

UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

WE ARE 25!





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“The [COVID-19] lockdown was on, so everything was more difficult. When I wanted to call you, I came to the wall that was too big for me to cross it on my own. After that first conversation, I felt some help, some psychological support. [...] That same moment my life somehow changed because I believed that there is someone who will help me [...] to cross that wall. [...] With your help, I reported the violence.”

A survivor explains how UN Trust Fund
Grantee, Center of Women’s Rights in
Bosnia and Herzegovina, is improving life for
women survivors of violence



The background is a solid blue color. In the upper left, there are several overlapping shapes: a dark blue shape with white lines, a light orange shape, and a larger orange shape with a white dotted pattern. In the upper right, there is a cluster of small orange dots. In the lower left, there is a trail of small orange dots that tapers off towards the bottom left corner.

The United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) is the first, and remains the only, global grant-making mechanism exclusively dedicated to eradicating all forms of violence against women and girls. It is managed by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) on behalf of the UN system and involves UN bodies and organs, civil society organizations (CSOs)¹ and experts on ending violence against women and girls in its decision-making processes through its Programme Advisory Committee (PAC).² As it marks its first 25 years of operation, the UN Trust Fund would like to take this opportunity to extend its thanks and acknowledge its debt to all those who over the years have contributed to and aided its work.

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1. FOREWORD

As COVID-19 swept the globe – a health pandemic of devastating proportions – another storm of violence against women and girls (VAW/G) was unleashed. It is hard to assess what was more disturbing: the surprise at the horrific consequences, seen on the whole as an afterthought, of lockdowns on women and girls; or the fact that history keeps repeating itself. Yet again, it took the profound suffering caused by one global human tragedy to focus the world’s attention on another: the ease with which women and girls are harassed, beaten, raped and abused – on a COVID or non-COVID day.

Let me be very clear, VAW/G did not happen because of COVID-19. It happens every day. To be more precise, it does not just “happen”. It is a horrific act committed by husbands, partners, fathers, brothers, friends and strangers – violent men. VAW/G did not emerge last year as a new or COVID-related phenomenon. However, COVID-19 did give rise to specific decisions and necessary life adjustments that “facilitated” even more of it. These decisions were essential to address the raging pandemic. But the impact on the reality of the lives of women and girl survivors, and the overall unpreparedness of governments to respond to that reality, caused intense harm and created a breeding ground for more violence.

The forms of harm and the places where they were committed were no different. They just increased, intensified and expanded. There was more of it, with no escape route, support or help. The decisions designed to protect us from COVID-19 – locked homes, empty streets, overstretched medical services, the closures of schools and justice system institutions, lack of access to regular social networks and sources of social support – exposed the depth of VAW/G. They revealed a core pattern of neglect, flawed structures and inequities affecting the lives of women and girls.

This should never have happened. Gender dynamics should not be put to one side in the frenzy of any new “normal” or crisis. They should not be overlooked as something to be dealt

with at the later stage, where careful consideration can be deferred. This is particularly true given that a spike in VAW/G during humanitarian and public health emergencies is not something new. We learned these lessons long, long ago and many, many times over. Most recently, the Ebola crisis in West Africa (2014-2016) clearly and painfully showed how school closures and quarantines expose women and girls to more violence, coercion and exploitation and how reports of such violence are de-prioritized and ignored.

Governments have a duty of care; they must apply the principles of due diligence in all circumstances and be well organized and prepared with policies and responses – on a “normal” or a COVID day. As their institutional machineries switch to crisis mode to contain a health pandemic, natural disasters or any, “normal” day issues – the rights and needs of women and girls must be addressed and the services they rely on must be available, prioritized and seen as essential.

In the first six months of the pandemic, UN Trust Fund grantees working in 69 countries and territories worldwide reported an increase in the severity and frequency of VAW/G, with marginalized women and girls and those most often left behind being disproportionately affected. While the pandemic was revealing the lack of sustainable, structural and societal support for women and girls and the overburdened state of referral systems, civil society organizations (CSOs) and women rights organizations (WROs) were rapidly adapting their programming and service delivery to fill the gaps.

As they always do, they immediately stepped in, provided support and adjusted the provision of their services to the “new normal”. At a time when national statistical capacity and administrative methods were out of action, CSOs and WROs were playing a key role in monitoring VAW/G by listening to survivors, documenting their experiences and making data available so that local and national response efforts could be informed by the realities on the ground.

Once again, and as in many crises before, their reaction was quick, focused, innovative and action oriented. They proved to be resilient and adaptable, but in urgent need of financial and advocacy support to continue their work, protect their staff and beneficiaries, avoid the risk of burnout and prevent closures of their own organizations as a result of the rising economic crisis.

This Annual Report is testament first and foremost to their humanity, compassion and determination. It demonstrates the incredible work, results and achievements of remarkable individuals and organizations who changed the reality of life under COVID-19 for so many women and girls. Working often in dangerous and truly testing circumstances, taking personal risks and putting themselves and their families in harm’s way – our grantees saved many, many lives, one by one.

I salute all of them.

Aldijana Šišić

Chief, UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Violence against women and girls (VAW/G) remains the most widespread breach of human rights – a long-standing pandemic whose many forms and manifestations are often exacerbated in times of crisis. Since its establishment in 1996, the UN Trust Fund has evolved, adapted and learned about effective initiatives to end VAW/G. Over the past 25 years, its grantees have impacted the lives of women and girls in every region, addressing complex and diverse forms of VAW/G through innovative programmes driven by the demands of their particular contexts.

The UN Trust Fund deployed this cumulative and unique body of knowledge and experience in 2020 to support organizations confronting the challenges of implementing initiatives to end VAW/G during the COVID-19 pandemic. An understanding of the importance of flexible and swift responses, underpinned by relationships of trust, helped ensure that vital civil society organizations (CSOs), especially women's rights organizations (WROs), working to end VAW/G were able to survive and adapt.

During 2020, COVID-19 and the measures adopted to contain the pandemic saw a dramatic rise in VAW/G, severely impacting the work of the UN Trust Fund and grantees. Above all, it exposed the lack of preparedness of countries to respond to and deal with existing, ongoing and persistent VAW/G.

Indeed, prevalence figures released by the World Health Organization based on 2018 data, confirmed that 1 in 3 women around the world have been subjected to physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner or non-partner, indicating that levels of VAW/G remained disturbingly high and gains in women's rights fragile, even before COVID-19.³

The COVID-19 pandemic, however, also highlighted the vital role played by CSOs/WROs in preventing and addressing VAW/G as first responders in crises. Their work is especially important in meeting the needs of women and girls who experience intersecting forms of discrimination and who are at most risk of violence.

This report reflects on the work of the UN Trust and its grantees since its inception in 1996 and looks in greater detail at the achievements of grantees during the last Strategic Plan (2016-2020) and specifically during 2020.

In its 25 years of existence, the UN Trust Fund has supported a total of 572 initiatives specifically aimed at preventing and addressing all forms of violence against women and girls across the globe.

In the past five years, its grant giving has focused primarily on funding CSOs/WROs and specifically WROs. During this time the grantees reported⁴ reaching at least 54,615,105 people and at least 1,604,305 women and girls benefited directly through services, empowerment activities and protection from violence, including more than 149,958 survivors of violence.

During 2020, COVID-19 and a dramatic increase in VAW/G globally posed new, and at times existential, challenges to UN Trust Fund grantees. Despite this, grantees reached **over 31,071,058 people** through various initiatives and ensured that more than **242,569 women and girls** directly benefited from support that led to transformative changes in their lives, to prevent and respond to violence including services for at least **26,519 women/girl survivors of violence.**



San Ratha, a participant in ADD International's project in Cambodia receives a COVID-19 emergency kit.

Credit: Sambath Rachna/ADD International

As this report shows, during 2020 grantees were able, with UN Trust Fund support, to adapt swiftly to maintain key aspects of their projects, while protecting the safety of beneficiaries and staff. The overall impact of COVID-19 on grantees and their work to prevent and address VAW/G was localized and complex, but some key trends were clear. These included a stark rise in intimate partner violence, sexual violence, online harassment and harmful traditional practices; a severe impact on those experiencing intersectional discrimination

and marginalization and those most at risk of being left behind; and a lack of sustainable, structural and societal support for work on ending VAW/G. CSOs/WROs rose to these challenges. This report also describes some of the specific steps taken by the UN Trust Fund to strengthen and support their role as first responders to women and girls, including funding specifically aimed at ensuring organizational survival and resilience.

With UN Trust Fund support, grantees have

enabled 158,736 women and girls to access specialist support services and helped 23,089 service providers around the world to improve their provision of services.

The year also saw the close of the Strategic Plan 2016-2020. The three priority areas set for this period were: improving access for women and girls to essential, safe and adequate multisectoral services; furthering implementation of legislation, policies, national action plans and accountability systems; and promoting the prevention of VAW/G.

In addition, at least 133 institutional policies or protocols on VAW/G have been developed or improved at various institutional levels. This report details some of the key achievements of grantees in 2020 under these three pillars.

Throughout the period of the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, the UN Trust Fund has continued to build a global Evidence Hub on ending VAW/G, grounded in evaluated grantee results, to create a platform for collecting and disseminating practice-based knowledge and lessons. This report looks at some key areas of progress in taking forward this commitment to continuous learning and sharing practice-based knowledge and lessons learned, which proved invaluable in enabling a prompt and effective response to the crisis in 2020.

This report also looks to the future, highlighting the priorities, challenges and opportunities identified to take the UN Trust Fund forward over the next five years. Its Strategic Plan 2021-2025 will continue efforts to effectively support CSOs/WROs to prevent and end VAW/G. Grounded in feminist principles, it will continue to be led and informed by women's experiences and civil society efforts to end VAW/G, fully recognizing women's and survivors' own agency and will be guided by the expertise and knowledge generated by CSOs/WROs.

The final chapter is devoted to the achievements during the year by grantees under the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative. The specific central focus of the collaboration between the UN Trust Fund and the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative is strengthening and supporting women's rights groups

and autonomous civil society organizations (Outcome 6 of the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative Theory of Change) for projects working to end VAW/G.⁵ In 2019 and 2020, the UN Trust Fund cumulatively awarded USD24 million in direct grants to 55 CSOs/WROs in 25 countries in Latin America (11 grants) and sub-Saharan Africa (44 grants). This included USD9 million in resources to 44 CSOs/WROs in sub-Saharan Africa for their institutional strengthening in the context of the COVID-19 Response Framework in 2020. Looking to the future, the UN Trust Fund is analysing the contribution grantees make to women's / feminist movements locally and nationally as well as how grantees have organisationally and programmatically adapted to COVID-19 that provide lessons for future ending VAW/G work especially in times of crisis.

3. WE ARE 25

In the 25 years since the UN Trust Fund was established, its grantees have impacted the lives of women and girls in every region, with innovative and demand-driven initiatives.

Growing the momentum for change

VAW/G remains the most widespread breach of human rights – a long-standing pandemic whose forms and manifestations are context-dependent. Since its establishment in 1996, as a direct response to the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women and resulting Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the UN Trust Fund has evolved to support civil society organizations (CSOs) and women’s rights organizations (WROs) in their goal to reach the most at-risk women and girl survivors of violence.

Today, the increased scale and breadth of its grantee portfolio is testament to the extent to which the UN Trust Fund has continued to grow in scope and ambition. It has leveraged its convening power to bolster the funds available and strengthen its relationship with grantees as “more than a funder”, a finding from the UN Trust Fund’s mid-term review of its Strategic Plan 2016-2020, enabling it to provide support where, when and in a manner that is most effective to ensure sustainable outcomes.

The work of the UN Trust Fund over the years has shown the immense potential and opportunity for bottom-up and sustainable change to prevent and address VAW/G. There is a strong message of hope to be drawn from the experience and knowledge garnered over the past 25 years to end this pervasive human rights violation. However, what is also clear is that only a small fraction of this potential is being tapped and much remains to be done to address chronic underfunding of initiatives to end VAW/G – another pervasive issue which the UN Trust Fund will leverage its growth and maturity to address through its next Strategic Planning period (2021-2025).

The UN Trust Fund has consolidated its processes and procedures over the past 25 years and has matured as a fund. The active engagement of a wide spectrum of stakeholders has helped ensure the selection process for projects to be supported is transparent, rigorous and rooted in the needs of women and girls in their specific contexts.

The UN Trust Fund is an inter-agency mechanism grounded in the institutional backbone of the UN system – under the management of the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) until 2010 and UN Women for the past 10 years – delivering results for women and girls.

Throughout the 25 years of its existence it has established a relationship of trust with donors. A significant increase in the number of donors – from three in 1997 to 34 in 2020 – has ensured that the UN Trust Fund has been able to invest in demand-driven civil society-led initiatives to end VAW/G in all its forms. With crucial institutional support from UN Women and its regional, multi-country and country offices, and the UN system as a whole, the UN Trust Fund is firmly embedded in the work to end VAW/G across the UN system.

The results achieved have made a profound difference in the lives of women and girls around the world, showing that progress is indeed possible.

HIGHLIGHTS OF GRANTEE ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE PAST 25 YEARS

The UN Trust Fund has supported a total of

572 of the most promising and high quality projects,

and engaged hundreds of UN staff members and civil society experts at the country, regional and global levels.

awarded with a total value of **USD800,000**

1997



36

organizations supported

2020



awarded with a total value of **USD72,000,000**

150

organizations supported

GRANTEES IN 2020 ARE BUILDING ON THE SUCCESSES AND LASTING RESULTS OF PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED AROUND THE WORLD OVER THE PAST 25 YEARS:

2008

Grantee **Women in Cities International** piloted a project in four cities on four continents promoting women's "right to the city". This began a UN Women global initiative, "Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces", which has now been implemented in **50 cities around the world**.

2009

The organization **Reflexion** trained professionals in Albania serving survivors of violence on a new domestic violence law and scaled up the project to reach one third of Albanian women who experience domestic violence.

The **NGO Breakthrough** pioneered an innovative awareness campaign on violence against women called "Bell Bajao" ("Ring the Bell") in India which has since been scaled up to reach more than **124 million people** with messages on women's rights.

2012

The **Cambodian Acid Attack Law** was officially enacted. The NGO Acid Survivors Trust International played a central role in the development and passage of the law, which provides comprehensive regulations on the sale of acid and harsher penalties for perpetrators of acid violence.

IN 2020



THE UN TRUST FUND SUPPORTED
150 PROJECTS

aimed at preventing and addressing violence
against women and girls

WITH GRANTS TOTALLING
USD72.8 MILLION



71 countries and
territories, across
five regions



IN TOTAL, THE PROJECTS REACHED
OVER 31 MILLION PEOPLE

mostly women and girls, through initiatives such as
awareness raising campaigns to prevent and end
violence against women and girls.

IN 2020,
242,569
WOMEN AND GIRLS

directly benefited from support
that led to transformative
changes in their lives

AMONG THOSE WHO DIRECTLY
BENEFITED INCLUDED AT LEAST:



6,661
women and girls
living with
HIV/AIDS.

26,519
women/girl
survivors of
violence

11,747
refugee/internally
displaced women
and girls



21,040
women and
girls with
disabilities

12,822
indigenous women
or women from
ethnic groups

In the past five years, the UN Trust Fund has focused funding primarily on CSOs and specifically WROs. Under its Strategic Plan 2016-2020 (see Grantee Achievements for a comprehensive overview of results), which just came to a close, the UN Trust Fund has funded projects centred around three strategic pillars: preventing violence, implementing laws and policies to address and eliminate VAW/G, and improving access to adequate essential, specialist, multisectoral services for survivors. It also focused on building up its Evidence Hub to share best practices.

Between 2016 and 2020, UN Trust Fund grantees reached at least **54,615,105 people, mostly women and girls.**

Among those reached were agents of change, duty bearers, rights holders, project participants and recipients of outreach activities. They included at least **1,604,305 women and girls** who benefited directly through services, empowerment activities and protection from violence that transformed their lives, including more than **149,958 survivors of violence.**

Even so, it consistently is able to fund only around 2-4 per cent of the total amount requested in grant applications received each year. This is one further indicator that underscores the pervasive lack of funding and the scope of the requests and opportunities presented each year by CSOs/WROs.

Grantees in 2020 achieved results for women and girls despite the unprecedented context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which required them to adapt and respond swiftly and nimbly, with support from the UN Trust Fund. In these very challenging circumstances, grantees achieved significant results, in some cases devising innovative adaptations to the changing context.

The results of the last five years, including during the COVID-19 crisis, clearly show that the UN Trust Fund remains relevant and uniquely placed to support adaptations to rapidly changing contexts

The UN Trust Fund increased both the number of grants awarded and the overall amount provided, compared to the previous Strategic Plan period:

2010-2015:

109 GRANTS AWARDED
WITH A TOTAL VALUE OF
USD54.5 MILLION

2016-2020

146 GRANTS AWARDED
WITH A TOTAL VALUE OF
USD67.2 MILLION

that grantees working to prevent and end VAW/G need. From shrinking spaces for civil society and humanitarian crises to the crisis created by COVID-19, the UN Trust Fund has responded to support CSOs/WROs. Its commitment to continuous learning meant that the UN Trust Fund was able to draw on a wealth of evidence to respond promptly and effectively and support CSOs/WROs and their work as first responders on VAW/G during the COVID-19 pandemic and to face future challenges.

4. 2020: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

“Women’s organizations, operating with meagre resources, are often on the front line of community response – supporting those most affected economically by the crisis, ensuring shelters remain open for domestic violence victims, and channelling public health education messages to women. Expansion and capitalization of Funds such as the UN’s Women, Peace and Humanitarian Fund or the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women must be encouraged as a means of scaling up support.”

António Guterres, UN Secretary-General, SHARED RESPONSIBILITY, GLOBAL SOLIDARITY: Responding to the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 (2020)

“It is clear that the increased rate of violence against women and girls is a result of the effects of the pandemic. There have been increased reports of rape cases, including gang rape and child sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, intimate partner violence, domestic violence, [and] assaults by law enforcement agents, coupled with poor access to sexual and reproductive health care.”

Iheoma Obibi, Executive Director, Alliances for Africa

During 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic and adverse consequences of measures taken to curb its spread exacerbated a situation in which VAW/G globally was already widespread and prevalent. In 2020, WHO/UN Women analysis of the prevalence of VAW/G from data available up to 2018 found that violence remains disturbingly high; 1 in 3 women worldwide have been subjected to physical or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.⁶

Across the world, CSOs/WROs reported a

surge in violence against women and girls⁷ with the arrival of the pandemic. This was reflected in the increased calls for support to helplines, in some cases up by 770 per cent.⁸

Grantees of the UN Trust Fund, at the forefront of the response for women and girl survivors of violence, acted as an early warning system. Organizations reported that survivors of violence experienced a lack of or restricted access to justice, essential health care and social protection. Information from grantees also revealed how swiftly they adapted to maintain key aspects of their projects, while protecting the safety of beneficiaries and staff.⁹ For example, Rozan in Pakistan moved psychological counselling online and the Women Forum Tetovo in Macedonia began offering online legal counselling.


The overall impact of COVID-19 on grantees and their work to prevent and address VAW/G was localized and complex, but grantees identified and shared key challenges. These included a stark rise in sexual violence, online harassment and harmful traditional practices; a severe impact on those experiencing intersectional discrimination and marginalization and those most at risk of being left behind; and a lack of sustainable, structural and societal support for work on ending VAW/G, a gap which CSOs/WROs were striving to fill.

Grantees reported a rise in the number of requests for help and in cases concerning immediate threats to life. For instance, the Women’s Rights Centre in Armenia noted

UN system’s integrated response

The essential work of CSOs/WROs as front-line responders during the COVID-19 pandemic was recognized early on and informed the coordination of the UN system’s response. Through the April 2020 statement, *Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to socio-economic impacts of COVID-19*,¹⁰ and in the system-wide “Political Engagement Strategy on Gender-based Violence and COVID-19”, the Secretary-General called on Member States to fund women’s organizations and services.¹¹ The UN Trust Fund continued its advocacy across the UN system to ensure recognition of the important role played by CSOs/WROs as front-line responders during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UN Trust Fund’s advocacy messages on the key and essential role of women’s rights organizations in ending violence against women have been embraced by a joint multistakeholder Action Coalition against Gender-Based Violence under the umbrella of the Generation Equality campaign led by UN Women.



both significantly higher numbers of cases and increasingly severe violence. While, in March, grantees reported that the most common form of VAW/G was intimate partner violence, by August, they were reporting that other forms of violence, such as online harassment and harmful practices, were also on the rise.

All 20 grantees working on violence against women and girls with disabilities reported that these women and girls were disproportionately affected in the context of COVID-19, although the scope of the impact was difficult to gauge given that the group was among the hardest to reach during lockdowns. However, this prompted grantees to adapt.¹² For instance in Haiti, Beyond Borders, with support from its partner organization Pazapa, created new resources to promote remotely the prevention of violence against girls and women with disabilities.

4.1. Responding to the pandemic

The UN Trust Fund's advocacy goal of recognizing CSOs/WROs as first responders to the needs of women and girls at a time of

crisis was strongly substantiated through its analysis as the pandemic unfolded, which in turn informed the UN Trust Fund's response. The societal and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were documented through the voices of UN Trust Fund grantees early on in the pandemic in a dialogue convened in April 2020. This brought together 280 participants representing small organizations, CSOs/WROs, civil society actors, donors, government development agencies and UN partners from around the globe. At the same time, the UN Trust Fund actively monitored these impacts in different localized contexts by maintaining constant exchanges with grantees.

As part of the UN Trust Fund's initial response to the COVID-19 pandemic, two knowledge products¹³ were released in 2020 which documented grantees' challenges, adaptations and strategies in response to the crisis.

The UN Trust Fund Secretariat responded to the grantees' urgent needs with immediate, medium and long-term intervention plans. The UN Trust Fund's initial response included issuing a 5-point action plan to assist grantees on budget reallocation and reprogramming activities to match the rapid adaptations needed in local communities.

5-POINT ACTION PLAN TO SUPPORT GRANTEES

- Acknowledge and approve delays in grantee reporting, including final and evaluation reports;
- Exercise utmost flexibility to enable grantees to modify or delay project activities;
- Share resources and guidance to help grantees navigate the public health crisis;
- Accept budget reallocation requests to meet core costs to ensure business continuity and minimize the negative impact of COVID-19; and
- Approve no-cost extension requests for grantee projects.

Our response and adaptations informed by grantee needs

The UN Trust Fund produced two briefs based on an analysis of up to 144 grantee project reports and replies to a survey, from grantees in 69 countries and territories. The purpose of the briefs was to inform UN Member States, UN organizations, policymakers, donors and other partners working on preventing and ending VAW/G about the urgent need to resource the work of CSOs/WROs on the front line of VAW/G responses.¹⁴

Based on lessons learned from CSOs/WROs during the pandemic, the briefs set out a series of recommendations for immediate action, including:

- Recognize CSOs/WROs as essential and specialist service providers and include them in the development and funding of national COVID-19 response plans;
- Recognize that CSOs/WROs need flexible funding to adapt quickly and build resilience and improve the response to VAW/G and the crisis;
- Recognize the economic empowerment of women as essential to global recovery and preventing VAW/G;
- Ensure that national COVID-19 response plans include partnerships and networks of CSOs/WROs in a manner that supports and sustains women's movements;
- Support adaptations of programme delivery which provide opportunities for innovation that could improve support for survivors, reach those left behind and tackle the digital divide;
- Invest in targeted programming in under resourced areas that require sustainable funding and could have the most significant impacts on ending VAW/G; and
- Recognize and use data collected and reported by CSOs/WROs, including qualitative data, to improve services and programmes to address VAW/G, always ensuring a survivor-centred approach and ethical safety standards.

These key recommendations were fully integrated into the UN Trust Fund's response and support for grantees during the year.



FACT Malawi conducted “know your rights” community dialogue sessions at Dzaleka refugee camp with women refugees.

Credit: Jessica Mphasa/FACT Malawi

With support of the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative (see section on EU/UN Spotlight Initiative), the UN Trust Fund injected an additional USD9 million in resources to its 44 grantee organizations located in sub-Saharan Africa to support their organizational resilience during the crisis, infusing funds for the medium term as well as for adaptations and responses, as grantees began to liken the impact of COVID-19 to a long-term crisis.

In the longer term, the UN Trust Fund engaged in advocacy for the recognition of CSOs/WROs as first responders during the crisis to the needs of women and girls and for effective resourcing of their work in response to the rise in VAW/G linked to COVID-19. These efforts led to the launch of the UN Trust Fund’s 24th Call for Proposals in September 2020, resourced with a USD15 million grant-giving envelope.

2020

MARCH

The UN Trust Fund surveyed the situation of its grantees, receiving responses from 122 grantees in 69 countries and territories about the impact of COVID-19. This highlighted the rapid rise in VAW/G and the challenges faced by struggling, often CSO-led, support and protection systems; this was reaffirmed by a second analysis published in September.

APRIL

UN Trust Fund stakeholders convened a virtual discussion on the impact of COVID-19. The meeting welcomed over 280 participants representing small organizations, CSOs/WROs, civil society actors, donors, government development agencies and UN partners from around the globe.

The UN Trust Fund announced a 5-point action plan to provide immediate support to grantees during the crisis.

The UN Secretary-General's April 2020 statement, *Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to socio-economic impacts of COVID-19* called on Member States to fund women's organizations and services.

JUNE

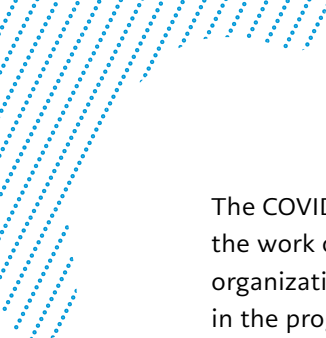
The UN Trust Fund released its first knowledge product as part of its initial response to COVID-19 – *Impact of COVID-19 on violence against women and girls: Through the lens of civil society and women's rights organizations – analysing responses received to its mapping exercise in March.*

The UN Secretary-General urged all governments to make the prevention and redress of VAW/G a key part of their national response plans for COVID-19, 146 Member States responded to his call to action. The UN system came together to accelerate policy responses to gender-based violence in the context of COVID-19, including through mechanisms such as the UN Trust Fund.¹⁵

SEPTEMBER

The UN Trust Fund launched a call for proposals for projects on ending VAW/G focusing on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UN Trust Fund released its second assessment – *Six months of global pandemic: UN Trust Fund assesses impact on violence against women and front line organizations* – which showed that continued economic insecurity and movement restrictions related to the pandemic were continuing to drive increased VAW/G.



The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly impacted the work of all UN Trust Fund supported organizations and required swift adaptations in the programming. The impact was two-fold. According to discussions with grantees and UN Trust Fund analysis, on the one hand, organizations described experiencing an increase in requests for assistance and support from their direct beneficiaries. For instance, the Women's Rights Centre in Armenia noted both significantly higher numbers of cases and increasingly severe violence and in Colombia reports logged as emergencies increased by 553 per cent, according to Corporación Con-Vivamos.

On the other hand, grantees had to re-conceptualize their modus operandi in the new radically changed circumstances. Many were agile in turning to virtual programming, providing an opportunity to enhance women and girls' access to and engagement with digital technology and to give women access to new spaces. This enabled some projects to reach larger audiences through adapted modalities such as radio.

Grantees also took action to improve their organizational capacity and facilities to ensure staff well-being, including, for example, enabling remote working.

4.2. Results of grantee adaptations to COVID-19 in 2020

Grantee adaptations and interventions were varied and driven by their local needs and contexts during the pandemic, although a number of themes emerged, including the important role of flexible and core funding. By August, all active grantees had adjusted their project plans for programmatic and operational reasons.

As a result of the UN Trust Fund's response and support to grantees, during the year, 3,321 of grantees' staff/partners reported improved knowledge and skills of how to integrate COVID-19 response into ending VAW/G interventions. Grantees also took steps such as refocusing their efforts on the immediate survival of beneficiaries and their organizations. Such responses included implementing cash-based interventions, with specific operational support from the UN Trust Fund. Grantees also worked to ensure that new adaptations served as entry points for awareness-raising on VAW/G and COVID-19.

In communities where immediate referrals and specialist services were unavailable, or physical access to specialist services became limited, CSOs/WROs worked to strengthen community pathways to provide legal aid and psychological counselling. For example, in the Philippines, the Institute of Politics and Governance, Inc. trained community volunteers as paralegals to provide legal aid to survivors. In informal settlements in Kenya, the Refugee Consortium Kenya worked to build the capacity of community-based counsellors to act as referral points to help survivors and provide emergency responses.

Grantees quickly recognized that the economic impact of the pandemic could further fuel VAW/G and worked to proactively mitigate against



In India, SAHAYOG distributes COVID-19 relief items and information on the pandemic in the community.

Credit: SAHAYOG

possible negative outcomes. For instance, Badabon Sangho in Bangladesh worked with women farmers to ensure that they are not forced to sell their land, often their only asset.

Assessments by CSOs/WROs of service capacity and qualitative insights provided data that informed local responses and constituted a critical body of practitioner-based knowledge intended to guide global responses. For example, the International Foundation for Crime Prevention and Victim Care in India investigated why more cases of violence had not been reported to their helpline at the start of the pandemic. They found that fewer women were calling because stay-at-home orders prevented them from speaking on the phone in private. Some women at risk assumed that the service was closed. In response, the grantee republicized the hotline number, moved to online methods of communication and urged the Government to publicly reaffirm that services related to violence against women and girls were essential and open.

A total of 413 calls were received by the national support line, which also led to 24 referrals.

At a time when national violence protection systems were refocused to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, the roles of CSOs/WROs, both as first responders to VAW/G and in monitoring and gathering data emerged as an invaluable early warning system. For example, in the State of Palestine, the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling systematically recorded violations reported to its services every week following lockdown; the number of cases in which a woman's life was threatened increased significantly in May and the number of long-term (unresolved) cases almost tripled compared to pre-pandemic figures.



Attendees at a seminar to improve community support to address violence against women in Nigeria. (Photo from January 2020)

Credit: Abraham Samuel Ben/EWEI

4.3. Focus on organizational resilience

The UN Trust Fund took specific steps to ensure that organizations were strengthened and supported during the COVID-19 pandemic. Feedback from CSOs/WROs during the year showed that many were concerned about survival, both for the women and girls they serve and their own organizations. The UN Trust Fund called for global responses to be immediate, appropriate and effective to ensure that CSOs/WROs could

maintain their vital role on the front-line serving survivors and sustain women's organizations and women's rights defenders, the foundation of the women's movement.

Immediate support, flexibility and a focus on ensuring organizational resilience ensured that, with UN Trust Fund support for initiatives such as new working from home policies, 1,149 staff/partners were able to work from home effectively in 2020, an important investment for their health and safety during the pandemic.

In response to needs voiced by CSO/WRO partners, the UN Trust Fund organized a series of webinars in English, French and Spanish on how to effectively manage the additional resources for responding

to COVID-19 for those grantees receiving the additional EU/UN Spotlight funding. These reached 420 participants. Training covered areas such as project modification (96 per cent of attendees rated this as useful or very useful); cash-based interventions (80 per cent of attendees rated this as useful or very useful); and procurement and recommended procedures (94 per cent of attendees rated this as useful or very useful). In a post-training survey, all respondents indicated that the knowledge and skills gained from the training will be useful for them even beyond the management and implementation of the current project.

In addition, feedback from 40 individuals on the increased investment in access to core costs and self-care funds for small organizations initiated in 2019 indicated that they found these very helpful

in empowering women, addressing issues at an early stage, providing for mental health and counselling, and contributing to improved relations in the workplace and community.

The UN Trust Fund's role supporting CSOs/WROs on the front line of serving women survivors of violence was recognized through the contribution from the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative, which focused the additional influx of funding in sub-Saharan Africa on support for their organizational resilience, risk mitigation and recovery in the context COVID-19.



A TOTAL OF **44**
ORGANIZATIONS

in sub-Saharan Africa (24 funded under the 2019 EU/UN Spotlight Initiative and 20 from previous UN Trust Fund funding cycles) were invited to submit a request for additional funding of up to 43 per cent of the organization's initial grant; all 44 received the requested funding, totalling

USD8.4 MILLION

The remaining USD0.5 million was allocated to a virtual practitioner-based collaboration and learning hub. (See section on EU/UN Spotlight Initiative for more details.) The focus of this support was directly informed by requests for support voiced by grantees in virtual consultations.¹⁶

Planned in-person workshops due to be held in 2020 had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. The 35 organizations originally funded under the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative Call for Proposals completed online training on project management developed by the UN Trust Fund.



In general, organizational capacity development activities reached more than

1,100
GRANTEE

**PARTICIPANTS IN 2020,
FROM ALL ACTIVE CYCLES.**

Grantees were provided with training on effective management of projects, preventing sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as ethics and safety. By the end of the year, written policies on these areas were in place for 112 projects.

5. GRANTEE ACHIEVEMENTS

5.1. Results over the Strategic Plan 2016-2020

During the UN Trust Fund's Strategic Plan 2016-2020, funding was increasingly focused on enabling small, locally rooted WROs to deliver services and activities that transform the lives of the women and girls in their communities.

The share of small grants,¹⁷ awarded to CSOs/WROs annually rose from 39 per cent in 2016 to 50 per cent in 2020.

In terms of the three priority areas set out in the Strategic Plan 2016-2020, key achievements and learning, gleaned through various monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, both validated this focus and pointed the way to the direction of travel for future work for the next Strategic Plan period (2021-2025).

For example, a 2020 external meta-analysis of findings from 30 external evaluations of projects¹⁸ published between 2015-2019 found that factors influencing the successful outcome of **prevention** projects include investing in the skills of front-line/community facilitators and



By the end of 2020, the percentage of grants awarded to WROs had **DOUBLED OVER THE 5-YEAR PERIOD:**

FROM **33%** in 2016
TO **60%** in 2020



By 2020 **94%** of the CSOs/WROs funded were **women-led**

community members; engaging men and boys; context-tailored interventions; survivor-centred project design; mid-course project adaptations to address any obstacles identified; and a gender transformative approach designed from the ground up. For instance, through the work and support of **136 UN Trust Fund grantees, 22,432 community and faith group leaders** advocated publicly for changes in behaviours, practices and attitudes towards ending VAW/G, including harmful practices, from 2017-2020. The evaluation also found that the three-year limit on project funding needed to be revisited in order to enable projects to effect changes in some of the deep-seated norms that underpin VAW/G.

Regarding projects with a component addressing the need to expand access to **multisectoral services**, a total of 158,736 women and girls directly benefited from essential, specialist services provided by UN Trust Fund grantees between 2017¹⁹ and 2020. The services, provided most frequently by WROs, were long-term psychological counselling, medical care, shelters, SOS helplines and legal aid.

The 2020 meta-analysis of evaluations of projects to **strengthen the implementation of laws**, policies and national action plans underscored that planning and focus were key to successful

engagement strategies. It also identified the need to expand the focus to include building political will in relation to specific actions and the alignment of national legislative and policy frameworks with international standards.

The urgent need for locally based services rooted in feminist principles has been particularly evident in relation to groups of women and girls experiencing intersecting and multiple forms of oppression and discrimination, including women and girls living with disabilities, those living in poverty in both urban and rural areas, internally displaced and refugee women, indigenous women and members of religious or ethnic minorities. Therefore, in tandem with the three priority areas, support was also increasingly geared towards responding to the need to leave no one behind by focusing on groups facing intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalization.

The UN Trust Fund established two thematic funding windows to address the needs of specific groups during the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan period. The special windows were focused on women and girls living with disabilities, and refugee and internally displaced women and girls in humanitarian contexts. At least 75 projects supported by the UN Trust Fund in 2020 focused on those who have historically been marginalized.

OVER THE COURSE OF 2016-2020,
UN Trust Fund grantees reached at least:



111,069
REFUGEE AND
INTERNALLY DISPLACED
women and girls;



47,823
INDIGENOUS
women;



67,439
women and girls
LIVING WITH
DISABILITIES;



and at least
16,421
LESBIAN, BISEXUAL
AND TRANSGENDER
WOMEN.

Annual Partner Surveys have also shown steady progress during the Strategic Plan 2016-2020 in key areas. One of the metrics used by the UN Trust Fund to assess its success as more than just a funder and in ensuring sustainability for grantees' work is the extent to which grantees felt able to secure additional funding in the wake of UN Trust Fund support. The percentage of all respondents to the Annual Partner Surveys who reported confidence that securing a UN Trust Fund grant would enable their organization to mobilize additional resources for current or future projects to end VAW/G rose from 82 per cent in 2016 to 92 per cent in 2020. The Annual Partner Surveys also showed that the percentage of grantees reporting that they had secured additional funding for UN Trust Fund supported projects rose from 46 per cent in 2017 to 58 per cent in 2020.

5.2. Preventing violence against women and girls

During the course of the Strategic Plan 2016-2020, the UN Trust Fund invested **USD47 million** in projects that solely or partly focused on preventing VAW/G. The majority of grantees engaged in prevention projects were WROs, which are also a strategic focus of UN Trust Fund investment.

Grantees work on the entire range of prevention and response activities relating to violence against girls in and around schools. For example, since 2016, as a result of the work of **71 grantees, 1,443 schools** have improved their curricula or implemented policies, practices or services to prevent and respond to VAW/G (including extracurricular school activities). However, this area of work was particularly affected by the closure of educational institutions in response to COVID-19 in

2020. With schools, community centres and other venues closed, CSOs/WROs like Sonke Gender Justice in South Africa, along with its implementing partners, the Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse and MOSAIC Training Services and Healing Centre for Women, adapted during COVID-19 and identified alternative locations for their programmes, such as soup kitchens.

Despite the additional challenges created by COVID-19 and the measures introduced to contain it, grantees achieved considerable results during 2020.

Colombia: Corporación Con-Vivamos

“Those of us who are born or identify ourselves as women can recognize that poverty has a woman’s face.”

A young Afro-Colombian woman from Buenaventura, who is a beneficiary of Corporación Con-Vivamos project.

UN Trust Fund grantee Corporación Con-Vivamos is implementing a project, together with its co-implementing partners, in Medellín, Colombia, with diverse groups of women and girls. The project works to develop studies, surveys and facilitate meetings in public and educational spaces to challenge sexist behaviour and attitudes and to help young people understand and lead transformative changes. The project is implemented in different parts of the country by five partner organizations (Centro de Formación y Empoderamiento Ambulua, Centro de Promoción y Cultura CPC, Corporación de Mujeres Eco-feministas Comunitar, Funsarep and Oxfam Colombia).

With the outbreak of COVID-19, Corporación Con-Vivamos noted that local women and girls faced growing difficulties. It logged a 553 per cent increase in reports of VAW/G categorized as emergencies. The lockdown also forced many girls to suspend their education and

take on unpaid care work, exposing them to higher rates of domestic and other violence, as well as more obstacles to pursuing higher education and training. In response, Corporación Con-Vivamos radically adapted its methods to deliver key training services virtually. It also prioritized maintaining contact with beneficiaries through daily phone calls to identify their needs, refer them to relevant services and provide psychological care. Additionally, Corporación Con-Vivamos offered digital literacy spaces and facilities so that women and girl survivors and those at risk of violence could access prevention and care support. The organization managed to maintain its crucial collaboration with feminist organizations, enabling continuous monitoring of VAW/G, which in turn facilitated recording holistic data, including the phenomena that exacerbated violence during the pandemic.

“Each investigative, monitoring and care management is conducted without harm... It [takes into account] non-revictimization, the autonomy and right of the victims to decide; the need to undertake pedagogical actions for their empowerment; and resources to meet their immediate needs.”

Clara Ortiz, Corporación Con-Vivamos’ General Director and Legal Representative

Tunisia: Association Femme et Citoyenneté

Association Femme et Citoyenneté (AFC), a small women-led organization, runs the Manara Center – the only centre for women survivors of all forms of violence in the Northwestern region of Tunisia. The project implemented by the AFC focuses on increasing the knowledge and competences of service providers on preventing and responding to domestic violence. In addition, AFC builds on expertise from previous interventions, including the Manara project, which was funded by the UN Trust Fund and implemented by CIDEAL and AFC between 2016 and 2018.

Despite the impact of COVID-19, the AFC-led project was able to make progress in achieving project objectives. Four trainers were recruited and had started to deliver training by the end of the year. Between 1 December 2019 and 30 November 2020, the Manara Center provided support to 285 survivors

of domestic violence and 153 new beneficiaries went through the listening service where their safety and needs were evaluated. Six women survivors were able to access emergency shelter. More than half of the 153 new beneficiaries were referred to social services, health care services and the justice system, indicating progress in intersectional coordination and the growing confidence of these institutional service providers in AFC.

Malaysia: Persatuan Sahabat Wanita, Selangor

An initiative by Persatuan Sahabat Wanita, Selangor (Friends of Women Organization, Selangor) in Malaysia focuses on addressing the rising problem of harassment of women workers, particularly undocumented migrant and domestic workers, who are at heightened risk of all forms of gender-based violence.

Some activities could not be carried out as planned during 2020 because the impact of the COVID-19

An awareness raising session regarding land documentation for women at risk of displacement and harassment in Bangladesh.

Credit: Badabon Sangho



pandemic required the grantee to adapt some initiatives, deliver some virtually and postpone others. Nevertheless, despite the challenges, during the year progress was made in some key project areas, including: the development of an app that will be ready for testing in early 2021 to report abuses and provide information; gathering and analysing baseline data, using responses from 100 women; disseminating information relating to sexual harassment, including launching a video on sexual harassment on Facebook during the 16 Days of Activism, which was widely viewed; and training 15 domestic worker leaders during a short lifting of the ban on gatherings due to COVID-19.

The grantee also provided relief to those most at risk during the pandemic and 60 families received emergency aid.

Philippines: Solidarity of Oppressed Filipino People Inc

A project implemented by Solidarity of Oppressed Filipino People Inc (SOFP) focuses on sexual harassment in public places in the Philippines, building on the New Urban Agenda, Sustainable Development Goals 5.2 and 11 and a previous UN Women project on Safe Cities.

The impact of COVID-19 meant that face-to-face events moved online. Organizers reached out to help equip participants to engage online, for example lending out smartphones to join orientations. Following these activities, parents and community members approached SOFP and community organizers to report violence against their daughters and 45 participants from four rural and urban communities expressed greater awareness of sexual harassment in public places and have pledged their support to end VAW/G in their communities. So far, the project has reached 40 adolescents, 23 young people, 22 adults and six elderly women. In addition, 81 barangay officials, transport groups and boys have taken part in orientation activities and seminars. Over 100 young people, who have taken part in relevant training on sexual harassment in public places and theatre advocacy, initiated the formation of a Safe Cities Youth Theatre Advocacy Group.

5.3. Access to services

Under this pillar of work, the UN Trust Fund supports projects to improve women and girls' access to specialized support services, including psychological counselling, medical services and



SINCE 2017, AT LEAST

158,736

WOMEN AND GIRLS
have accessed specialist
support services through UN
Trust Fund grantees

shelters, as well as access to justice through the provision of legal aid.

Training service providers is also an important component of projects seeking to enhance access to essential, safe and adequate services for women and girls.

Since 2017, at least 23,089 service providers around the world have improved their provision of services, supported by UN Trust Fund grantees.

Ensuring access to essential and adequate services was a cornerstone of many grantees' COVID-19 response plans in 2020. Specifically, grantees reached 72,629 rights holders/beneficiaries with food, hygiene supplies, sanitation and/or with other

emergency need parcels in order to ensure the stability of the project and reach those who were most marginalized and at risk. In addition, grantees took action to provide immediate support such as cash-based or in-kind assistance, to ensure the survival of beneficiaries. Grantees rapidly adapted their service provision in light of the pandemic. For example, in Chad, the Public Interest Law Center created a temporary shelter, beyond its permanent counselling centres, to provide additional support for women in need. In the State of Palestine, the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development, advocated for transitional shelters, where women could quarantine before entering shelters, in accordance with COVID-19 regulations.

Results in 2020 on ensuring access to services for women and girl survivors of violence, in the context of COVID-19, included important adaptations and responses from grantees globally.

State of Palestine: Stars of Hope

Stars of Hope (SHS), an association run by women with disabilities for women with disabilities, is implementing a project in the West Bank and Gaza in the State of Palestine in collaboration with Al Marsad, an organization of academics and researchers. The project focuses on marginalized communities in refugee camps, Area C territories and Bedouin communities.

COVID-19 initially impacted planned outreach and awareness-raising activities, mainly due to the quarantine and restrictions on movement and assembly. However, the organization rose to the challenge in a number of ways, including providing capacity building for focal points, who were able to document 10 cases of violence reported by women with disabilities aged 25 to 59 during the year.

“We created a monitoring system for the status of girls and women with disabilities living in the COVID-19 emergency, including evaluating the economic, medical and education situations and the linkage of all these factors to the discrimination and violence against women with disabilities. We have surveyed 850 women living with disabilities – by phone by SHS ‘focal points’ who are women with disabilities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.”

Rihab Abu Hashish, Programs Manager and Amneh Badawneh, Referral and Documentation Officer for SHS describing the response to the crisis situation.

Based on the priorities expressed by women and girls living with disabilities, SHS implemented a set of planned and new responsive actions. These included: communicating with officials and networking with emergency committees to include women with disabilities on these committees; organizing online awareness-raising workshops and peer-to-peer sessions for girls and women with disabilities; providing individual and group psychological support services to SHS fieldworkers and beneficiaries; launching relevant COVID-19 media awareness campaigns on SHS's Facebook page; and raising awareness among women with disabilities about the pandemic via phone calls.

“SHS has gained a deep understanding of the needs of women and girls with disabilities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, particularly in the COVID-19 situation. The generated data has enriched SHS's database, provided reliable evidence for any planned advocacy and influenced action in relation to the levels of COVID-19 as well as emergency and disability-gender mainstreaming.



Through our position papers, SHS has strengthened its position as an influential women-led organization for people with disabilities. The COVID-19 situation has allowed SHS to provide evidence of the deliberate exclusion and marginalization of women and girls with disabilities at all levels, particularly the gender-based violence level.”

Staff member of SHS

Albania: Woman Forum Elbasan

In Albania, Woman Forum Elbasan responded immediately to the COVID-19 pandemic both in terms of supporting staff, who were able to work from home, and in adapting their services for survivors of domestic violence. The adaptations included providing telephone and hotline services to replace face-to-face counselling and psychological support for survivors of violence and redirecting flexible financial support from the UN Trust Fund to distribute food baskets to survivors of violence struggling to access food and other basic necessities.

The grantee also used social media to raise awareness about COVID-19 prevention measures and to disseminate crucial social and legal information almost daily for survivors of domestic violence, including children. In 2020, the organization’s counselling centre provided 1,258 psychological counselling sessions; its advocates studio provided 816 legal counselling sessions; and 38 women with 38 children were housed in its emergency shelter.

Photo taken during a march against violence with youth, students and community members to promote women rights in Albania (photo taken before COVID-19).

Credit: Gertjana Hasalla/Woman Forum Elbasan





Costa Rica: Cenderos

A project implemented in Costa Rica by Cenderos with a small grant from the UN Trust Fund seeks to prevent violence against women and girls from Nicaragua who are at risk of or who have experienced gender-based violence. So far, 505 migrant women have received psychosocial aid and information through 36 coffee afternoons in seven communities; 271 refugee applicants were provided with shelter; and 10 women at risk of femicide were placed in a safehouse administered by Cenderos.

In addition, 30 women migrants and asylum-seekers stated that, with the aid of Cenderos, they now feel safe in community spaces and have found support within women's collectives to help them cope with their living conditions. To ensure the sustainability of the project's impacts, 16 women migrants and asylum-seekers were trained as community promoters. In addition, 81 participants received leadership training and made a commitment to lead activities to protect and welcome women in situations of violence.

Mongolia: National Center Against Violence

Although Mongolia has legal provision for access to justice and services for women and girls with disabilities, no shelter or support services in the country are accessible to them. A project by the National Center Against Violence (NCAV),

a small woman-led organization, is using a UN Trust Fund grant to pilot a model shelter in Ulaanbaatar for survivors of violence with inclusive services which are accessible to women and girls with disabilities. A temporary shelter with capacity for 20 survivors of violence has been fully equipped to meet the needs of women and girls with disabilities and a training manual for personnel at the shelter has been developed. In addition, a support group has been organized to accompany the training programme.

Budget revisions for the project were agreed with the UN Trust Fund to address challenges posed by COVID-19, including covering the cost of enabling children's e-learning and access to information online. The NCAV also helped maintain services by influencing the government to be included in the list of organizations working during a strict quarantine. The helpline service therefore worked 24/7 providing counselling, as did shelter services. In addition, services were provided in 12 cases of violence against women and girls with disabilities, including security protection, social work services, child protection services, psychological counselling, legal counselling and health care.

Iraq: Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq

The project implemented by the OWFI focuses on women and girls at heightened risk of violence because of mass displacement, the role of violent militias and religious extremists, the lack of legal accountability and the inaccessibility of existing state services. Many police and government policies are creating additional barriers for survivors of violence in accessing justice and services, such as the refusal to issue ID papers for women survivors of trafficking unless they are accompanied by a male relative.



A sports team supported by OWFI in Iraq for youth involved in the project.

Credit: Sura Laith/OWFI

Mina²⁰ is 23 years old and from Hawija city, which was under ISIS occupation for four years. She tried to escape with her two children, but was caught by ISIS fighters and held for over a month, during which time she was repeatedly raped. After the city was liberated from ISIS control, Mina was unable to go back to her family or her husband's house as they rejected her. After many visits and meetings with the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI) and receiving support from them, Mina now feels strong enough to share her story with other survivors and is helping OWFI open a shelter in a Kirkuk suburb where she can help other survivors of ISIS violence regain their dignity and well-being.

Despite these challenges, OWFI achieved the project objectives for the year. Among these were serving 68 women and girls in shelters/safe groups, 31 of whom were new referrals. Nine women obtained IDs through OWFI support and seven women and their four children accessed health services. Fourteen of the 16 women in

Baghdad shelters surveyed reportedly felt safer as a result of project activities.

"We cannot believe that we escaped such a medieval and backward dungeon to come to such a pleasant place that respects us".

Nada, aged 15

"I feel that I've just started my childhood life in the safe shelter provided by the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq as I was not allowed a carefree childhood before. I never experienced this feeling amid my family. Thank you to OWFI for making me live the innocent childhood all over again but in a peaceful environment".

Rashia, aged 18

Sisters Nada and Rashia²¹ and their 12-year-old sister were supported at the OWFI shelter. They had been living in one of the suburbs of the religious city of Najaf where they were imprisoned and subjected to beatings by their mother and brother. One of OWFI's youth supporters met them and contacted OWFI staff, explaining that the girls were at risk of violence if they stayed there. A senior member of staff at OWFI drove to where the girls were and after speaking to them brought them to the shelter.

The project employed a number of strategies to improve the safety, security and agency of women. These include expanding OWFI's shelter and safe house services, expanding the network of allies and advocates, as well as providing protection and response services for survivors of violence. Training and mentorship to assist survivors' reintegration is another important aspect of the project. The grantee also raises awareness of VAW/G and works to strengthen relationships with the Ministries of Health, Justice and the Interior, which are responsible for providing essential services to victims of violence.



5.4. Implementing laws and policies

Since 2017, UN Trust Fund grantees have supported at least 1,373 local, sub-national or national government institutions to improve their effectiveness in preventing and responding to VAW/G. In addition, during that time, at least 133

policies or protocols on VAW/G have been developed or improved at various institutional levels.

Many grantees reported facing challenges in ensuring WROs were included in COVID-19 response planning in 2020. For rights holders, physical mobility restrictions in response to COVID-19, such as in access to public transport, made it more difficult for women to escape violence, and to seek help, support and justice.

“Owing to the movement restrictions, women and girls are forced to stay at home with their abusers, with no avenues to seek safe shelter... resources have [been] diverted from the routine health services, further reducing the already limited access to sexual and reproductive health services for many young girls and women.”

Wangechi Wachira, Executive Director of Centre for Rights Education and Awareness in Kenya

Nevertheless, grantees, did make progress in this area during the year and the following describes some of their achievements.

Kenya: Centre for Rights Education and Awareness

In Kenya, the Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW), a women-led, feminist organization, is leading a project to strengthen implementation of laws and policies relating to gender-based violence. Before the pandemic, the project had reached the target number of beneficiaries: 640 adolescents (aged 10-19); 787 young women (aged 20-24); 1,370 women (aged 25-59); and 1,427 women and girl survivors of violence.




A facilitator leading a training in Narok county, Kenya as part of the project from CREAM.

Credit: CREAM

The grantee reached 262 government officials who are part of the multisectoral service mechanism and 32 parliamentarians. A survey found that following the intervention, 38 per cent of service providers reported having the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to respond to the needs of survivors of VAW/G, compared to a baseline of 24.7 per cent at the start of the project. The project also reached 3,819 community based-groups/members, of

whom 52 per cent reported improved skills and knowledge on gender equality and non-violence.

As a result of the pandemic, the organization has had to change its working methods. Among the adjustments to its work introduced were: intensifying the dissemination of information on COVID-19 and VAW/G via community radio, mass SMS messaging and digital communications materials; working with community activists to build networks of referrals and case



documentation; and providing a toll-free hotline and psychosocial counselling and legal support online. In addition, CREAM and six other grassroots organizations in Kenya have written to the authorities calling for inclusive and gender-sensitive national responses to COVID-19. Their demands include the mainstreaming of gender in essential services and additional funds for preventing and responding to gender-based violence such as shelters for women and girl survivors of violence.

Moldova: Help Age International

Help Age International implemented a project in Moldova from 2017-2020 which worked to make older women survivors of gender-based violence feel safer.

An evaluation of the project found that it exceeded its target by nearly threefold, reaching 512 women and girl survivors of violence through individual and group counselling, as well as through diverse outreach activities. In addition, 2,510 older women and girls at risk of violence benefited from different outreach activities and 12,033 women and girls in eight communities benefited from its awareness raising campaigns. The number of secondary beneficiaries also exceeded targets with 359 members of 32 district multidisciplinary teams and 26 representatives of Centres for Assistance and Protection receiving training on preventing, identifying and addressing violence against older women.

The feedback from people who participated in the evaluation process indicated that the project was and remains “highly relevant” and “extremely needed for older women at risk of violence and survivors”. In addition, through the project, Help Age International provided key recommendations for integrating the needs of older women survivors into the National Strategy on preventing and combating violence against women and violence in the family for 2018-2023 and its Implementation Plan for 2018-2020.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Center of Women’s Rights

A project implemented by the Center of Women’s Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina is working to improve protection mechanisms for survivors of intimate partner violence.

The grantee took initial steps in creating alliances with relevant professionals; during COVID-19 initial communication and preparations were conducted by telephone and email. Preparatory activities were undertaken to organize seminars for judges and prosecutors, including obtaining the necessary approvals, disseminating plans and working to organize seminars with participants in the Multisectoral Working Group and the Expert Group that are being convened.



An informational and educational seminar taking place in Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Center of Women's Rights during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Credit: Selma Badzic/Center of Women's Rights

“For women, [lockdown] means that they have to stay in home with a violent partner... There is no on-duty service officer to whom women and those exposed to violence can turn for help. There is no one to monitor what happens after the dark.”

Meliha Sendic, President of the Center of Women's Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, speaking at a virtual conference convened by the UN Trust Fund to discuss the impact on global systems to prevent and end VAW/G attended by 280 representatives of CSOs/WROs, civil society actors, donors, government development agencies and UN partners from around the globe.

This led to an important achievement: for the first time since the establishment of the Judicial and Prosecutorial Training Centre, the seminar on changing attitudes and perceptions of judges and prosecutors was included in the regular Annual Training Programme of Judges and Prosecutors. In addition, the Centre drafted and submitted a proposed amendment to the law on protection from domestic violence.

6. EVIDENCE HUB

Lessons from practice-based knowledge and learning

To improve global efforts to end VAW/G, lessons on what worked and what did not must be effectively monitored and shared. To this end, a key pillar of the UN Trust Fund 2016-2020 Strategic Plan was to build a global Evidence and Learning Hub.

Over the past five years, the UN Trust Fund team has sought to collect and disseminate practice-based knowledge and lessons learned from the work of its grantees. It has achieved this through support on evaluation management, promotion of national evaluation capacities, as well as periodic analysis across the work of grantees. In 2020, the UN Trust Fund published a milestone 100+ evaluations on its [Evaluation Library](#), which constitutes a significant evidence base on ending VAW/G developed by practitioners and national consultants on projects going back 10 years, with UN Trust Fund funding and support.

An External Meta-Analysis of the evaluations was commissioned by the UN Trust Fund, and findings from 30 high quality external evaluations of projects concluded that “almost half the projects in the sample reported some impact and observed reductions in violence against women and girls”²² and that all projects showed some evidence of progress towards the precursors to ending VAW/G, such as improving the awareness of women and girls about their rights and their agency to exercise their rights to live a life free of violence.

In addition, the study found that “data from UN Trust Fund projects constitute a valuable resource both for those interested in advancing knowledge in the field of ending violence against women and girls and for practitioners to learn from other hands-on experiences”.

It also found that: “UN Trust Fund projects have adopted various effective strategies to shift harmful social norms related to VAW/G, but some deep-seated norms remain hard to shift within three years”. It recommended that the UN Trust Fund “consider providing funding for longer projects – at least four years, in recognition of the time needed for social norms change”.²³

One successful step towards this has been the UN Trust Fund’s special “invitation only” funding modality, through which a selection of current and previous grantees were invited to submit a second proposal with the potential for replicating or scaling up their projects, on the basis of rigorous evidence-based results, which would extend the project period to up to six years. While it is too early to assess the full impact of this modality (it will be assessed as part of the final evaluation of the previous Strategic Plan), the External Mid Term Review concluded that the modality has been “well received” by partners.

Highlighted results from the Evaluation Hub during the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan

Two external meta-analyses of evaluation findings from UN Trust Fund projects, one in 2016 and the second in 2020,²⁴ found that significant results had been achieved under the three outcome areas. The 2020 meta-analysis found that the majority of UN Trust Fund projects in the sample analysed implemented work across two, if not all three of the outcome areas.

The UN Trust Fund supported grantees to manage gender-responsive, final, external project evaluations during the Strategic Plan period of 2016-2020 to improve the quality of project evaluations to ensure that organizations:

- deliver long-lasting results, sustained by evidence;
- qualify for future funding of a diverse portfolio of donors; and
- prioritize organizational learning and strengthen evaluation management capacity.

The following are examples of results from published evaluations:

In India, the incidence of child marriage fell by 50 per cent in the Jeevikka operation area (24 districts) by 2020 during a project implemented by UN Trust Fund grantee, the Sahayog Society for Participatory Rural Development. Physical violence within the household fell from 71.1 per cent to 46.5 per cent by the end of the project.

Kvinna till Kvinna implemented a project from 2017-2020 in Beirut and Bekaa, Lebanon, including in refugee camps. The project worked to strengthen partners' organizational and service delivery capacities through training, staff care, stress management, resource development and working with men and women; and created referral networks.

The evaluation found that both partner organizations, KAFA and Association NAJDEH, ensured that gender-sensitive and human rights-centred approaches were applied in their interventions, including by respecting local customs and belief systems.

NAJDEH's protection and referral networks were tailored to the environment of the camps in which they operated and built trust with women survivors and those at risk of gender-based violence, as well as with men; 100 per cent of NAJDEH and 97 per cent of KAFA beneficiaries said that the assistance they received improved their life, including through positive changes in men's behaviour.

In total, through UN Trust Fund grantees, 373,122 women and girls demonstrated knowledge of at least one available and accessible service that could provide help in cases of VAW/G, over the course of the Strategic Plan 2016-2020.

Cluster Evaluation of three UN Trust Fund-supported projects in North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia

In 2020, the UN Trust Fund continued its investment in small grants evaluation capacity. Rigorous, external evaluation practices can come at a significant cost and require expertise and resources that may be out of reach for smaller, local organizations. Consequently, the UN Trust Fund is encouraging lower cost practice-based learning that brings practitioners, researchers and donors together and encourages donors to help bridge the gap between cutting edge evaluation methodologies and limited evaluation capacity.

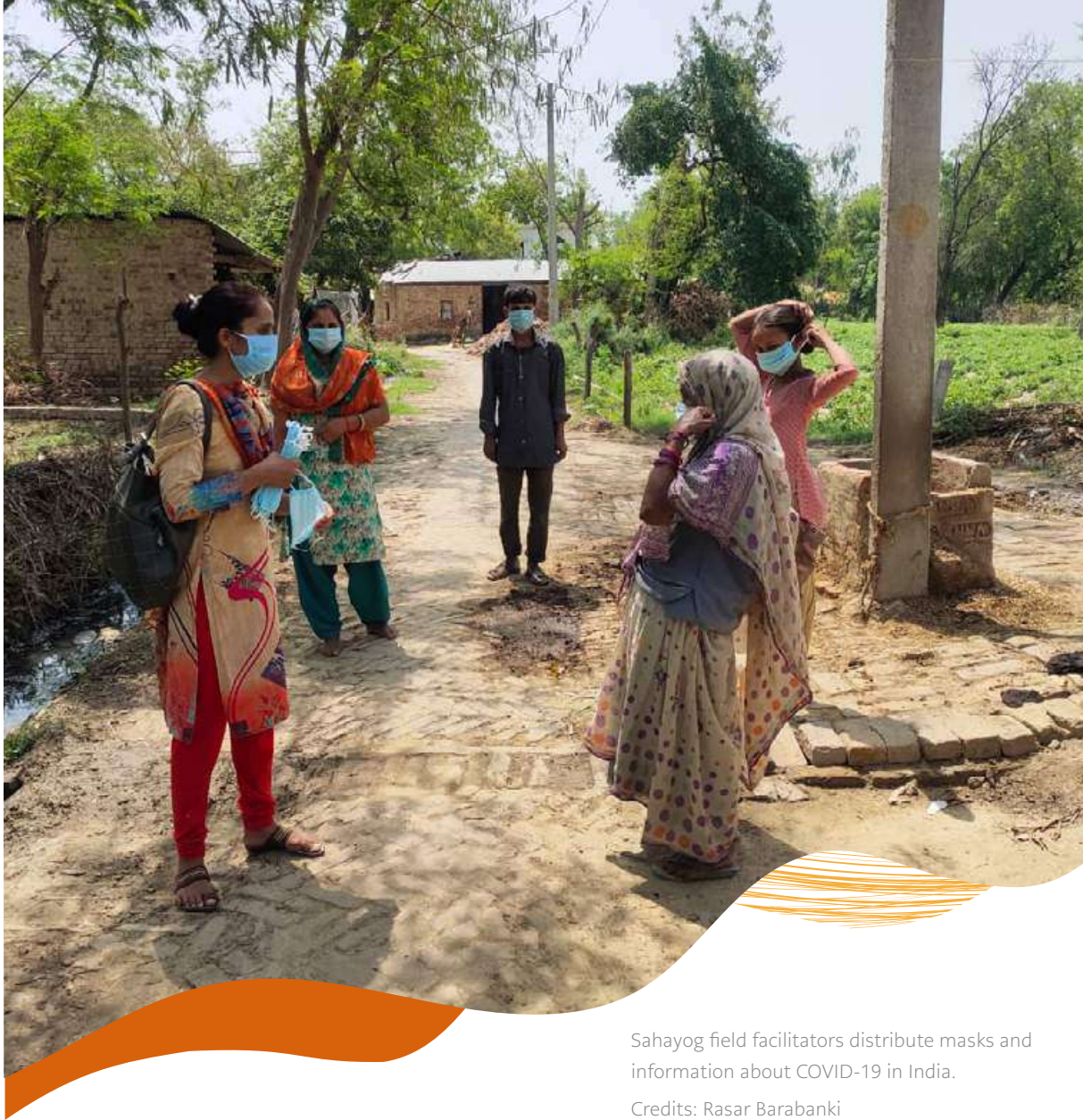
In 2019, the UN Trust Fund began strategically selecting for evaluation a few projects funded by grants of less than USD150,000, providing direct support to help manage the process. In the first year, it worked with two grantees running projects in Nigeria and Solomon Islands. In its second year, that is in 2020, the UN Trust Fund commissioned a cluster evaluation of three small grant projects implemented in Europe and Central Asia.

Small grants have the specific focus of seeking to enable the UN Trust Fund to extend its reach among small women-led CSOs as their administrative and organizational capacities have been particularly impacted by the historically low level of funding allocated to initiatives to end VAW/G. It is, therefore, particularly important that their experiences be included in the Evidence Hub.

The three grantees evaluated as part of the cluster evaluation in 2020 were: the Center for Girls in Serbia, whose project focused on prevention; the Women's Forum–Tetovo in Montenegro, which combined campaigning with supporting survivors; and SOS Hotline for Woman and Children Victims of Violence, Njasic, in Macedonia, which also combined campaigning with supporting survivors and coordinating essential services.

The evaluation found that some interventions were innovative and greatly helped to achieve results, including door-to-door campaigning in northern Montenegro; providing awareness-raising initiatives, legal support, economic empowerment and self-help support to women survivors of violence in Tetovo region, Montenegro; and peer-led workshops with girls in high school in Serbia.

Project designs were based on in-depth knowledge about diverse stakeholder groups, particularly women and girls as primary beneficiaries. The findings showed that the projects enhanced protection services and improved systems for responding to VAW/G through multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms, enhanced the capacity of professionals and led to better service standards.



Sahayog field facilitators distribute masks and information about COVID-19 in India.

Credits: Rasar Barabanki

In addition to supporting evaluations, in 2020, for the first time in its history, the UN Trust Fund also began a process of convening practitioners and researchers with the specific aim of raising practice-based knowledge on the hows and whys of ending VAW/G, and introduce this into a conversation about what works, starting first with prevention. Through a deep dive into its evaluation and monitoring reports and a parallel process of consultations with 250+ current and former grantees, in English, French and Spanish, the UN Trust Fund is currently synthesizing the evidence generated over the past five-year Strategic Plan into 10 knowledge briefs on preventing VAW/G. Each brief draws on the knowledge of and is co-created by 10 grantees and a senior researcher. The entire series of briefs is scheduled to launch in November 2021 and aims to contribute to the global body of knowledge around addressing VAW/G, which will in turn contribute to designing and implementing better VAW/G interventions.

Looking to the future, the UN Trust Fund will be analysing the contribution grantees make to women's / feminist movements locally and nationally as well as how grantees have organisationally and programmatically adapted to COVID-19 that can provide lessons for future ending VAW/G work especially in times of crisis.

7. NEW STRATEGIC CYCLE 2021-2025

The new UN Trust Fund Strategic Plan 2021-2025 provides a framework to guide its work over the next five years. It sets out priorities identified and validated by key stakeholders through an extensive consultation process which was undertaken during 2020 as was the conceptualization and core work on the new Strategic Plan. It also aligns with and directly contributes to key UN inter-agency initiatives, UN Joint Programmes, UN Women's work on ending VAW/G and its upcoming Strategic Plan.

CSOs, especially WROs, play an essential leadership role in initiatives to end VAW/G around the world and in delivering essential support services to survivors of violence. The strength of WROs – and feminist movements as a whole – is a key factor in driving positive change to end VAW/G. The UN Secretary-General recognized CSOs, and especially WROs, in the Beijing Platform for Action Review (2020) as key actors in advancing gender equality and ending VAW/G and called on Member States to support this role, including through funding.

A key element in delivering the SDG Agenda and the principle of “leaving no one behind” is an intersectional approach to VAW/G, also grounding the Strategic Plan.

The UN Trust Fund Strategic Plan 2021-2025 is grounded in feminist principles and based on the following core values: that the UN Trust Fund's work will continue to be led and informed by women's experiences and civil society efforts to end VAW/G, fully recognizing the agency of women and survivors; that it will be guided by the expertise and knowledge generated by CSOs/WROs; and that it will be implemented through mutually enabling relationships with key stakeholders.

The UN Trust Fund's long-term vision is of a world of global solidarity in which all women and girls live free from all forms of violence and enjoy and exercise their human rights.

To help achieve this vision, the UN Trust Fund's mission over the next five years will be to enable CSOs, especially WROs and those representing the most marginalized groups, to play a central role in delivering survivor-centred and demand-driven initiatives and to support their programmes to achieve sustainable impact on ending VAW/G in a manner that contributes to global solidarity, partnerships and stronger, inclusive feminist movements.

In order to contribute to these aspirations over the next five years, the UN Trust Fund will engage in principled, demand-driven grant giving and capacity development. This will ensure that more CSOs and WROs are enabled by the UN Trust Fund through long-term and flexible funding to implement initiatives to end VAW/G, coupled with programmatic and organizational support for sustainability and resilience.

Since 2017, the UN Trust Fund has provided grants solely to CSOs and over the next five years its grant selection process will continue to progressively prioritize WROs, women and girl-led organizations, CSOs/WROs with local or community-level reach and those with an ability to ensure projects to end VAW/G have an impact on the most marginalized women and girls and those experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination.

The UN Trust Fund will also continue to foster collaborative and inclusive knowledge production, exchange and learning. It will assist the UN system and key partners to be more informed by knowledge produced by CSOs/WROs and practice-based learning on efforts to end VAW/G, as well as knowledge and evaluations funded or co-produced by the UN Trust Fund.

Partnerships, advocacy and resource mobilization will remain central. Stakeholders will be mobilized

to advocate for more flexible and long-term funding for CSOs/WROs and to amplify their voices to inform the programmatic, policy and funding decisions of the UN system, UN Member States and beyond.

By providing CSOs and WROs with long-term and more flexible funding, coupled with programmatic and operational support during the grant implementation period that is appropriate to meet demand-driven needs, the UN Trust Fund will deepen its commitment to responsible and sustainable grant-giving, aiming to inspire a higher level of grant-giving standards and responsiveness to civil society needs.

Initiatives will continue to be funded under three broad programmatic thematic areas: (1) improved access for women and girls to essential, specialist, safe and adequate multisectoral services; (2) increased effectiveness of legislation, policies, national action plans and accountability; and (3) improved prevention of VAW/G through changes in behaviours, practices and attitudes.

The UN Trust Fund is uniquely able to influence these outcomes as a UN-system wide, global, grant-giving mechanism that focuses on all forms of VAW/G and that prioritizes funding for CSOs and WROs. As a UN inter-agency mechanism, and in partnership with a range of partners (inside and outside the UN system), the UN Trust Fund will continue to play a key convening role and contribute to advancing global solidarity for transformative action to end VAW/G.

8. EU/UN SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE

The EU/UN Spotlight Initiative has partnered with the UN Trust Fund to support projects to end VAW/G in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. The specific central focus of this collaboration is strengthening and supporting women's rights groups and autonomous civil society organizations (Outcome 6 of the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative Theory of Change).²⁵ Grant-making under this partnership has covered single-country and multi-country projects across 15 countries in sub-Saharan Africa – Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Ghana, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe – and five countries in Latin America – Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico.

In 2019 and 2020, the UN Trust Fund cumulatively awarded **USD24 million in direct grants to 55 CSOs/WROs in 25 countries** in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa. Of these, 35 grants were awarded in 2019.

In 2020, additional resources of USD9.1 million were allocated to 44 CSOs/WROs in sub-Saharan Africa for their organizational resilience in the context of the COVID-19 Response Framework (24 existing EU/UN Spotlight grantees and 20 additional UN Trust Fund grantees). Of this amount, USD0.5 million was allocated to create a practitioner-based online platform to enhance knowledge exchange on the intersection of crisis response, organizational resilience and ending VAW/G. The UN Trust Fund also responded to the needs of EU/UN Spotlight Initiative grantees in Latin America by promptly ensuring access for all 11 grantees to budget reallocations to implement targeted response activities.

8.1. Key results

In total, **27,264,407 people** were reached by UN Trust Fund grantees funded under the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative in 2020. The initially selected 35 projects **directly benefited at least 85,219 women and girls with life changing services and prevention activities** and reached **25,312,951 people**, through initiatives such as awareness campaigns.

Snapshot of UN Trust Fund grantees under the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative



52 of the 55

grantees are **women-led** and/or WROs and 93% of the overall funding was invested in WROs;



70% of funding went to national and grass-roots women's rights and women-led organizations;

OF THE INITIAL COHORT OF 35 GRANTEES, 33 ORGANIZATIONS WERE NEW PARTNERS.

In line with the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative's key principle of leaving no one behind, the organizations funded are working to **end VAW/G against women living with disabilities (16 grantees), indigenous women/women from minority ethnic groups (four grantees) and refugee and internally displaced women (11 grantees).**



In 2020, these grantees reached at least **9,066 indigenous women, 2,121 women and girls with disabilities and 804 refugee or internally displaced women and girls.**

In 2020, grantees provided direct and immediate support to women and girls in response to the impact of COVID-19. Grantees have reported that the infusion of resources for response to COVID-19 is strengthening their organizational resilience and crisis response. Grantees **reached 56,915 rights holders/beneficiaries with food, hygiene supplies, sanitary** and other emergency need parcels to ensure the stability of the project and reach those most marginalized and at risk. For example, in Côte d'Ivoire, a grantee distributed food packages to self-identified sex workers living with HIV who lost their income because of COVID-19 in order to ensure continued engagement with these beneficiaries.

Grantees also provided economic support to women and girls to mitigate the financial impacts of escalating VAW/G during the COVID-19 crisis. For example, in South Sudan a grantee trained 21 women and girls on producing face masks and reusable sanitary pads, thereby meeting local demand for both products and generating income that enabled them to recover financially during the pandemic.

In Honduras, a grantee partnered with a network of women's organizations, mobilizing the feminist movement, to raise awareness about increases in violence associated with lockdown measures. As a result of their consistent advocacy for an emergency law on VAW/G, the Honduras Parliament approved a new piece of legislation on emergency measures.

In Liberia, a grantee working on advocacy campaigns to prevent sexual and gender-based violence activated 10 women's groups which provide referrals in cases of violence, and 200 women in the groups have sensitized community residents on such violence. Twelve project communities developed community by-laws to prevent and protect women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence.

Grantees directed funds to ensure organizational resilience, including to enable remote working modalities. At least **515 staff/partners were enabled to work from home** effectively as a result of this funding. Several grantees also identified unintended positive consequences. For example, operating virtually enabled some organizations to reach more women and girls. Grantees intensified efforts to form alliances with civil society and community-based organizations to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on service and programmatic delivery. At least 19 grantees and co-implementing partners reported that they were able to fully maintain or even exceed service delivery in 2020.

In Nigeria, a grantee created three new toll-free hotlines for reporting violence. The hotlines, requested by women and girls with disabilities who experienced difficulty in reporting cases because of the lockdowns, were publicized through a weekly television programme, which reached at least 745,000 people. The grantee also enrolled all project staff in a health insurance plan to ensure access to medical treatment. This allowed 100 per cent of the interventions previously on hold because of COVID-19 to resume by the end of 2020.

A project implemented by the Rural Women Center for Education and Development in the North-West Region of Cameroon is working to foster partnerships with local CSOs to advocate against VAW/G and for women's leadership in decision-making. Through local advocacy, the project has so far achieved the inclusion of four women on a traditionally all-male 16-member council. The project has also reached 339 traditional/religious leaders, law enforcement and community-level actors to communicate about the root causes of VAW/G. After delivering training on human rights and sexual and reproductive health and rights once a week for three months, the grantee received 753 reports of violence, for which it is providing support services.

EWEI ending VAW/G expert, Rebecca Sako makes an input during a Technical Committee meeting in Nigeria.
Credit: Ibi Divine Doo/EWEI

Amplifying grantee voices

“This investment entails employing more long-term funding strategies [because] before real change can be realized, long-term funding is needed to allow community movements to become established.”

Gertrude Shumba, Executive Director of Family AIDS Caring Trust, Zimbabwe

“It is clear that the increased rate of violence against women and girls is a result of the effects of the pandemic. There have been increased reports of rape cases, including gang rape and child sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, intimate partner violence, domestic violence, [and] assaults by law enforcement agents, coupled with poor access to sexual and reproductive health care.”

Iheoma Obibi, Executive Director, Alliances for Africa

“Covid-19 challenged us to be innovative and devise new ways of working... At the end of the year, all team members were equipped with agile mindsets that were alive to the need for being flexible. Staff wellbeing therefore became an imperative and thanks to UNTF [UN Trust Fund] and our alliances as we were able to learn from different processes and training.”

Institute for Young Women Development in Zimbabwe





Hudaifa Hargeisa, an anti-FGM youth forum member participates in an awareness session for university students in Somaliland, Somalia.

Credit: Khalid/Candlelight/ISF

8.2. Innovation and promising or good practices

In the context of COVID-19, grantees increased virtual programming and thus the number of individuals reached. Many projects turned to virtual and radio modalities to reach women and girls with prevention programming and information on where and how to report violence.

For example, in Côte d'Ivoire, one grantee reached over 3.5 million individuals through a TV programme broadcast on the national channel in Abidjan. In Malawi, a grantee rolled out national awareness-raising campaigns through radio, TV and social media reaching at least 2 million individuals. And in Zimbabwe, a grantee reached 3.6 million people through a movement building project that engages and connects a number of WROs through TV, radio and social media.

8.3. Movement building

The importance of movement building was reinforced by EU/UN Spotlight Initiative grantees in interviews collected in early 2020. They highlighted how strong and empowering movements are crucial in equipping women and girls with the skills and confidence to demand and ensure their rights.

“Faced with the serious crisis in Mexico, working directly with girls, adolescents and women in the fight against violence becomes essential. The grant supports one of the main lines of work, which is the generation and strengthening of community networks for the protection of children and adolescents. Which means generating school community tools for timely detection from a human rights and gender perspective. This grant allows us to continue deepening the empowerment of girls and adolescents transforming their lives by being able to recognize situations of risk and child sexual abuse...

We also believe that the Spotlight grant is an opportunity to improve internally as an organization throughout the process of designing, planning, monitoring and following up on our projects. From our perspective, this grant represents the possibility of professionalizing ourselves in the work that we have done for several years.

We know that we have highly efficient and committed personnel in the field, but we need to improve in the field of project management, from its design, until its systematization. In the long term, this represents an important step to continue carrying out our work for the rights of girls, boys and adolescents.”

Mayra Rosalinda Rojas Rosas, Director, Infancia Comun A.C., Mexico

“To Bethany Project movement building with regards to this project is a process which consists of:

Building a critical mass of girls and young women to push an agenda in order to achieve a clearly defined outcome;

Mobilizing and equipping girls and young women on how to use their amplified voices to grab attention of decision makers so that they can influence them to come up with the desired change

Under this project we are therefore going to mobilize (build a critical mass) girls and young women then empower them (through mentoring, training, dialogues and peer to peer support) to report and raise awareness on sexual and gender-based violence they face, hold service providers to account and support survivors.”

Rebecca Gumbo, Project Director, Bethany Project, Zimbabwe

During 2020, the Bethany Project distributed dignity kits, including sanitary pads, for adolescent girls as well as setting up online community forums as safe spaces where girls could discuss sexual and gender-based violence to keep girls safe, healthy and well-informed so they could recognize, react and report incidents of violence. Eighty-eight girls and young women that could not be reached in person received information on sexual and gender-based violence via these online structures and four girls were referred to the Bethany Project for further support.



9. THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR PARTNERS!

As of December 2020, the following parties had contributed to the UN Trust Fund and its annual grant-giving:

- The Governments of **Australia, Austria, Canada, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.**
- **The Spotlight Initiative**, a joint effort of the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate violence against women and girls.
- Support was also received from the **UN Women National Committees of Australia, Austria, Germany, Iceland, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.**
- **Foundations and private sector partners included: Mary Kay Inc., Mary Kay Foundation, the United Nations Women for Peace Association, Conscious Step, Mahendi Projects, SOKO Inc., and the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund.**
- A special thank you to **UN Women Goodwill Ambassador Nicole Kidman.**

Thank you to all the individuals who contributed during the year.



ENDNOTES

- 1 The UN defines CSOs/WROs as non-state, not-for-profit, voluntary entities formed by people in the social sphere that are separate from the state and the market. In the context of the UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework, CSOs do not include business or for-profit associations.
- 2 In 2020, members of the Programme Advisory Committee at the global level included: the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; the United Nations Development Programme; the United Nations Population Fund; the United Nations Children's Fund; and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). It also included other experts at the global level, including representatives from the Centre for Women's Global Leadership, Equality Now, and the Sexual Violence Research Initiative.
- 3 World Health Organization, "Violence against women: Key facts", 9 March 2021, available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women#:~:text=A%202018%20analysis%20of%20prevalence,intimate%20partner%20or%20non%2Dpartner>
- 4 All beneficiary data in this report is self-reported data from grantees own project monitoring records
- 5 UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, Call for Proposals for Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa: *The EU/UN Spotlight Initiative: Theory of Change for Outcome 6*, available at: https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20untf/publications/2019/spotlight%20cfp%20docs/english/untfvaw_spotlight_annex%201_outcome6.pdf?la=en&vs=3542
- 6 World Health Organization, "Violence against women: Key facts", 9 March 2021, op. cit.
- 7 UN Trust Fund, *Impact of COVID-19 on violence against women and girls through the lens of civil society and women's rights organizations*, available at: https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20untf/publications/2020/external%20brief/external%20brief%20for%20publication%206%2019/impact%20of%20covid-19_v08_single%20page-compressed.pdf?la=en&vs=5117
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- 9 UN Women, *UN Trust Fund responds swiftly to COVID-19 crisis*, <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2020/04/un-trust-fund-responds-swiftly-to-covid-19-crisis>
- 10 UN Secretary-General report, *Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to socio-economic impacts of COVID-19*, March 2020, available at https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_report_socio-economic_impact_of_covid19.pdf

- 11 UN Women, *Inter-Agency statement on violence against women and girls in the context of COVID-19*, 24 June 2020, available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/6/statement-inter-agency-statement-on-violence-against-women-and-girls--in-the-context-of-covid-19>
- 12 Six months of global pandemic: UN Trust Fund assesses impact on violence against women and frontline organizations <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/09/six-months-of-global-pandemic-covid19-impact-on-violence-against-women-and-frontline-organizations>.
- 13 Six months of global pandemic: UN Trust Fund assesses impact on violence against women and frontline organizations <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/09/six-months-of-global-pandemic-covid19-impact-on-violence-against-women-and-frontline-organizations>
- 14 UN Trust Fund, *Impact of COVID-19 on violence against women and girls: Through the lens of civil society and women's rights organization*, op. cit. and *COVID-19 and the impact on civil society organizations (CSOs) working to end violence against women and girls: Part 2 – Six months on*, available at: <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/09/six-months-of-global-pandemic-covid19-impact-on-violence-against-women-and-frontline-organizations>
- 15 Inter-Agency statement on violence against women and girls in the context of COVID-19 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/6/statement-inter-agency-statement-on-violence-against-women-and-girls--in-the-context-of-covid-19>
- 16 UN Trust Fund , Stakeholder virtual discussion: “Impact of COVID-19 on the ecosystem of ending violence against women”, available at: <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/in-focus-covid-19#U8>
- 17 Small grants are defined as those for organizations managing annual operational budgets below USD200,000 and eligible for a UN Trust Fund grant of up to USD150,000.
- 18 <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/10/what-can-we-learn-from-evaluations-of-projects-funded-by-the-un-trust-fund>
- 19 The first year for which measurements were available during the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan.
- 20 Name changed to protect identity.
- 21 Names changed to protect identity.
- 22 UN Trust Fund, “What can we learn from evaluations of projects funded by the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women? A meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN Trust Fund grantees between 201 and 2019”, available at: <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/10/what-can-we-learn-from-evaluations-of-projects-funded-by-the-un-trust-fund>
- 23 UN Trust Fund, “What can we learn from evaluations of projects funded by the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women? A meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN Trust Fund grantees between 2015 and 2019,” op. cit.
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