

Global Fund for Widows 15th Annual Gala Raises Record Funds to Support Widows

Economically Empowering One of the Most Vulnerable Groups in the World Today – Widows and Single Mothers in the Developing World

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, November 16, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Nearly 250 people



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Heather Ibrahim-Leathers

gathered on Thursday, November 9, at The Edison Ballroom at the 15th Annual [Global Fund for Widows](#) (GFW) Gala. This year’s honorees were Aisha Muhammed-Oyebode, Former First Daughter of Nigeria and widow Advocate; Ritu Prakash Chhabria, Director of Finolex Industries Limited; Todd Wilcox, CEO, Deputy Chair and CEO of HSBC Egypt. Each of these distinguished honorees advocates for widow rights, working to improve gender equality and poverty.

Moved by the powerful testimonies of GFW’s beneficiaries and the commitments of the honorees, GFW had a

successful evening of fundraising and advocacy, raising resources to improve the lives of widows and their children through the construction of hundreds of proprietary Widows’ Saving & Loan Associations - or [WISALAs](#).

“While we have built over 191 microbanks globally and empowered over 29,000 widows and 70,000 of their children found social and economic security as of September 2023, governments and intergovernmental organizations have enacted social protections for widows worldwide. The movement to eradicate the human rights violations that are embedded in global widowhood is urgent. With an additional 1000 microbanks on the waitlist, representing over 25,000 additional widows, and over 125,000 of their children, the demand for Global Fund for Widows programming has never been higher.” – [Heather Ibrahim-Leathers](#), Founder and Chair, Global Fund for Widows.

We applaud all of our funders in addressing this urgent campaign. Toward that end, we are thrilled to announce a new, dynamic partnership between Finolex Industries of India, the Mukul Madhav Foundation, and GFW. With a gift of \$140,000, Finolex intends to establish 30 WISALAs to empower 750 widows and 3,750 of their children over the next two years. Together, we will continue to propel our communities forward with permanent impact and results.

GFW is the world's largest non-profit organization economically empowering one of the most vulnerable groups today: widows and single mothers in the developing world. GFW has been an innovator by building "micro-banks" called Widows' Savings and Loan Associations or WISALAs. Owned and operated by the widows themselves, these WISALA "micro-banks" provide them with a permanent source of capital to launch micro-businesses. With borrowings from their banks, widows launch businesses, ranging from vegetable stands to small groceries, poultry farms, and even bakeries. They are also pooling capital, establishing computer centers and schools, buying farms, and even buying apartments and becoming landlords.

GFW has economically and legally empowered widows and their children across Egypt, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Nigeria, Cameroon, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, and India. Including our role in passing the first-ever United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Widows on March 15, 2022, the UN unanimously adopted resolution AR 76/252, "Addressing the situation of widows." In partnership with Sierra Leone, GFW played an integral role in the resolution's success.

"The plight of widows is one of the most underestimated human rights violations being experienced by women globally," said Dr. Nagesh Borse, Executive Director of GFW. "Systemic disinheritance, discrimination, and harmful practices endured by widows not only result in the direct link between widowhood and poverty, but widowhood is also directly linked to hunger, poor health, poor education of widows' children, human trafficking, extremist indoctrination/recruitment, child marriage, and the unconscionable phenomenon of the child widow."

It is with great gratitude that we acknowledge all donors and sponsors who have generously supported the Global Fund for Widows.

For more information about Global Fund For Widows, <https://www.globalfundforwidows.org/>

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 to both the public policy front as well as financial inclusion programs for widows on the ground. We have impacted 25,500 widows in Africa, the Middle East, and India, as well as 57,000 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, the 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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