“Before I was not going out of house. Now I can go to anywhere else. I have courage to go somewhere, talk to some people.”

“Safety is a huge part of being displaced. If you feel safe, then most things – even if you’ve seen the worst – most things feel okay.”

Managed by UN Women on behalf of the UN system, the UN Trust Fund supports non-governmental organizations and governments around the world to improve access to services for survivors of violence, increase the implementation of laws and policies, and prevent violence. In 2017, the UN Trust Fund managed 120 projects aimed at preventing and ending violence against women and girls in 80 countries and territories. A total of 6.3 million people, including men and boys, government officials and the general public, were reached by these projects. Almost 150,000 women and girls benefited directly from empowerment activities and protection from violence, including almost 46,000 women survivors.

The UN Trust Fund has sought in particular to reach women and girls from marginalized and underserved communities, comprising at least 37,500 women and girls living with disabilities; 10,500 lesbian, bisexual and transgender women; almost 9,000 indigenous women; and 2,500 refugee and internally displaced women and girls. The cost of reaching beneficiaries in 2017 was on average USD 3 per person, illustrating how even small investments have significant potential impact.

Strategically responding to emerging global needs and challenges, in 2017, through a newly established humanitarian window, the UN Trust Fund awarded USD 2.5 million to five organizations working to prevent and end violence against refugee and internally displaced women and girls in Iraq and Jordan. A second window opened in the 2017 Call for Proposals provides at least USD 1 million in funding for projects on ending violence against women and girls with disabilities.

In Serbia, the Mental Disability Rights Initiative-Serbia, a UN Trust Fund grantee, provided some of the first evidence of violations such as forced abortions and sterilization among women with mental disabilities living in custodial institutions. The initiative has trained 60 service providers on how to address violence and prevent it from occurring. Fifteen women with a history of institutionalization were included in the programme so that their perspectives remained at the forefront. Taken together, the women’s greater capacities and confidence, and shifts in institutional practices and attitudes among policymakers are setting the stage for profound changes in the lives of women with mental disabilities.

The Women’s Justice Initiative, another grantee, is the only organization in Guatemala working to prevent gender-based violence in 18 rural indigenous communities. In 2017, the project delivered a legal literacy course for 813 women and girls. A survey after the course showed significant changes in attitudes, such as a 71 per cent decrease in the number of women who agreed that it is justified for a husband to beat his wife. Women participants have sought legal assistance and taken steps to assert their rights at home, such as through a fairer division of household chores.

In Mali, the UN Trust Fund is supporting AMSOPT to change social norms around female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), and provide medical and psychosocial services for survivors. Two villages in the Kayes region, which has the highest rates of FGM/C in the country, have publicly renounced these harmful traditional practices as well as child marriage. Six other villages are in the process of doing the same.