



LEARNING FROM PRACTICE: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS



Sensitization session on COVID-19 prevention with women living with disabilities. © Initiative pour un Développement Equitable en Haiti (IDEH).

The UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) is the only global grant-making mechanism that is dedicated exclusively to addressing all forms of violence against women and girls. Administered by UN Women, the UN Trust Fund was established in 1996 by the UN General Assembly. Over its 25 years of operation, the UN Trust Fund has awarded \$198 million to 609 of the most promising initiatives to advance work to prevent, address and end violence against women and girls. In the past five years, its grant giving has focused primarily on funding civil society organizations — especially women’s rights organizations. During this time the grantees reported reaching at least 54 million people, with at least 1.6 million women and girls benefiting directly through services, empowerment activities and protection from violence. Their work is especially important in meeting the needs of women and girls who experience intersecting forms of discrimination. Read the UN Trust Fund’s 2020 Annual Report [here](#).

A 2020 analysis by the World Health Organization and UN Women, based on pre-pandemic data, identified that 1 in 3 women worldwide have been subjected to physical or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. The COVID-19 pandemic placed women and girls even more at-risk, with access to services and justice for survivors of violence, as well as

prevention efforts, severely curtailed. With COVID-19 surging, the UN Trust Fund assessed the impact on violence against women and civil society organizations through [two briefs produced](#) highlighting the drastic increase in the reports of violence and worsening safety of women and girls. Grantees of the UN Trust Fund have acted as an early warning system as first responders for women and girl survivors of violence, reporting a dire surge in violence, reflected in increased calls to helplines—in one case up by 553%. In addition, due to the pandemic, it’s estimated that 11 million girls may not return to school and that efforts to end child marriage are faltering.

The UN Trust Fund has analyzed projects to identify lessons on how these organizations developed flexible and swift responses to help address the extreme impacts on their operations. Some general trends emerged that were also applicable to natural disasters and human-made crises, such as conflicts and war, when essential services often close down. The many lessons learned as part of the immediate response to COVID-19 included pivoting to the use of innovative technologies to reach women and girls in new and different ways; modifying service delivery models; switching to online psychological and legal counselling; and providing victims with food, hygiene supplies, cellphones and assistance with internet access and laptops.

For instance, civil society organizations adapted their operations to provide immediate relief and support to women and girls. The COVID-19 pandemic has made women and girls even more at-risk to violence, but also to poverty and food insecurity. Grantees adapted to reach women and girls with emergency supplies, which frequently offered an entry point to ensure women’s safety including raising awareness on violence against women and COVID-19.

In 2022, as the UN Trust Fund celebrates the work of its grantees over the past 25th years, it will present a new brief on the continued lessons and response to the impact of COVID-19 on violence against women as part of its “Learning from Practice” Prevention Series. The Report highlights how these vital women’s rights organizations have been able to adapt in the face of the pandemic, ensure organizational resilience, and continue to provide immediate relief and critical support to women and girls around the world.



In 2020 alone, grantees reached over 72,000 women and girls with food, hygiene supplies, or other emergency need items to support those most at risk of violence.



This work starts with every single one of us. You can help take a stand in making a world free from violence a reality for women and girls by supporting the #Give25forUNTF25 Challenge. Today, start by [donating \\$25 to the UN Trust Fund](#).

Follow the UN Trust Fund to find out more:
[Website](#) | [Medium](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Twitter](#) |
[Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) #UNTF

SHINE Hub: An online hub to co-create, collaborate and amplify knowledge on ending violence against women and girls