

# Empowering Resilience: Global Fund for Widows marks International Widows Day, June 23, with a monthlong campaign

*GFW is leveraging its social media platform throughout June to raise awareness of the global challenges faced by widows and their children.*

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, June 7, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Global Fund for Widows (GFW), announces the observance of International Widows Day on June 23, recognizing and celebrating the resilience and contributions of widows worldwide. To further increase the public's understanding of the issue of widowhood and the daily challenges it presents to women and children globally, GFW is mobilizing its social media platform throughout the month of June.



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*Elena Saenz Feehan, Executive Director of GFW*

Established by the United Nations in 2010, this day raises awareness about the challenges widows face worldwide and advocates for their rights and social inclusion. It highlights widows' economic, social, and cultural

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[Widowhood is a significant yet often overlooked gender issue](#) that affects more than 258 million widows and their children worldwide. ([International Widows' Day | United Nations](#)). Widows face discrimination, harmful traditions, disinheritance, and loss of income, status, and basic needs after losing their partners. Without proper support, poverty often traps them and their children. Despite being among the most marginalized demographics, widows remain invisible in contemporary aid and development programs.

GFW's focus is to empower the most vulnerable group of women today economically: widows and single mothers in the developing world. The main barriers are disinheritance, harmful traditional practices, and lack of access to capital or employment. GFW's groundbreaking work has shown that the violations endured by widows have a direct link to major global policy issues. These societal policy issues include poverty, poor health and nutrition, child marriage, and the inability of children to access education. GFW's award-winning micro-bank known as the "WISALA" – Widows' Savings and Loan Association - increases women's income on average by

2000% a month and has driven substantial GDP growth in developing countries. GFW has started 236 banks in total thus far. GFW collaborates with global philanthropy, including HSBC, Whole Planet Foundation, IF! International Foundation, Novartis, and many others.

“The insidious aspects of widowhood such as discrimination and disinheritance occupy a blind spot in the modern lexicon of human rights abuses; therefore, GFW is urgently amplifying the needs of widows as well as the positive interventions, like GFW’s WISALA, which is positively transforming lives everyday” said Elena Saenz Feehan, Executive Director of GFW.

GFW has successfully launched a global human rights movement for widows, influencing the international agenda. In 2022, GFW played a significant role in adopting the first-ever United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Widows on March 15, 2022 (AR 76/252), with Sierra Leone as a critical partner in its success. GFW has empowered widows and their children economically and legally across various countries, including Egypt, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Nigeria, Cameroon, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, and India.

The impact of GFW’s programs is as evident as the need is great. “Our impact is undeniable, with widows experiencing a near 2,000% increase in monthly income, a 650% increase in savings, a 135% increase in educational spending for their children, nearly 270% increase in medical spending, and an 81% increase in their spending on food and nutrition” said Heather Ibrahim-Leathers, Founder and President of GFW.

Join GFW’s efforts by visiting [www.globalfundforwidows.org](http://www.globalfundforwidows.org)

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About the Global Fund for Widows

Global Fund for Widows (GFW) is the world’s largest international non-profit organization dedicated to economically empowering widows. Founded in 2008 by Heather Ibrahim-Leathers upon the passing of her grandmother as a young widow in rural Egypt, GFW is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization based in New York City. We dedicate our work on both the public policy 29,343 widows in Africa, the Middle East, and India, as well as 72,515 of their children through our financial inclusion programs. Additionally, GFW leverages its success in the field to mainstream widowhood as a human rights issue at the United Nations, US Congress, and the UK’s House of Lords.

Our microbanks, otherwise known as WISALAs (Widows’ Savings and Loan Associations), have been extremely well-received by both sovereign governments (Kenya, Egypt, Sierra Leone, Malawi, and Liberia), as well as the disenfranchised women and families whom we support.

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