



Global Fund for Children

Winter 2026 Impact Report

Happy New Year!

As we welcome 2026, we are looking back at the extraordinary year that you helped make possible for Global Fund for Children and our partners around the world. From amplifying youth voices at COP30, to welcoming Girl Up into our global community, to advancing conversations on gender justice at the highest levels of government – 2025 was a year marked by bold partnerships, deepened impact, and unwavering commitment to youth-led change.

Read on to see how together, we're creating lasting change through Global Fund for Children's youth-led approach.

Empowering Young Climate Leaders: GFC's Work at the Forefront of Climate Justice

At Global Fund for Children, we believe in the power of young people to create transformative change – and among the most urgent needs is community-led climate adaptation and resilience.

Young people around the world are experiencing the impacts of climate change not as single events, but as part of their daily lives from impacts on their mental health to access to food. Rather than seeing themselves as victims of this crisis, young people are emerging as powerful agents of change.

From Brazil to Vietnam, young climate activists are building resilience, educating their families and communities, advocating for policy changes, and imaging creative innovations to protect the environment. Despite their innovative solutions and tireless organizing, these young leaders face systemic barriers that exclude them from the funding and decision-making spaces they need to scale their impact. **GFC is here to change this.**



Building off our successful work with youth climate activists in Southeast Asia, **Global Fund for Children launched Weaving Climate Solutions: Youth for Climate Justice—a groundbreaking initiative putting Brazilian youth at the center of climate action** ahead of COP30 in November 2025. Developed in collaboration with youth-led groups across Brazil, this pilot program aims to strengthen diversity in youth climate leadership by funding organizations led by Indigenous, quilombola, and other historically marginalized communities.

GFC awarded unrestricted grants to 16 remarkable youth groups across 10 states in Brazil that are developing climate solutions, building community resilience, advocating for policy changes, and protecting the environment in their territories.

Our collaboration illuminated both barriers and opportunities. As Thalita Silva, Programme Coordinator for GFC's Climate Justice and Youth in Brazil initiative, explained, "Brazil hosts COP30, but the Brazilian youth most affected by the climate crisis can't access the spaces, resources, or recognition needed to participate—and this exclusion isn't only about money, nor is it limited to summits. **It's about power—about who gets to decide what counts as legitimate knowledge and whose voices are heard when shaping climate solutions.**"

Armed with insights from GFC's collaborative report, **GFC brought youth voices directly to the global stage during COP30 in Belém, Brazil** – joining side panels centering youth as speakers, challenging traditional power structures, and demonstrating what's possible when young people have a seat at the table.

GFC is proud to be at the forefront of the climate battle, with youth voices and organizations leading the charge to protect their communities and their country.

Read more in our media release: [Brazil Hosts COP30 Whilst its Climate Activists Watch from Outside: Frontline Youth Expose How Philanthropy Blocks Grassroots Solutions.](#)

We were thrilled that this piece was picked up by multiple media outlets around the world including [AP News](#), [Prospect Magazine](#), [Business Insider](#), and others.

Youth in Brazil engage in a hands-on gardening activity. © Onda Solidária



Girl Up Joins GFC: A Partnership for the Future

In November, **Global Fund for Children welcomed Girl Up as our newest hosted initiative** – a transformative partnership that significantly expands our capacity to advance youth-led gender justice worldwide.

Girl Up brings something extraordinary to GFC: 345,000+ youth leaders in 155 countries, 15 years of mobilizing young feminists, and a proven track record of cultural and policy change. Since 2010, they've built a movement that organizes locally and leads globally through four powerful pillars:



Youth Leadership training that builds skills, confidence, and feminist analysis



Convenings that create spaces for connection, learning, and solidarity across border



Youth-Led Action that provides direct funding and support for community projects



Partnerships that amplify youth voices in policy spaces and cultural conversations



Girl Up's bold vision for a more just and equitable world – where every girl can lead and shape their future – resonates deeply with our mission. Together, we're building a global movement that amplifies young people's voices, unlocks their leadership, and drives transformative change for generations to come."

–John Hecklinger, Global Fund for Children, Co CEO

Together, we're creating something bigger than either organization could achieve alone and amplifying the impact of youth-led gender justice around the world!

Read more about [Girl Up here](#).



Reimagining Masculinity: From Local Communities to National Platforms

Global Fund for Children leads the sector in supporting community-based organizations that promote gender justice through healthy masculinities and ending gender-based violence and exploitation.

Across five regions – from **India to West Africa, the UK to the US** – GFC is bringing **together locally-led and youth-led partners that are changing the lives of boys and young men.**

We aren't simply funding programs – together GFC partners are building a movement. From boxing gyms to art studios, from psychosocial support for survivors of violence and trafficking to peer mentoring circles, **our healthy masculinities partners are meeting boys and young men where they are and helping them harness their strengths to become leaders, allies, and changemakers.**

And our work is getting noticed at the highest level.



In the UK, GFC is reimagining masculinity with a focus on underserved rural communities and organizations operating beyond major cities. One partner, The Warren Youth Project, is a pioneering youth-led charity that is building confidence and providing safe creative outlets through its recording studio, spoken word collective, and performance spaces. The Warren is based in Hull, England – a city facing high rates of poverty and unemployment – where young men facing economic obstacles are targeted by far-right extremist organizations.

JJ Tatten, The Warren Youth Project's Chief Executive, explained in a recent **interview with Open Democracy** that the best way to respond to this serious threat is to create a safe space for young men to discuss without judgement their emotions, fears and difficulties, and find a new community where they are valued for who they are, not for how they can be exploited.



With patience and time, and that building of a relationship with a young person, a trusted relationship with somebody who is not chaotic, is not aggressive, and who is understanding, is willing to give their time to you, you can't fail to engage with that," says JJ. "And that's what youth work is all about."

GFC's approach recently gained national attention, receiving an invitation to a reception at 10 Downing Street on International Men's Day in November.

This wasn't just recognition – it was an opportunity to ensure that conversations about masculinity, mental health, and youth wellbeing at the highest levels of government include the voices and experiences of the boys and young men themselves.

We are proud to not only have a seat at the table, but also to pull up a chair so boys' voices are heard where they are most needed. Because as JJ said, real solutions don't come from talking about young people– they come from listening to them, learning from them, and supporting their leadership.

Read more about GFC's Healthy Masculinities initiative.

GFC Partners Receiving the Recognition they Deserve

GFC is not the only ones who think our partners are incredible.

GFC partner **Union des Jeunes Dynamiques de Man (UJDM)** received national recognition through Côte d'Ivoire's Youth Impact Award 2025 in Education and Capacity Building!

When GFC first partnered with UJDM, they were a passionate group operating without an office or steady budget. With flexible funding and capacity support from GFC they are now a structured, impactful organization with a strategic focus on adolescent girls' leadership development. This award recognizes their remarkable transformation and dedication to empowering young people.



Photo Credit: Peronia Adolescente

Throughout 2025, GFC partner **Peronia Adolescente** received multiple awards for their film ***Comparsa***, which celebrates Guatemala's vibrant culture and traditions while confronting a system that permits and commits violence against women. With headlines in *Variety*, *The Hollywood Reporter*, and *CBS News*, most recently, *Comparsa* was recognized by the Denver Film Festival with the Documentary Feature Audience Award. Peronia Adolescente is a part of the RECARGA initiative, which is funding organizations filling in educational gaps in Guatemala and Honduras.

We can't wait to see what 2026 has in store for GFC and our partners as we continue this vital work, together.

Thank you for standing with children and young people!



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