



UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



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The United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) is the only global grant-making mechanism exclusively dedicated to eradicating all forms of violence against women and girls. In the 24 years of its existence, it has supported 572 organizations, investing in innovative and evidence-based civil society-led solutions and life-changing initiatives. The projects it has funded focus on preventing violence, implementing laws and policies to address and eliminate violence against women and girls, and improving access to essential services for survivors. The UN Trust Fund is managed by UN Women on behalf of the UN system and involves UN bodies and organs, civil society organizations and experts on ending violence against women in its decision-making processes through its Programme Advisory Committee (PAC)¹.

**“I live with more hope.
I experience less violence and
more respect”**

Chann (not her real name), survivor of violence
living with a disability in Cambodia who received
specifically tailored services from the Cambodia
Women’s Crisis Centre





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FOREWORD

THE PANDEMIC BEFORE THE PANDEMIC

In 1996, the Beijing Platform for Action, a defining framework for change, identified violence against women as one of its 12 critical areas of concern.

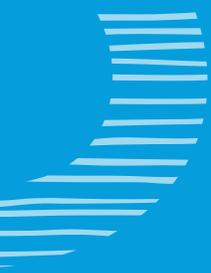
It stated that ***“Violence against women both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. The long-standing failure to protect and promote those rights and freedoms in the case of violence against women is a matter of concern to all States and should be addressed.”***

The severe and lasting consequences of “the long-standing failure” to address violence against women are irrefutable – that was the stark reality confirmed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in its report, *Global and regional estimates of violence against women: Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence*. Published in 2013, this was the first systematic study of global data on the prevalence of violence against women by partners and non-partners. The research found that intimate partner violence – physical and/or sexual – is the most common type of violence against women, affecting 30 per cent of women worldwide. It highlighted the need for all sectors to engage in eliminating broader social acceptance of violence against women and girls

and to better support women who experience it. The study concluded with global estimates indicating that 35 per cent of women worldwide, more than one in three, experience violence in their lifetime, either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence. Subsequently, violence against women was declared a major public health problem and a gross violation of women’s human rights.

Since then, we have collected even more data about violence against women and girls from every continent, from every country. We have repeatedly shown that this is one of the most pervasive human rights violations there is. For example, it is estimated that of the 87,000 women who were intentionally killed in 2017 globally, more than half (58 per cent) were killed by intimate partners or family members. That is the equivalent of a daily death toll of 137 women across the world killed by a member of their own family. More than a third (30,000) of the women intentionally killed in 2017 were killed by their current or former intimate partner. Some 650 million women and girls in the world today were married before the age of 18. Approximately 15 million adolescent girls (aged 15 to 19) worldwide have experienced forced sex (forced sexual intercourse or other sexual acts) at some point in their lives.

The statistics and history I highlight here are not new. Indeed, their familiarity reinforces the point



—we established a long time ago that violence against women and girls represents the most severe expression of discrimination and the disempowerment of women and girls. So, I must admit that I have found it hard to understand the expressions of shock that greeted recent reports that violence against women, and particularly domestic violence, has increased as we closed the doors of our homes in order to curb a new major public health crisis, COVID-19. If for some the correlation between sheltering-in-place/lockdowns and increased violence against women and girls came as a surprise, for others it came as glaring confirmation of what we already knew. When threats to personal safety and security and health, money worries, job insecurity or increased alcohol consumption create tensions and strains, and these are intensified by the confined living conditions of lockdown —violence rises.

The already very high levels of violence against women and girls - more than 1 in 3 - surge in times of conflict, natural disasters and crises. We have seen this time and again around the world whether in crises caused by hurricanes, landslides, earthquakes or diseases, such as Ebola. And now we are seeing it again during the COVID-19 crisis. The soaring levels of violence against women and girls during this new pandemic should come as no surprise.

Lockdowns cut off survivors' escape routes and unleash the pervasive violence that had previously been hidden or ignored. Violence against women and girls, already prevalent, is now exacerbated by food shortages, unemployment, economic insecurity, school closures, public transport shutdowns, mass migration flows and the threat of civil unrest. Those most at risk before COVID-19 are among those disproportionately affected by its consequences. Women and girls with disabilities, for example, are even more at risk because of their increased dependence on their abusers and because they are denied access to basic necessities within the household. As services are redirected to respond to the

COVID-19 crisis, women and girl survivors are seeing access to essential services, such as shelters, helplines, justice, health care and social protection, either withdrawn or restricted, increasing the risks they face.

This Annual Report has taken an unexpected direction from that planned at the beginning of this year. In addition to reflecting on our work in 2019, given the current context, it also required a reflection on our work and response to the COVID-19 crisis. But there is a clear common thread between both: the report is once again a testimony to the results and achievements of our grantees who are adjusting their reality to respond to COVID-19 and continuing to have an impact. As we closed the doors of our offices and homes and searched for new and different working modalities, our grantees still managed to reach out to their beneficiaries and to survivors. They quickly adjusted their work to reshape their plans and responses, finding new ways to support women and girls in need and adapting as best they could to maintain key aspects of their projects, while protecting the safety of beneficiaries and staff.

In these challenging times, the need to respond to the immediate and long-term consequences of the current crisis for women and girls is crucial. The UN Trust Fund remains committed to its partners in the field, to civil society and women's organizations, who play a vital role in assisting women and girl survivors of violence. We thank them all as in these unprecedented circumstances, they remain on the front line of the response to the long-standing and ongoing pandemic of violence against women and girls.

Aldijana Sisic,

*Chief, UN Trust Fund to
End Violence against Women*

SNAPSHOT OF ACHIEVEMENTS



Over the past four years a total of

22,699,683 PEOPLE

of all genders, including government officials and the general public,
were reached by UN Trust Fund projects²

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