support monitoring of NSAP implementation, with the OPM-GCAD serving as a coordinator among ministries and UN Women invited to join the Technical Working Group as an observer.¹
- **Coordination spaces established under the Initiative that included government and civil society** (e.g., National Steering Committee) and supported government accountability to civil society have not been continued, limiting CSO ability to engage in government-level decision making and track progress against commitments.¹
- **Risk of declining resources towards addressing GBV** due to the shrinking national budget, diversion of funds towards security and economic issues, and potential changes in national priorities with upcoming 2025 elections.^{1,2}

WHAT ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR AN EFFORT LIKE SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT DRM FOR GBV IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO?

Identify opportunities to connect new GBV investments to existing ones as a cost-saving and advocacy strategy, especially in a tight fiscal context where government may not be compelled to expand its areas of focus. As part of this strategy, link government spending on GBV to broader national priorities around sustainable economic development and crime reduction.

Leverage donor-government relationships and networks to create and nurture champions in all sectors, fostering a whole-of-society mindset and approach to address GBV.

Concentrate on tangible, high-visibility, and long-lasting efforts that lock in commitment to end GBV, especially where there are still rigid and unequal gender norms and inconsistent political will from government to resource efforts to address GBV. Set up monitoring tools to adapt and improve these efforts as needed and communicate their impacts to strengthen the case for government commitments.

LIBERIA

LIBERIA CASE STUDY(1 of 2) | In Liberia, growing political and social support for ending GBV turned into a tide by a sharp increase in rapes during pandemic lockdown

WHAT CHARACTERIZED THE ENVIRONMENT AROUND DRM FOR GBV BEFORE THE INITIATIVE?

- A society influenced by a **14-year civil war that weaponized GBV, deeply rooted culture of patriarchy and harmful beliefs** about gender, and **alarming statistics** around gender inequality and biases, SGBV, and HP. Notably, a women's nonviolent movement in Liberia played a key role in ending the second civil war.^{1,2}
- **Two consecutive administrations demonstrating commitment to the issue:** The administration of **President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (2006-2018), first elected female head of state in Africa, put GBV on the national agenda** and undertook many key efforts including drafting the Domestic Violence Act, criminalizing rape, and temporarily banning female genital mutilation (FGM).^{3,4} The next administration under **President George Weah continued a public commitment toward ending GBV—with Weah declaring himself Liberia's "Feminist-in-Chief" in 2018—and included politically powerful women in key positions, such as the Minister of Gender.**⁵
- A sense that **commitments ended at public statements and that strong national and government ownership of the issue was still lacking.**⁴

HOW DID EFFORTS TO RESOURCE WORK ON ENDING GBV CHANGE DURING THE INITIATIVE (SPECIFIC TO THIS FINDING)?

THE CATALYST

- **Strengthened collaboration between the Initiative and government** after appointment of new Spotlight Coordinator.
- **Spike in SGBV during the pandemic** including several cases of child rape, **which set off 3 days of protests, greatly amplifying public pressure on government and as a result increasing political will of government changemakers to act.**⁶

KEY EVENTS

- 1 Following a series of ministerial meetings in April-July 2020, President Weah created an **Inter-Ministerial Taskforce on SGBV tasked with developing a roadmap to address SGBV by 2022.**^{7,8}
- 2 The **Anti-SGBV Roadmap (2020-2022) was developed and endorsed in Sep 2020 and costed at just over USD 6M over 2 years (Sep 2020-Sep 2022).** This study suggests that the **government committed to allocating USD 2M toward the roadmap, with the rest of the budget to be sourced by development partners.**^{7,10}
- 3 Alongside the unveiling of the roadmap, and responding to the three days of protests, **President Weah declared rape as a national emergency for 2020-2022** and introduced the first set of measures, including a **specific prosecutor to handle rape cases, a national sex offender registry, and a national security taskforce to handle SGBV.**¹¹
- 4 The **Inter-Ministerial Taskforce on SGBV convened in January 2021 to review progress on the roadmap during its first quarter of implementation** (with a progress report intended to be made public). However, our discussions suggest implementation may not have started until later.⁹

THE ROLE OF SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE

- **Helped develop, review and finalize the Anti-SGBV Roadmap led by the Liberian government, with RUNOs participating in a Technical Committee of the Inter-Ministerial Taskforce.**¹⁰
- **Strengthened the capacity of the GRPB Unit of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning** (led by UN Women), which worked to ensure that the national budget reflected the President's commitment for funding the roadmap.¹⁰
- **Participated in implementation of roadmap activities, including providing technical assistance for the launch of an SGBV toll-free call center** (led by UN Women).¹⁰

LIBERIA CASE STUDY (2 of 2) | Moving forward, the Initiative could work with government to shape efforts succeeding the roadmap, support embedding of SGBV allocations in budgets, and strengthen capacity of the MGCSP

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF RELEVANT EFFORTS AS SPOTLIGHT 2.0 IN LIBERIA KICKS INTO GEAR?

- **The Anti-SGBV Roadmap continues to be under implementation**, with the new government allocating USD ~500K toward it in its 2024 budget.
- **The new government has set up a committee to review** the status of activities under the 2020-2022 roadmap, **understand remaining gaps and help inform planning for continuation of efforts** to end SGBV (which may include a new roadmap).
 - **Government stakeholders flagged challenge of sustaining allocations toward this work in the national budget** given the 2020-2022 roadmap was funded as a special project and there were no new line items integrated within ministry budgets.
- **Generally, a change in administration in the country often brings significant shifts within the government's bureaucratic and technocratic machinery**, with resulting **loss in institutional memory and knowledge**. This may affect not only implementation or refresh of the roadmap, but work on ending GBV more broadly.

WHAT ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPACT FOR SPOTLIGHT 2.0 IN LIBERIA?

Collaborate with the current government to help shape the next phase of work on ending SGBV that will succeed the Anti-SGBV Roadmap 2020-2022. As part of this effort, engage early in the design, development and costing of these efforts to maximize impact.

Continue to advocate and provide TA and capacity strengthening to key decision-makers shaping the national budget, such that significant government investments toward ending GBV do not remain as “one-off” special projects (like the roadmap) but are integrated in ministry budgets in the longer-term.

Continue strengthening the capacity of the MGCSP given anticipated loss of institutional knowledge and memory with change in administration (including by embedding a Spotlight team member within the ministry).

UGANDA

UGANDA CASE STUDY (1 of 2) | In Uganda, capacity building on gender equity budgeting at the district level mobilized local budgets, though shifts were small due to national fiscal and political constraints

WHAT CHARACTERIZED THE ENVIRONMENT AROUND DRM FOR GBV BEFORE THE INITIATIVE?

- **A decentralization policy that transferred power to Local District Governments and Lower Local Councils**, shifting budget planning and allocation to lower levels of governance and creating a more participatory approach to budgeting in which sub-counties, parishes, and villages could provide input on budgeting needs.¹
- **A robust legal and policy framework**, which have mandated gender and equity considerations into budgeting decisions (2015 Public Finance Management Act) and set up institutions to monitor compliance (2007 Equal Opportunities Commission Act), though capacity challenges meant these frameworks were not fully realized.^{2,3}
- **Coordination between CSOs and government** to strengthen gender and equity budgeting (GEB) via advocacy, trainings, and monitoring efforts.⁴

HOW DID EFFORTS TO RESOURCE WORK ON ENDING GBV CHANGE DURING THE INITIATIVE (SPECIFIC TO THIS FINDING)?

THE CATALYST

- **CSOs' longstanding advocacy to end GBV was amplified as COVID-19 increased its visibility, urgency, and costs.**⁵
- **The Ugandan President elevated GBV as a focus issue as part of his broader support towards gender equity.**⁶

KEY EVENTS

- 1 **A National Development Plan III (2020-2025) was developed**, shifting from a siloed sector approach to a programmatic approach to deliver development activities.⁷ A Human Capital Development Program was established, which aimed to scale up GBV interventions with an annual planned budget of USD 8.4M in FY 20/21, projected to increase to USD 9.7M in FY 24/25.⁸
- 2 **Government officials at district levels who were key decision-makers in budget planning (e.g., District Community Development Officers, Chief Administrative officers, Ministry officers) were trained on gender and equity budgeting** to ensure implementation of national mandates to allocate budgets towards gender and equity focused activities. This resulted in increased compliance with budget guidance as well as committed and actual budget allocations towards GBV.⁹
 - We estimate an average **USD ~3K budget allocation per district** towards gender mainstreaming and GBV based on evidence from districts where the Initiative focused activities (Tororo, Arua; see footnote for estimate details).*

THE ROLE OF SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE

- **Developed advocacy tools**, including a UNFPA study on the Cost of Inaction of Teenage Pregnancy and ministry-level assessments on GBV funding gaps.¹⁰
- **Leveraged its brand and network to reach deeper and broader into government stakeholders**, elevating the role of DCDOs and all sectors in budgeting for GBV.¹¹
- **Provided TA to strengthen existing GEB training programs** through conducting assessments of those trainings, embedding GBV into gender-related topics, and deepening the reach of trainings into local government (led by UNDP).¹¹
- **Provided TA to support district officials to integrate GBV into local development action plans and identify a budget for GBV-related efforts** (led by UNDP).¹¹

Sources: 1) Decentralization and Local Development in Uganda, 2014; 2) Public Finance Management Act 2015; 3) ILO, Equal Opportunities Act 2007; 4) CSBAG, Budgeting for Gender and Equity Budgeting; 5) International Women's Media Foundation, How Covid-19 lockdown spiked teenage pregnancy, 2022; 6) The Independent Uganda, President Museveni calls for women economic empowerment to fight gender based violence, 2020; 7) NPA, Third National Development Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25, 2020; 8) NPA, NDP III Human Capital Development Programme Implementation Action Plan, 2020; 9) Spotlight Initiative Uganda Final Cumulative Report; 10) UNFPA, Teenage Pregnancy in Uganda: The Cost of Inaction, 2022; 11) Dalberg interviews. Note: *In Tororo, UGX 10M of the UGX 17.5M district revenue is allocated to gender mainstreaming, but budget release challenges have meant that some of these funds are not disbursed. In 2023, only UGX 3M was released. Meanwhile, UGX 5M is consistently allocated from the national budget, which goes towards GRB training, coaching, mentoring, and monitoring as well as GBV programming. We focus on the planned budget of UGX 15M for our estimate. In Arua, 5-10% of the UGX 100M annual district budget (excludes funds from development partners) goes towards GBV and gender mainstreaming activities. Based on these data points, we estimate an allocation of around UGX 10M per district towards GBV and gender mainstreaming, which aligns with the Final Cumulative Report's figure that roughly 8-10 departments per district each allocated USD 420 towards GBV efforts.

UGANDA CASE STUDY (2 of 2) | For Spotlight 2.0 in Uganda, the Initiative can strengthen linkages between GBV and broader national priorities, amplify national-level advocacy, and leverage existing structures to advance DRM

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF RELEVANT EFFORTS AS SPOTLIGHT 2.0 IN UGANDA KICKS INTO GEAR?

- **GBV-focused GEB training is being institutionalized in existing curricula**, supporting continuous trainings of public officials including via an online self-paced course.¹
- **Efforts to mobilize local district budgets to address GBV are ongoing**, though the size of budget allocations and the scale of their impacts may be limited in part to: 1) **Trends of financial centralization** in which local governments are seeing reduced budget releases from the Ministry of Finance.
2) **Heavily earmarked local budget releases** that constrain ability to spend on GBV-related activities.

WHAT ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPACT FOR SPOTLIGHT 2.0 IN UGANDA?



Strengthen linkages between GBV and other national priorities, doubling down on ongoing efforts to shape the NDP IV currently in development so that it includes guidance to allocate budgets towards GEB as well as indicators for gender mainstreaming and gender transformative projects.



Amplify advocacy at the national level to engage key decision-makers who influence the budgets that trickle down to district levels, alongside the advocacy and capacity-building happening at the subnational level.



Continue to anchor on existing structures and frameworks on gender and equity, and engage government as a partner, to ensure government buy-in and long-term sustainability of pilot efforts under the Initiative.

ANNEX 2: DATA COLLECTION

This study tried to mitigate certain limitations around data quality, data availability, and research scope

	Limitations	Mitigation
Data quality	• Incomplete or inconsistent Spotlight Initiative programme data due to varying capacities to calculate and report on DRM metrics.	• The study focused on 10 countries for which data was available and engaged Spotlight Initiative colleagues and country programme teams to understand data inconsistencies and resolve them when possible.
Data availability	• Limited publicly accessible information on budgets or GBV-related events in focus countries. • Inability to reach certain stakeholders in country visits.	• Changes in budget allocations to GBV were identified based on stakeholder interviews and desk research on publicly announced initiatives or action plans. This research only includes findings based on triangulated data (across multiple sources). • This study gathered input across government, civil society, and UN staff during all country visits, ensuring balanced representation. Although we were unable to meet with the Ministry of Finance in all countries, this consistent challenge meant that no one country was disadvantaged in analysis.
Research scope	• A general focus on GBV rather than VAWG in assessing funding allocations and tracing DRM impact of Initiative activities.	• The scope of the analysis was broadened from VAWG to GBV, to reflect what the study heard in stakeholder conversations and the language used in national action plans and budget policies.

Desk research included the following:

- *Annual programme reports*
- *Annual global reports*
- *Final cumulative programme reports*
- *Final cumulative global report*
- *Mid-term Assessments*
- *Mid-term Review*
- *Compendium of Good Practices*
- *Global Results Framework*
- *Methodological Guidance Note for Global Results Framework Indicators*
- *ActivityInfo data*
- *All Outcomes data raw excel*
- *Integrated National Financing Framework reports*
- *UN Development Assistance Framework reports*
- *Country legal/fiscal policies*
- *Country national strategies, roadmaps, etc. to end GBV*
- *Country subnational legal and policy frameworks*
- *News articles on high-profile GBV events*
- *Spotlight 1.0 Sustainability Plan tracker*