



A collaborative brief between IIX and HiIL

## Innovative financial strategies and Orange Movement for scaling gender justice solutions

Around half of the world's population today is left without any fair or just resolutions for the legal problems they face daily. This massive shortfall between the justice solutions people need and the justice solutions they actually receive is the "justice gap", and it falls disproportionately on women. This is often referred to as 'Gender Justice'. Justice services across the globe are rarely designed to address the unique needs and challenges women face, nor do they deliver the outcomes that women seek from resolution processes. As a result, women experience inequality, discrimination, and exclusion at every step of their justice journey.

Innovative solutions focusing on women's justice needs and experiences are uniquely positioned to directly address some of the challenges women face in accessing justice. Launched by social entrepreneurs and civil society organisations, innovative solutions help women easily and effectively navigate their justice journeys and obtain the outcomes needed to close the access to justice gap globally. However, gender justice solutions continue to face several challenges, particularly in accessing capital, hindering their development and scale. A concerted effort to identify and support these solutions through innovative and collaborative approaches can help address some of the key financing gaps, enabling transparency, data, and capital mobilization in the gender justice ecosystem.



# A. Global Gender Justice Landscape

Globally, women face unique barriers to accessing and receiving fair justice. Women and men tend to experience a similar number of justice problems<sup>1</sup>, however, HiiL's Justice Needs and Satisfaction Surveys (JNS)<sup>2</sup> regularly find that women face distinct justice problems. For example, according to the 2019 Justice For Women Report, "90% more women than men experienced sexual assault. Women informal workers can be more vulnerable to gender-based violence due to the intersection of their gender and insecure working conditions."<sup>3</sup> The JNS surveys, conducted in 23+ countries, provide detailed insights into what the most common justice problems women face are, as well as their experiences trying to resolve them.

In Asia, the JNS Surveys reveal distinct patterns. In Indonesia<sup>4</sup> and Fiji<sup>5</sup>, women were more likely to experience family-related issues, while in Fiji and Bangladesh<sup>6</sup> neighbor disputes are more prevalent among women. Interestingly, in the United Arab Emirates<sup>7</sup>, housing-related problems are more commonly reported by women.

These differences are not confined to Asia. In several African countries, including Burkina Faso<sup>8</sup>, Niger<sup>9</sup>, Tunisia<sup>10</sup>, Uganda<sup>11</sup>, and Nigeria<sup>12</sup> women also face higher rates of family and neighbour problems. This trend extends to Latin America, where in Colombia<sup>13</sup> women report similarly high levels of family-related issues. Furthermore, a recurring theme emerges across diverse

contexts: studies in Indonesia, Tunisia, Colombia, and Uganda indicate that women more frequently encounter problems accessing public services, primarily healthcare and education.

Domestic violence is a particularly common justice problem for women across the world, according to JNS survey data. In all of the above-mentioned studies, women were far more likely to experience domestic violence than men. For example, in Fiji, 19% of all women who encountered legal problems had faced domestic violence. Even further, 39% of Ugandan women have experienced some form of domestic violence in the last year.

The consequences of justice problems also affect women more profoundly. Women report greater emotional and physical impacts, such as stress-related illness, violence, and damaged family relations. In the United States<sup>14</sup>, women more often reported experiencing negative emotions as a result of their legal problems. Devastatingly, in Colombia, women were more likely than men to experience the death of a family member as a result of unresolved justice problems.

When it comes to resolving a justice problem, women face many barriers when accessing help. In 2019 World Justice Project reported that only 13% of women who experienced a justice problem turned to a third party for help resolving it.<sup>15</sup> Social norms often play a role in restricting women's access to justice. Informal justice services, local services, and justice providers all operate within these social contexts. Therefore, when women do seek

1 The World Justice Project's 2019 "Women's Access to Justice: A Global Snapshot" reported that 53% of women globally had dealt with a justice problem in the previous 2 years. Available [here](#).

2 To view more justice needs and satisfaction data see here: <https://dashboard.hiil.org>.

3 High-level Group on Justice for Women. (2019). Justice For Women. pp 15. Available [here](#).

4 HiiL. (2014). Justice Needs and Satisfaction Survey, Indonesia. Available [here](#).

5 HiiL. (2019). Justice Needs and Satisfaction Survey, Fiji. Available [here](#).

6 HiiL. (2017). Justice Needs and Satisfaction Survey, Bangladesh. Available [here](#).

7 HiiL. (2015). Justice Needs and Satisfaction Survey, United Arab Emirates. Available [here](#).

8 HiiL. (2022). Justice Needs and Satisfaction Survey, Burkina Faso. Available [here](#).

9 HiiL. (2023). Justice Needs and Satisfaction Survey, Niger. Available [here](#).

10 HiiL. (2023). Justice Needs and Satisfaction Survey, Tunisia. Available [here](#).

11 HiiL. (2024). Justice Needs and Satisfaction Survey, Uganda. Available [here](#).

12 HiiL. (2023). Justice Needs and Satisfaction Survey, Nigeria. Available [here](#).

13 HiiL. (2024). Justice Needs and Satisfaction Survey, Colombia. Available [here](#).

14 HiiL. (2020). Justice Needs and Satisfaction Survey, USA. Available [here](#).

15 World Justice Project. (2019). Women's Access to Justice: A Global Snapshot. Available [here](#).



help from a third-party to resolve their problems, they often experience exclusion, marginalisation and discrimination. For instance, qualitative data from Burkina Faso revealed that women are often discouraged from approaching formal justice providers like courts due to perceptions about their societal roles.

Data shows that even when women approach justice services, they are often provided substandard services and outcomes in comparison to men. HiiL's survey of populations affected by displacement in Iraq<sup>16</sup> shows that when taking action to resolve their most serious legal problem, 26% of the women said the justice provider they chose did not help them (as opposed to 15% of the men). In Uganda, Local Council Courts were developed specifically to be present in communities and handle the cases of people who cannot reach or afford the costs associated with the formal justice system. Unfortunately, women in Uganda are less likely than men to go to a Local Council Court for help.

In contexts of insularity and remoteness, the justice journeys of women suffer. According to the justice needs survey conducted in Fiji one-third of victims of domestic violence do not take any action. Victims, often, remain passive because they lack faith in their abilities to find a fair resolution. Shame, social stigma, lack of trust in the legal system, limited legal awareness, and financial dependence are all factors that may keep a woman from taking action to resolve her domestic violence problems.

Despite these challenges, or perhaps as a result of them, across most countries surveyed, women often rely on informal networks—family, friends, or community leaders—to resolve their most serious legal issues. However, these mechanisms frequently fail to provide credible, fair, or tailored solutions.

<sup>16</sup> HiiL. (2023). Justice Needs and Satisfaction of Forcibly Displaced Persons and Host Communities in Iraq. Available [here](#).

## What is people-centred justice?

People-centred justice (PCJ) is emerging as a new paradigm to help deal with challenges under SDG 16.3 - equal access to justice for all. PCJ puts people and outcomes they want at the centre of justice systems, rather than institutions. It envisages a well-functioning justice system that delivers fast and effective justice services based on the plurality of needs and experiences of all the people it serves.

By moving the needs and justice journeys of women from the fringes to the centre of the design of justice systems, PCJ offers a practical approach to close the justice gap. It fosters an equal partnership between justice providers and women seeking justice, ensuring that services are responsive to women's unique circumstances and consistently deliver the outcomes they want.



## The need for innovation

Justice systems and the services they provide are simply not meeting the needs of people in their daily lives. This is where people-centred justice plays a crucial role by focusing on delivering innovative solutions that are effective, affordable, and sustainable. These services work to bridge the access to justice gap by helping people easily navigate their justice journeys and achieve outcomes they want. Rather than replacing formal public justice systems, such services complement them by filling critical gaps that the formal system cannot reach.

Startups and civil society organisations are particularly well-positioned to drive innovation in justice service delivery by introducing creative, adaptable, and scalable solutions. In the case of women's access to justice, they can address apparent gaps while collaborating with formal justice systems, women's rights organisations, and local authorities to ensure a lasting impact. For example, data shows that women often turn to their immediate social environments for solutions but struggle to access credible, tailored information. Services that provide legal information, advice, and representation — designed to be affordable, accessible within communities, and integrated into women's social circles — can act as a crucial bridge to justice.

This highlights the urgent demand for innovative justice delivery services that are specifically tailored to meet women's unique needs and preferences. By working alongside established systems and local stakeholders, startups and civil society organisations have the potential to transform the way women experience justice. The following sections will explore examples of innovative solutions for gender justice and their contributions to addressing the challenges women face in accessing justice.

## Spotlight on Gwiji for Women

Elizabeth Mwangi, the founder of Gwiji for Women, grew up in informal settlements in Nairobi, Kenya where she witnessed the hardships of her mother and thousands of other women who worked as cleaners. Without any support to fall back on, the women endured verbal and physical abuse, unpaid wages and long working hours. In 2021, she launched a solution that would ensure fair treatment to women like her mother.

Gwiji for Women is an online platform and app that vets the domestic workers and employers and sets minimum wage rates for the labour of the domestic workers. It trains domestic workers in cleaning, maintaining professionalism, conflict resolution methods and their legal rights. It has an SOS button that domestic workers can use in emergencies while at work. The app requires employers to share their location and wage rates and offers a payment gateway via which domestic workers can receive their salaries.

Gwiji for Women has trained and vetted 2000 women, 900 of whom are active users. It has launched a financial literacy program to encourage savings and provide small business loans among the women. The women using Gwiji have begun earning above-market rates, providing financial stability and better quality of life for their families.

In recognition of her work, Elizabeth Mwangi has received the Aurora Tech Award for innovation and impact. She has received support from HiiL's Justice Accelerator and Standard Chartered's Women in Tech program.





Photo: Gwiji for Women

## B. Innovative Gender Justice Solutions

We analysed 60+ innovative solutions, focused on the justice problems of women across the globe, launched by social entrepreneurs and local civil society organisations. These solutions address the personal safety of women; legal information, advice, representation and holistic care needs of survivors of gender-based violence; creating awareness in the community about gender-based violence; workplace safety of women and addressing needs of marginalised women. Countries like Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria in Africa have witnessed the launch of several innovative solutions. In Asia, India, Indonesia and Pakistan; in Latin America, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia and Argentina.

Factors that have enabled the growth of these innovative solutions are the rise of startup hubs across Africa, Asia, and Latin America which has provided entrepreneurs with critical resources, including mentorship, networking opportunities, and funding. The increasing usage of smartphones and the internet, the growing middle class with a sizable purchasing power, advocacy groups for women's rights and public awareness campaigns have fueled the demand for legal services for women. Governments are

also supporting the startup movement by initiating grants in the field of technology and entrepreneurship and easing regulations on the formation of startups.

Table 1 provides an overview of the categories of innovative solutions on gender justice launched by startups and civil society organisations across the globe. These solutions have received funding from various sources, including social impact organisations like HiiL and IIX, international development organisations, venture capital institutions, foundations, trusts, charities and the government to some extent. Female founders (27) significantly outweighed the number of male founders (7) in our data, indicating that women are foraying into traditionally male-dominated fields like law and technology, facilitated by increased access to education and overall empowerment of women.

Solutions that charged customers (35) outnumbered the free solutions (28), indicating the shift towards generating steady revenue streams instead of relying on donor support among social impact startups. Civil society organisations provide their solutions for free. The majority of the solutions are in early growth and scaling stages, and a small number (8 out of 64) have closed operations. A negligible number of solutions have reached maturity.

Category	Features	Examples
<b>Solutions for the safety and security of women</b>		
Apps for the personal safety of women	Location tracking; emergency calls and text messages to select contacts; audio and video recording of the location.	Donna (Brazil); 2Six4 (Sri Lanka)
Wearables for the personal safety of women	Bracelets for location tracking; emergency calls and text messages to select contacts.	Shakti (India); Invisiawear (USA)
Crowd-sourced maps that identify hotspots of crime against women so that women can avoid them	File a report via SMS/ email/ Twitter/ Facebook with an app documenting the details of the incident, including address, street name and public points of interest. Highlights unsafe areas in a city and offers route recommendations based on reported incidents.	My Safetipin (India); Harassmap (Egypt)
Women-driven taxis and motorbikes that ensure safety of women	Affordable services; Accessible via phone/app.	Sister Ojek (Australia); ChauffHer (South Africa)
Hygiene products and case management systems for workplace safety of women	Menstrual hygiene products for offices; Legal literacy for women; Management of sexual harassment complaints online.	Jyoti (Bangladesh); Im Safe (India)
<b>Solutions that provide legal services and resources and create awareness on gender-based violence</b>		
Online one-stop shop dispute resolution systems	Mediators who support agreements on childcare and distribution of assets and liabilities; private arbiters and judges	Uitelkaar (Netherlands); WeVorce (USA)
Online platforms that provide legal information, advice and representation to women	Chatbots and apps that give legal information on crimes against women, property rights, inheritance rights and more.	Voice IT (Nigeria); Pink Legal (India)
Mobile apps to record evidence of domestic violence	Document incidents in real time with timestamped text, video, or audio; store data in encrypted, cloud-based systems	Brightsky (UK); Arc (Australia)
Online platforms that provide resources on gender-based violence	Websites, apps and chatbots that connect women to counselors, shelter homes, support groups of peers.	Herfessions (Nigeria); Chayn (Pakistan)
Digital media (games, videos) to create awareness about gender-based violence	Users can make decisions in the well-being of women in the game; Videos demonstrate consequences of biases against women.	Swallows (Kyrgyzstan); Flores en el Aires (Mexico)
<b>Solutions that address the justice needs of marginalised women</b>		
Digital platforms providing information on rights and entitlements of domestic workers and connecting them with potential employers	Chatbots and apps that provide information on rights and entitlements of domestic workers; train employees in conflict resolution; calculate their salary, severance pay and other employee benefits; connect them to employers; enable online payments; SOS button for emergencies at work.	Gwiji for Women (Kenya); Dignas (Mexico)

Table 1: Illustrative Gender Justice Solution Categories

## Spotlight on Herfessions app and Voice IT platform in Nigeria

Osasumwen Edozor and Olufunmilola Owosho launched the platform Voice IT and the Herfessions app respectively. They were inspired by the plight of women who suffered from domestic violence and trafficking and sought support of civil society organisations where they worked.

The Herfessions app and Voice IT platform in Nigeria offer survivors of gender-based violence an opportunity to report incidents of crime anonymously to authorities, engage in peer-to-peer interactions and consult with trained psychologists, lawyers, legal aid and shelter homes. The parent organisation of Herfessions app conducts stage plays that use real survivor narratives to foster cultural change regarding treatment of women in society.

Voice IT also deploys a standardised gender-based violence risk assessment tool and aggregates real-time incident data to map hotspots in the city. So far, VoiceIT has gained 1,000+ sign-ups, developed a referral directory for 200+ organizations across Nigeria and 5 other countries, referred 5 cases of sexual and gender-based violence.

Photo: Voice IT



## Spotlight on Jyoti from Bangladesh

Startups that sell feminine hygiene products in factories and corporate offices are a small category among solutions protecting the safety of women but have the potential to make workplaces safe and comfortable for million of female employees. For instance, the solution Jyoti in Bangladesh, supported by IIX, dispenses multiple variants of sanitary napkins, including biodegradable ones through digital vending machines.

The co-founder of Jyoti, Rezwan Noor comes from a family of doctors and was thus aware of the taboo associated with menstrual hygiene. He was inspired by his daughters and his experience working at Maya Bangladesh, a startup addressing feminine health. Therefore, in 2020, he leveraged his engineering degree to create and distribute sanitary napkin vending machines.

The vending machines track inventory in real time and are monitored remotely for refill alerts. Field agents or local micro-entrepreneurs manage refills. The Jyoti app provides peer support, psychosocial counseling, medical assistance, and awareness resources on menstrual hygiene and the taboo associated with it.

Users can purchase sanitary napkins using prepaid and postpaid cases and mobile apps thereby making operations for users cashless. Thus far, Jyoti has installed 325 vending machines in schools, garment factories, and corporate offices in 23 districts of Bangladesh.



## C. Key Challenges Faced by Gender Justice Solutions

Innovative solutions addressing the justice needs of women face multifaceted challenges as they strive to make social impact. Insights gathered from interviews with the founders of gender justice startups and civil society organisations — Herfessions (Nigeria), Jyoti (Bangladesh), Gwiji for Women (Kenya), Voice IT (Nigeria), Yasmina Bot (Syria), and Al Hakawati (Syria) — alongside HiiL’s prior work with African justice-focused startups, highlight critical obstacles.<sup>17</sup> These obstacles span from fundraising to scaling efforts, shedding light on the systemic barriers these enterprises face.

The main challenge when funding innovative solutions on gender justice is the lack of dedicated incubators and accelerators. Incubators and accelerators in Africa, Asia and Latin America mainly focus on ed-tech, fin-tech, agri-tech, climate change, poverty and healthcare. Legal and justice solutions do not receive the same level of support from investors. In fact, HiiL’s Justice Accelerator is the only accelerator that focuses solely on legal problems. Many entrepreneurs in the justice sector who manage to secure funding from social impact investors often apply to programs targeting general social challenges, as in the case of Violetta, a chatbot providing legal information on gender-based violence and access to skilled professionals.<sup>18</sup>

Social impact accelerators that focus on the issues of women mostly specialise in problems other than justice, such as climate, finance and technology. For instance, Tech

Herfrica focuses on digital and financial inclusion of women, She Wins Climate focuses on women-led climate startups. To some extent, international aid organisations and governments have launched innovative solutions to eradicate gender-based violence such as the Spotlight Initiative of the UN<sup>19</sup>, Infosegura Regional Project by UNDP and USAID<sup>20</sup>, the Government of India’s Himmat app<sup>21</sup> and the Government of South Africa’s<sup>22</sup> chatbot for survivors of gender-based violence.

However, these initiatives are few in number. Gender Lens Investing (GLI) which directs funds from the global financial system to women’s issues allocates only a small fraction of its resources to justice-related challenges (read more on GLI in the next chapter). To summarise, there is a significant gap in meaningful support for social entrepreneurs dedicated to advancing gender justice.

Another factor that inhibits fundraising for innovative solutions tackling gender justice is that many are launched by civil society organisations—in our data set, nearly one-third of the innovative solutions on gender justice were launched by such organisations. These services are offered for free and are project-based and grant-dependent, making it difficult to generate revenue and create a solid financial model that can attract investors. To achieve long-term sustainability and facilitate engagement with investors, such justice-focused solutions must also develop viable business and financial models that foster sustained growth.

A recurring challenge among justice-focused entrepreneurs is the inability to demonstrate impact using metrics devised by donors and investors. Many innovative solutions focus on preventive measures, such as awareness campaigns delivered through

17 For more information see the following: HiiL. (2024). Tackling crime in Kenya – With Eric Murithi and Vicent Awino. Available [here](#); HiiL (2023). Making legal services accessible to Kenyans - With Nelson Nkari. Available [here](#); HiiL (2022). User-friendly contracts. Available [here](#); HiiL (2022). One-stop shop dispute resolution. Available [here](#).

18 Cano, C. (n.d). (2023). 4Herpowerchallenge: Innovating for sexual and reproductive health rights, Violetta. See [here](#).

19 Spotlight Initiative. (2024). Unprecedented: A Pathway for Ending Violence against Women and Girls - Spotlight Initiative Impact Report 2017-2023. United Nations. Available [here](#).

20 USAID. (n.d). New Digital Tools to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls in Honduras. See [here](#).

21 Times of India. (2018). Delhi Police’s Himmat app for women safety failed to serve purpose: Parliamentary panel. See [here](#).

22 African Union Development Agency. (2022). Leveraging Smart Technologies To Tackle Gender-Based Violence In Africa. See [here](#).



videos or games. The intangible nature of these efforts, coupled with unsuitable metrics of investors, further complicates fundraising. The inclination among investors to prioritise profits over social impact has also resulted in several justice entrepreneurs losing funding opportunities. To bridge this gap, gender justice entrepreneurs need support in building scalable business solutions and understanding strategic and business practices that integrate financial sustainability with social impact, enabling them to grow as viable enterprises while continuing to address systemic justice issues.

A fundamental challenge for all types of justice innovations has been aligning investor expectations with the realities in which these startups operate. While investors seek viable business models that ensure returns, early-stage justice innovations often require time to establish strong operational foundations and navigate the complexities of systemic societal issues. A targeted support through dedicated accelerators and other capacity-building initiatives is essential to nurture these entities into sustainable businesses that can attract investment while delivering meaningful impact.

## Scaling challenges of innovative solutions on gender justice

Beyond fundraising, innovative solutions for gender-justice face cultural, legal and infrastructural hurdles that limit their reach and effectiveness. To elaborate, our conversations with gender justice startups revealed that they found it difficult to secure the seed and scaling funds required for product development, diversification of service offerings, acquiring equipment, and setting up physical infrastructure to scale the startup. The lack of technological expertise made it difficult to resolve bugs or errors in

apps and maintain a presence in app stores. Plus, online support platforms that connect survivors of gender-based violence to counselors, therapists, healthcare providers and shelter homes are constrained in their ability to bring in such skilled professionals on the app due to the inadequate number of shelters and professionals.

Rules and regulations regarding the provision of online legal services by non-lawyers have proven to be a significant barrier for the growth of justice entrepreneurs, as observed in the case of LegalZoom in the USA and Ask Wakili in Kenya<sup>23</sup>. Lawyers and bar associations, who prefer to maintain a monopoly on the delivery and cost of legal services, have raised questions about the quality of services delivered by startups, despite their growing popularity among ordinary people and evidence of positive impact.

On the demand side, cultural barriers also play a critical role in hindering growth. Deep-rooted patriarchal values often discourage women from seeking legal assistance, especially on sensitive issues like domestic violence or inheritance rights. Women fear social ostracism or backlash from perpetrators if they pursue legal action, leading to reluctance to use the legal services provided by the solutions on gender-justice. Similarly, startups that provide B-B-C services find it challenging to convince clients to invest in products and services that can improve their female employees' well-being due to the absence of female leaders in management positions of their clients' firms.

Factors that affect the innovative solutions operating across the justice sector include the digital divide and language barriers. Women across the world have less access to the internet than men. In low and middle-income countries, women are 19% less likely to use mobile internet than men, translating to 310 million fewer women than men<sup>24</sup>. Since many services offered are based on

23 See: HiiL. (2024). Need for a level playing field for justice entrepreneurs in Kenya - With Morgan Gikonyo. Available [here](#); HiiL. (2022). LegalZoom Case Study in the report: Delivering Justice, Rigorously. Available [here](#).

24 World Bank. (2023). Closing Gender Gaps in Digital Development: A Practical Guide for Operational Teams. Available [here](#).

the internet and smartphones, it limits their reach and scalability. Furthermore, if online solutions — websites, apps, chatbots — do not offer services in local languages used by ordinary people, there is a risk that uptake of the solution might remain low. This was observed in the case of Delhi (India) police’s personal safety app.<sup>25</sup>

## D. Financing Landscape for Gender Justice Solutions

Over two billion women around the world are denied equal access to economic opportunities, underscoring the profound global disparity in gender equity.<sup>26</sup> According to a 2023 UN report assessing SDG progress, achieving gender equality requires an additional annual investment of US\$360 billion<sup>27</sup>. Yet, the economic case for gender justice has never been clearer. A study by the McKinsey Global Institute in 2015 estimated that advancing gender equality could contribute US\$12 trillion to global GDP by 2025<sup>28</sup>. If full parity in the labor market were achieved, this figure could rise to US\$28 trillion, an amount comparable to the combined GDPs of the United States and China<sup>29</sup>.

In recent years, Gender Lens Investing (GLI) has emerged as a promising approach to address the funding gap and advance gender equity. GLI intentionally integrates gender considerations into financial decision-making, directing capital toward initiatives that empower women and girls.

This investment strategy spans diverse asset classes, including public equities, real estate, infrastructure, and private debt, allowing for broad-based impact. The number of funds explicitly applying a gender lens has grown by over 250% between 2017 and 2021, reflecting increasing recognition of its importance<sup>30</sup>. However, despite this growth, the US\$6 billion raised by these funds remains a fraction of the US\$1.1 trillion impact investing market as of 2022<sup>31</sup>.

Most GLI investments focus on sectors like healthcare, fintech, and agriculture, which, according to surveys, collectively account for about 50% of the funds.<sup>32</sup> While 94% of these investments align with the UN’s Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality), only 15% claim to extend their focus to systemic issues like peace, justice, and strong institutions, as reflected in SDG 16<sup>33</sup>. This limited scope often prioritizes measurable financial returns alongside social outcomes, with an emphasis on initiatives that show immediate or tangible results. Investments frequently target increasing the number of women entrepreneurs, business owners, or executives, as evidenced by surveys indicating that 87% of funds prioritize women entrepreneurs, 83% focus on leadership roles, and 78% aim to enhance women’s workforce participation<sup>34</sup>.

While these efforts represent meaningful progress, they often fall short of addressing structural gender injustices such as entrenched patriarchy, systemic discrimination, and unequal power dynamics. Critics argue that GLI initiatives lack clear accountability measures and robust impact assessment frameworks, leading to risks of superficial engagement or “impact washing.” This is particularly challenging for innovative solutions for

25 Times of India. (2018). Delhi Police’s Himmat app for women safety failed to serve purpose: Parliamentary panel. [See here](#).

26 World Economic Forum (WEF). (2023). The finance gap for women entrepreneurs is \$1.7 trillion. Here’s how to close it. Available [here](#).

27 UN Women. (2023). Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2023. Available [here](#).

28 McKinsey Global Insights (MGI). (2015). The power of parity: How advancing women’s equality can add \$12 trillion to global growth. Available [here](#).

29 Id.

30 Biegel, Brown & Hunt. (2021). Project Sage 4.0: Tacking Venture Capital, Private Equity, and Private Debt with a Gender Lens. Available [here](#).

31 GiiNSight: Sizing the Impact Investing Market. (2022). Available [here](#).

32 Id.

33 Id.

34 2X Global and Sangana: Project Catalyst: Tracking gender lens investing activity in private markets (2024). Available [here](#).

gender justice, which typically address complex, long-term issues like legal reforms, community advocacy, or gender-based violence prevention.

Examples of such solutions include Brightsky in the UK, an app enabling real-time reporting of domestic violence, and My Safetipin in India, a platform using data to improve urban safety for women. These ventures, while tackling urgent societal challenges, struggle to secure funding because their impacts are harder to quantify in economic terms. In contrast, solutions offering consumer-oriented products like personal safety devices often receive more attention from GLI funds due to their marketability and measurable outcomes.

The rise of innovative financing mechanisms within GLI, however, offers hope for solutions on gender justice. By shifting focus from short-term deliverables to systemic change, these models create opportunities for long-term transformation. One notable initiative is the **Orange Movement** (drawn from the Orange color of UN SGD 5: Gender Equality), which seeks to mobilize US\$10 billion by 2030 to empower 100 million women, girls, and gender minorities<sup>35</sup>. Instruments such as the IIX **Women's Livelihood Bond Series** have mobilized US\$228 million as of 2023, benefiting 2.6 million women and girls worldwide<sup>36</sup>.

Orange Loan Facilities, linked to gender outcomes and gender-empowerment performance, provide loans to solutions that support women. For instance, Champei, a smallholder farmer in Cambodia, leveraged such a loan to implement climate-resilient agricultural practices, increasing her income by 50%. Such instruments align with gender justice goals by tying funding to measurable gender and social outcomes, thereby ensuring resources are directed toward impactful outcomes that enhance transparency.

Globally, Orange Bonds, social impact bonds, and microfinance initiatives are expanding the scope of gender-lens investing. These instruments are gaining traction in regions like sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Europe, and North America, showcasing the potential for diverse applications. However, the success of such financing approaches hinges on building a supportive ecosystem for gender justice startups to thrive, particularly in Africa, where the need to develop the readiness of the ecosystem for these financing facilities is more acute. In this context, accelerators and technical assistance play a critical role in equipping early-stage enterprises and other stakeholders with the necessary tools, knowledge, capacity support, and business foundations before such financing mechanisms can be truly effective.

Many of the gender justice focused solutions operate in silos, disconnected from mainstream investment networks. Unlike sectors like fintech or health tech, they rarely receive attention at high-profile pitch events or forums. As mentioned earlier, platforms like the Innovating Justice Forum, which highlights startups and civil society organisations addressing access to justice, provide valuable visibility but remain limited in scale. Expanding such initiatives and creating dedicated gender justice pitch competitions could bring these solutions into the spotlight and connect them with investors.

Capacity-building programs are also essential to prepare solutions for investment. Many founders lack the expertise in financial modeling, impact measurement, or investor engagement necessary to attract funding. Adapting existing initiatives, such as SheTrades<sup>37</sup>, to focus on gender justice enterprises can help bridge this gap. Collaboration among stakeholders is also critical to

<sup>35</sup> See <https://orangemovement.global/>.

<sup>36</sup> Women's Livelihood Bond. See <https://wlb.iixglobal.com/>.

<sup>37</sup> See <https://www.shetrades.com/>.



developing outcome-based metrics that capture intangible impacts, such as societal awareness or systemic prevention. These frameworks would enable gender justice solutions to demonstrate their contributions in ways that resonate with investors.

Governments have a vital role to play in strengthening this ecosystem. By offering tax incentives, grants, and partnerships with philanthropic funds, they can help de-risk investments in gender justice ventures. A coordinated effort between public, private, and philanthropic actors could amplify the transformative potential of these solutions, ensuring their innovations lead to lasting change.

As innovative financing mechanisms gain traction, they hold the promise of transforming the landscape for gender justice solutions. By addressing systemic barriers—improving visibility, building capacity, and creating robust impact metrics—these efforts can unlock the potential of gender justice initiatives to drive meaningful progress. Together, these actions can pave the way for a more equitable and inclusive future.

## E. Introducing Orange Movement for Gender Justice

Gender equality is a key driver of progress across all the UN SDGs. Integrating gender equality and the financial system can build sustainable economies and communities, advancing the gender justice goals. At the forefront of this effort stands the Orange Movement™, inspired by the hue of SDG 5: Gender Equality, which recognizes and values the role of women, girls, and gender minorities in building sustainable financial markets and inclusive justice solutions.

By integrating technology, data analytics, and community-driven approaches, the Movement enables solutions to deliver impactful results transparently and efficiently. Minimizing the funding gaps that often hinder gender justice solutions enables enterprises to scale while fostering investor confidence and enhancing trust and transparency in the value chain.

The Orange Movement operates through various channels, including capital mobilization, data transparency and measurement, and establishing inclusive financing frameworks. Central to the movement is unlocking financing toward women-benefiting and women-focused solutions in the last mile, aligning closely with the literature on gender justice.

Gender justice solutions serve as a blueprint for tackling gender-based disparities and achieving systemic change. Orange Movement can empower these solutions through much-needed working capital. This targeted support helps women overcome financial barriers and the results promote equitable access to resources and fair justice. Improved access to capital and resources enables these groups to scale their businesses and enhance their reach and effectiveness.

Through its multifaceted approach, the Orange Movement creates a collaborative ecosystem that bridges the public, private, and civil society sectors, opening pathways for gender justice solutions to access financing. Data and transparency serve as the backbone of the movement, empowering stakeholders to make strategic decisions that align with both financial returns and social impact outcomes. Utilizing gender-disaggregated indicators and rigorous reporting standards, the movement promotes accountability and trust within the ecosystem.

The transparency, data, and impact outcomes are further amplified by the Orange Seal™, a certification recognizing enterprises driving gender equality and climate action.<sup>38</sup> Driven by the IIX Values™ platform<sup>39</sup>, it involves a digital assessment and verification with employees, suppliers, or customers. Thus far, ~800 small businesses have reported their impact and verified with 18,000+ stakeholders globally. By fostering measurable and impactful outcomes, the Orange Seal builds investor confidence and enables sustained access to capital.

The Orange Seal helps build strong funding linkages with Orange funding programs and platforms such as IIX Impact Partners™, which connects solutions with global impact investors and provides technical assistance to boost the visibility and credibility of the solutions.<sup>40</sup>

The success of the Orange Movement is exemplified through transformative investment deals that have reshaped market landscapes while addressing critical gender and climate challenges. These success stories underscore the potential of the Orange Movement to create a ripple effect, inspiring more investments that advance gender justice and gender empowerment.

38 See <https://orangemovement.global/orange-seal>.

39 See <https://iixvalues.com/>.

40 See <https://impactpartners.iixglobal.com>.

## Spotlight on Sehat Kahani in Pakistan

Sehat Kahani is a women-owned & led Healthtech startup enabling female doctors to establish home-based practice in remote communities. Sehat Kahani has established 27 e-health clinics, completing over 60,000 consultations.

The Orange Seal showcases its strong focus on women's impact in an industry with limited environmental relevance. The Orange Seal helped Sehat Kahani gain investor interest by demonstrating its social impact, in an industry with limited opportunity to create environmental impact.

The Seal provided access to technical assistance for financial modeling and valuation, leading to a capital raise of US\$200,000 from a women-focused angel consortium. The capital raise has also boosted its global visibility, with features in Digital Health Global, Arab News, Business Recorder, and Dawn.



## Spotlight on Munyax Eco in Rwanda

Munyax Eco, spearheaded by Rwandan women, stands as a trailblazer in the renewable energy sector, particularly in solar energy solutions. Notably, the enterprise places a strong emphasis on women's empowerment, aligning closely with its dedication to sustainability and gender inclusivity.

Despite its impactful business model, the enterprise faced challenges in showcasing its contributions to women's empowerment and environmental sustainability. The objective was to attract impact investors prioritizing social and environmental benefits.

Munyax Eco received tailored investment readiness support, including refining the business model, articulating and measuring impact, and engaging with investors. This resulted in securing a €250,000 investment from Bettervest, highlighting Munyax Eco's focus on advancing women's roles in the renewable energy sector in Rwanda.

The Orange Seal received by Munyax Eco further demonstrates its commitment to inclusivity and gender-responsive practices, effectively showcasing its impact to diverse stakeholders transparently.



## F. Conclusion and the Way Forward

Despite the growing prominence of Gender Lens Investing, most funds remain concentrated in sectors like healthcare, fintech, and agriculture, with a limited focus on systemic issues such as justice, peace, and equality. This narrow scope often prioritises measurable financial returns over addressing entrenched gender injustices, including systemic discrimination and unequal power dynamics. Consequently, many of the gender justice solutions — focused on tackling deep-rooted challenges like gender-based violence and legal empowerment — struggle to secure funding. Those that offer commodified products and services like safety devices attract greater support, reflecting a preference for solutions with immediate, tangible outcomes and financial returns. This leads to superficial engagement and risks “impact washing” within GLI investments.

Meanwhile, the demand for gender justice remains vast. HiIL's legal needs surveys consistently reveal that justice providers neglect women's needs, often influenced by patriarchal values. Women face additional barriers, including stigma, fear of social sanctions, and limited legal literacy, which hinder access to formal justice systems. The emergence of social entrepreneurs who provide affordable and accessible legal services can play a big role in bridging the justice gap for women. Supporting them is key to transforming justice for millions of women worldwide.

The Orange Movement, as a pioneering global initiative, has demonstrated its potential to support these solutions and build the ecosystem with enhanced transparency, capital mobilization, and measurable outcomes that cater to women's needs. This movement can be leveraged to address the funding gaps faced by gender justice solutions, helping them reach scale and maturity. Enabling platforms and approaches such as the IIX Impact



Partners™ and the Orange Seal™ to play a vital role in connecting gender justice enterprises with impact investors, facilitating the flow of funds and the use of data-driven impact measurement.

By fostering a supportive ecosystem for innovative gender justice solutions—one that combines innovative financing, mentorship, and targeted investment—the global community can empower enterprises to help close the justice gap for women.

We make the below recommendations that enterprises, governments, and investors can undertake in adopting the Orange Movement and innovative financing strategies to support gender justice solutions.

### Need for reliable people-centred, gender-disaggregated data:

To effectively address the barriers women face in accessing justice, it is imperative to invest in people-centred data collection on a global scale. This includes gathering comprehensive data on women's justice needs, the outcomes they prioritize, their experiences navigating justice systems, and the specific services they require. The insights gained from this data will enable gender justice start-ups and other justice service providers to better target their services and inform policymakers and funders to allocate resources for women's access to justice. Integrating the Orange Movement with the solutions is pivotal to further building transparency and reliability as well as democratize the access to data.

### Adopting impact metrics to measure and report gender justice outcomes:

Impact investors need to develop standardized, outcome-based metrics that consider the complex challenges facing gender justice solutions. Enhancing the introduction and adoption of the Orange Seal™ certification can help bring much-

needed credibility and recognition for gender equality action. This can further unlock significant capital and drive crucial values of transparency, equitable access, and sustainability.

### Building capacity of gender justice enterprises for enhanced impact and access to capital:

Many enterprises lack expertise in business development, gender equality, impact management, financial literacy, and planning for long-term sustainability. A collaborative approach, working closely with accelerators, incubators, and investors, to provide capacity building, training, and technical assistance for investor engagement can significantly enhance the investment readiness of the enterprises, thereby mobilizing further capital into the solutions and promoting social and financial returns. Platforms such as IIX Impact Partners play a key role in building ecosystem engagement to facilitate investments.

### Government-supported and partnered programs:

Create dedicated gender justice accelerator programs embedded within Judiciaries and Ministries to support start-ups, civil society organizations, innovators, policy-makers, and investors to support solutions that address key gender justice issues. The programmes can provide seed financing, capacity building, piloting support within the relevant government agencies, and scaling support whilst ensuring alignment with relevant legal and policy frameworks. These can also help the governments lower barriers to entry and operational frictions for gender justice startups by streamlining the processing of licenses, permits, and other administrative applications.

Government engagement will also create the opportunity to establish further investment linkages with impact investors for the enterprises through these targeted support programmes.

## Knowledge sharing and insights into Gender Justice:

Develop platforms and initiatives to share knowledge and insights into the gender development aspects of the people-centred justice ecosystem. This includes publishing and sharing focused papers and conducting knowledge sessions on specific countries to highlight the unique socio-cultural and economic aspects in various regions, as well as creating opportunities to share learning and insights across markets. Integrating the gender justice agenda into the Orange Movement can further galvanize the ecosystem by drawing on the shared learning around gender development and women's empowerment.

## Investor orientation and mobilization:

Educate and orient various categories of investors, including philanthropic foundations, funds, trusts, angel networks, and multilateral and bilateral agencies, on the gender justice ecosystem. Introducing the Orange Movement can help catalyse the various stakeholders through shared outcomes, data, and community engagement while developing a qualified and investment-ready network of gender justice enterprises to garner interest and demonstrate on-ground impact.



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