



**Spotlight  
Initiative**  
*To eliminate violence  
against women and girls*

## Annex B

# Summaries of the 2020 Programme Annual Reports

01 January 2020 – 31 December 2020

Initiated by the European Union and the United Nations:



## Table of Contents

### **Africa**

1. Liberia Country Programme
2. Malawi Country Programme
3. Mali Country Programme
4. Mozambique Country Programme
5. Niger Country Programme
6. Nigeria Country Programme
7. Uganda Country Programme
8. Zimbabwe Country Programme
9. Africa Regional Programme

### **Latin America**

10. Argentina Country Programme
11. Ecuador Country Programme
12. El Salvador Country Programme
13. Honduras Country Programme
14. Mexico Country Programme
15. Latin America Regional Programme

### **Asia**

16. Afghanistan Country Programme
17. Kyrgyzstan Country Programme
18. Tajikistan Country Programme
19. Central Asia and Afghanistan Regional Programme
20. Safe and Fair Programme

**Caribbean**

- 21. Belize Country Programme
- 22. Grenada Country Programme
- 23. Guyana Country Programme
- 24. Haiti Country Programme
- 25. Jamaica Country Programme
- 26. Trinidad & Tobago Country Programme
- 27. Caribbean Regional Programme

**Pacific**

- 28. Papua New Guinea Country Programme
- 29. Samoa Country Programme
- 30. Timor-Leste Country Programme
- 31. Vanuatu Country Programme
- 32. Pacific Regional Programme

**Civil Society Grant-Giving Programmes**

- 33. United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women – Grant-giving to Civil Society Organizations in Africa and Latin America
- 34. Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund – Grant-giving to Civil Society Organizations in Africa, Afghanistan, Haiti and Papua New Guinea

# LIBERIA 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 18,665,681	 USD 15,844,000	 USD 2,821,681	2019 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, OHCHR

**Other partners:** UNHCR, IOM, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Information, Law Reform Commission, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Independent National Human Rights Commission, National Traditional Council of Chiefs and Elders, Civil Society Organizations

## Context

In Liberia, women and girls suffer from multiple and intersecting forms of violence and harmful practices. 41.8% of girls under the age of 15 have been subjected to Female Genital Mutilation<sup>1</sup>. Access to sexual and reproductive health services remains limited, the majority of girls report being coerced into their first sexual experience, and child marriage is common. By the end of 2020, the President declared rape to be a national emergency, instituting national taskforces and legal measures, and supporting the allocation of US\$2 million to address ending violence against women and girls. In addition to deep-seated patriarchal norms, Liberia still suffers from the normalization of violence and widespread impunity fostered by civil wars marked by high levels of sexual violence. Although Liberia has ratified the relevant international and regional instruments and has advanced progressive laws in place, their implementation remains weak, and the laws are not well known. COVID-19 stay-at-home restrictions further heightened the risk of intrahousehold conflict, family separation, lack of child supervision, and potential child abuse, as well as reliance on other harmful coping mechanisms such as child marriage. In April 2020, the government declared a state of emergency in response to COVID-19 and put in place a National Response Center working with multiple government entities to slow the spread of the virus – a proactive stance reflecting lessons learned from the Ebola epidemic.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

The Spotlight Initiative's work in Liberia created major milestones in ending violence against women and girls throughout 2020. In January, the national Comprehensive Sexual and Gender-based Violence Prevention Strategy, which outlines the responsibilities of all actors at all levels in protecting every woman and girl from violence, was made available to every Liberian. Developed through a highly participatory process, it was translated into Liberian and other local languages, and paired with visual aids to support people who are blind or illiterate, who are often marginalized. The strategy was widely disseminated, and each community was invited to determine their needs, to be included in the Community Action Plan to stop violence. The Spotlight Initiative has further worked to build capacity for legal action, reinforce subnational coordination mechanisms in five counties, build the capacity of Liberia's Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and develop plans to foster long-term, sustainable norm changes. In 2020, with the support of the European Union, the Spotlight Initiative also reprogrammed funding towards the COVID-19 emergency. Applying lessons learned from the Ebola crisis, the Spotlight Initiative has informed its work around the critical role of subnational structures and civil society, a strategy developed in line with the Leaving No One Behind principle, and has leveraged the comparative advantages of each agency to achieve greater impact, following UN Reform standards.

## Key Results

- ✓ **New laws and policies strengthened with the support of civil society networks to fight violence against women and girls** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). CSOs reviewed the major existing laws related to violence against women and girls to ensure alignment with international human rights norms and standards and subsequently facilitated the translation and dissemination of copies of those laws to 150 communities. The intent was to address the lack of legal

<sup>1</sup> [United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs](#), Population Division, 2013.

literacy on the part of those most negatively impacted by violence. Additional community-level workshops reinforced women's understanding of the legal texts and also explained the broader system of rules that guide legal decisions and how the process works. These conversations with women and their communities laid out the roadmap for an individual survivor and encouraged women and other vulnerable individuals to use the tools and claim their rights. In 23 communities, this work led to increased reporting of legal violations and arrests of alleged perpetrators.

- ✓ **Service provision reflects global standards and local priorities** (Pillar 2: Institutions and Pillar 4: Services). With an understanding of the importance of local structures, the Spotlight Initiative strengthened the capacity of the 15 subnational task forces addressing violence against women and girls. The Spotlight Initiative also strengthened the capacity of Child Welfare Committee members such as county-level gender coordinators, social workers, health workers, and protection officers to effectively address child sexual abuse cases, and engage community and youth leaders to detect, monitor, and report on sexual exploitation. Refugee girls and women surviving in camps along the Liberian border who experienced high levels of violence were provided with shelters, services and support through an extensive joint effort with UNHCR and IOM. The Spotlight Initiative fostered the ability of security and protection government officials to respond to the needs of survivors of violence against women and girls and increase coordination within and across sectors, improving access to justice and effective remedies. Similarly, the Spotlight Initiative enhanced the capacity of criminal-justice personnel to transversally adopt human rights and survivors-centered approaches and foster accountability mechanisms to address violence against women and girls.
- ✓ **Reliable national database to foster levels of understanding, cooperation, and persistence needed to make sustainable social norms changes** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 5: Data). The Spotlight Initiative developed a five-year multi-sector strategy and operational plan to address unequal social norm change around violence against women and girls. The plan was informed by an extensive review of the drivers of violence, as well as the identification of gaps in knowledge, attitudes, and practices relevant to violence. The Spotlight Initiative further supported strengthening the national database on violence against women and girls, providing a uniform tool to manage data from the Ministries of Health, Justice, and Gender, Children and Social Protection, leading to a more reliable national database with data disaggregated by age, sex, and other demographics. This contributed to informing on the use of services at the subnational level to help tailor context-specific responses to violence against women and girls in different parts of Liberia.

### One Story of Impact: CSOs are trained to rigorously monitor the Spotlight Initiative

To prepare CSOs for their monitoring roles in the new era of COVID-19, the Spotlight Initiative provided seed grants to 25 CSOs and five CSO Secretariats (local networks enabling joint actions), which were also trained on the use of various social accountability mechanisms and tools such as community-level checklists, writing reports to international accountability entities, and organizing evidence. Over 300 individuals from 100 civil society organizations are now using these skills to monitor the work of the Spotlight Initiative and to appeal to the government to, for example, appoint dedicated county judges to expedite violence against women and girls cases.

#### In their own words...

I've participated in several [sexual and gender-based violence] SGBV trainings, but the Spotlight [Initiative] training gave me a whole new perspective on investigating and writing on [violence against women and girls] issues. This impacted my style of writing and made me realize that I [need]... the experts to explain the numbers/data of a given story... - Alline Louise Dunbar, journalist with Frontpage Africa.

## Innovative, Promising or Good Practices

To effectively respond to the challenges that emerged during COVID-19, the Spotlight Initiative invested in an innovative model for "safe spaces" for those awaiting referral or pending investigations following a sexual abuse case. These spaces were adapted for adult women; however, girls and very young teens are also survivors of violence and at risk of violence. The restructuring of accommodation for girls and boys allowed for a more child-centered and gender-sensitive environment. Further reducing contact between perpetrators and victims, safe spaces were staffed by specially trained police and social gender officers, decreasing secondary victimization, and providing age-appropriate services.

# MALAWI 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 20,990,484	 USD 20,000,000	 USD 990,484	2019 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women

**Other partners:** UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNHCR, Ministry of: Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare; Local Government and Rural Development; Education, Science and Technology; Home Affairs; Health; Labour; Youth Sports and Manpower Development; Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Malawi Police, Civil Society Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, Media, Academia, Traditional Leaders

## Context

In Malawi, shifting harmful social norms related to girls' education and access to sexual and reproductive health services remains challenging. To date, Malawi remains one of the most impoverished countries in the world, ranking 172 out of 188 on the UNDP Human Development Index. During the outbreak of the COVID-19 global pandemic, Malawians faced heightened protection risks, particularly related to gender-based violence. The COVID-19 crisis further affected the economy and status of human rights. With 17% of the economy relying on tourism, COVID-related lockdowns brought associated industries to collapse, and tens of thousands of people lost their jobs. This situation, coupled with the closure of schools, likely contributed to the increased reports of child marriage. Women and girls were particularly vulnerable to exploitation in agriculture, health, and domestic work, leading to a setback in recent gains made on gender equality.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

The Spotlight Initiative in Malawi, supported by the European Union, focuses on six districts with high rates of gender-based violence (Mzimba, Nkhata Bay, Ntchisi, Dowa, Nsanje and Machinga). In 2020, the Spotlight Initiative contributed to elevating the position of violence against women and girls (VAWG) on the national political agenda through extensive advocacy efforts following a high-profile case of violence, which resulted in a ground-breaking historic legal precedent that held the State accountable for perpetrating violence against women and girls in a situation of political and electoral unrest. This achievement also enabled the creation of an institutional mechanism to prevent violence against women and girls by the Police. Overall, the Government of Malawi has demonstrated a commitment to eliminating violence against women and girls by actively contributing to the Spotlight Initiative's implementation at both national and local levels. In addition, to address the spike in violence during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Spotlight Initiative, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, developed a comprehensive response plan to COVID-19 based on a programme criticality assessment to ensure the continuation of programming. In line with the principles of the UN Reform, the Spotlight Initiative also developed an innovative 'One UN' Accountability Framework aimed at fostering inter-agency coordination and cohesion and technical coherence to ensure a comprehensive response to violence against women and girls, coordinated advocacy efforts, increased efficiencies, and streamlined partnerships. Upholding the 'Leaving No One Behind' principle, the Spotlight Initiative partnered with a broad spectrum of civil society actors representing groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including sex workers, female refugees, women and girls living with HIV-AIDS, and women and girls with disabilities.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Advancing gender-sensitive laws to end violence against women and girls** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 2: Institutions). The Spotlight Initiative, through a multi-stakeholder and participatory approach, developed a series of recommendations to enhance the legal and policy framework in line with human rights and international legal standards, with the goal of protecting survivors from sexual violence perpetrated by the Malawi Police. The recommendations were endorsed by the highest level of Government, Legislature and the Judiciary. The Spotlight Initiative also strengthened the capacity of 574 duty bearers to effectively implement gender-responsive and survivor-centred laws and policies, leading to better protection of women and girls against violence.

- ✓ **Stronger services, better information and data** (Pillar 4: Services and Pillar 5: Data). The Spotlight Initiative contributed to developing, for the first time in Malawi, a harmonized data collection system aimed at ensuring the collection of standardized and quality data on violence against women and girls by the judiciary, health, and social welfare sectors. The Spotlight Initiative also contributed to achieving substantial improvements to Police and Judiciary information systems, which have led to greater availability of data on violence against women and girls and facilitated evidence-based responses to cases of violence against women and girls. To ensure access to quality and essential violence against women and girls and sexual and reproductive health services, the Spotlight Initiative enhanced the capacities of 1,286 service providers in all sectors, including health, mental health and justice, which benefitted a total of 19,733 women and girls. In line with the principle of Leaving No One Behind, the Spotlight Initiative improved the mobility of service providers and community workers to assist women and girls living in hard-to-reach areas through the provision of 60 motorbikes and 940 bicycles.
- ✓ **Leadership to prevent violence and build women movements** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). The Spotlight Initiative contributed to transforming harmful behaviours, attitudes and norms, mitigating the risks of violence against women and girls and harmful practices faced by women and girls. Through the Safe Schools intervention, Spotlight Initiative enhanced the knowledge and skills of 212,262 adolescents on how to detect and report cases of violence against women and girls. This led to the identification of 941 cases of child marriage which were referred to the relevant authorities. Additionally, thanks to the Safe Space Mentorship Programme, the Spotlight Initiative empowered 11,440 young women who became agents of change in their own communities. Their achievement resulted in the identification of 1,893 cases of child marriage, including 71 cases that subsequently secured convictions in court. Furthermore, the Spotlight Initiative enhanced women's movement building in Malawi by facilitating the establishment of district Women's Assemblies aimed at fostering coordination among Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Overall, the Spotlight Initiative engaged 28 CSOs as Implementing Partners to administer approximately 40% of the 2020 Programme budget. Of these 28 CSOs, 40% were grassroots organizations.

### One Story of Impact: Education for all

A Spotlight Initiative scholarship enabled the programme to develop, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, a re-admission policy where girls who were expelled from school for being pregnant are given the opportunity to return to school after giving birth. This policy has helped ensure that the survivors of violence are not excluded from their right to access education. These efforts have led to the support of 624 girl survivors of sexual gender-based violence and child marriage to access their right to education through the provision of scholarships.




### In their own words...

The scholarship came at the right time. Every time the headteacher sent me home to collect fees, I felt sad and ashamed. I spent months not knowing where the money would come from. This support increases my chances to remain in school and achieve my dreams. I am thankful and I will show it by working harder in class. - A Spotlight Initiative rights-holder

## Innovative, Promising or Good Practices

In Malawi, traditional leaders are catalysts of social change and community transformation, as they are considered as custodians of culture and traditions. In 2020, the Spotlight Initiative, in partnership with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, enhanced the engagement of traditional leaders, through the establishment of a Chiefs Forums aimed at creating a space for dialogue, harmonization, and peer-to-peer exchange on how to effectively prevent and respond to violence against women and girls at the community level. Through this mechanism, the programme contributed to developing a national framework to define the role and work of Chiefs in the prevention and response to eliminating violence against women and girls. Through consultations with 3,421 community stakeholders, the Spotlight Initiative ensured that the Chiefs Forums missions and roles are locally embraced and that the Chiefs are accountable to their communities, particularly women and girls.

# MALI 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 19,444,519	 USD 18,000,000	 USD 1,444,519	2019 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UNFPA, UN Women, UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR

**Other partners:** Ministries of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; Promotion of Women, Children, and the Family; Justice and Keeper of the Seals; Security and Civil Protection; Health and Public Hygiene; National Education; Youth, Employment and Citizen Building; Religious Affairs and Worship; Economy and Finance; Communication and the Digital Economy, Civil Society Organizations

## Context

Although the government of Mali has adopted and ratified most regional and international conventions on the elimination of violence against women and girls (VAWG), and despite several legal and political instruments to combat VAWG, women and girls in Mali continue to face violence and harmful practices. The security context in Mali is complex, with many regions facing armed conflict and acts of terrorism, which contributes to a state of insecurity and vulnerability. Moreover, religious leaders and groups resist many efforts to address gender inequality and VAWG, including through legislation. In Mali, harmful practices and taboos about sexuality, sexual health and reproductive rights continue to represent key obstacles to ending VAWG.

## Spotlight Initiative s Response

The Spotlight Initiative in Mali, supported by the European Union, has embarked on a strategy to end all harmful practices (including female genital mutilation and child marriage), eliminate barriers to health and improve education for women and girls. The Spotlight Initiative has contributed to shining a light on the issue of VAWG and harmful practices by collaborating with women s groups, youth, and marginalized community members, such as women living with disabilities. In 2020, the Spotlight Initiative achieved substantive results in raising awareness on how to prevent and respond to VAWG and harmful practices through a fostered engagement of national media and community-based radio, dedicated research, as well as targeted outreach efforts to the most marginalized groups of women and girls survivors of VAWG. In the spirit of UN Reform, the Spotlight Initiative in Mali adopted an interagency, multi-stakeholder strategy to identify and strengthen synergies among community leaders, Civil Society Organizations and institutional actors in 279 communities, to collectively ending harmful practices, including female genital mutilation. The programme contributes toward the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals and delivers programming in synergy with the Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Progress in closing legal and institutional gaps** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 2: Institutions). The Spotlight Initiative fostered multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms and strengthened the capacities of 32 actors in this mechanism, including 11 women in the field of eliminating VAWG and harmful practices. To do so, the Spotlight Initiative engaged critical stakeholders in a dynamic dialogue to identify key challenges in terms of coordination and follow-up in order to respond more effectively to VAWG. The Spotlight Initiative launched 60 community dialogues, engaging traditional and religious leaders, frontline organizations, and civil society organizations, to raise awareness on international and national laws and policies in the field of VAWG and harmful practices. The Spotlight Initiative also enhanced the capacity of 36 key institutional actors at the community level to effectively apply relevant legal frameworks. In addition, the programme strengthened the knowledge and understanding of 710 key stakeholders, including 190 traditional leaders, 230 religious leaders, 113 community leaders, and 123 women s rights defenders, on how to effectively promote women s rights in institutional processes.

- ✓ **Better data and stronger services to end VAWG** (Pillar 4: Services and Pillar 5: Data). The programme has contributed to strengthened access to coordinated quality services for survivors of VAWG through the establishment of 10 One-Stop Centers. Through these efforts, 837 women were provided with psychosocial, health, social, or legal services. The programme also developed a protocol and operational manual on survivor-centred service provision, strengthening the capacity of front-line providers to provide respectful care to survivors. In addition, the programme increased the knowledge and awareness of 61,926 individuals through 1,411 community sessions on how to report cases of VAWG to the justice system and benefit from effective remedies. Adolescents and young girls benefited from information on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in 12 safe spaces. Building on the findings of a national study conducted by the National Institute of Statistics, the programme conducted an assessment on existing gaps in the VAWG data collection system, leading to its enhancement. The programme also conducted a diagnostic study of organization and data producers aimed at strengthening the institutional framework and improving the production and availability of quality, disaggregated and globally comparable quantitative and qualitative statistical data on different forms of VAWG.
- ✓ **Engaging men and boys through movements to end VAWG** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). The Spotlight Initiative mobilized 139,327 individuals through community awareness efforts, to foster engagements and create networks. These efforts included 580 community sessions to raise awareness on how to prevent and respond to VAWG. The Spotlight Initiative also established 1,179 advocacy platforms and eight networks of men and boys to share experiences, jointly advocate for the elimination of VAWG and harmful practices, and promote access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights services, including during the outbreak of COVID-19. In line with the principle of Leaving No One Behind, the Spotlight Initiative, in partnership with the Association des Femmes Handicapées de Kayes, has contributed to the establishment of a movement of women with disabilities. Through catalytic efforts at the community level, the movement has been able to engage multiple stakeholders, including traditional and religious leaders, in ground-breaking discussions on how to effectively prevent and respond to violence experienced by women and girls with disabilities.

### One Story of Impact: Prevention through teenage agents of change

The Spotlight Initiative implemented gender-based violence prevention programmes in and out-of-schools with a focus on female genital mutilation, child marriage, and reproductive health by involving communities to promote a protective environment for young women and girls. A total of 159,226/600,000 adolescents, girls, and boys participated in programmes that promote gender norms, attitudes and behaviours including the prevention of risks associated with increased gender-based violence in schools. As a result, 8386 (1968 women, 3277 girls, 2957 boys and 184 men) people were sensitized in schools and 150,840 (57,306 girls and young women and 93,534 boys and young men) out of school in Yélimané, Kolokani and the District of Bamako. These teenagers, who have become agents of change, contribute to the prevention of gender-based violence in and out of school.




#### In their own words...

"This training was very valuable to me. I commit to raise awareness among the members of my community on what I learned during this training. As a Deputy Mayor in charge of the promotion of women, children, and families' rights, I will share the content of the modules given with my peers. I also commit to do everything possible to raise awareness on VAWG among my peers, local authorities and decision-makers of my commune, to encourage them to integrate a gender lens into their programmes and strategies. - Djelika HAIDARA, Deputy Mayor of the commune of Segou

### Innovative, Promising or Good Practices

In 2020, an innovative practice was the establishment of Model Husband Clubs to foster dialogue and exchange among men and boys on how to transform harmful masculinities and prevent VAWG. Through peer-to-peer discussions, men and boys jointly reflected on how to promote, within their families and communities, an alternative model of masculinity. Model Husbands Clubs assume an important role in the reduction of domestic violence, couple's mediation, and prevention of VAWG and child marriage. Additionally, to overcome the challenges that emerged during COVID-19 and reach women and girls facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, the Spotlight Initiative organized youth-led mobile information caravans to share information and increase knowledge on national and international legal frameworks on VAWG and harmful practices, and on how to apply them in their local context. At the community level, these prevention programmes led to each community beneficiary having an education mechanism for preventing gender-based violence and helped strengthen the local referral mechanisms accompanying gender-based violence survivors to services of inputs.

# MOZAMBIQUE 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 20,901,238	 USD 20,000,000	 USD 901,238	2019 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women

**Other partners:** Ministries of Gender, Children and Social Action; Health; Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs; Interior; Economy and Finance; Education and Human Development; Secretary Ministry of State for Youth and Employment, Non-Governmental Organizations, National and Local Civil Society Organizations, National Civil Society Reference Group, Parliament, Ombudsman, Attorney General's Office, Professional Council of the Judiciary, Family and Minors Courts, Supreme Court

## Context

In 2020, Mozambique faced multiple and intersecting crises that impacted the level of violence against women and girls (VAWG) as well as the ability of survivors to access essential services. The tropical storm Chalane, which affected Manica province, as well as the increased level of violent extremism in the northern province of Cabo Delgado in 2020, contributed to exacerbate the level of insecurity, especially of the most marginalized groups. The outbreak of COVID-19 further worsened living conditions for women and girls: a phone survey on the impact of COVID-19 on women and men carried out by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action; the National Institute of Statistics; and other relevant stakeholders found that 30% of female respondents generally felt less safe. Of the respondents who had experienced gender-based violence (GBV) since the COVID-19 state of emergency started, 34% of cases were identified as physical violence, 23% as emotional and/or verbal abuse, 20% as child and/or forced marriage, 18% as rape and 20% as other unwanted sexual contacts.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

The Spotlight Initiative in Mozambique has contributed towards elevating the profile of ending VAWG on the political agenda and contributing to reducing the barriers to accessing services for survivors (in the spirit of Leaving No One Behind). To respond to the critical events in 2020 in a timely way, the Spotlight Initiative swiftly adapted its programme strategies, developing, for instance, a COVID-19 adaptation plan to provide life-saving services to survivors of VAWG. Under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, the Spotlight Initiative renewed its commitment to One UN by fostering coordination across UN Agencies and with Governmental and Civil Society implementing partners. Building on respective comparative advantages, the Spotlight Initiative supported the creation of provincial multi-sectoral committees with Government, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and UN Agencies, aimed at fostering joint planning, monitoring and reporting on eliminating VAWG interventions. The Spotlight Initiative also supported the creation of new coordination mechanisms, such as GBV Response Units in the justice sector, which is contributing to increased coordination on gender issues in this critical sector. By enhancing the capacity of 21 women's rights groups and CSOs representing groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, the Spotlight Initiative further enabled them to implement and monitor their programmes on eliminating VAWG. By working closely with Government and Civil Society and in close coordination with the European Union Delegation, the Spotlight Initiative in Mozambique was able to adapt to new ways of working and bring community sensitization campaigns on GBV prevention and response to more than 500,000 women, girls, men and boys. This also resulted in increased demand for quality and essential services, which benefited 965,918 women, girls, men, and boys.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Gender-sensitive laws and legislation** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 2: Institutions). The Spotlight Initiative contributed to the reinforcement of existing legislation and policies on eliminating VAWG, including the law on Prevention and Combat of Early Marriage, the Law on Alternative Measures of Prison, the Succession Bill, the Family Law and the Revision of

the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedural Code. In 2020, the Spotlight Initiative contributed to the finalization of critical legislation and policies, including the Gender Strategy for Public Administration and HIV and AIDS Strategy in the Public Sector and the One-Stop Center Regulation. In addition, the Spotlight Initiative contributed to strengthening the capacities of 1,086 justice and security officials and 222 women police officers to effectively implement the newly approved legislation, which is expected to increase the protection of women and girl survivors of violence. Leveraging the investment in social mobilization and gender transformative campaigns, Spotlight Initiative's interventions supported the engagement of 879 traditional leaders and community influencers as agents of change in the fight to eliminate VAWG, including early marriage.

- ✓ **Prevention of violence, stronger services and better information and data** (Pillar 3: Prevention, Pillar 4: Services and Pillar 5: Data). In partnership with government authorities, civil society organizations, and with the support of the European Union, the Spotlight Initiative conducted community sensitization campaigns on VAWG prevention and response reaching more than 500,000 people. Using radios and TV channels, as well as megaphones and WhatsApp groups, the Spotlight Initiative contributed to shifting unequal social norms, attitudes, and behaviours at individual and community levels. Through increased efforts to reach those who are often left behind, the Spotlight Initiative also increased awareness on existing VAWG services, provided by the justice, health, security, and social action sectors. Furthermore, the Spotlight Initiative invested in the capacity development of public service providers, acquisition of mobile clinics, provision of equipment (including Personal Protection Equipment due to COVID-19) to One-Stop Centers and Adolescents and Youth Friendly Health Services and expansion of counselling services, which enabled the provision of services to more than 400,000 people. In addition, the Spotlight Initiative trained 66 service providers on data collection, management and analysis, enhancing their ability to streamline and improve the quality and timeliness of VAWG data and developed tailored response services.
- ✓ **Civil society engagement** (Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). The Spotlight Initiative in Mozambique has meaningfully engaged a wide range of organizations promoting innovative mechanisms to establish partnerships with grassroots organizations. In 2020, the Spotlight Initiative strengthened or established partnerships with 20 national and international organizations. The Spotlight Initiative also fostered their capacity to feed into policy documents and strategies, such as the Universal Periodic Review and the State Report on sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence and disabilities. The Spotlight Initiative also enhanced the capacity of members from civil society, women's organizations and marginalized groups to advocate for women's human rights, elimination of VAWG, child marriage and transformation of harmful social norms. In partnership with 61 members of civil society organizations, including grassroots organizations and informal groups, the Spotlight Initiative led extensive social mobilization interventions at community level in three target provinces.

### One Story of Impact: Lessons from Civil Society Groups

In Mozambique, the Spotlight Initiative has significantly engaged women activists and leaders in awareness raising and social mobilization actions at the community level. In 2020, 209 members from women's organizations enhanced their skills and capacity to advocate for women's human rights and elimination of all forms of VAWG. By fostering skills and networks, the Spotlight Initiative has contributed to streamlining and amplifying their voices and stories.

#### In their own words...

...I was raped...The One-Stop Center was able to resolve my case. They reported the case to the police and sent me to the hospital for analysis. I was very well received and treated. The case was tried and is well resolved, we were very satisfied. When people take their case to One-Stop Centers, they can solve it without any problem. The perpetrator was sentenced to 12 years in prison on June 26, 2020. - 14-year-old survivor of sexual violence

## Innovative, Promising or Good Practices

With the aim of producing quality data of violence against women and girls, the Spotlight Initiative in Mozambique, in partnership with the Ministry of Interior, developed the digital platform called InfoViolência. This platform, aimed at registering and managing reported cases of violence against women and girls, represents a key milestone in the country's ability to better manage, analyse and use real-time data on violence cases. The platform will also contribute to fostering long-term planning and coordination, integrating other existing violence against women and girls administrative data systems, such as the one used by the Ministry of Health and administration of justice (Prosecutors and Courts). InfoViolência is currently being piloted in the three Spotlight Initiative provinces, and it will be gradually scaled up to increase management capacity at the local level for gender-based violence reports.

# NIGER 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 18,765,995	 USD 17,000,000	 USD 1,765,995	2019 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, UNICEF

**Other partners:** Ministry of Women's Promotion and Child Protection; Justice; Plan; Finance, Primary Education, Professional and Technical Education, Secondary Education, Public Health, National Defence, Interior, Hydraulic and Sanitation, National Assembly, Islamic Council, Association these Traditional Heads of Niger, National Institute of Statistics, National Agency for Legal and Judicial Assistance, Association for Welfare, Women and Children Victims of Family Violence, Hope and the Association of African Communication Professionals Niger, Civil Society Organizations

## Context

The security situation in Niger has been of concern in recent years, owing to an increase in extremist violence, further exacerbated by growing instability in neighboring countries (Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Chad). Repeated terrorist attacks, the proliferation of armed groups, and the rise of violent extremist religious fundamentalists have contributed to a state of emergency in many regions. In 2020, general elections were organized (presidential, parliamentary and local government), which impacted the political debate, exacerbating social tensions. The outbreak of COVID-19, and its repercussions on the Nigerian economy, disproportionately impacted the lives of women and girls. Increased stress levels, economic and food insecurity, unemployment, and movement restrictions have contributed to a significant increase in cases of domestic violence. The country experienced a rapid increase in reports of violence against women and girls (VAWG), and a recent UN survey noted that 76.3% of women aged 20 to 24 were married or in a union before the age of 18<sup>1</sup>. Niger is ranked last on the 2020 Human Development Index.

## Spotlight Initiative s Response

In partnership with the European union and with high-level political leadership, as demonstrated by the involvement and commitment by government and key ministries, the Spotlight Initiative in Niger worked to strengthen legal frameworks and institutions, mobilize and empower communities and women s rights organizations, increase access to integrated support services and improve data on VAWG. By convening a range of stakeholders, the Spotlight Initiative emphasized strong relationships to facilitate consensus on the need to strengthen efforts to urgently address sexual and gender based violence. In the spirit of the UN Reform, the Spotlight Initiative collectively developed a COVID-19 Response Plan and a Joint Acceleration Plan to quickly adapt to the pandemic and ensure a comprehensive response to an increased number of survivors. The Spotlight Initiative also worked to promote gender-equitable norms, attitudes and behaviours and advance sexual and reproductive health and rights.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Gender-responsive laws and budgeting** (Pillar 1: Policies and legislation and Pillar 2: Institutions). During 2020, the Spotlight Initiative fostered the knowledge of 100 government officials working at the provincial and local level on the importance of girls education and the implementation of relevant policy frameworks to advance their right to education. The Spotlight Initiative also worked to familiarize 20 traditional and religious leaders and 130 key stakeholders including government officials, civil society organizations, and representatives of women s movements on existing laws and policies to prevent and respond to VAWG. Substantive progress in institutionalizing gender-responsive budgeting through a multi-pronged partnership with government ministries (Gender, Planning and Finance) was made, as well, resulting in a national strategy and two methodological guides to support the integration of gender equality into plans and budgets at the national and local levels.

<sup>1</sup> UN Women, [Niger](#)

- ✓ **Working with multiple stakeholders to prevent violence and strengthen services** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 4: Services). Over the course of 2020, the Spotlight Initiative in Niger ensured access to coordinated quality services for a total of 6,531 survivors of VAWG. The Spotlight Initiative also advanced sexual and reproductive health and rights, by equipping 22 Basic Neonatal Emergency Obstetric Care Centres with post-rape kits that helped to care for 1,102 survivors and established 22 Legal Clinics covering 300 villages. In order to ensure comprehensive and holistic support to survivors of VAWG, the Spotlight Initiative also worked to strengthen the technical and operational capacity of a multi-service centre for survivors of VAWG and harmful practices in the target regions of the programme. Prevention was prioritized by promoting dialogue, shifting unequal social norms, and streamlining advocacy efforts. Through the establishment of multiple groups and platforms - including 144 Village Child Protection Committees, 566 Dimatra Clubs, 192 Safe Spaces, 11 Multi-stakeholder Platforms, 4 Active Men Clubs, and 56 groups or networks of women's rights defenders - the programme enabled 596,325 people (167,846 men, 215,010 women, 116,404 girls and 97,065 boys) to increase their awareness of VAWG, and strategies to prevent VAWG.
- ✓ **Better data and strengthened civil society** (Pillar 5: Data and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). To address the challenges that emerged with the COVID-19 pandemic and foster the engagement of young leaders and activists, the Spotlight Initiative created the Spotlight Girls Advocates network. Through story-telling, this network created a safe space for dialogue and advocacy, and underscored young leaders and activists as agents of change in their communities. Relatedly, the programme worked to amplify civil society voices and promote progressive change through platforms and coordination mechanisms. For example, the e-platform *Plateforme VBG Niger* was developed, which enabled women leaders to share policy recommendations for a peaceful electoral process. These actions, among others, elevated the issue of VAWG on the political agenda. Relatedly, the Spotlight Initiative also supported an integrated and multi-level strategy for quality data collection (through community and government structures), improving access to coordinated quality services.

### One Story of Impact: Lessons from Civil Society Groups

The Spotlight Initiative piloted the Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy in Niger. Through extensive engagement of the Civil Society National Reference Group, civil society organizations were able to participate meaningfully in monitoring and evaluation processes. This enabled civil society to control the content, the process and the results of this exercise and surface lessons-learned and promising practices grounded in the local context. Ultimately, this type of engagement helps to ensure that the Initiative's interventions are relevant, rooted locally, and effectively advancing the rights of individuals and communities to end VAWG.

#### In their own words...

"The most important contribution that the Civil Society National Reference Group has made to the Spotlight Initiative has been to bring civil society voices and perspectives into the United Nations structures and mechanisms. Today, the National Reference Group serves as an interface between civil society, UN agencies and the Spotlight Coordination Team. This allows civil society organizations to participate in key meetings and take part in the design of Spotlight program strategy documents. - Soumaila Moumouni, National Reference Group, Niger

### Innovative, Promising or Good Practices

In Niamey, Niger, taxis are the main mode of public transport and are often used by women to escape abusive situations. However, taxis can become sites of abuse themselves, when taxi drivers perpetuate violence. As part of the 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women Campaign, the Spotlight Initiative engaged 50 taxi drivers in an innovative effort to become ambassadors for the elimination of VAWG. Through peer to peer dialogue and awareness raising, taxi drivers learned how to better connect women and girls who've experienced violence to support services and specialized civil society organizations. As an informal referral mechanism, their commitment has transformed taxis into safe spaces, and has been crucial to reaching women and girls. This innovative practice is a new solution that directly engages with critical stakeholders as changemakers to end VAWG in Niamey's public spaces.

# NIGERIA 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 27,189,793	 USD 25,000,000	 USD 2,189,793	2019 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, UNESCO, UNFPA

**Other partners:** Ministry of Budget and Planning; Women Affairs and Social Development; Health; Justice; Finance; Education, Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on the Sustainable Development Goals, National Orientation Agency, National Bureau of Statistic, National Human Rights Commission at Federal and State level, Office of the Vice President

## Context

Despite the recent progress in gender equality in Nigeria, inequalities between men and women still prevail, with increased risks of violence and harmful practices for women and girls. In Nigeria, 30% of women and girls aged 15 to 49 reported having experienced sexual violence, while 43% have experienced child marriage, and 20% have undergone female genital mutilation. Additionally, during the outbreak of COVID-19, Nigeria experienced a rapid increase in reports of violence against women and girls (VAWG) incidences. With the support of the European Union, the Spotlight Initiative in Nigeria aims to achieve a country where all women and girls, particularly the most vulnerable, live a life free from violence and harmful practices. This vision is realized by addressing the linkages between sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices and focusing on cross-cutting themes, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

In Nigeria, one of the overarching achievements of the Spotlight Initiative during the reporting period was the establishment, in partnership with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, of a coordination platform for response to violence against women and girls during lockdowns and the support to the development of a National Covid Response Strategy for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence. The Spotlight Initiative in Nigeria has contributed to shining a light on the issue of violence against women and girls and harmful practices by collaborating with women and youth groups and marginalized community members, such as low-income women, those living in difficult to access communities and women and girls with disabilities. A ground-breaking result of the programme has been the abolishment, in Cross River State, of the traditional harmful practice called Money woman, a tradition where underage girls were sold into marriage as debt repayment. In the efforts to end impunity around violence against women and girls and ensure access to effective remedies, the Spotlight Initiative contributed to the establishment of Nigeria's First DNA Forensic Lab to collect and analyse forensic evidence on eliminating violence against women and girls cases. To address the spike in violence during the pandemic the UN system, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, called for immediate and urgent action to tackle violence against women and girls. Furthermore, thanks to the engagement of the Nigeria Governor's Forum, an increasing number of states have passed the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law. In the spirit of UN reform, the Spotlight Initiative has designed innovative and flagship models to foster inter-agency coordination mechanisms to eliminate violence against women and girls.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Gender-sensitive laws and legislation** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 2: Institutions). High-level progress was made on the legislative framework for eliminating violence against women and girls by providing technical support to the development of four new policy instruments and support to civil society organizations and women's rights organizations to effectively influence seven policy instruments and strategies, including COVID-19 response plans. In addition, the Spotlight Initiative enhanced the capacity of 2,203 women and human rights advocates, parliamentarians, and government officials to develop gender responsive and survivor-centered laws and policies. Due to the increased rate of sexual exploitation and abuse in tertiary institutions, the Spotlight Initiative also drafted guidelines for the prevention of and response to School-Related Gender-Based Violence in tertiary institutions of Nigeria.

- ✓ **Stronger services, information collection and data** (Pillar 4: Services and Pillar 5: Data). The Spotlight Initiative in Nigeria has contributed to strengthening the capacities of 377 service providers, including health workers, police and justice sectors, with a focus on providing essential services for victims of violence. This has resulted in strengthened multi-sectoral coordination, ensuring access to inclusive, timely, and quality services for survivors. As a result, 30,835 women and girls have gained access to essential services, and 32,989 women and girls survivors accessed long-term recovery services. Furthermore, the programme established a one-stop center in Sokoto State to provide a comprehensive set of quality services to survivors of violence. Concerted efforts were also made by the Spotlight Initiative to ensure classification of one-stop centers and shelters as essential services and secure approvals for the centers to remain open to survivors of violence against women and girls during the outbreak of COVID-19. The four one-stop centers supported by the Spotlight Initiative in the Federal Capital Territory, Lagos, Sokoto, and Adamawa provided life-saving support to 1,090 survivors of violence against women and girls, including 19 persons with disabilities. The Spotlight Initiative supported front-line service providers and CSOs to foster their ability to safely and ethically deliver support services remotely, for instance, through hotlines and safe chats . In addition, the Spotlight Initiative launched, in partnership with the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, a National Gender-Based Violence Data Situation Rooms and Data Dashboard to collect harmonized and real-time data on violence against women and girls and Harmful Practices to inform laws, policies, and programmes.
- ✓ **Civil society engagement and leadership to prevent violence** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 6: Women s Movement and Civil Society). Thanks to the unprecedented synergies that have emerged among civil society organizations, the Spotlight Initiative has been able to bring together partners that have not traditionally worked together, supporting coordination mechanisms and dialogues, which have resulted in 12 joint recommendations on how to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls, including in the context of COVID-19. The Spotlight Initiative has also enhanced the capacity of 528 representatives of women s rights movements and civil society organizations, including representatives of groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, to monitor and assess the Sustainable Development Goal Benchmarks for VAWG, Harmful Practices, and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. In partnership with the Ministry of Education, the Spotlight Initiative revised the national curriculum to include violence against women and girls and sexual and reproductive health and rights components.

### One Story of Impact: Change through community practices

In Nigeria, traditional and religious leaders have catalyzed unprecedented changes to the social norms landscape, for instance, through their contribution to the ban of Female Genital Mutilation and harmful widowhood practices in Ebonyi State. In 2020, the Spotlight Initiative held a meeting of religious leaders and media professionals to enhance the information and understanding of the programme and developed culturally and religiously acceptable strategies to address Sexual and Gender-based Violence and Harmful Practices.

#### In their own words...

Henceforth, perpetrators of Gender-Based Violence cases reported by victims at the Safe Space will be prosecuted by my Cabinet members and legal actions will be taken against such persons as well - Chief Gomna Ezra the Hakimi, Traditional Leader of Kurudu Community

## Innovation, Promising or Good Practices

In Nigeria, the Spotlight Initiative has contributed to enhancing access to justice for survivors of violence against women and girls through the establishment of a Presidential Special Investigation Panel on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence. For the first time in judicial history, this mechanism provides all parties a fair hearing on allegations before the investigation panel. This is crucial to enhance access to effective remedies, redress violations and tackle the widespread culture of impunity around violence against women and girls. The Spotlight Initiative has contributed to identifying perpetrators of violence against women and girls; ensuring adequate access to effective remedies, reparation measures, and restorative justice for survivors of violence against women and girls; and filing complainants and investigating alleged acts of human rights violations.

# UGANDA 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 23,108,417	 USD 22,000,000	 USD 1,018,418	2019 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNHCR

**Other partners:** IOM; WHO; Pulse Lab; Ministries of Gender Labour and Social Development, Health, Education and Sports, and Local Government; District and Local Governments; Public Service; National Planning Authority; Inter-Religious and National Population Council; Equal Opportunities Commission; Uganda Bureau of Statistics; Uganda Human Rights Commission; Civil Society Organizations; Women's Networks; International Non-Governmental Organizations; Cultural Institutions; Council of Traditional Leaders in Africa; Private Sector Foundation; Safe Boda; Academic Institutions

## Context

In 2020, major flooding and landslides in Kasese and other regions, and the locust infestation during the agricultural season, led to a shift in attention and government resources towards humanitarian response. The national elections held in 2020 further halted progress on legislative reforms and government capacity-building activities, as government partners were focused on the elections. Incidents of violence against women and children spiked considerably during the COVID-19 lockdown. The demand for Emergency Shelters increased by 60.5%, and public awareness of violence against women and girls (VAWG) expanded.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

In 2020, the Spotlight Initiative implemented interagency coordination in the spirit of UN Reform, including by leveraging the joint resources and capacities of agencies to strengthen coordination on programming to end child marriage at national level. In Uganda, the Spotlight Initiative worked to address sexual and gender-based violence (GBV) and harmful practices, advance gender equality, and increase women's access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. By working with the Ministry of Health to integrate sexual and reproductive health, HIV and VAWG into the Essential Services Package, the Spotlight Initiative helped elevate the importance of access to health services for survivors of VAWG. Services were adapted during the COVID-19 outbreak, when the Spotlight Initiative, in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, adjusted its strategies to respond to the emerging needs of women and girls survivors and provide information and vital services through mobile clinics, GBV shelters and Safe Spaces. The Spotlight Initiative's work in social engagement and media outreach increased awareness on VAWG and sexual and reproductive health and rights, empowering adolescents and youth and supporting the uptake of services. To ensure access to effective justice and remedies, the Spotlight Initiative, together with partners, worked to establish special court sessions dedicated to child survivors of violence, pivoting to a fast-track procedure to reduce trauma and exposure to COVID-19. Upholding the principle of Leaving No One Behind, the programme focused on communities at high risk of violence, including refugees, adolescents, in-and out-of school girls, women and girls with disabilities, and those living with HIV/AIDs.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Working towards gender-sensitive legislation** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 2: Institutions). High-level progress was made on the legislative framework for eliminating VAWG through advocacy efforts for and technical support to the development of the National Child Policy and the Sexual Offence Bill and Succession Amendment Bill 2019. In 2020, the Spotlight Initiative also contributed to the increased capacity of state and non-state institutions to address VAWG and harmful practices. For example, the review of the curricula in a university and training institutions to integrate GBV programming is ensuring continuous capacity strengthening of government officials. Additionally, by strengthening the capacity of local governments, the Spotlight Initiative supported them to develop and implement institutional frameworks to combat VAWG, improve access to justice for survivors, strengthen accountability mechanisms, end impunity for perpetrators, and ensure multi-sectoral support and services. There has been a notable increase - particularly at local

government level - in awareness of and attention to VAWG response, with the development of GBV action plans and increased allocation of funds for GBV initiatives. At the end 2020, 49 costed GBV specific interventions were integrated into budget documents for FY 2021/2022. Through the COVID-19 sub-committee on GBV and violence against children, which the Spotlight Initiative has supported, the government has integrated GBV into its national response to COVID-19.

- ✓ **Advancing norm change and improved data and vital services** (Pillar 3: Prevention, Pillar 4: Services and Pillar 5: Data). To shift unequal social norms, the Spotlight Initiative implemented the SASA! model, a comprehensive methodology to foster community mobilization and prevention. In 2020, 918 community activists engaged more than 140,000 people (95,000 women and girls and 45,000 men and boys) in communities across Uganda. These individuals and communities now better understand the nexus between power, violence, and gender equality, and deeper reflection on attitudes toward gender roles. Prevention efforts were further supported through awareness campaigns on essential services for VAWG and harmful practices, which reached over 5,960,000 people and resulted in increased awareness of existing referral pathways and available response services. To support access to services, the Spotlight Initiative worked with the Ministry of Health to integrate sexual and reproductive health, HIV and VAWG into the Essential Services Package. The Package will be incorporated into the country's universal health coverage strategy 2021-2025 (and aligned with the Gender-based Violence Policy), a significant achievement to ensure the sustainability of efforts to end VAWG within national structures. In line with the principle of Leaving No One Behind, the Spotlight Initiative partnered with civil society organizations to improve access to services for refugee populations, and raise awareness on the links between COVID-19 and GBV. The Spotlight Initiative launched Safety Audits in targeted refugee settlements to address the specific risks faced by women refugees while accessing essential services. Access to services was further supported by supporting women's groups to access funding and government grants under the new Parish model project (the government's development project to address poverty) that will provide services at village level.
- ✓ **Supporting civil society and women's movements** (Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). The Spotlight Initiative strengthened the ability of civil society organizations, activists and women human rights defenders to effectively advocate for gender-transformative legal frameworks. For example, advocacy by the Spotlight Initiative through women's rights organizations resulted in a Presidential Declaration, which removed the requirement for pregnant women to obtain the Resident District Commissioners' permission to seek health care services, followed by a Ministerial Circular urging probation officers to expeditiously handle cases of domestic violence and support survivors to access required services during and after the COVID-19 lockdowns. Through joint advocacy efforts with the Ministry of Gender, the programme contributed to amplifying the voice of the women's movement in favour of the development of National Guidelines on the Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy and Re-entry of child mothers in school and ensuring women's safety in public places.

### One Story of Impact: Civil Society Organizations leading in Leaving No One Behind

The principle of leaving no one behind informed interventions that enhanced the capacities of civil society to reach vulnerable groups including women with disabilities, albino women, women living with HIV and the Batwa women. In partnership with national and local CSOs, the Spotlight Initiative increased access to multi-sectoral services for over 1,500 women and girls, including those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. To create an enabling legislative environment, the programme provided technical support in the revision of the National Disability Policy integrating access to sexual and reproductive health and rights for persons with disability. As a result, women with disabilities in two districts attained positions of leadership in their local councils.




#### In their own words...

The training opened my eyes. I didn't know where to go for help but now I know where people with disabilities can get different services in our district. I became more aware of our rights and how to stand up for ourselves. - Angella Muhindo, Spotlight Initiative rights-holder

### Innovation, Promising or Good Practices

The Spotlight Initiative piloted the use of information and communications technology to strengthen referral mechanisms for survivors of VAWG. In partnership with the Uganda Law Society, Spotlight Initiative developed innovative applications to match survivors of VAWG to specialized lawyers able to provide legal advice and referrals in multiple languages to survivors. Through the Child Help Line Call Center and the Self Interactive Voice Recording, the Spotlight Initiative reached 15,043 individuals, with 329 individuals referred for legal support to the different legal aid clinics across the country. Furthermore, 1,159 individuals used the language assistance to listen to the information on GBV and other services, and 34 cases were referred to the police for further support. These efforts have the potential to ensure more timely access to information and better reach those who are often left behind.

# ZIMBABWE 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 22,683,606	 USD 21,000,000	 USD 1,683,606	2019 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women

**Other partners:** Ministries of Women Affairs; Community, Health and Child Care; Public Service; Labor and Social Welfare; Justice; Legal and Parliamentary Affairs; Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage; Finance and Economic Development; Education, Local Government, Public Works and National Housing, Office of the President and Cabinet, Women's Rights Organizations, Women Community Groups, Disabled Persons Organizations, Faith-Based Groups, Human Rights Organizations, Children's Rights Groups, Zimbabwe Gender Commission, Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, Parliament of Zimbabwe, Anti-Domestic Violence Council, Public Service Commission, Private Sector, Academic Institutions, Media

## Context

Women and girls in Zimbabwe face high rates of intimate partner violence, rape, and child marriage while having limited access to quality sexual and reproductive health services. Adolescents and young women are most at risk, as evidenced by their higher rates of HIV infection and maternal mortality. Moreover, the country has ratified the core international conventions addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG), and the gender equality facets of the 2013 National Constitution reflect the input of the women's movement. Yet prevention and response are undermined by lack of capacity in key sectors such as the judiciary; capacity and resource gaps in the lead ministry and ineffective coordination among initiatives; insufficient gender disaggregated administrative data to inform planning; lack of staff in Gender-Based Violence/Sexual Gender-Based Violence multi-sectoral sectors; and entrenched patriarchal attitudes. While the country has seen improvements in life expectancy, schooling, and income in recent years, from 2019 onwards, the country has flailed through successive droughts and other humanitarian crises.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

The Spotlight Initiative in Zimbabwe is advancing a whole of government approach to addressing VAWG demonstrating the highest levels of government must lead and own efforts to ensure sustainability, including through longer term state financing for programming. In the spirit of UN Reform, a key strategy has been leveraging the political and technical strengths of the agencies under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator to support high-level coordination and alignment of legal frameworks. In 2020, despite the challenges of COVID-19, and responding to associated increases in domestic violence, the Spotlight Initiative, with the support of the European Union, significantly expanded the reach of the programme and laid the foundation for a coordinated, competent, and sustained response in the most affected districts in five provinces. The Spotlight Initiative has combined this expansion with efforts to strengthen the technical expertise of service providers across government. The Spotlight Initiative also worked to ensure that the voices and priorities of those most often left behind informed political and programming decisions, such as the guidance provided by the National Disability Board on changes in legal provisions to address the needs of girls and women with disabilities who experience VAWG.

## Key Results

- ✓ **High-level political compact strengthened accountability on VAWG and fortified the security and judicial sectors capacities** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 2: Institutions). The Spotlight Initiative is generating strong new momentum to mitigate and eliminate VAWG by harvesting months of advocacy with the government through high-level dialogues among key ministries, the Resident Coordinator, the European Union Ambassador, and the heads of UN Agencies. The dialogues resulted in the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee to draft principles for a High-Level Political Compact that is expected to establish accountability at the highest levels of government, including for sufficient funding, and strengthen

coordination at national and sub-national levels. The Compact will provide a platform for coordination across sectors to enable programming which is not typically handled by health, justice, or security. To strengthen the justice sector, outdated legal provisions were identified for review and revision, new areas of protection were addressed (e.g. related to online violence, digital data and sexual harassment), and strategic guidance and client-focused operational guidelines on VAWG were developed for the security and judicial sectors. These guidelines include a handbook for prosecutors, guidelines on investigations for the Zimbabwe Republic Police, a coordination framework for the entity representing those unable to afford legal representation, and a roadmap for the implementation of the National Action Plan on Ending Child Marriages.

- ✓ **Access to diverse strategies of services delivery was expanded** (Pillar 4: Services and Pillar 5: Data). When the stay-at-home rules to battle COVID-19 resulted in increases in intimate partner and family violence, the Spotlight Initiative secured an agreement from the host ministry to declare VAWG response and community mobilization as essential services. As a result, behavioral change workers were able to reach thousands of beneficiaries. Six new hotlines, two shuttles/transport services, and mobile clinics also helped reach the most marginalized groups. Concurrently, the Spotlight Initiative launched an effort to improve the national data system, tracking incidents of violence and patterns of services and providing better access to quality and coordinated services. It also helped revive the gender-sector statistics committee, supporting tracking needs and patterns of service use, and included a module on violence in the national rural Livelihood Assessments conducted by the Food and Nutrition Council.
- ✓ **Men and boys were engaged to accelerate the process of normative change** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). The Spotlight Initiative ensured ongoing civil society participation in the development of programmes engaging men and boys to lay the groundwork for sustainable change. For example, Padare Men's Forum on Gender has been developing a 'champions' initiative and building a movement among men and boys to change the attitudes and beliefs driving violence and harmful practices. Padare focuses on the personal transformation of individuals who then become examples for the community. In 2020, a key entry point was providing counseling to help men cope more effectively with COVID-19-related stresses in order to reduce intrahousehold conflict and VAWG. In broader outreach, five anti-Gender-Based Violence campaigns were also launched by the Innovators against Gender-Based Violence to strengthen Gender-Based Violence movement-building at the community level using internet technology. One of these campaigns was #HeForShe, a global effort to engage men and boys in removing the social and cultural barriers that prevent women and girls from achieving their potential and working together to positively reshape society.

### **One Story of Impact: Women with disabilities advise on policies for the elimination of VAWG for survivors with disabilities**

Spotlight Initiative partners supported capacity-building to enable women and girls with disabilities to participate effectively in Parliamentary public consultations, such as those on the national budget. The Spotlight Initiative also supported capacity-building for sub-national stakeholders to engage more effectively with persons with disabilities. An advocacy paper highlighting the legal and administrative interventions required to address VAWG among women and girls with disabilities was submitted to the ministry housing the National Disability Board. The Spotlight Initiative also supported this board to develop a costed Strategic Plan, showcasing the participation of persons with disabilities in public consultations.

#### **In their own words...**

(Working with the Spotlight Initiative), I learnt that eliminating Gender-Based Violence requires a multi-sectoral, community-driven approach. I also learnt that such a fight takes time, but it is possible. Behaviour change is a process, not an event. I learnt to be optimistic and never to give up when fighting for change. - Kudzai Mugumbate, former member of Spotlight Initiative Zimbabwe Innovators against Gender-Based Violence

### **Innovative, Promising or Good Practices**

In a major step to ending impunity and holding perpetrators to account, the Spotlight Initiative is supporting efforts towards regular use of DNA evidence in VAWG court cases – a first for Zimbabwe. Even as laws are strengthened, evidence is key for implementing those laws effectively. Such evidence is critical for sexual violence cases, for which there are seldom witnesses, and over which young and female victims have limited influence despite suffering life-threatening consequences. As such, the Spotlight Initiative is developing guidelines and training health, security, and judicial personnel while procuring supplies to facilitate the use of DNA evidence.

# AFRICA REGIONAL PROGRAMME 2020 Regional Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 26,982,281	 USD 25,620,000	 USD 1,362,281	Jul 2020 - Dec 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women

**Other partners:** African Union Commission, Regional Civil Society Organizations (including Faith Based Organizations)

## Context

Across Africa, 125 million girls and women alive today were married before their 18 birthday. Moreover, an estimated 200 million girls and women alive today are believed to have been subjected to female genital mutilation, and about 68 million girls will be at risk of female genital mutilation by 2030, if current trends continue. There have been significant improvements in the adoption of Human Rights instruments and policies, both at the continental and regional level, by Member States, but progress remains limited due to the lack of capacities and resources needed to translate legislation and policies into action and achieve tangible benefits for women and girls. Furthermore, the health, social, political and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are disproportionately affecting girls and women by exacerbating existing systemic gender inequalities at all levels, with potential implications for the incidence of harmful practices against girls and women, including child marriage and female genital mutilation.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

A partnership between the United Nations, European Union, and African Union, the Spotlight Initiative Africa Regional Programme has a continental scope and enhances a regional approach to Ending Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG), Sexual Gender-Based Violence, and Harmful Practices, as well as strengthening Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. The Regional Programme prioritizes strengthening existing strategies and initiatives, such as the African Union (AU) Gender Strategy 2017-2027, Agenda 2030, Agenda 2063, and the Maputo Plan of Action on the Operationalization of the Continental Policy Framework for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (2016-2030), among others. The Regional Programme works through two streams of work (Stream I and Stream II), both of which contribute towards achieving results under Outcome 1: Policies and Legislation; Outcome 5: Data and Outcome 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society. Stream I promotes and protects the rights of women and girls through support to the African Union Commission by supporting and enhancing existing capacities and mechanisms to eliminate VAWG and promote sexual and reproductive health and rights and by investing in regional women's rights organizations and civil society actors. Stream II was built on the programmatic and operational framework, including governance structures, of the ongoing [UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage](#) and [UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation](#). As such, the Africa Regional Programme is fully aligned with the UN Reform efforts that encourage interagency coordination to implement as one UN system as well as a significant increase in joint programming on gender equality. The programme adopts a strategy of harnessing the respective strengths of multi-sectoral, multi-level partnerships which support the acceleration of transformative change. Guided by the principle of leaving no one behind, Stream II launched innovative approaches to intensify efforts to reach the most vulnerable, despite the physical distancing challenge caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and even where access to digital resources remained limited.

## Key Results

- ✓ **National strategic frameworks and plans implemented on eliminating harmful practices through governments advocacy** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). Through advocacy and sharing of data and evidence on what works to eliminate harmful practices, the programme has partnered with the AU campaign to end child marriage and the AU Saleema initiative on elimination of Female Genital Mutilation to engage governments to develop and implement national strategic frameworks and plans of actions on sexual and gender-based violence, child marriage and female

genital mutilation. The AUC and its Member States validated 5-year strategy for its Saleema Initiative on Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation and 5-year strategy for its Campaign on Ending Child Marriage, both facilitating greater coordination in implementation of the agenda to eliminate harmful practices. These strategies articulate the AUC's vision and agenda to accelerate the elimination of harmful practices on the continent, capitalizing on the organization's mandate. These strategies aim to amplify regional and country level efforts and will be an important link to the 55 Member States of the African Union.

- ✓ **Religious leaders engaged to address the frequently incorrect interpretation of sacred scriptures in relation to Child Marriage** (Pillar 6: Women's Movements and Civil Society). The programme established a partnership with the African Council of Religious Leaders to engage with religious leader members of the Inter-Faith Councils at national level and address the frequently incorrect interpretation of the sacred scriptures in relation to Child Marriage. In collaboration with Religions for Peace and the Joint Learning Initiative for Faith and Local Communities, new guidance was produced on how to engage and communicate with religious leaders on violence against children, child marriage and female genital mutilation in the times of COVID-19. A series of 6 regional webinars were organized with religious leaders from 6 countries on different topics, including COVID-19 prevention, adaptation of religious gatherings to the COVID-19 context and on how to prevent, address and respond to cases of violence against children (including child marriage and female genital mutilation) during the pandemic. Some immediate results from these webinars include awareness and uptake of the new guidance as well as the establishment of a community of practice.
- ✓ **Broad-based social change for gender equality accelerated** (Pillar 5: Data) A cost and impact modeling exercise was conducted to determine the level of investment required to eliminate female genital mutilation by 2030. Based on the analysis, which used programme data, secondary data, and population-level costing methods, it is estimated that \$3.3 billion is necessary to reach the high-coverage targets by 2030 and avert about 25 million cases of female genital mutilation. This data has been widely used in communication channels for advocacy for more investment in programmes addressing female genital mutilation. Through the ongoing partnerships, the report on the cost and impact of scaling up programmes addressing female genital mutilation was finalized and accepted for a [peer-reviewed journal article](#).

### One Story of Impact: Creating transformative change through empowered youth

On 20 November 2020, through Stream II, the African Union campaign on ending child marriage, in collaboration with the AUC Youth Division and the Department of Social Affairs, organized an ideation workshop, social media campaign and intergenerational dialogue with duty bearers. These [events and activities](#) aimed to enhance the role of youth in prevention and elimination of harmful practices, particularly child marriage. The events were organized to support the innovative regional youth-led initiatives and amplify youth's, particularly young women and girls, engagement in policy dialogue and initiatives ending child marriage and harmful practices. 200 youth participated virtually. These events are expected to advance awareness and advocacy on the interconnected driving forces and solutions on child marriage; amplify the role of young people, particularly young women and girls, in ending child marriage; and identify scalable solutions for the prevention, elimination and response to child marriage ([African Union Youth Program - Reimagine An Africa Without Child Marriage Ideation Workshop | Facebook](#)).

## Innovative, Promising or Good Practices

A Youth Reference Group on Child Marriage has been created as a promising practice to engage youth at continental, regional and national levels to support engagement and communication between local and grassroots actors and policy and other decision-makers. The Youth Reference Group is expected to have a significant role in raising awareness, mobilizing support, and promoting social accountability for the prevention and elimination of child marriage. With a strong coordination mechanism, the Youth Reference Group has much potential to be expanded widely as it is cost effective and dynamic and allows for interaction with multiple stakeholders in a relatively short period of time. Additionally, the Saleema Youth Victorious Ambassadors Programme has been created for young women and youth to mobilize support for an end to harmful practices, particularly female genital mutilation and child marriage. The programme brings together young female activists and female genital mutilation survivors between 18 and 35 years old who publicly advocate for the elimination of female genital mutilation. It is a communication bridge between national, regional and global institutions and youth. The programme is a partnership between the AUC and UN that predates the Spotlight Initiative and is now being implemented under the framework of the Africa Regional Programme, which provided technical support to manage the programme's launch, and will continue to do so for engagement opportunities and their overall agenda. These initiatives are fairly new and will be continuously refined to eventually support wider adoption and upscaling.

# ARGENTINA 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 5,875,803	 USD 5,400,000	 USD 475,803	2019 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, ILO

**Other partners:** Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity; Justice and Human Rights; Security; Labor, Employment and Social Security; Education; Tourism and Sports, Secretary of Childhood, Adolescence and Family; Social Development, Public Defender's Office, Office for Women, Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation, Public Prosecutor's Office. In Province of Buenos Aires: Ministry of Women, Gender Policies and Sexual Diversity, General Directorate of Culture and Education, Institute of Judicial Studies, Supreme Court of Justice. In Province of Jujuy: Provincial Council for Women and Gender Equality, Secretariat for Indigenous Peoples, Ministry of Education, Public Prosecutor's Office. In Province of Salta: Secretariat for Human Rights, Ministry of Government, Human Rights, Labor and Justice

## Context

Argentina – an upper-middle income country with a Human Development Index of 0.83 – has ratified most international and regional treaties on human rights and is an active part of the efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. While a National Action Plan against gender-based violence (GBV) was implemented in July 2020, women continue to face multiple forms of discrimination, and violence against women and girls (VAWG) is still a major problem. In a 2018 survey, 31% of women in Argentina claimed to have suffered from violence over the last year, and 29% stated they had been victims of sexual harassment during the same time. Although official femicide rates for 2020 are yet to be published, the non-governmental organization *Casa de Encuentro* recorded 175 femicides during the COVID-19 mandatory self-isolation period. Additionally, VAWG data collection remains a challenge, and availability of figures varies across regions, including figures on women facing multiple forms of discrimination. In addition, the country's harsh economic situation – burdened by a sharp contraction and a 40.5% devaluation of the national currency – further contributed to the complexity of the socioeconomic situation in 2020, disproportionately affecting women.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Spotlight Initiative has pivoted nearly all activities to a virtual modality. This adjustment raised significant concerns pertaining to reaching women in more vulnerable populations, due to existing gaps in digital access, but was ultimately found to significantly broaden the activities' reach. The programme has taken a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to eliminating VAWG, by embracing new masculinities perspectives; developing materials for the educational system; working with grassroots and local civil society organizations (CSOs) situated away from large urban areas; and strengthening remote care services. Through partnerships with the government and CSOs, and with the support of the European Union, the Spotlight Initiative has managed to successfully integrate national stakeholders, further adding to the intervention's sustainability and national ownership as well as the programme's efforts to leave no one behind. Alliances with the media, unions, employers' organizations and sports clubs have also been pivotal to amplifying the Spotlight Initiative's messages and scope. In line with UN Reform efforts, the programme's holistic, interagency, multi-stakeholder approach has been instrumental to achieving results.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Strengthening legal frameworks and data collection to better respond to VAWG and femicide** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 5: Data). In 2020, the Spotlight Initiative supported the reinforcement of public policies aimed at preventing and addressing VAWG in Argentina. The programme prioritized a two-fold approach within the country's normative framework, focused on training legislators to promote gender-sensitive laws (which took place in early 2020) and supporting the successful ratification of norms within ILO's international instrument on violence and harassment in the workplace. Furthermore, in order to improve the quality of information available for evidence-based decision-making, the Spotlight Initiative worked in alliance with the Ministry of Women,

Gender and Diversity to strengthen the Comprehensive System of Gender-Based Violence Cases for the systematization of information. This strategy is aimed at collecting information on VAWG and femicide as well as establishing a collective standard for addressing inquiries and cases. The programme also worked to support data integrity and to provide key equipment to streamline data collection and harmonize processes related to registering femicide cases across state institutions.

- ✓ **Enabling effective application of gender-based violence policies and boosting services through stronger institutions** (Pillar 2: Institutions and Pillar 4: Services). In order to strengthen institutional capacities, the Spotlight Initiative supported the creation of several ministries and governing bodies with jurisdiction in matters of gender-based violence, through the procurement of necessary equipment and support in the participative planning process. As such, the programme has contributed to the creation of spaces for systematic exchanges that include CSOs and representatives of the women's movement. Moreover, the Spotlight Initiative contributed to the promotion of gender-sensitive budgeting, aimed at bridging gaps and generating knowledge for the creation of regulations within the COVID-19 framework. Additionally, in order to strengthen access to quality care services, the Spotlight Initiative partnered with ministries to enhance Line 144, the federal line for cases of VAWG. The programme also supported the work of the recently created Provincial Directorate for the Promotion of Masculinities for Equality and the launch of the *Hablemos* Line for providing support to male perpetrators of violence in order to prevent future violence. Additionally, the programme continued to work with the Lawyer Corps for Gender-Based Victims to guarantee access to legal aid and promoted indigenous women's economic autonomy by providing financial education.
- ✓ **Facilitating the participation of a multiplicity of actors, including civil society, to change social norms and behaviours and foster prevention** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). Through partnering with educational institutions, the Spotlight Initiative was able to increase visibility of women's rights and widen its local reach. The programme strengthened the capacities of the Ministry of Education's Comprehensive Sexual Education programme; generated materials for an online course to foster healthy masculinities; strengthened the work of unions in the prevention of gender-based violence; developed a kit for athletes and trainers in sports clubs; created materials to address comprehensive sexual education and prevention among youth facing multiple forms of discrimination; promoted youth participation in the creation of prevention strategies; and encouraged responsible communications within media platforms. The Spotlight Initiative also worked to strengthen several CSOs that focus on prevention of violence against women and girls. For example, the programme promoted joint work between CSOs and universities to strengthen institutions through technical support and capacity-building, including training and experience-sharing, to prevent VAWG.

### **One Story of Impact: Working together to foster prevention in schools within rural zones**

Together with the Buenos Aires provincial government, the Miguel Bru Civil Society Organization, the Unified Education Workers Union and the Buenos Aires University's Philosophy Faculty team, the Spotlight Initiative worked towards promoting prevention of violence against women and girls in schools through the *dESIdir en Comunidad* project. This innovative project allowed the programme to effectively address comprehensive sexual education with teachers in 26 districts within rural zones, as well as evaluate potential impacts on students. The rigorous, multi-actor project developed a model for detecting, accompanying, and addressing cases in the academic realm, to further prevent violence against women and girls and constructively raise awareness.

#### **In their own words...**

I went to the Deaf school, but the information was limited. Until I attended the gender-based violence prevention and comprehensive sexual education workshops, I thought sexual education only had to do with sexual relations. Participating in these spaces made me realize there was so much more behind that, a wealth of information that I had never received. And having this information is key to be able to make autonomous decisions about our own life. - Sofia Castaglia, Deaf adolescent and Spotlight Initiative workshop attendee

### **Innovative, Promising or Good Practices**

Within the framework of the 16 Days of Activism, the Spotlight Initiative launched the SpotlightLAB's first cycle, where over 2,800 people participated in social innovation to provide attention to victims of violence and engage new actors to counter VAWG. The programme has also done extensive work to promote healthy masculinities and remove existing barriers in access to information and services for Deaf women and the LGBTQI+ community. It also launched a variety of successful communications campaigns, including the *#ObituariosDeGenero*, *#AmigoDateCuenta* and *#LaOtraPandemia* to amplify the programme's messages and reach a broader audience. Among its most innovative projects are *Es con ESI*, aimed at promoting youth leadership for prevention, and *Abrir el Juego*, devoted to developing strategies to eradicate violence against women and girls in sports. Additionally, a major innovative achievement in 2020 is the work done towards harmonizing femicide registries based on information collected by three State institutions.

# ECUADOR 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 3,220,681	 USD 2,900,000	 USD 320,680	Nov 2020 - Dec 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women

**Other partners:** Ministries of Government, Finance and Education; Secretariats of Human Rights and Higher Education; General Prosecutor's Office; Judiciary Council; National Boards of Equality and of Communication; National Assembly; Local Governments; National Institute of Statistics; National Police; Cantonal Boards of Protection; National Unions; Network of Shelters for Women Victims of Violence; Women Rights Organizations and Networks; Alliance for Mapping and Monitoring Femicides in Ecuador; Academia; Private Sector

## Context

In Ecuador, roughly 65 out of every 100 women aged 15 to 49 have experienced some kind of violence within their lifetime. Given high prevalence, there are various actions being taken to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls (VAWG) and femicide in-country. The 2018 Comprehensive General Law to Prevent and Eradicate Violence Against Women upholds the approval of comprehensive policies for providing support, protection and reparation for victims, by promoting healthy masculinities and transforming the socio-cultural patterns that perpetuate inequality. Additionally, Ecuador has adopted the National Development Plan "Toda Una Vida" aimed at addressing the normalization of violence and eliminating impunity. Although the women's movement has a long history of participation in-country, there is a need to strengthen the relationship between social movements and women's movements by creating spaces devoted to women vis-à-vis the broader gender equality agenda. Moreover, cases of VAWG rose alarmingly during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, the Ecuador 911 emergency line recorded a 6.8% increase in domestic violence calls, compared to the same time last year. According to official data, the number of women victims of femicide was at 78, the highest since 2017.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

With the support of the European Union, the State, women's organizations and the broader civil society organization (CSO) network, the Spotlight Initiative in Ecuador is committed to developing holistic strategies to prevent and eradicate VAWG by integrating national stakeholders. With a focus on 6 municipalities - Portoviejo, Chone, Azogues, Cuenca, Morona and Pastaza - the programme aims to support the implementation of human rights standards, guided by the key principles of inclusion (i.e. Leave No One Behind), accessibility, security, non-discrimination and non-re-victimization. The programme will foster sustainability by anchoring activities and measures in existing policies and laws, actively engaging State and CSO counterparts and strengthening local institutions. The programme will strategically identify gaps for implementing the Comprehensive General Law to Prevent and Eradicate Violence Against Women and the legal framework on femicide, and respond to the requirements for new normative frameworks needed to implement it. Moreover, the programme is committed to advancing UN Reform, promoting a participatory intervention focused on permanent dialogue with governments and CSOs, and using innovation and technology to attain results and reach more vulnerable populations.

## Planned Results

- ✓ **Supporting the implementation and enforcement of policies that promote the prevention and eradication of VAWG and femicide** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation). The Spotlight Initiative will support the implementation and enforcement of policies and laws that promote eliminating VAWG. It will also strengthen national capacities to develop gender-sensitive legislation, with a focus on more vulnerable populations. The programme will also develop a monitoring and evaluation framework within the National Plan to Prevent and Eradicate VAWG as well as strengthen access to justice by developing reparation policies for victims of VAWG and adapting the regional Protocol for Criminal Investigation on Femicide to the national context. Moreover, it will support the enforcement of the Comprehensive General Law to Prevent and Eradicate Violence Against Women within national and local jurisdictions, as well as strengthen CSOs' advocacy capacities.

- ✓ **Strengthening institutional capacities to challenge the status quo and transform cultural patterns to support eliminating VAWG efforts** (Pillar 2: Institutions). In order to boost institutional capacities, the Spotlight Initiative will coordinate the institutional arrangements and management model of the System to Prevent and Eradicate VAW at the national level and support its implementation at the local level. Further, it will oversee the application of a budgeting mechanism for the provision of services to prevent and eradicate VAWG. The Spotlight Initiative will also implement a budget tracking system on the financial allocation of VAWG at the national and local levels and the monitoring of CSOs. Moreover, it will bolster institutional capacities through the transformation to cultural patterns and promotion of women's access to leadership positions.
- ✓ **Enabling stereotypes and sociocultural patterns change and fostering prevention through work with healthy and non-violent masculinities** (Pillar 3: Prevention). Working with men to foster sustainable prevention and sociocultural patterns change, the Spotlight Initiative will develop a comprehensive, innovative strategy to prevent VAWG and femicide. In efforts to promote prevention, it will also focus on generating mechanisms to prevent harassment within the higher education system and leveraging the National Citizen Tribunal as a tool for citizen mobilization to prevent femicide and VAWG. As a means for understanding the multi-causal, intersectoral nature of violence, the programme will implement a CSO media observatory and engage with local platforms for the promotion of non-sexist communication.
- ✓ **Promoting access to quality services through comprehensive assistance to women victims of violence and their dependents** (Pillar 4: Services). To help ensure women and girls who are survivors and victims of violence have proper access to essential services, the Spotlight Initiative will strengthen the capacities of the health, security and justice sectors as well as the shelter management model, through enabling the teams to take on case management and to adopt self-care measures. It will also offer adaptable guidelines to manage emergency and crisis contexts, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, in response to reported difficulties in accessing emergency services due to weak coordination between the police and Canton Boards for Protecting Rights, the programme will focus on addressing VAWG in situations of crisis and implement the Early Warning system on femicide. It will also instate a system to evaluate judicial operators on enforcing human rights standards on VAWG and femicide. In order to further foster sustainability of actions, the programme will implement mechanisms for the economic empowerment of women survivors and victims of violence as well as that of their dependents.
- ✓ **Reinforcing data collection to strengthen efforts to end VAWG and femicide** (Pillar 5: Data). The Spotlight Initiative will provide technical assistance for the creation of the National Observatory for VAWG, which will contribute to constituting its legal mandate and stimulate synergy with CSOs, academia and other public and private institutions. Moreover, it will implement the National Register of Violence and develop a femicide indicator. It will also engage in specialized research on femicide victim and perpetrator profiles. To ensure sustainability, the programme will work with the Human Rights Secretariat, the Ministry of the Interior, Judicial Council, National Gender Equality Council, and Ecuadorian Institute of Statistics and Census to support national and local capacity transfer to reinforce public policies and strengthen inter-institutional operations.
- ✓ **Strengthening women's participation and advocacy capacities to boost citizen oversight and strategic litigation of VAWG and femicide** (Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). In collaboration with women from civil society, the Spotlight Initiative will oversee and monitor the implementation of laws and public policies to prevent and eradicate VAWG, by supporting the formation of Users' Committees, which contribute to the enforcement of the Comprehensive General Law to Prevent and Eradicate Violence Against Women at the local level through the regular management of technical records and continuous feedback. It will also support women's participation and advocacy capacities through leadership schools for indigenous and afro-descendant women by incorporating contents related to VAWG and femicide. Further, the Spotlight Initiative will work to ensure women's organizations are equipped for self-care and crisis response and well-prepared to engage in strategic litigation.

## Innovative, Promising or Good Practices

A significant good practice that will be employed is the *We Decide* Programme and its focus on responding to gender-based violence against women with disabilities. This programme engaged in a research process addressed at generating evidence and promoting advocacy in order to include this topic in the Comprehensive General Law to Prevent and Eradicate Violence Against Women and the policies of the National Council on Disabilities. Moreover, as part of its commitment to innovation, the programme fostered the adoption of the Citizen Guide on gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health and rights; the engagement of men in prevention activities; the economic empowerment of women victims of violence; partnerships with the private sector, in order to prevent VAWG and femicide in business settings; and technical assistance regarding Behavior Change to strengthen the institutional capacities of the Public Administration to respond to violence against women and girls.

# EL SALVADOR 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 7,595,384	 USD 7,200,000	 USD 395,384	2019 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP

**Other partners:** Institutions from the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches, Civil Society Organizations, Non-governmental Organizations

## Context

El Salvador faces one of the highest rates of femicide and sexual violence in the region. According to data from the Directorate of Information and Analysis of the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety, there were 115 cases of violent deaths of women in 2020, closing the year with a rate of 3.21 per 100,000 women. The 2019 National Survey of Sexual Violence against Women reflects that 6 out of 10 women report that they have experienced at least one act of sexual violence over their lifetime. The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated lockdown measures further exacerbated the high level of violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the country, while, at the same time, the country faced a complex political situation following the 2019 elections with instability in the country's key authorities. Girls have continued to be victims of chronic violence in their homes, and communities during the health crisis. The effect of covid-related lockdowns and stress on families has contributed to an increase in domestic violence. During 2020, 2,086 cases of sexual violence against girls and children were reported where 9/10 victims were girls. Between January and June of 2020, 2,427 cases of violence against women were reported, while pregnancies of girls and adolescents exceeded 6,800.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

The Spotlight Initiative in El Salvador, supported by the European Union, works in the municipalities of San Salvador, San Martín and San Miguel and contributes to reducing femicide and VAWG. During the reporting period, the Spotlight Initiative supported high level processes on eliminating violence against women and contributed to strengthening the legislative framework on eliminating VAWG. Although the programme experienced unforeseen delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters, it was able to reorient and adapt its activities to provide information on referral pathways to women and girls and strengthen services for survivors. An interagency COVID-19 adaptation plan was designed in a participatory manner with the Civil Society National Reference Group, Implementing Partners, and the Technical Committee to ensure relevance to, inter alia, communities and marginalized groups. The principle of Leaving No One Behind has also been at the center of the programme's activities, with grants to Civil Society Organizations defending the rights of transgender people in the country to strengthen their capacity in providing essential medical, psychosocial, and legal services to survivors.

## Key Results

- ✓ **An overhaul of the process for access to justice for survivors of violence and families of femicide victims** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 2: Institutions). In order to improve access to justice for women and girls facing violence, the Spotlight Initiative partnered with the Justice Sector's institutions to strengthen their capacity to provide quality survivor-centred services, and ensure they have adequate and effective resourcing to guarantee universal access to justice. The programme provided technical support to the Attorney General's Office which led to a revised version of the Action Protocol for the Investigation and Criminal Prosecution of Women's Deaths, Femicides and Femicide Suicides. The Protocol sets guidelines, provides tools, and details responsible parties for the investigation and litigation of femicides. As a result of the revision, it now better integrates an intersectional and gender responsive lens in the investigation and criminal prosecution of violent deaths, and provides prosecutors with tools to ensure respect for the rights of victims, survivors and family members throughout the

criminal process. Moreover, the programme conducted numerous studies to examine existing legal loopholes in the country, and provided policy recommendations to fill these gaps in a range of regulatory bodies and codes, facilitating further alignment with international human rights standards.

- ✓ **Preventing violence through shifts in social norms via education and engagement with civil society** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). In partnership with the Ministry of Education, shifts in social norms and deeply held beliefs and attitudes are being promoted through comprehensive sexuality education in schools and by incorporating content on prevention, reaching teachers and children, as well as parents through methodologies on nonviolent parenting. Although the national education system was seriously impacted by COVID-19 and subsequent school closures, the Spotlight Initiative adapted, adjusting activities to ensure they continued in a virtual format. Aligned with the principle of Leaving No One Behind, educational content was adapted to braille and the LESSA system for the visually and hearing-impaired, and broadcast on local radios to better reach those traditionally left behind. To further address gender-transformative approaches, the Spotlight Initiative led innovative virtual prevention work with men and adolescent boys and girls, engaging them to discuss and reflect on harmful masculinities and changed behaviour.
- ✓ **Strengthened capacity to deliver survivor-centred services and use technology to engage men and adolescents** (Pillar 4: Services and Pillar 5: Data). In partnership with various government institutions, the Spotlight Initiative strengthened the capacity of the National Care System to respond to VAWG. The National Care System is the national inter-agency coordination mechanism in which all public institutions responsible for providing essential services participate. Capacity building is expected to strengthen coherence across services and the quality of services provided. A key achievement in 2020, the Spotlight Initiative contributed to the development of the National Sexual Violence against Women Survey, the first specialized survey on sexual violence in the country. The Spotlight Initiative provided technical and financial support to facilitate analysis with public stakeholders and Civil Society Organizations, furthering the evidence base on eliminating VAWG, including evidence on prevention.

### **One Story of Impact: Supporting the creation of special Citizen Complaint Office to address gender-based violence**

The Spotlight Initiative supported the creation of a specialized citizen complaint office (UNIMUJER) in the municipality of San Miguel for girls, adolescents and women to safely and comfortably file reports of gender-based violence. Agents were trained on specific protocols and referral pathways, and provided with tools to ensure a survivor-centered approach aligned with international standards. As such, they were able to provide supportive accompaniment to victims throughout the process of filing a report, a key difference from the approach used in more traditional offices where crimes are reported. According to the records of the San Miguel police delegation, 793 complaints were recorded in 2020 alone for reasons of psychological, physical, sexual and trafficking violence.

#### **In their words...**




We are trained to accompany the victims [across the referral pathway], supporting them to access legal, medical, shelter, and protection services...as the case warrants." - Agent working in the UNIMUJER office

## **Innovative, Promising or Good Practices**

Faith-based organizations and religious leaders can play a critical role in efforts to eliminate VAWG, given their access to and connection with communities and individuals' lives. To advance prevention efforts, the Spotlight Initiative launched an innovative approach to engaging these leaders. Through the development of a diploma on Pastoral Action Against Violence Against Women and Pregnancies in Girls and Female Adolescents implemented by the Evangelical University of El Salvador in coordination with ACT Alianza, three hundred and sixty religious leaders of different denominations were trained on the prevention of violence, including femicide, and the prevention of adolescent pregnancy. Designed collaboratively with church leaders, the curriculum embeds biblical-theological text with a broader prevention framework, facilitating the engagement of faith-based organizations (a sector historically unengaged, given its generally conservative orientation). The diploma promotes constructive dialogue among religious organizations, demonstrating that feminist theology can be reflected within these institutions at the community level. Although this innovative approach has only recently been implemented, shifts in social norms at the community level are already noticeable. These achievements are reflected in more than 20 products across studies, regulations, analyses, and diverse materials that contribute to training and awareness-raising processes with around 650,000 direct beneficiaries.

# HONDURAS

## 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 7,923,150	 USD 7,200,000	 USD 723,151	2019 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women

**Other partners:** Central Government Organizations and Municipalities, Civil Society Organizations, National/Local Organizations Women's and Feminist Organizations, Academia, Private Sector, Religious Sector

### Context

In Honduras, efforts have been made to adapt local legislation and the country's regulatory framework on violence against women and girls (VAWG) to be in line with international conventions, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Belem do Pará Convention. However, widespread violence against women and girls, including femicide, continues to impact the lives of women and girls in Honduras while impunity of perpetrators persists. Between 2005 and 2019, there were close to 6,000 victims of violent deaths and femicide in Honduras.<sup>1</sup> During 2020, Honduras faced the impacts of three major phenomena that have accentuated the challenges for advancing the country's gender equality agenda and for eliminating violence against women and girls: a) the COVID-19 pandemic, b) political instability, exacerbated by cases of corruption and the pre-election context, and c) the devastating impact of tropical storms Eta and Iota. The COVID-19 pandemic led to a spike of violence against women and girls, with critical peaks in May and September, when emergency calls increased 14% and 20%, respectively, compared to February 2020, prior to the start of the pandemic.

### Spotlight Initiative's Response

During 2020, the Spotlight Initiative in Honduras strengthened relationships with key allies and partners, including a wide range of civil society organizations, through an approach focused on complementing existing initiatives, building unprecedented synergies between partners, and ensuring long-term sustainability. Under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, the Spotlight Initiative has stepped up inter-agency work as part of the implementation of UN Reform, undertaking joint field missions and events, establishing joint institutional partnerships and collaboratively streamlining operations. With the support of the European Union, the Spotlight Initiative has also helped to elevate the issue of ending violence against women and girls on the national agenda through its advocacy work with civil society and government partners on legal reform and strengthening institutions and services.

### Key Results

- ✓ **Working towards stronger laws with national institutions and civil society organizations** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation, Pillar 2: Institutions, and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). The Spotlight Initiative has developed numerous trainings on gender-focused budgeting for 24 institutions and 12 civil society organizations, in coordination with the National Women's Institute, to ensure that they are adequately resourcing efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls in a holistic manner. Further, an analysis of gaps in the criminality of femicide in national legislation and policies has also been developed, providing recommendations on areas to be strengthened for the adaptation of the Latin American Protocol Model. Another important step forward is the contribution of civil society partners to the strengthening of the proposal and advocacy for a comprehensive law against violence against women, which is still lacking in Honduras. The programme has provided technical support to both national policymakers and civil society organizations to advocate for legal reform.

<sup>1</sup> IUDPAS, [Boletines](#) 2005-2019.

- ✓ **Engaging education, public services and ambassadors to prevent violence and respond to the needs of survivors** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 4: Services). To advance prevention efforts, the Spotlight Initiative made important headway across numerous sectors: from designing guides for violence prevention and a comprehensive approach to sexuality, to using art at the community level to challenge social norms, to using new technologies to foster online conversations on masculinities. In addition, the programme has been able to push the needle on access to justice and psychosocial support for survivors and families of victims of femicides. Alliances have been generated with leaders of the private sector, faith-based organizations and the media; new qualitative data on the social and institutional tolerance of violence against women and girls has been generated as the basis of the Prevention Strategy hand in hand with the establishment of a media observatory that will contribute to a Communications for Development (C4D) campaign. In fact, an alliance has been forged with the FLACSO university in Argentina for the design and implementation of a training process for the implementation of the Latin American Protocol aimed at the justice sector. The programme has also contributed to strengthening the capacities of psychosocial care services of key government bodies, including family councils and municipal services for women and girls survivors of violence.
- ✓ **Supporting women s movements and institutions to improve data on violence against women and girls** (Pillar 5: Data and Pillar 6: Women s Movement and Civil Society). The Spotlight Initiative has worked with institutions to identify data gaps and opportunities for incorporating femicide within official statistics, currently absent from the data. The Spotlight Initiative, in collaboration with civil society partners, contributed to the design of a new violence against women and girls index that will be soon made publicly accessible. The programme also contributed to strengthening the capacities of women s rights organizations and providing them with the resources and tools to scale-up their advocacy efforts and instrumental work at the community level, addressing the needs of the most marginalized. Innovative approaches to violence against women and girls have been developed with women organizations, strengthening grassroots networks, especially those that face multiple forms of discrimination.

### **One Story of Impact: Entrepreneurship and training for survivors of violence**

As part of the agreement between the Spotlight Initiative and the Women and Family Integral Development Unit, the project "Women Entrepreneurship without Violence in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises" was developed. This project consisted of the articulated work with small and middle private companies and the mapping of economic initiatives for women as essential services. In addition, a mentoring program was developed on topics such as prevention of harassment in the workplace and women s labor rights. Through this programme, Rosa, a survivor of years of domestic violence, secured financial independence and gained self-confidence by being hired for the first time by Hotel Las Hamacas, a company deeply committed to addressing gender-based violence and promoting equality, following a training programme on entrepreneurship targeted for survivors.

#### **In their own words**

Through the mentoring I received with the Women and Family Unit I was able to heal those wounds and understand that I do not have to understand the violent behaviors of my ex-partner, nor should I feel guilty for the violent behaviors of my ex-partner.

Rosa, survivor of violence and participant of the above-mentioned project

## **Innovative, Promising or Good Practices**

The Spotlight Initiative has developed an innovative online platform, referred to as the [OSC Co-Laboratory](#) for civil society partners. This virtual space serves as a one-stop shop for civil society partners where they can find all information in a single repository that includes report formats and forms and guides for the implementation of Monitoring and Evaluation actions, as well as brand usage and visibility guidelines. Akin to an online information and learning center, this space allows civil society partners to share best practices and learn from each other to strengthen their work on ending violence against women and girls.

# MEXICO 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 7,499,365	 USD 6,300,000	 USD 1,199,366	2019 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, OHCHR, UNODC

**Other partners:** National Commission to Prevent and Eradicate Violence Against Women, National Institute of Women, Ministry of Foreign Relations, Civil Society Organizations, Private Sector, Community Organizations, Non-governmental Organizations

## Context

According to data from the Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System in Mexico, the first quarter of 2020 showed an increase by 56.4% in calls to 911 reporting emergencies related to violence against women. In February 2020, there were 18,353 incidents of intimate partner violence, and by March the number climbed to 22,628, an increase of 23%. According to recent data, confinement measures resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic increased cases of violence against women and girls (VAWG), as many women and girls spend most of the day at home with their aggressors. In addition to the outbreak of the pandemic, 2020 saw changes in personnel within key governmental agencies and institutions, which had implications for international development programming.

## Spotlight Initiative s Response

To address the continuum of violence that women and girls face, the Spotlight Initiative in Mexico aims to contribute to the effective prevention and eradication of femicide and other forms of VAWG. With the support of the European Union, the Spotlight Initiative works to strengthen different sectors to secure the rights, development, and wellbeing of women and girls. The programme focuses on the State of Mexico (Naucalpan and Ecatepec), Chihuahua (Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua), and Guerrero (Chilpancingo). In response to COVID-19 and the rise in reports of VAWG, the Spotlight Initiative in Mexico re-evaluated the implementation strategy to modify activities and ensure the continuation of programming during the pandemic. In the spirit of UN Reform, the UN agencies coordinated closely to devise new and creative ways to carry out the work and develop strategies of mitigation and acceleration to ensure progress and generate significant impacts, despite the limitations caused by the new context.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Reforming laws at the federal, state and municipal levels with civil society to effectively contribute to the prevention and eradication of violence, and access to justice for survivors** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). The programme worked with almost 120 Civil Society Reference Group members and women's rights activists at the national and state level to identify gaps reviewing 389 bills on VAWG. Based on deep and broad consultations, 114 main problems were identified by the participating organizations, which were grouped into 7 priority advocacy areas. This identification led to the development of a Diagnosis of the federal framework and a reform package focusing on prevention, punishment and reparations in all relevant laws for which priority issues were identified: femicide, sexual violence, kidnapping, family violence, and orphans of femicide, among others. On December 10, 2020, the first package of reforms prepared by the Spotlight Initiative on the eradication of violence against women was presented to the Chihuahua Congress and was adopted by several deputies to initiate the legislative process. This package was approved in April 2021, becoming the first set of regulations transformed by Spotlight Initiative. The Spotlight Initiative, through strategic alliances with El Colegio de México and OXFAM Mexico, worked to strengthen the capacities of local and grassroots organizations by providing funding for 11 civil society organizations working on the first line of response on the prevention and care of cases of violence, on the basis of "Leave no one behind", including organizations focused on attending domestic workers, women with disabilities, indigenous women, women's movements seeking for missing persons, women and girls from peripheral areas with high levels of vulnerability, girls victims of sexual violence, among others.

- ✓ **Toolbox strengthens Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Experiencing Violence** (Pillar 2: Institutions and Pillar 4: Services). The programme team generated technical tools aimed at strengthening the capacities of 700 service providers for women and girls facing violence. The implementation of the tools developed, together with capacity-building processes for staff providing essential services, allows survivors to access qualitative essential services, focused on their needs and prioritizing their safety and integrity. The tools adopted the Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Experiencing Violence for local and municipality levels, including referral mechanisms, communication material to disseminate information, training curriculum for public officials, and guidelines for the provision of first-contact care for survivors. So far, 500 workers of the 911 emergency line have been trained and 1380 emergency kits were given to women and children victims of violence. Products were developed in close consultation with providers of essential services within the police, judicial and social services sectors and with the participation of civil society organizations and incorporating the experiences of users of these services. While the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the piloting of the tools due to confinement restrictions and reduction of essential services, a "toolbox" will be integrated into the package which is expected to strengthen the capacities of more than 1,200 providers of essential services in different sectors.
- ✓ **Systematization of data providing intersectional perspective of survivors' lives** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 5: Data). In December 2020, the programme team conducted an analysis exercise on the results of the interviews of the Attorney General's Offices of the States of Chihuahua, Guerrero and Mexico. The main objective was to identify the internal statistical process of each agency on VAWG, as well as good practices, lessons learned, areas of opportunity and relevant findings in terms of data and records. This work aimed at generating products that improve decision-making processes, systematize best practices and build spaces for cooperation, in order to promote capacity-building among other states, institutions and organizations, at the national, regional and global levels. This exercise led to the development of a virtual platform that compiles available information on violence in Spotlight Initiative territories and generates comparative analyses between different variables associated with VAWG. The tool includes an interactive overview of VAWG in these territories; disaggregation of data by sex, age, and schooling; and a section of statistics during the months of the pandemic (analysis of 911 calls, family violence variables, among others). This tool is intended to respond to the needs of public officials at the municipal level and to promote the use of information for decision-making and prevention of VAWG.

### One Story of Impact: The power of partnerships

The Spotlight Initiative team established a partnership with Grupo Posadas, one of the largest hotel chains in the country, to provide free accommodation to 178 women and girls who were victims of violence in 13 cities and 4 Spotlight Initiative municipalities, as part of the programme's COVID-19 Response Plan. The partnership has generated a high level of support from all parties, including state and municipal government institutions and Grupo Posadas staff; 307 people have been trained to assume the role of first-line responders. An employee of Grupo Posadas commented on this partnership, saying "the value of this initiative is immeasurable in financial terms because, by offering a safe space, we are saving lives." So far, 4 new hotel chains have expressed interest in joining this activity.

### In their own words...

It is a very beautiful space, I never thought I could be in such a place. The people at the hotel have been very kind to me and my children. At first, I was afraid that we might be discriminated, but it has been the opposite. This time in the hotel has helped me to talk with my children... It has been a space to get to know them better, I feel less fearful than when we started this nightmare. We are very grateful for the treatment and the space." - A 27-year-old indigenous woman who fled her violence from her husband in Chiapas, Mexico, and found safe accommodation with Grupo Posadas

## Innovative, Promising or Good Practices

To deepen work on prevention, the Spotlight Initiative trained community-based civil society organizations adapting to a virtual environment. This allowed for the creation of networks between local organizations that previously have not collaborated in the prevention of VAWG. An example of this linkage was the formation of *Chihuahua con Ellas* a network, which brought together 10 organizations working on community interventions in the municipality of Chihuahua. The network continues to collaborate even after training, promoting coordinated actions to transform social norms for VAWG. Furthermore, as part of the efforts to leave no one behind, the Spotlight Initiative invested in airtime and virtual platform licenses for those facing connectivity problems.

# LATIN AMERICA 2020 Regional Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 4,218,686	 USD 3,500,000	 USD 718,686	Jun 2019 - Dec 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA

**Other partners:** ECLAC, UNICEF, OHCHR, UNODC, IOM, ILO, WHO, PAHO, National Counterparts, Regional Intergovernmental Bodies, International Organizations, Civil Society Organizations and Networks

## Context

Alongside the COVID-19 pandemic, Latin America is undergoing a socioeconomic crisis that is generating greater gender inequalities, affecting mainly girls, boys, adolescents, and women, who are more vulnerable and at-risk to situations of violence, including in their homes. Latin America and the Caribbean house 14 of the 25 countries with the highest number of femicides/feminicides in the world, and the alarming situation of violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the region has been further exacerbated by the pandemic. Data from many countries revealed an increase in the number of calls made to hotlines to report cases of violence and an increase in requests for support and remote assistance services in 2020. Government regulations to prevent the spread of the virus such as quarantines, social isolation and mobility restrictions have generated additional barriers for women to access support networks and essential services that are necessary to prevent and address gender-based violence, protect women and girls, and prosecute perpetrators. These restrictions have also affected the capacities of civil society organizations and networks of human rights defenders, who have also suffered increasing threats, intimidation, and criminalization to discourage their advocacy and defense of human rights.

## Spotlight Initiative s Response

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in the spirit of UN Reform, the implementing agencies of the Spotlight Initiative Latin America Regional Programme worked together with the interagency coordination unit, implementing partners (including regional and subregional organizations) and associated agencies to analyze the emerging situation in the region and its impact on women and girls, using the most relevant data. The European Union and the Civil Society Reference Group provided advice and strategic direction to develop focused lines of action adapted to the new reality. Strategies were designed and implemented that guaranteed the participation and leadership of women in addressing the increased gender-based violence and femicide/feminicides, with differential approaches and intersectoral analyses, prioritizing the needs of the most marginalized groups. Likewise, support to CSOs was prioritized so that they could maintain their actions on the ground and generate new protection mechanisms in the face of crisis.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Cutting-edge research on the intersections between VAWG and femicides in the region** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 5: Data). The programme has carried out a complex, multi-dimensional research framework to generate evidence on the intersections between VAWG and femicides and new scenarios of high risk and social vulnerability in 18 countries, in order to fill critical knowledge gaps on these issues. The programme s research proposal consists of eight studies under a common conceptual framework. The work covers, inter alia, the effects and consequences of migratory processes on VAWG and femicides; the access to livelihoods and the exposure to sexual violence of women in human mobility contexts; organized crime and VAWG in the context of those facing multiple forms of discrimination and exclusion; regional diagnosis of the availability and quality of data on disappearances and trafficking of women; criminal regulations and public policy instruments to adjust the legislation according to the Palermo Protocols; and the quality of the measurement of femicide. An example of meaningful interagency coordination, the research effort to fill knowledge gaps is strengthened with the contributions of the Technical Advisory Committee, which is composed of both recipient UN organizations and associated agencies. The results of these

studies aim to provide resources for local and regional women's rights organizations, decision and policymakers and academics to strengthen existing programmes, legislations and policies, and to contribute to political advocacy on the matter.

- ✓ **An innovative regional Community of Practice to foster greater knowledge exchange** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation). The regional Community of Practice of essential services is a knowledge platform for the exchange of good practices and the generation of evidence and technical guidance to strengthen the response to VAWG in the region. The Spotlight Initiative Latin America Regional Programme held two cycles of seminars on the virtual platform with the participation of more than 5,000 people from 18 countries. In addition, a virtual course has been adapted to the regional context and aims to strengthen essential health, social, police and judicial services, through a coordinated, comprehensive and multisectoral response. In addition, virtual training on essential services for survivors of violence was launched with more than 7,000 participants, mostly public servants. These exchanges not only allowed for an immediate adaptation of the countries' response to the spike of VAWG during lockdowns but also provided practical recommendations and tools for different stakeholders to improve their response to increased cases of VAWG.
- ✓ **Networks of shelters strengthened to ensure their resilience during crises** (Pillar 1: Legislation and Policies and Pillar 3: Prevention). In the context of the pandemic and the spike of VAWG, the Spotlight Initiative programme partnered with the Inter-American Shelters Network to support the adaptation and resilience of shelters in the region so that they could continue providing adequate services to survivors of violence. As a result of this partnership, a practical guide providing recommendations for comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures in shelters in the context of COVID-19 was shared. Additionally, a study providing an overview of the impact of COVID-19 on the emerging needs of shelters was conducted to inform policy-making and advocacy in the region, and a training programme for service providers within shelters was launched to equip providers with the adequate tools and skills to swiftly adapt to the emergency context. The study, where progressive feminization in the private, domestic, or intrafamily sphere is observed, focused on the presence of organized crime, chronic violence and multidimensional poverty, among others. These have increased public insecurity, which mainly affects groups in vulnerable situations, such as women and, among them, those who suffer multiple forms of discrimination and oppression.

### **One Story of Impact: Innovative Coordination Practices in Service of UN Reform**

In the spirit of the UN Reform, a Technical Advisory Committee which comprises UN agencies and 13 regional experts, including former government officials, academics, and representatives of civil society and the women's and feminist movement from ten countries, has been put in place to support the programme's multi-dimensional research framework. The committee provides robust technical support to all the studies carried out under both Pillar 1 (Policies and Legislation) and Pillar 5 (Data). This innovative collaboration aims at leveraging the different stakeholders' expertise to fill critical knowledge gaps on a range of issues related to femicides and VAWG in the region.



#### **In their own words**

With the Spotlight Initiative, we are innovating to eliminate barriers and perceived notions about gender discrimination, ethnic/racial origin, in short, intersectional discrimination, in order to identify initiatives between actors and countries that empower women in their diversity for enforceability of your rights." - Waldistrudis Hurtado Minotta, Gender and Public Policy Consultant with a Differential Focus and Civil Society Reference Group Member of the Latin America Regional Programme, Colombia

### **Innovative, Promising or Good Practices**

The programme has forged a strategic alliance with a feminist organization to generate evidence of what works and what doesn't work with a view to map and identify VAWG prevention experiences from 2010-2020. The collected experiences are being systematized to draw out lessons learned for a multi-stakeholder and multi-level political dialogue with decision-makers in the region to strengthen primary prevention strategies and public policies. Another innovative practice is the development and testing of a model campaign with key messages based on evidence constructed and compiled through behavioral sciences and existing literature on masculinities to strengthen approaches in the response of men and young people in the prevention of VAWG. A behavioral science approach allows studying how humans make decisions and the factors that influence their behavior, thus offering a series of powerful tools to identify or influence critical decision-making. Currently, the Spotlight Initiative is developing a model communication campaign that can be replicated by actors across the region. Finally, the programme forged a strategic alliance with the [Gender Equality Seal for Public and Private Companies](#), that promotes gender equality in the private sector. The partnership seeks to prevent VAWG in the workplace and aims at ensuring that adequate referral pathways are in place. The companies' highest levels of leadership are involved, ensuring that there is a systematic diagnosis and action plan to tackle any existing or future cases of violence against women in all companies.

# AFGHANISTAN 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 16,921,384	 USD 16,500,000	 USD 421,385	Nov 2020 - Dec 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UN Women, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA

**Other partners:** Ministries of Women's Affairs; Youth Affairs; Education; Interior; Public Health; Labour and Social Affairs, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, Civil Society Organizations

## Context

In Afghanistan ranked 170 out of 189 on the Gender Development Index in 2019 women and girls face persistent sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices, despite recent attempts by national stakeholders to make normative progress towards gender equality. While the Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women was passed in 2009, women and girls continue to experience high levels of violence, with an estimated 56% of married women having experienced spousal violence and 47% of women marrying before the age of 18. However, sexual and domestic violence continue to be viewed as private matters for families to manage, and 80% of women and 72% of men think that wife-beating is sometimes justified. These cultural and social beliefs prevent women and girls from accessing the support they need. Evidence<sup>1</sup> shows that the number of women and girls experiencing violence, particularly domestic violence, has increased in all provinces of Afghanistan since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, further exacerbating gender inequalities and limiting women's access to critical services and resources to respond to the crisis. Additionally, institutions in Afghanistan have limited capacity to implement gender-responsive interventions to protect sexual and reproductive health and rights, and current secondary school curricula do not sufficiently enable women and girls to make informed decisions about their own bodies. Gender inequality, harmful norms and rigid definitions of masculinities and femininities continue to lead to and perpetuate an environment of violence against women and girls (VAWG) and hinder the effective implementation of related legislation and policies. Limited technical and financial capacity of key stakeholders to collect, disaggregate, manage, use and disseminate VAWG administrative data still exists, hindering evidence-based VAWG programming. Decades of conflict and insecurity pose significant challenges for programme implementation and have further contributed to the normalization of violence. The deteriorating security situation has also resulted in increased threats and violence to women human rights defenders and peacebuilders as well as stricter security protocols limiting staff movements and affecting programming in the country.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

The Spotlight Initiative in Afghanistan seeks to be both responsive and resilient to the country's challenging context. Covering the Herat, Kandahar, and Paktia provinces, the Spotlight Initiative has brought together government, civil society, the European Union and the United Nations with an opportunity to consolidate and accelerate efforts aimed at reducing VAWG. As full implementation begins in 2021, the Spotlight Initiative will prioritize support to civil society to play a central role in the programme and promote increased partnership with the Government to realize international and national commitments to women's rights. The Spotlight Initiative will also focus on engaging women and girls who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, particularly women and girls from remote and rural populations, in order to ensure that their needs and priorities are at the top of the national agenda for women's human rights. Additionally, the Spotlight Initiative will work to engage men and boys as agents of change as well as with adolescent girls and young women as rights holders. Although the Spotlight Initiative in Afghanistan works across the six Pillars of the Theory of Change, the programme will prioritize the prevention of sexual gender-based violence and harmful practices and the provision of comprehensive services. Furthermore, the Spotlight Initiative will apply a COVID-19 lens to its programming, to ensure that work is relevant and tailored to operational and contextual constraints.

<sup>1</sup> Oxfam, [A New Scourge to Afghan Women: COVID-19](#).

## Planned Results

- ✓ **Strengthening policies by expanding knowledge on women's human rights** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation). The Spotlight Initiative will support the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission to conduct nation-wide enquiries on gender equality, non-discrimination, gender-based violence and harmful practices, in order to enhance available evidence-based knowledge on eliminating VAWG.
- ✓ **Enabling the effective implementation of strategies to end VAWG** (Pillar 2: Institutions). The Spotlight Initiative in Afghanistan will prioritize bolstering institutional capacity for the implementation and monitoring of the National Action Plan to Eliminate Early and Child Marriage 2017-2022. Working with Provincial Government Officers, the Spotlight Initiative will also identify and support vulnerable groups and key stakeholders in developing evidence-based local plans that target women and girls who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Moreover, the programme will establish a multi-stakeholder platform for knowledge sharing, coordination, technical support and advocacy at the national and provincial levels to support the efforts of government, civil society, service providers, development partners, and donors.
- ✓ **Affecting social norms change through education, advocacy, and social mobilization** (Pillar 3: Prevention). In order to prevent VAWG in a sustainable way, the Spotlight Initiative will partner with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Health, students, young people, parents, and teachers to ensure comprehensive sexuality education, promote safe schools, and roll out school-based prevention and response initiatives. The Spotlight Initiative will also undertake multi-media interventions, utilize community advocacy platforms, and engage community influencers and men and boys networks to promote gender equitable social norms and behaviors and positive masculinity. Additionally, the programme will develop and monitor a National Prevention Framework to promote evidence-based, coordinated approaches to prevention.
- ✓ **Facilitating the provision of high-quality and integrated essential services for women and girl survivors of violence** (Pillar 4: Services). To ensure that women and girls have access to coordinated and survivor-centred services, the Spotlight Initiative will engage in capacity development for frontline service providers, civil society organizations (CSOs) and community organizations as well as produce guidelines, standard operating procedures, and tools for quality case management and referrals for women and girls. Additionally, the Spotlight Initiative will scale up services through partnerships with women protection centres, family guidance centres, family protection centres, youth health corners, girls' safe spaces, youth health lines, and child protection action networks, among other groups.
- ✓ **Leveraging data to strengthen efforts to eliminate VAWG** (Pillar 5: Data). Working with the National Statistic and Information Authority to collect and analyse gender- and age-disaggregated data, the Spotlight Initiative will use data to inform stronger programming. In 2020, the programme finalized the terms of reference for the baseline survey and mapping exercise, which will equip the team with the necessary information to tailor interventions and reach target populations. In 2021, the programme will map gender-based violence data collection systems to support greater harmonization and will work with police, CSOs, and key stakeholders to improve data collection, analysis and utilization at the national, provincial and district levels.
- ✓ **Supporting young women and girls and the women's movement to advocate for the elimination of gender-based violence** (Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). In partnership with young women's networks and women civil society actors, the Spotlight Initiative will provide support through capacity building that will enable them to undertake social accountability mechanisms and to enhance their ability to claim their rights and advocate for better laws and policies. This will also provide a key linkage to and entry point with the Spotlight Initiative for Central Asia and Afghanistan.

## Innovative, Promising or Good Practices

The Spotlight Initiative programme in Afghanistan has fostered innovation, laying the groundwork for innovative practices and activities to be carried out in 2021. These include an online civil society platform, which will promote knowledge and information sharing among members of the Eliminating Violence Against Women Forum, and a technology-based solution to real-time monitoring needs called RapidPro / U-Report. The U-Report is an innovative way to facilitate two-way communication via phones and social media platforms, such as WhatsApp and Viber, to monitor and course-correct programming. Other innovative practices will include mobile teams - which will provide emergency essential support, referrals and information to survivors of gender-based violence and harmful practices, particularly those most marginalized - and intergenerational dialogues and mentoring of women, which will support young women's engagement in the women's movement and bridge the gap between big organizations and grassroots organizations.

# KYRGYZSTAN 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 5,396,071	 USD 4,700,000	 USD 696,071	2020 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UN Women, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNODC

**Other partners:** General Prosecutor's Office, Bar Association, Supreme Court, Parliament, Ombudsman's Office, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Health and Social Development; Justice; National Statistics Committee; Education and Science; Culture, Information, Sports and Youth Policy, Local and National Civil Society Organizations, International Non-governmental Organizations

## Context

The life choices of women and girls in Kyrgyzstan are restricted by deeply rooted patriarchal norms and behaviors, and more recently, threatened by a resurgence of conservative voices as evidenced in recent public attacks on women's rights events. Across the country, 50% of men and 34% of women surveyed agreed that a husband can hit his wife if, for example, she leaves the house without telling her spouse or burns the food<sup>1</sup>. Of ever-married women and girls aged 15 to 49, 25% have experienced domestic violence<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, according to the official data of the National Statistics Committee, in 2019, 93% of reported cases of domestic violence were committed by men. Child marriage and forced abduction of a girl for marriage are commonly widespread practices but often ignored as a social problem. Despite the country having signed multiple global human rights conventions, many challenges remain in regard to the enforcement of local laws and monitoring reforms. While Kyrgyzstan has its strong legal framework recognizing different forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG), survivors' rights to services, and punishment for perpetrators, it still faces issues in ensuring public awareness, engagement, and trust, as well as public funding. During COVID-related restrictions, VAWG surged, with a 62% increase in reported cases during the year's first quarter as compared to 2019<sup>3</sup>.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

The Spotlight Initiative has prioritized listening to survivors and women and girls in general; building broad coalitions of support for its work; strengthening the sectors most in need of gender-responsive training; carefully researching the specifics of context – both community conditions and service systems – to inform its response. With the support of the European Union and strong coordination among UN agencies, the Spotlight Initiative in Kyrgyzstan adapted its budget and workplan to address the immediate situation. The Initiative noted that despite progressive laws and significant resources, the response to VAWG during the COVID-19 emergency highlighted areas of the system needing additional support such as capacity-building towards a unified, multi-sectoral response to VAWG in humanitarian settings.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Enhancement of the legal frameworks to better protect women and girls** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 5: Data). The Spotlight Initiative's critical review of VAWG laws and judicial practices identified legal inconsistencies and practical gaps which will inform the programme's efforts to support the development of relevant bylaws, amendments, and practices. Concurrently, to document survivors' experiences on a broader scale under this improved legal framework, the Spotlight Initiative supported an upgrade of the Office of the General Prosecutor's data system (Unified Registry of Crimes and Misdemeanors) to meet the UN Statistical Commission's standards for crimes related to VAWG, including disaggregation of data by sex, age, education, marital status and other key characteristics relevant for legal and other services. The Spotlight Initiative further supported age-sensitive

<sup>1</sup> [Medical and demographic research 2012](#)

<sup>2</sup> The Kyrgyzstan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2018, Statistical Committee

<sup>3</sup> Data of National Statistical Committee, 2020

legal frameworks, including guidance on services tailored to the particular needs of girls and boys who have suffered violence and trauma, and selection and training of legal staff to address the intricacies of the law as it relates to children.

- ✓ **An enabling environment for women and girls to report cases of violence** (Pillar 2: Institutions, Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 4: Services). With the purpose to integrate the Essential service package and improve coordinated service delivery to gender-based violence (GBV) survivors, the comprehensive assessment and participatory mapping of existing essential services (health, psychosocial, social, justice, police) at the national and subnational level was completed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including beneficiaries, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and survivors. For those unable to reach services, the Spotlight Initiative is adapting the Ministry of Justice's mobile legal-services unit, Bus of Solidarity. Building on the work of the Union of Social Pedagogues, who reached out to families regarding the Helpline for Children during the COVID-19 lockdowns, the Spotlight Initiative is developing an integrated case-management system to refer children in difficult life situations, including those experiencing violence, to relevant services. Further, a multisectoral approach to sexual GBV in emergency situations was developed and endorsed under the leadership of the Ministry of Health and Social Development and Association of Crisis Centres to improve the coordination and quality of response to GBV through online counselling and referral for survivors, where VAWG survivors were provided with psychosocial support, legal and medical aid.
- ✓ **Enabling change in attitude and norms through broad-based strategies** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 6: Women's Movement). The Spotlight Initiative undertook a qualitative study in which community members were trained to become researchers in their environments. This work is expected to inform future social and behavioral change communication and a community-wide, gender-focused dialogue, including special outreach to men and boys. Meeting the community "where it is" and creating new spaces for conversations and knowledge sharing, informed the response to the 2020 public attacks on women's rights groups. As a result, this helped research with conservative and nationalist actors to better understand their position and produced the recommendation to incorporate moderate civil society actors. In addition to supporting the broad coalition of the UN UNITE campaign on ending VAWG, the Spotlight Initiative also engaged the online technology community in producing context-adapted content. Subsequently, a highly successful internet-based learning tool – a video game on ending child marriage – built a bridge to a largely progressive additional movement, that of youth. Through teacher-training modules and expanding outreach online, the programme has positioned itself to create a strong broad-based coalition building.

### **One Story of Impact: UN Reform in Practice**

Despite the political turmoil in 2020, the programme has implemented its activities through extensive coordination across Recipient UN Organizations and cooperation among CSOs. Demonstrating the spirit of UN Reform, the Spotlight Initiative held "Pathways of Change" consultations to gain joint understandings of the programme activities, goals, and potential impacts. This has allowed CSOs to be connected across pillars, whereby one agency's data on services informs another agency's revisions of the law. To further adjust to and plan for the unexpected, the team led several stakeholder meetings, including with the Government, using the Oxford Scenario Planning Approach to anticipate scenarios likely to affect the implementation of the National Gender Equality Strategy. The approach includes an even broader mix of expertise (e.g. on religion, politics, economics, culture studies) – an approach allowing to hear different perspectives and eliminating group-think. This inter-agency and cross-sector collaboration resulted in a shift towards an integrated approach of engaging a broader expert community.

### **In their own words...**

Gender inequality starts in our heads. I believe (the) Spotlight (Initiative) team will bring comprehensive behavioral and social changes in our country - Benazir Kaliyeva, gender activist

## **Innovative, Promising or Good Practices**

With over 4.6 million views, 117,000 downloads, and an approval rating of 4.8/5 in less than 6 months, the Spotlight Initiative's interactive video game, in which players stop the attempted abduction of a young girl for marriage, has proven to be a potentially very powerful tool in challenging VAWG and in shaping alternative behaviors. The game is the first test of a larger initiative on Interactive Stories for Girls through their smartphones – an accessible and affordable mass communications tool, even in rural areas. The approach further engages users to select between laws which protect the rights of girls and gender stereotypes and patriarchal practices. The game allows players to personalize the main character and choose the actions needed to create a safe environment – thereby fostering empathy, teaching about consequences, maintaining interest, and bringing a hopeful, positive message.

# TAJIKISTAN 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 5,567,038	 USD 4,900,000	 USD 667,037	2020 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women

**Other partners:** Committee on Women and Family Affairs; Ministries of Justice, Internal Affairs, Health and Social Protection, Education and Science, and Committee on Religion, Regulation of Traditions, Celebration and Ceremonies; Agency of Statistics; Supreme Court, Union of Advocates; Attorney General's Office; Office of Ombudsman, Women's Rights Organizations and Networks; Grassroots and Women's Community Groups; Organizations of Persons with Disabilities; Religious Associations; Human Rights Organizations; Youth Centers; Organizations working on Gender-equality issues; Mass Media; Sport Schools; Research Groups

## Context

The 2019 Gender Development Index ranked Tajikistan 125 out of 189 countries, reflecting women's low levels of participation in the economy and politics. Although the country's constitution guarantees equal rights for women, the legal and regulatory tools needed to enforce those rights need improvement. Violence against women and physical punishment of children are widespread throughout the country, with higher rates in the region of Khatlon, where 32.7% of the population lives in poverty. Survey results, conducted under the Project to Reduce Violence against Women in Tajikistan, show deep-seated patriarchal values; over 95% of both women and men agree that if a wife angers a husband, it is acceptable for him to punish her through physical, emotional, economic and other forms of violence. The COVID-19 stay-at-home orders were associated with an increase in domestic violence in Tajikistan, which spurred the government to increase its support for ongoing services benefitting all survivors.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

The Spotlight Initiative in Tajikistan, which is supported by the European Union, has laid the foundation for a strong multi-sectoral approach to meet the needs of survivors of violence against women and girls (VAWG) and bring about normative change to end violence at community level. In line with UN Reforms, Recipient UN Organizations joined forces to work in six rural districts and the capital, to support efforts to identify different types of survivor services (medical, legal, counselling) to be strengthened. It further helped develop district-specific guides for providers that map all possible public and private service providers at each level of governance and identify technical resources adapted for that district. Longer-term investments in specialized training of gender advocates and working with men are expected to foster changes at community level. Moreover, community volunteers visiting households to educate members on COVID-19 risks and protocols were also able to monitor these households for indications of violence or abuse and report their concerns for follow-up.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Survivors of violence given access to medical, psychosocial, legal, and social services that meet international quality standards** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 2: Institutions). Through interdisciplinary collaboration, women and girls who have experienced violence will have access to medical, psychosocial, legal, and social services which meet international quality standards. The Spotlight Initiative and a team of national and international consultants have collaborated to develop a methodology to comparatively review the adherence to global standards for each service sector (i.e. security, justice, health, labor/social affairs and education). Specifically, the review identifies areas of improvement to foster coordination among service providers that were previously working in silos. It is also expected to further strengthen the efforts of the National Multi-Sectoral Coordination Group (a group comprised of diverse actors working to establish national and sub-national coordination and oversight mechanisms to address VAWG at local level) to provide additional learning opportunities to other marginalized groups, such as women and girls living with disabilities.

- ✓ **A national database on VAWG planned to identify gaps and needs in services for survivors of violence** (Pillar 4: Services and Pillar 5: Data). Working closely with the Agency for Statistics and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the Spotlight Initiative launched a process to revise and harmonize the tools used to collect VAWG data and to create a database to identify gaps and needs in services for women survivors of violence, providing more effective distribution of support for all modalities of services. To respond to the increased demand resulting from COVID-19, the Spotlight Initiative supported clinic-based and outreach services; hotlines offering free psychological, legal and referral assistance to survivors of violence; 6 women's centers providing psychological, medical and legal support to survivors; and an additional 10 victim-support rooms providing shelter and timely medical services. This led to over 110 health professionals being trained on the National Protocol for provision of quality essential services for survivors of rape, over 2,291 individuals to be supported by the distance psycho-social support hub, and 3,400 individuals by the localized case management referral mechanisms.
- ✓ **Gender transformative approaches at community level will sustain reduction in VAWG** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). Responding rapidly to COVID-19 related increases in VAWG, informational videos originally developed for young men to promote positive masculinity and challenge traditional norms were adapted for older men to focus on men's involvement with care work leading to a reduced domestic burden on women. To address a trend in resistance to social activism, the Spotlight Initiative is also expected to launch a School of Gender Advocates working on transformative approaches to ending VAWG. Through this, Spotlight Initiative put out a call for help in formulating a Civil Society Strategy to Leading Change and provided technical and financial support to operationalize the strategy. Normative change at community level will continue to advance through additional informational materials shared through campaigns, challenging traditional gender roles, promoting equality and labor-sharing in six pilot districts.

### **One Story of Impact: A quality service from tailored case management knowledge-sharing**

Increased VAWG cases associated with COVID-19 created an urgent need to rapidly expand the number of agencies able to provide high quality services appropriate for the varied contexts within Tajikistan. Drawing from existing guidelines, learning resources, and referral pathways of established providers, the Spotlight Initiative helped compile detailed, context-specific information alongside a map of each district's service providers at all levels. With support from the Committee of Women and Family Affairs, a compendium with materials specialized for CSOs and providers working with special populations was created. These detailed, localized case-management packages helped providers improve services, provided a map of all local resources, and supported the regular updating of referral pathways. The compendium, in great demand among CSOs, service providers, experts, state partners and the Committee of Women and Family Affairs, also facilitated coordination amongst providers.

### **In their own words...**

Localized referral mechanisms for cases of gender-based violence helped us a lot during our work in the target regions. These materials provide a good overview of the existing mechanisms for referring victims of gender-based/domestic violence to government agencies for services. I would recommend the materials to be circulated further as cases of gender-based violence have increased significantly during the pandemic... We will continue to disseminate the brochures and provide our assistance to victims of gender-based/domestic violence using the mechanism. - Zebo Sharifova, Director of Public Organization Women-Lawyers for Development

## **Innovative, Promising or Good Practices**

The COVID-19 lockdowns restricted face-to-face trainings for volunteers working in villages to educate communities about VAWG and survivor services. High attrition rates due to COVID-19 cases among volunteers further left labour gaps. As a result, the Spotlight Initiative developed a digital tutorial to train new community volunteers and non-governmental organizations on outreach, communication skills, and referrals for survivors using an online platform. It also adapted the training as an application for mobile phones to accommodate volunteers who were unable to access the tutorial given limited internet access. This was the first digital training application in Tajikistan. Interactive, user-friendly and highly portable for field volunteers in remote districts, the app provided an easy to access guide addressing communication techniques, the identification of VAWG cases, and referral mechanisms while adhering to the principles of Leaving No One Behind and Do No Harm. This is expected to improve efficiency and increased community coverage, as new volunteers save time by using the mobile app while travelling.

# CENTRAL ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN

## 2020 Regional Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 4,432,461	 USD 4,248,584	 USD 183,877	Jul 2020 - Dec 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP

**Other partners:** Governments, Civil Society, Activists, Survivors, Youth, Men and Faith-based Leaders from the five Central Asian states and Afghanistan

### Context

In the countries targeted by the Regional Programme in Central Asia and Afghanistan<sup>1</sup>, violence against women and girls (VAWG) remains a significant concern, with an estimated 31% of ever-married women aged 15-49 having experiencing physical, sexual or emotional violence by their spouse, though rates range across countries. Public tolerance of violence against women and girls remains high in the region: in Tajikistan, for example, 96.5% of men and 71.5% of women interviewed by Oxfam in 2016 agreed that women must tolerate violence for the benefit of the family. Apart from Afghanistan, there are improvements in other key indicators for women (such as lower maternal mortality and higher school enrollment rates) in the region. However, persistent violence against women and girls reflects deep-seated, traditional, patriarchal beliefs manifesting in norms and restricting girls' and women's rights and choices. Resistance to normative change, coexistence of relatively progressive new laws and weak implementation of legislation, and lack of institutional accountability and disaggregated data on violence against women and girls are shared realities across all countries in the region. Under the COVID-19 emergency, which resulted in the most significant downturn in the economies of the region in 26 years, there was a documented increase in violence against women and girls, particularly for girls who lost protection with reduced time spent outside the home (in school and the community) making actions on violence against women and girls even more urgent.

### Spotlight Initiative's Response

Reflecting the principles of UN Reform, the Resident Coordinators and implementing UN agencies involved in the regional programme work together, with the support of the European Union, to reach the collective objective of eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls. In 2020, governments, civil society, academia and community leaders fostered cross-border cooperation and multi-stakeholder dialogue through the Central Asia Alliance, a regional mechanism supported by the Spotlight Initiative. Exchange of experience through interagency cooperation, cross-border learning, and dialogue across civil society has been encouraged in each country, with the aim of addressing common challenges related to: a) Shifting norms at the community level; b) Supporting women's movements to hold governments accountable; c) Including those often left behind in decision-making processes; and d) Updating and enforcing existing laws and policies while strengthening implementing institutions on effectively applying international standards on violence against women and girls service provision, data collection, and monitoring.

### Key Results

- ✓ **Strengthening knowledge on legal framework on violence against women and girls** (Pillar 1: Policy and Laws and Pillar 2: Institutions). A regional legislative review is ongoing and expected to improve women's and girls' access to health as well as to legal services to mitigate the effects of violence. The review is documenting gaps such as forms of violence not covered by law or regulation and promising/good practices such as linking law enforcement to care services in order to adhere to global standards for survivor-centered case management. The network of experts undertaking the review will also identify key national

<sup>1</sup> The programme covers Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, with partnerships with national stakeholders from Afghanistan.

and regional institutions in need of strengthening their knowledge on global standards. These institutions will guide investments in generating broad-based, sustainable political support for the international human rights and survivor-centered agreements addressing violence against women and children, including those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

- ✓ **Civil society engagement and prevention of violence** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). The regional programme supported community-level, gender-transformative, and educational initiatives to increase men's and boys' awareness of their responsibilities and accountability, along with public education and solidarity campaigns led by the women's movement. These initiatives are increasing women's and girls' awareness of their rights and contributing to shifts in unequal social norms on gender roles. With the support of the Spotlight Initiative, rights and solidarity messages were launched via the campaign #NeMolchiCA (DontBeSilent), as well as on UN Women's and FemAgora's social media. This messaging was formalized with the movement-led conference Giving Voices and a Safe Space to Survivors, which highlighted results and established cross-border partnerships of Civil Society Organization (CSOs) to end violence against women and girls. In addition, the programme's work with men and boys through the technical support of MenEngage will involve a review of experiences in the region to share good practices and develop a common roadmap to transform harmful masculinities.
- ✓ **Accurate, timely, and comparable data on violence informs policy, programmes, and learning** (Pillar 5: Data). The regional programme will use a common framework and set of tools for data collection on patterns of violence, which will advance the core principles of the programme in leveraging the power of collective action and cross-border networking for sustainable change. The common tools will help ensure that data from different subnational parts of one country as well as from different countries in the region will be comparable, a change that will also help identify different patterns of violence against women and girls associated with intra-regional conflicts and population movements, economic shocks and natural disasters. The programme has also launched a partnership with kNOWVAWdata to foster knowledge and exchange on violence against women and girls data through this partner's internationally recognized training tools, developed to guide regular data collection as well as a national prevalence survey.

### One Story of Impact: Survivor Stories Mobilize a Movement

To raise awareness among the general public, amplify the voices of civil society, foster engagement of decision-makers, and encourage women and survivors to speak up, major regional social media campaigns, such as #NeMolchiCA (DontBeSilent), were launched in 2020. These campaigns created a space for survivors of violence against women and girls to widely share their stories and experiences, raising awareness about the critical need of accessing coordinated quality services. Through these campaigns, nearly 100 stories made clear the near universality of women's experiences with violence as well as the power of civil action and common themes crossing national borders. This work also helped women's movements and CSOs catalyze their efforts in streamlined outreach efforts. To capture this momentum and solidify ties, the campaign by the Public Fund NeMolchiKZ concluded with an online regional conference of women's rights activists and survivors of violence from across the region, titled "#DontBeSilent Movement in Central Asia: Giving Voices and a Safe Space to Survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence".

### In their own words...

The [Spotlight Initiative's] support...is a big breakthrough for many [and] several civil society organizations have joined forces in the region to combat violence. This...support unite(s) the efforts of public figures and civil society. We hope that...our network will expand, and other countries will join the Movement in Central Asia." - Dina Smailova, NeMolchiKZ (DontBeSilentKZ) Foundation, Kazakhstan

## Innovative, Promising or Good Practices

The Regional Open Coordination Group on Small Grants for CSOs provided a flexible platform for UN agencies across countries in Central Asian and Afghanistan to think outside the box and coordinate across the region while building a movement against violence against women and girls. Members of this group jointly reviewed and considered both national and regional priorities in making recommendations to the regional programme on CSO grants. This group also jointly defined long-term strategies for a vital and sustainable civil society and women's movement in the region. The group ensured transparency, efficiency, and good governance in the disbursement of small grants, ensuring that this mechanism was able to reach and foster groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discriminations.

# SAFE AND FAIR 2020 Regional Programme Results

Total Budget	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 30,000,000	 USD 29,370,587	 USD 629,413	2018 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** ILO, UN Women

**Other partners:** UNODC, Regional and National Counterparts (ASEAN Institutions, Government, Employers Organizations, Workers Organizations, Non-governmental Organizations and others), International Organizations

## Context

With the support of the European Union, the regional programme Safe and Fair: Realizing women migrant workers rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region (Safe and Fair) is implemented in the South East Asian region (covering Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam). The programme's overriding objective is ensuring that labour migration is safe and fair for all women in the ASEAN region through addressing women migrant workers' vulnerabilities to violence and trafficking, strengthening rights-based and gender-responsive approaches to violence against women (VAW) and labour migration governance, as well as supporting access to essential services. The programme mainstreamed three cross-cutting approaches: 1) women's voice and agency; 2) rights-based approaches; and 3) broad engagement of stakeholders, delivering jointly on programme initiatives.

While women and men migrant workers in the region strived to protect their livelihoods and health, many women migrant workers were disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and its economic and health impacts. Many have faced cuts in pay and retrenchment. Those who remained employed may have been forced or coerced to continue work in unsafe conditions, undertake longer working hours (especially migrant domestic workers), or work without sufficient protective equipment. In these situations, movement restrictions and quarantine procedures have restricted women migrant workers from seeking assistance and accessing social networks and support services. Services for women who have experienced violence became harder to access in 2020 due to movement restrictions, a reality that can have an even greater impact on women migrant workers, who already face significant barriers to access services.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

To remain relevant in such an environment and to respond in a timely and effective manner to the emerging needs of women migrant workers, the Spotlight Initiative's Safe and Fair programme has been able to pivot its programming approaches and prioritize support to the elaboration of COVID-19 response strategies and to ensuring service delivery (via shelters, hotlines, quarantine facilities, etc.) is not disrupted due to the crisis. Safe and Fair shifted from face-to-face to remote service provision through safe technology when needed, enhanced information dissemination on the emerging risks of violence and exploitation and where to seek help, and strengthened peer networks and workers' organizations in adapting to the new context.

## Key Results

- ✓ **New and revised laws and policies highlighting women migrant workers** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation). Supporting ASEAN countries in their commitments to gender equality, ending violence against women, gender responsive labour migration and decent work, Safe and Fair provided technical support to the political measures to prevent and/or respond to violence against women migrant workers through 17 new legal and policy instruments; of the total, 5 were adopted in 2020. Safe and Fair provided technical support to Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam in the process of revising or developing new laws, policies, and regulations on labour migration or ending violence against women and/or national level standard operating procedures. This included support for legal and policy instruments, including

labour migration regulations, national action plans on violence against women and trafficking in persons, and national standard operating procedures and protocols, to ensure a gender-responsive and survivor centered approach. Furthermore, Safe and Fair advocated for the importance of maintaining or strengthening the availability of coordinated quality essential services for women migrant workers, including survivors of violence, in an emergency context like COVID-19, through the provision of technical inputs on national and regional COVID-19 strategies and action plans.

- ✓ **Building capacity in institutions and services through improved knowledge and data about violence** (Pillar 2: Institutions, Pillar 3: Prevention, Pillar 4: Services, and Pillar 5: Data). Safe and Fair has partnered with governments, trade unions, and civil society organizations to provide coordinated quality services to women migrant workers and their families, including through Migrant Worker Resource Centres. Safe and Fair supported the provision of coordinated quality VAW services and disseminated information on the risks of VAW and on where to locate available specialized VAW services to contact for help. In 2020, 75,445 women migrants were provided with support services, including psychosocial, health, social or legal services; with increased knowledge of support initiatives, eliminating violence against women, and safe and fair migration; and with job skills training/certification, and 18,892 frontline service providers enhanced their capacity to provide quality services. In the context of COVID-19, strengthening the capacities of frontline service providers across the region and accompanying them throughout the adaptation of their services to the new normal was a priority. In countries of origin, direct support to returnee women migrant workers who had to repatriate due to loss of jobs, incomes and travel restrictions was ensured through support to quarantine facilities and shelters. In countries of destination, support to helpline services addressing violence against women, including women migrant workers, was prioritized.
- ✓ **Organizing and networking with women migrant workers** (Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). During the COVID-19 pandemic, Safe and Fair partners supported cross-border information sharing and network building among women migrant workers, more specifically among migrant domestic workers. Through Safe and Fair partnerships, 2,975 women migrant workers were organized into trade unions, workers' associations, and peer networks in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, and Malaysia. In Cambodia, peer groups of women at the community level played a pivotal role during the pandemic in creating a safe environment for returnee women migrant workers and sharing resources and information with members. In Myanmar, returnee women who were residing in quarantine centers were empowered through activities organized to increase awareness about violence against women migrant workers and to disseminate information on safe migration and COVID-19.

### **One Story of Impact: Shifting negative attitudes towards women migrant workers**

Safe and Fair launched a [video campaign](#) to promote a better understanding of women migrant workers' contributions to the societies and economies of countries of destination and origin, as well as to address gender-based inequalities and violence during the migration process and the attitudes prevalent among the public and duty-bearers that migrant workers should not enjoy the same treatment as local workers. The video was produced based on the findings of Public Attitudes towards Migrant Workers in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Japan – a recent study conducted jointly by Safe and Fair and the TRIANGLE in ASEAN programme.

#### **In their own words...**

[Through the shelters, the bond among returnee women migrant workers is stronger.](#) - Rara Saraswati, Assistant at Rumah Perlindungan Trauma Center, in Bambu Apus Jakarta

## **Innovative, Promising or Good Practices**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Safe and Fair has adopted an integrated approach to enhance access to quality service provision, including systems strengthening, knowledge generation and information dissemination through technology. The programme ensured that hotline operators were able to provide reliable information and referral with updated skills and information on safe use of technology. Helpline operators within and beyond the ASEAN region came together in a joint webinar to share promising practices and common challenges in providing remote services. The recommendations from the dialogue fed into a knowledge product on [remote service provision](#) and [safe technology](#) for women migrant workers at risk of or subjected to violence. Additionally, social media groups operated by women's networks and domestic worker associations served as platforms to post essential information, such as the service directories and the safety plans, to digitally share news and reliable information. The platforms supported by Safe and Fair have proven to be conducive and safe for workers to report cases of violence and abuse and seek help.

# BELIZE 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 2,948,751	 USD 2,475,000	 USD 473,751	2020 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF

**Other partners:** Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People s Affairs, Ministry of Health & Wellness, Ministry of National Defense and Border Security, Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology, Attorney General s Ministry, Special Envoy for the Development of Families and Children, National Women s Commission, National Committee for Families and Children, Civil Society Organizations, Academia

## Context

Belize has ratified the core UN Human Rights Treaties, reflecting these principles in their national laws and policies. However, their impact is limited by an under-resourced National Women s Commission, a lack of protocols that would operationalize the law and regulations to activate the Criminal Code, as well as the absence of local level and independent mechanisms to hold individuals and institutions accountable. With 56% of the population living at or below the poverty line and dispersed over a very broad, rural geography, poor access to both sexual and reproductive health services and protection services in the face of violence are major impediments to realizing the rights of women and girls. During 2020, Belize faced multiple challenges limiting access to services for populations in the most rural areas, including the COVID-19 pandemic and major flooding following Hurricanes Eta and Iota.

## Spotlight Initiative s Response

The Spotlight Initiative Belize, has worked to cultivate an enabling environment that responds to and prevents violence against women and girls (VAWG) by addressing a lack of knowledge on rights and laws, challenging gender-discriminatory social norms, and strengthening community-level accountability mechanisms. It has also worked to strengthen violence against women and girls services, by improving access to and the quality of services for survivors, while educating youth and adults to change harmful norms and practices at the community level. In all six districts of Belize, the Spotlight Initiative has supported meaningful collaborations between government and civil society, engaged communities to identify both challenges to implementing legislation on family violence and gaps in essential services guaranteed by law, and developed ministries and providers technical capacities. It has also worked to expand access to services through hotlines, as well as mobile services for those hardest to reach. The Spotlight Initiative is supported by the European Union, and the achievements in the Spotlight Initiative s first year were made possible by a One UN approach, which strengthened overall coordination and technical coherence. A specialized management and governance protocol was developed to outline the roles, functions, and working relationships including mechanisms for reporting, coordination, and accountability among the agencies and the Spotlight Initiative s institutional governance mechanisms.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Revisions to core national policies to better reflect civil society's diverse priorities** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 6: Women s Movement and Civil Society). In partnership with three ministries, Spotlight Initiative engaged Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to identify and represent the concerns of women, girls, and their communities within the process of making revisions to the National Gender Policy and the National Gender-Based Violence Action Plan. To encourage meaningful dialogue between CSOs and decision-making entities, the Spotlight Initiative strengthened CSOs capacities to manage programmes that can demonstrate new approaches as well as decision-making entities (such as independent human rights accountability mechanisms and the judicial and court sectors) ability to work collaboratively with diverse civil society groups; and enhanced

knowledge and awareness of advocacy platforms to ensure these decision-making entities are held accountable to communities and marginalized groups. It has supported the expansion of the networks of CSOs addressing violence against women and girls to ensure a greater diversity of perspectives so that no one is left behind. This included outreach to marginalized groups such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) coalitions as well as the establishment of a new partnership with the Belize National Indigenous Council – a crucial platform for reaching indigenous Maya and Garifuna males and females to stimulate dialogue within these groups to change harmful social norms.

- ✓ **Increasing respect for the rights of girls and women, reducing violence, and championing gender equality through Sexuality Education** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 5: Data). Spotlight Initiative's partnership with the Ministry of Education enabled the roll-out of comprehensive sexuality education at secondary level with strong messages on equality, rights, and empowerment. Sexuality education for in-and-out of school youth is challenging traditional gender norms, increasing respect for the rights of girls and women, reducing violence, and championing gender equality by including content on child abuse, sexual exploitation, and family violence in teacher training curriculums. To reach youth no longer in school, specially trained educators have launched the adapted curriculum through virtual platforms. To further address immediate concerns, parents, administrators and community programme staff are trained to detect and report suspected cases of family violence or sexual exploitation. This both reinforces community awareness of violence and contributes directly to the data collection efforts of the health and justice sectors, working to ensure the data is used to inform violence against women and girls laws, policies, and programmes.
- ✓ **Expanded access to quality services enhanced by the development of protocols and training based on capacity and readiness assessments** (Pillar 2: Institutions and Pillar 4: Services). Assessments of the capacity and readiness of key institutions providing essential services shaped the development of protocols and training, assuring that multi-sectoral services will be client responsive. The training needs of the key ministries and agencies providing essential services for providers were identified using the Rapid Readiness Assessment tools. This informed the development of the training on services and the main protocols and standard operating procedures for every sector. Special attention was given to the Social Services workforce, which is key for a survivor-centered approach, coordinating response at client and service levels.

### **One Story of Impact: How women took the reins of social protections for survivors in Belize**

The Spotlight Initiative conducted an in-depth review of existing family violence legislation to identify possible gaps. Concurrently, as part of efforts to ensure access to services under the flood emergency restrictions, 21 communities helped map the availability and accessibility of services mandated by the family violence legislation, identifying many barriers beyond distance. This inspired in-depth discussions, including with survivors themselves, on lack of knowledge about the legislation, as well as their experiences with providers, and the agencies tasked with providing support. The findings and recommendations of this process are expected to inform upcoming multi-stakeholder dialogues to ensure that common barriers will be effectively addressed.

#### **In their own words...**

Spotlight Initiative is allowing us to...be creative, to be forward thinkers, to be strategic in our approaches, and to work on parallel tracks. It makes us think that while we are addressing the situation today, how can it influence the future?... in the next ten years this programme will give us a frame of reference. – Michele Irving, Productive Organization for Women in Action

### **Innovative, Promising or Good Practices**

Designed as a brigade model, the Mobile Centers aimed to reach women unable to access services due to the stay-at-home orders during the COVID-19 emergency. It brought all essential services to women survivors living in the most remote areas while establishing a connection with a community to encourage and increase women's use of the CSOs' services and provide longer-term support. With the intent of establishing 24/7 reliable services, each service was provided by a different CSO with a broad network and clinics and offices in many parts of the country, ensuring connections to reliable referrals. At present, these CSOs have taken an additional step towards regular services through service level agreements with key ministries. The Spotlight Initiative will further develop Standard Operating Procedures, codifying the approach to mobile delivery for Belize.

# GRENADA 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 2,474,962	 USD 1,650,000	 USD 824,962	2020 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UNICEF, UNDP, UN Women, PAHO/WHO

**Other partners:** UNFPA, ILO, Government of Grenada, Ministry of Social Development, Housing and Community Empowerment, Women's Non-Governmental Organizations, Civil Society Organizations

## Context

While Grenada<sup>1</sup> ranks high on the UN human development index, over one-third of the population lives below the poverty line, and the vast majority lives in the rural areas which are furthest from the capital, business centre and tourism belt. Similar to trends in the Caribbean region, Grenada has experienced high rates of domestic violence, where most incidences were associated with intimate partner violence. According to the 2018 Women's Health and Life Experiences Study, one in four Grenadian women has suffered physical violence in her lifetime, and close to one in ten Grenadian women have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime. Moreover, one in five Grenadian women has been sexually abused during childhood. The increase in reports and intensity of domestic violence and unemployment among women seen under COVID-19 echoes Grenada's experience during the emergency following Hurricane Ivan during 2004/05, demonstrating a trend that gender-based violence and inequality are exacerbated during periods of crisis.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

Launched a week before the outbreak of COVID-19, the Spotlight Initiative spent several months of 2020 solidifying the governance, technical, administrative, participatory, and representational structures and processes to Grenada's unique context. The Spotlight Initiative in Grenada adapted service modalities and educational campaigns to effectively address violence against women and girls (VAWG). Mechanisms put in place brought the UN, the European Union, government and civil society partners together on a regular basis to provide oversight, as well as coordinate and implement the activities of the programme. For example, Technical Leads from the agencies who were based primarily in Barbados worked with the Government Pillar Leads who were based in Grenada, while Programme staff and members of civil society for the reference group were recruited from Grenada's small community of experts. During the lockdown, the Spotlight Initiative assisted key partners in adapting to the context of a new normal, shifting their planning and service provision models online. A virtual platform accommodated wider collaboration among stakeholders, joint interagency planning meetings, and sharing of emerging challenges and bottlenecks, thereby strengthening the overall programme and supporting accelerated results.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Strong national service-based data informs standard protocols and rights policies** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 5: Data). Based on the Spotlight Initiative's analysis and joint recommendations, an assessment was completed to inform the set-up of a national database on VAWG to adopt more rigorous and reliable methods for collecting service-based data. The resulting evidence on patterns of violence and survivors' choice of services is expected to help tailor implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures of Grenada for the provision of Essential Services, which was drafted in 2020 after the completion of a situational analysis. This situational analysis and the normative framework are critical foundations to inform the development and implementation of the National Victims' Rights Policy, which aims to strengthen access to justice for survivors in alignment with the Essential Services Package for women and girls subject to violence. A review of legislation was also conducted, which has helped to identify gaps and guide law reform.

<sup>1</sup> The Spotlight Initiative in Grenada also works in Grenada's two dependencies: the islands of Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

- ✓ **Standard Operating Procedures on service provision and capacity-building for national institutions** (Pillar 4: Services and Pillar 2: Institutions). The urgent need for coordinated quality services in the face of increased violence under COVID-19 lockdowns accelerated the work on service provision, including the development of new tools and retrofitting older guidelines to meet global standards (including for the only protective shelter in the country). In order to build on existing efforts, and efforts and maximize results, a rapid situational assessment of the institutional capacity to deliver the Essential Services Package was conducted. The results informed the development of Standard Operating Procedures, protocols, and data tools to track the use of these services, and build the capacity of key personnel involved to ensure survivor-centered responses. In line with UN Reform efforts, agencies worked closely with Government partners to ensure appropriate referral pathways, intersectoral coordination, and knowledge-sharing, improving the quality of and access to essential services by survivors.
- ✓ **Civil society engagement and prevention of violence** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). The Spotlight Initiative developed an online training session on the core concepts of gender equality and ending VAWG, which included discussion on transforming harmful masculinity. The training session was rolled out with community leaders and influencers. Parents were reached on radio and through a campaign which featured giant murals with positive parenting messages on buses that service both urban and rural areas. It is estimated that at least 15,000 Grenadians read at least one of the messages on the buses, heard the message on the radio or saw a message on their social media feed. In line with the principle of Leaving No One Behind, the Spotlight Initiative worked to include CSOs from under-represented communities such as rural women, LGBTQI women, and youth, in a programme to strengthen skills in advocacy, survivor-centred service delivery, gender-sensitive educational and psycho-educational<sup>2</sup> programming, engagement with men and boys, and creation of safe spaces.

### One Story of Impact: Using technology to bridge divides

During the COVID-19 lockdown, the Spotlight Initiative team tested approaches to working virtually to continue to address violence effectively. Helpline responders and counsellors learned to provide more psychosocial counselling and referral guidance by phone. Key staff from first responders and frontline agencies were trained in using remote means of communication as part of crisis management. The Gender-Based Violence Unit in the Division of Gender and Family Affairs of the Ministry of Social Development, Housing and Community Empowerment developed a COVID-19 response protocol with guidelines for responders and case managers, including phone and remote contact systems, and personal protective equipment for face-to-face services to victims and survivors. The Spotlight Initiative intends to harvest these early efforts, including, for example, through harnessing online psycho-support to increase the accessibility of services more broadly (through use of digital and mobile phone technology) following COVID-19. These are expected to continue to serve efforts to bridge the gaps in services and information across the islands and rural areas of Grenada.

### In their own words...

We consider this issue of VAWG to be so crucial because of its impact on all aspects of our lives, and we pay a heavy price socially and economically. Grenada recognizes that gender equality is required if we want to live in a state where there is harmony and progress for everyone. - Dr The Honorable Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister, Government of Grenada (at the Launch of Spotlight Initiative on March 5, 2020)

## Innovative, Promising or Good Practices

The Grenada Spotlight Initiative's system of Joint Pillar Teams and a Community of Learning has helped strengthen cross-pillar coordination and improve synergistic impact. By balancing the focus on outcomes with a concern for overall programme cohesion and technical soundness, this new system has facilitated exchange and knowledge sharing on both the technical dimensions of pillar activities as well as on the broader issues of gender transformative approaches. As a result of the exchanged, inter-agency collaboration with the Gender-Based Violence Programme Officer, the Director of Statistics, a Senior Legal Counsel, the Coordinator for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse, and the Senior Programme Officer for Gender and Family Affairs has deepened, engaging Government Pillar Leads on key technical and operational issue. This inter-agency collaboration and connection with high-level government engagement laid the way for sustainability of the Initiative's interventions and outcomes.

<sup>2</sup> Psycho-educational programming refers to structured interventions that integrate both educational (cognitive) and psychological (e.g. motivation, reflection) approaches to address a particular problem and that can be loosely described as a cross between teaching and counselling.

# GUYANA 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 4,105,441	 USD 3,700,000	 USD 405,441	2020 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women

**Other partners:** ILO, IOM, PAHO/WHO, UNAIDS, Ministry of Human Services and Social Security; Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; Finance; Health; Home Affairs; Education; Legal Affairs; Local Government and Regional Development; Amerindian Affairs, Guyana Police Force, Director of Public Prosecution, Regional and Neighborhood Democratic Councils, Office of the President, Village Councils, State Institutions, Civil Society Organizations, National Tshao Council, Women's Arms of Political Parties

## Context

Guyana's legal framework addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG) is relatively strong. The majority of judges are women, and the country has signed three international women's rights conventions and enacted 12 relevant major laws. Yet despite special courts and special guidelines to handle sexual offences, a 2018 women's health survey showed 55% of women aged 15 to 64 had experienced some sort of violence, while 4 in 10 had experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner in the 12 months preceding the interview. The factors assumed to exacerbate men's violence include conflicts arising from men's frustration with loss of employment and high rates of alcohol consumption among men. In 2020, COVID-related stay-at-home restrictions gave rise to unemployment, livelihood insecurity, and increased male violence towards women and girls. The Spotlight Initiative programme in Guyana addresses its efforts within the framework of family violence. While the programme was approved to officially start in January 2020, the formal launch and rollout of the Spotlight Initiative programme in Guyana only occurred in November 2020 due to prolonged national elections.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

The active support of the European Union and strong inter-agency collaboration under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator enabled the Spotlight Initiative programme in Guyana to secure approval for reprogramming and funding of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The programme later coordinated with the newly elected Government that expedited the formal launch of the Spotlight Initiative programme. As there are plans for the legal framework and policy options to be updated, the Spotlight Initiative in Guyana continues to focus particularly on service delivery and prevention efforts. Strategies include adapting successful approaches for the different geosocial regions of the country, strengthening the implementation capacity of CSOs to manage services, and training government service providers. Despite the delay in official approval for the start of activities, the Spotlight Initiative programme in Guyana quickly put in place the foundation for a technically skilled, client-responsive, and coordinated approach, involving the key sectors such as health, law, and social services. Its rapid uptake and high needs in the country mean that there are already requests for additional partners to rollout the Spotlight Initiative in additional districts.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Laws enhanced to focus on prevention, the national database on VAWG strengthened to inform programmes and policies** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 5: Data). Foundational processes were completed to recruit experts to review the National Legislation on Domestic Violence, conduct an inventory of new and emerging forms of Family Violence in Guyana, and create policy options on restorative justice. The review and analysis of these pieces of legislation will create an enabling environment to establish policies and plans that would guarantee the rights of women and girls. The development of the new policies will be further enhanced by evidenced-based analysis from the national database to inform policy decisions for targeted programmes.

- ✓ **Global service standards and plans adopted virtually, reaching remote areas** (Pillar 2: Institutions and Pillar 4: Services). The virtual launch of the Spotlight Initiative covered by major news outlets included messages and participation of the President, the First Lady, the Minister of Human Services and Social Security, the UN Deputy Secretary-General, the EU Deputy Director-General, and CSO leaders. The momentum created by this launch helped precipitate the disbursement of grants to nine CSOs responding to increased VAWG under the COVID-19 lockdown. Service provider trainings were adapted to the virtual approach necessitated by COVID-19 protocols, and over 20 public healthcare workers were trained on caring for women and girls affected by violence, sexual violence, and mental health care for women and girls subject to violence. The Spotlight Initiative is now developing guidelines and protocols for implementation of the Essential Services Package that meets global standards for identifying the most appropriate support for survivors. Technical guidance and training for case management is also underway. With the support of the Spotlight Initiative, the University of Guyana plans to include information on VAWG in training packages for students studying to become health personnel, security officers, lawyers, or staff of other essential services. These advancements are expected to bring sustainable solutions for ongoing training in the country.
- ✓ **Broad-based social change for gender equality accelerated** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). The Spotlight Initiative focused particular attention on educating men and boys in the most marginalized indigenous communities with the least access to information on ending VAWG, including the need to remain vigilant about family violence such as incest or rape by a family member or relative. To ensure that no one is left behind, the Spotlight Initiative helped create a new CSO network, which included representatives of marginalized groups, and commenced the process for the development of public accountability scorecards, which will allow users of services to evaluate how well those services meet their expectations. These new approaches are expected to engage new actors in order to address family violence.

### **One Story of Impact: Business Owners used as safeguards**

Testing a new approach for reaching women who are unaware of or unable to access existing gender-based violence and VAWG services on their own, the Spotlight Initiative supported sensitization sessions with the owners of selected community businesses and pharmacies that were operational during COVID-19 lockdown. This aided the safe referral of survivors of gender-based violence and VAWG to relevant support services. For an added safeguard, five community-based CSOs were trained by the Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association, Help and Shelter and Saint Francis Community Developers to monitor the enlisted shopkeepers and pharmacists. With the support of CSOs engaging community members on issues related to gender-based violence and VAWG, including guidelines on accessing Essential Services for VAWG survivors, 10 shopkeepers and pharmacists were identified and trained, resulting in 192 VAWG consultations conducted with individuals in the target communities, 9 counselling sessions completed, 59 referrals made, and at least 26 information sessions conducted at community level.

### **In their own words...**

The Spotlight Initiative can definitely play a role in developing new mechanisms, new methodologies, and more holistic methodologies (to address gender-based violence)... Throughout time we have seen everyone working on their own little facet, developing their own project... Spotlight (Initiative) takes a more holistic, general approach... which includes everybody. - Anil Persaud, Member, Civil Society National Reference Group

## **Innovative, Promising or Good Practices**

The Spotlight Initiative supported the operationalization of Child Advocacy Centers in a region of Guyana which had not previously benefitted from such services, under the National Childcare and Protection Agency and its partner, ChildLink Inc., which specializes in addressing child sexual abuse. The Child Advocacy Centers make Essential Services accessible to children and reflect the gendered dimensions of violence while strengthening providers' child-specific skills and benefitting an increased number of boy and girl survivors and their families. This work solidified existing partnerships among police, the judiciary, the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security, the Ministry of Health, and CSOs. Groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, among others, are expected to have improved access to quality essential services and accompaniment/support initiatives. In the longer term, the Spotlight Initiative is exploring the possibility of having the one-stop center model developed for adult survivors of gender-based violence and VAWG (not only children) as a way of sustainably building on existing infrastructure and institutions.

# HAITI 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 10,627,880	 USD 9,900,000	 USD 727,880	2020 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women

**Other partners:** Ministry for Women's Status and Women's Rights; Planning and External Cooperation; Social Affairs and Labour; Public Health and Population; Education and Vocational Training; Justice and Public Security (National Police of Haiti, Brigade Protection of Minors); Interior and Territorial Communities, Citizen Protection Office, Civil Society Organizations, Non-governmental Organizations

## Context

In Haiti, women play a major role in the economy: they represent 51% of the population, 48% of the economically active population, and 82% of the business sector. However, Haiti has the highest maternal mortality rate in the Western Hemisphere for which driving factors including child marriage, early pregnancy, and lack of services. It also has the highest HIV rates in the Caribbean region, impacting women disproportionately. In addition, 29% of women ages 15 to 49 have experienced physical violence, where 45% of cases were perpetrated by an intimate partner and in 37% of cases, these acts of violence resulted in serious injuries. Moreover, 32% of girls aged 15 to 17 report having experienced violence. The ability of the state to address these inequalities is severely compromised by ongoing political instability, combined with an economic crisis and frequent natural disasters. The constitutional and electoral crisis afflicting Haiti since 2019 was dramatically magnified with the February 2020 dissolution of parliament and subsequent ending of local leaders' terms, with replacement by presidential decree. This was followed by the COVID-19 lockdown; a combination bringing Haiti to a near halt.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

The Spotlight Initiative in Haiti prioritized access to holistic services informed by context. Demonstrating the potential of UN Reform, all four Recipient UN Agencies (RUNOs) agreed to contribute both financially and technically to the development of an accessible digital catalog for survivors and their helpers. This catalog is expected to provide up-to-date information on support services and enable service providers to strengthen coordination across sectors, based on the referral pathways. This will be possible with the expected involvement of an international team experienced with the UN Essential Services Package – a global guide outlining the minimum required health, social services, police and justice services for all survivors, quality standards for those services, and the coordination of those services across sectors.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Survivors' access to referral services, legal support and shelter expanded** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 4: Services). Funds and training enabled field-based Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) service partners to provide medical and psychosocial support to over 2,300 adolescent girl survivors of physical and sexual violence and nearly 20 survivors of trafficking. Training of 180 local authorities and CSOs providing legal support enabled 326 survivors to access legal services. However, given the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 lockdown, alternative ways of assuring access to essential services were critically important as the lockdown also increased incidents of violence against women and girls (VAWG). Six new referral hotlines were established; one developed particularly for young people. A system to computerize case management processes within shelters to accelerate access to available placements was discussed in 2020 to be launched in 2021. Eight women's rights advocacy agencies were trained on tools for digital legal services to begin providing remote legal support. The Ombudsman's office – an alternative independent resource on legal action – was evaluated to determine how to strengthen its gender responsiveness resulting in an extensive plan to do so in 2021.

- ✓ **Responding to VAWG through state implemented mechanisms** (Pillar 2: Institutions and Pillar 5: Data). The Spotlight Initiative put in place mechanisms to jointly approach key ministries who represent important levers in the prevention, institutional and state response of VAWG in order to accelerate implementation of activities to strengthen the national response to VAWG. A workshop is also planned to launch and foster the engagement of other ministries. These interventions will strengthen international standards on VAWG for local authorities and dialogues with the community for a better consideration of VAWG in the Communal Development Plans. Upcoming collaborations with the State University of Haiti for the analysis of the existing curricula of Faculties of Medicine, Nursing Sciences, Maieutics, Ethnology, Human Sciences and Legal Sciences for the integration of the prevention and management of VAWG and the reinforcement of related capacities. In addition, the programme has started defining a roadmap for an index analysis of the capacities of the producers and users of data from the different sectors and networks of women's rights organizations in certain regions to strengthen their capacities to integrate VAWG data into sectoral reports. The expected result of this index analysis is to further the understanding of existing tools and protocols in these sectors and the orientations that exist in terms of the development of national statistical strategies, planning of the health, justice, social, education, social affairs, and agricultural sectors.
- ✓ **Holistic approach to VAWG prevention through CSO experiences** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 6: Women's Movement). The Spotlight Initiative has made substantial progress in identifying and connecting diverse networks and groups that advance and represent the rights of diverse groups of women and girls by engaging with a wide range of CSOs, prioritizing engagement with organizations representing diverse groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence, local and local organizations, feminist advocates and activists. One partner, the Scouts, activated their national Network to relay messages on the causes, consequences and prevention of violence reaching 15,615 individuals (primarily young people); and the Centre for Peasant Animation and Community Action, reached 6,350 individuals of all ages through festivals and marketplaces with the same messages. An additional 22,000 individuals were sensitized on the issues through CSOs, churches, girls' safe spaces, and the media including 209 men champions at community level. The Spotlight Initiative is working at developing a mapping jointly with CSOs and Government with the aim of helping to build on and strengthen existing initiatives, amplify knowledge essential and ensure cross-learning and dialogue, especially at the Grand Anse level. Thanks to this mapping, the programme will contribute to the pooling of organizations including those defending women's rights through a more robust civil society platform at the departmental level. Through this platform, knowledge on existing legislation and accountability mechanisms on VAWG will be deepened, as is the capacity of CSOs.

### **One Story of Impact: Coalitions to end gender stereotypes**

The Spotlight Initiative in Haiti adopted the social media campaign #Imwithher with the creole language campaign #mkanpeavèl. A partnership of three national and international CSOs launched the campaign to challenge harmful social norms and gender stereotypes in order to prevent VAWG. To reach a larger audience, Facebook images of young women, young men, and the UN agency leadership were posted holding placards asking, 'Are you with her?'. The campaign reached more than 13,480 people in the department of Grand Anse. More than just challenging individuals to be 'with her', it helped launch a new coalition of 13 CSOs which have continued to promote egalitarian social norms beyond the campaign.

### **In their own words...**

Participants in training courses on the prevention of violence against women and girls are better equipped to report cases of violence and support survivors in taking charge and referral if necessary. In addition to this, parents who attended the parenting sessions testified that they adopt better behaviors in the education of their children with the application of positive and non-violent discipline methods. - Center for Peasant Animation and Community Action staff, partner in the Nord-Est department

## **Innovative, Promising or Good Practices**

With many government institutions at a standstill, and with limitations on community-level work due to COVID-19, the Spotlight Initiative turned to the social messaging and data collection tool U-Report. With this tool, the Initiative was able to share information at the grassroots level, as well as to conduct real-time polls on respondents' perceptions of the incidence of violence in their communities and the availability of services. Polls captured respondents' perception that violence had increased in the previous 30 days and that stress and proximity could contribute to violence. The polls also showed that 70% of respondents did not know how to get help should they be a victim or witness. All participants in the poll were given information on how to contact a national child protection hotline for minors. More than 28,000 young people, 41% of whom are girls, are registered on the U-Report platform, and through the outreach efforts of the nationwide Scouts, this number continues to grow.

# JAMAICA 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 7,833,390	 USD 6,600,000	 USD 1,233,390	2020 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF

**Other partners:** PAHO, UNESCO, UNAIDS, Ministries of Culture; Gender; Entertainment and Sports; Education, Youth, and Information; National Security; Justice; Health and Wellness; Finance; Labour and Social Security; Local Government and Community Development Planning, Institute of Jamaica, Statistical Institute of Jamaica, Non-governmental Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, Private Sector, Jamaica Household Workers Union, Jamaica Council of Churches

## Context

Jamaica is perceived as a country with a relatively high level of human development, positioned at 101 of the 189 ranked countries and territories. During the period between 1990 and 2019, Jamaica's Human Development Index value increased by 13.8 per cent. However, the country still faces high rates of poverty and unemployment, particularly for women. These challenges were magnified due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the effect of natural disasters in 2020. Intense flooding associated with Tropical Storms Eta and Zeta contributed to infrastructural damage, displacement of persons and billions of dollars in losses. Additionally, violent crime including sexual assault remains a crippling social ill. In 2018, the homicide rate was 47 per 100,000 residents, a rate that increased by 3.4% in 2019. Eighty per cent of Jamaican children under the age of 15 are subject to violent methods of discipline at home, a pattern that normalizes interpersonal violence and is repeated across generations. While Jamaica has signed seven of the nine core international human rights agreements, and the constitution guarantees non-discrimination, gaps remain within national laws, policies, data and monitoring systems and the provision of essential services.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

Under the shared vision of eliminating violence against women and girls (VAWG), the principles of interagency coordination and leaving no one behind are key to advancing the goals of the Spotlight Initiative in Jamaica, which is supported by the European Union. The Spotlight Initiative is laying the foundation for its contribution to the body of knowledge on effective strategies and approaches that contribute to the elimination of VAWG, especially those approaches that focus on addressing violence within the family, specifically domestic violence and child abuse. The Spotlight Initiative's work in Jamaica provides the impetus for fostering the common vision and levels of coordination, involving varied ministries, agencies and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), that are needed to ensure that survivors of VAWG have access to quality services. In line with UN Reform efforts, the programme developed a guide for Spotlight Initiative agencies and partners which addresses governance arrangements, Monitoring and Evaluation principles and tools, and guidelines for communication, visibility, and internal reporting, providing a direct response to the fragmentation diagnosis for the slow progress on ending VAWG to date.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Laws, policies, and institutions improved for women and girl survivors** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). The Spotlight Initiative has supported various strategies to foster dialogue amongst civil society groups, the public, and those responsible for creating, revising, and implementing laws, policies, and action plans to address VAWG. With the help of CSOs, the Spotlight Initiative supported efforts to reach the most marginalized, such as persons living with disabilities and domestic workers, to represent their voices in the judicial review of laws on VAWG, as well as the town hall discussions for the launch of the National Plan of Action for Integrated Response to Children and Violence. This is expected to be reinforced through work with universities to build CSO capacities in drafting legislation and engaging in internal parliamentary processes. Considerable investment is being made in the Bureau of Gender Affairs, which is responsible for the National Strategic Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence. The Spotlight Initiative will further support an expert group inside the Bureau to complete the national plan. These resources will also support the Bureau's network of gender experts which interface with all other programming and enable work across ministries.

- ✓ **Improved access to quality essential services for all women and girls** (Pillar 4: Services and Pillar 5: Data). The first year of the Spotlight Initiative in Jamaica saw the establishment and operationalization of the first of three shelters that are expected to be fully operational by the end of 2021. The helplines for survivors of VAWG were also strengthened in their capacity, including through the update of a referral pathway for survivors of violence. Efforts were also made to strengthen the capacity of counsellors to properly respond to cases of violence against adolescent mothers. A Spotlight Initiative-sponsored workshop on administrative data on VAWG revealed the degree of fragmentation that has impeded efforts to effectively address VAWG and highlighted the importance of intensive work with both CSOs and government ministries. The Spotlight Initiative has further supported the capacity building of CSOs on methods, approaches and ethical guidelines on the collection and analysis of data during this workshop. The Spotlight Initiative in Jamaica has also made significant investments in services for parents (especially young parents) on the conviction that patterns of violence begin at home. These wide-ranging services include psychosocial support for adolescent mothers and programmes under discussion to meet the basic needs of families struggling post-pandemic. In the longer term, work is underway with police on more gender-sensitive modalities as well as in the justice sector to support the enhancement of legal literacy at the community level.
- ✓ **Promoting prevention by shifting gender norms and expectations with educational programmes at the community level** (Pillar 2: Institutions and Pillar 3: Prevention). The Spotlight Initiative has supported the prevention of VAWG working through evidence-based programmes and campaigns. During the COVID-19 emergency, a social media campaign informed by the experiences of survivors raised awareness of the added risks of child abuse when girls and boys are kept away from regular safe spaces such as schools, where such incidents or the sequelae from such incidents at home are likely to be observed and reported. Together with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, a programme of VAWG education has begun, targeting principals, guidance counsellors, and deans of discipline, exploring behaviour management and VAWG in schools. A Family Life Education companion course for teachers is expected to complement the student curriculum with more guidance on VAWG. To accelerate the prevention, important investments were made in the development of a community-based parenting training package and scripts for five short parenting training videos.

### **One Story of Impact: Raising awareness through multiple communication channels**

To further prevent the risks of increased cases of VAWG and violence against children in the wake of COVID-19-related lockdowns, a national campaign was launched to reinforce the messages and impact of the Spotlight Initiative in Jamaica. A behaviour change communication specialist was hired to use the findings of perceptions on the issue of gender-based violence, its impact, and the required responses, to inform the media products developed. The campaign is expected to contribute positively to the number of people facing challenging harmful social norms and gender stereotypes. Public Service Announcements were developed and aired garnering nearly 74,454,000 impressions on traditional and social media platforms. The awareness campaigns further helped to encourage responsiveness and action by duty bearers and build awareness of the agencies and associated helpline numbers to which community members can report.

#### **In their own words...**

With the support received from Spotlight (Initiative), staff members were trained to deliver Psychological First Aid, and were provided with technical resources and the necessary IT equipment, as they sought to maintain contact with the adolescent mothers during the pandemic, and help them to cope with the attending psycho-social realities. - Dr. Zoe Simpson, Director, Women's Centre Foundation of Jamaica

## **Innovative, Promising or Good Practices**

To respond to the increased violence following the COVID-19 pandemic and the limited number of safe spaces available, the Spotlight Initiative supported the Women's Centre Jamaica Foundation to equip managers and counsellors with the requisite skills to provide remote support for young mothers and pregnant adolescents who are victims of VAWG. This is an innovative practice for Jamaica, as there were no systems in place to provide support tailored for this target group. The managers were equipped with the skills required to identify and provide appropriate responses and accurate referral of cases of gender-based violence among young mothers and pregnant adolescents victims of VAWG. This enhanced the capacity of the Women's Centre Jamaica Foundation to provide appropriate response and referral to different sectors thus facilitating the access of the survivors of violence to the referral pathway, proper support, and better recovery.

# TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 4,515,210	 USD 3,700,000	 USD 815,210	2020 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UNFPA, UN Women, UNICEF, PAHO, UNDP

**Other partners:** Office of the Prime Minister Gender and Child Affairs Division, Regional Health Authorities, Trinidad & Tobago Police Service, Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago, Tobago House of Assembly, Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation, Mayaro/Rio Claro Regional Corporation, National and grassroots organizations, Women's rights organizations, Academic Institutions, Ministries of: Health, Planning, Social Development and Family Services, Education, National Security

## Context

Trinidad and Tobago has an architecture of laws, policies, institutions, and groups with significant advocacy experience on ending violence against women and girls (VAWG). However, in one recent survey,<sup>1</sup> 30% of women in intimate partnerships reported having experienced violence. Other survey data indicates that 25% of young women aged 18-29 have experienced sexual violence by age 18.<sup>2</sup> Women migrants, asylum seekers and refugees are particularly vulnerable to sexual and domestic violence.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, civil society service providers provided anecdotal information on a reported surge in requests for services from survivors during the national lockdowns related to COVID-19. The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service identified through the Crime and Analysis Problem Branch 1,224 reports of domestic violence for 2020, compared to 941 in 2019, a 30% increase in reporting.<sup>4</sup> Although this information cannot determine prevalence and may also be attributed to the January 2020 launch of the Gender-Based Violence Unit, it is clear that lockdowns and stay-at-home measures put victims at increased risk of violence and deterred their capacity to access services safely.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

The Spotlight Initiative in Trinidad and Tobago is building on the country's legal and institutional framework and history of advocacy, working in three communities (Tunapuna/Piarco, Mayaro/Rio Claro, and Tobago), by adopting an approach for a comprehensive and integrated national strategy and leveraging the UN's technical expertise and experience working in other countries. Moreover, with the support of the European Union and leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator and the Heads of Agencies from the implementing agencies, the Spotlight Initiative quickly adapted its 2020 programming to address the COVID-19 related challenges of increased violence and lack of access to marginalized groups. The Spotlight Initiative supported the continuation of services for women and girls facing violence and coordinated with UN Agencies, such as UNFPA, who trained service providers in remote service provision and provided Personal Protective Equipment using their own resources to complement the Spotlight Initiative's work.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Tailored capacity building supports high quality services** (Pillar 2: Institutions and Pillar 4: Services). Following the 2020 legislative amendments to the Domestic Violence Act which increased the power of the courts, baseline assessments were conducted to determine the gaps in the management of family violence cases. In response to the baseline assessments, support was crafted to improve judicial sensitivity to the dynamics of family violence and abuse. Training of the judicial actors addressed the dynamics of family violence, societal attitudes, and recognition and management of bias in these often high-conflict cases. With special concern for girls, the Children's Authority was supported to update case management procedures, workflow

<sup>1</sup> [Cecile Pemberton and Joel Joseph: National Women's Health Survey for Trinidad and Tobago, IADB 2018](#)

<sup>2</sup> [National Women's Health Survey for Trinidad and Tobago, 2018](#)

<sup>3</sup> Assessment of Venezuelan Women Migrant Situation in T&T, UN Women, 2018

<sup>4</sup> Crime and Problem Analysis Branch, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, 2019-2020

processes, and a new data system to facilitate information sharing among Government Ministries and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, Hospitals, Police, and other child protection actors, limiting gaps in referral.

- ✓ **An integrated approach to data and knowledge management across government and state agencies for improved communication towards ending VAWG** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 5: Data). The Spotlight Initiative's 2020 policy focus was building towards a comprehensive, integrated, multi-sectoral approach of government to addressing VAWG. The National Strategic Action Plan on VAWG, which is currently under review and will be updated before pursuing Cabinet approval, as well as the National Child Policy, will mark an end to [silos and] fragmentation and the start of a fully comprehensive strategy, which addresses justice and security sectors, social services, health, education, housing, and community advocacy. To support a truly comprehensive strategy, the Spotlight Initiative is laying the foundation for a unified system to collect, manage, and analyze data on VAWG including types of violence and use of services. In 2020, the programme began reviewing what data systems are in use across the relevant sectors. For example, the programme organized virtual consultations with the Office of the Prime Minister, Gender and Child Affairs Division to compare the electronic data capture systems of the Office of the Prime Minister's Domestic Violence Registry and the proposed system. Additionally, evidence-based communications products using local data sources and WHO good practice guidance were developed to guide health care workers providing support to survivors.
- ✓ **Work with youth lays a foundation for normative change** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). Through the support of the Spotlight Initiative, the Ministry of Education has reviewed and will revise the primary and secondary level Health and Family Life Education programme to strengthen the content on family violence, gender, and human rights and age appropriate comprehensive sexuality education, with a dedicated section on VAWG. The National Teacher Training curriculum will also add a VAWG module. Work on primary prevention programming with out-of-school youth has begun, based on the Collaborative HIV and AIDS Mental Health Project, a model that has been adapted to specifically address family violence. Grassroots organizations have also been supported directly through funding from small grants to support prevention efforts.

### **One Story of Impact: Bringing the grassroots to the high table**

An Inter-Ministerial Committee was recently established at the highest level of government mandated to advocate for the adoption and operationalization of the National Strategic Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence. The Spotlight Initiative leveraged this high-level access by providing technical support and funding to strengthen multi-stakeholder accountability within the committee, and also focused on its harmonization with other relevant National Policies. When a sub-committee was formed within the high-level committee to address essential services for survivors including case management and referral pathways, the Spotlight Initiative worked to ensure the representation of even the most marginalized women and girls as well as all those providing services civil society groups, shelters, regional corporations, and key government agencies. Thus, the principles of leaving no one behind and supporting a diversity of perspectives were integrated into the government's response, thereby increasing national ownership of those perspectives.

### **In their own words...**

I was so happy and elated to see the NiNa programme at St. Jude's. Had we had a programme like this when I was a resident it could have saved many girls from going down the wrong path. The programme is real and relatable and has made the girls more emotionally intelligent and self-aware. - Kylene Romain, Student Mentor

## **Innovative, Promising or Good Practices**

The Spotlight Initiative supports efforts to end gender-discriminatory patterns inside the workplace, with the expectation that such a change will foster broader societal changes outside the workplace. In 2020, the National Trade Union Center of Trinidad and Tobago and its management counterpart, the Employers Consultative Association, began working on parallel projects to stop sexual harassment in the workplace, including training their members to identify signs of VAWG and guide survivors to services. Both Agencies are supporting educational campaigns, policies, and inductee and annual member trainings. This work is also expected to address the broader issues of women's equity and the impact of sexual harassment and violence on productivity. Members will also be trained as anti-violence advocates in and outside of work through media and speaking engagements and through advocacy with co-workers and managers to ensure the policies are reflected in collective bargaining agreements and workplace rules.

# Caribbean Regional Programme

## 2020 Regional Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 11,360,711	 USD 9,552,830	 USD 1,807,881	Jul 2020 - Dec 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF

**Other partners:** ILO, PAHO, ECLAC, CARICOM, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission, Caribbean Development Bank, Caribbean Examinations Council, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers (CAJO), Government, Regional and non-governmental organizations, regional trade unions, employers federation

## Context

Every CARICOM country has dedicated domestic violence legislation that advances child protection. Many have drafted national plans and strategies to address gender-based violence (GBV), in which ending family or domestic violence is prioritized. While these laws have improved some women's access to justice, recent prevalence surveys<sup>1</sup> suggest that a significant number of women experience intimate partner violence, the majority of whom do not report to police or access services for protection and to prevent the recurrence of violence. Policymaking and programming development is not sufficiently informed by research, and a coordinated approach to administrative data across sectors does not exist in most countries. Alongside and feeding into system inadequacies, patriarchy and gender inequality persist and, along with other bases of inequalities, contribute to high levels of violence against women and girls (VAWG). Gender norms that associate masculinity with power over and control of women are harmful, as is the association of discipline of children with corporal punishment. Similar to global trends, women and girls' vulnerability to family and domestic violence across the region increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Anguilla, for example, noted an increase of 88% in domestic violence cases during this period.<sup>2</sup> In many Caribbean countries, lockdown restrictions and limited mobility made it difficult for women and girls to access police services and report incidents of violence and to an extent impeded access to quality, effective and non-discriminatory services.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

Complementing the Spotlight Initiative Country Programmes in six Caribbean countries<sup>3</sup>, and taking into account the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts, the Regional Programme will increase policy coordination and functional cooperation across the region to address family violence, with the support of the European Union. The programme will set regional standards for essential services delivery and for monitoring the implementation of regional and national family violence laws and policies, advance best practice models for prevention, and ensure the engagement of women's organizations in regional accountability frameworks. It will also address specific regional institutional bottlenecks that impede or limit the reach of technical support to respond to and prevent family violence in CARICOM member states. In particular, the Regional Programme will support CARICOM and the OECS as the two inter-governmental frameworks leading functional cooperation in the region. The programme is a timely injection of technical expertise and resources to ensure that the COVID-19 response is shaped by women's involvement in community and national decision-making to ensure the accessibility of services and approaches to prevent and protect against family violence. In 2020, the programme focused on critical foundational activities, including partnership-building and building interagency coordination in the spirit of UN Reform.

<sup>1</sup> UN Women, [Caribbean Women Count: Ending Violence against Women and Girls Data Hub](#).

<sup>2</sup> PAHO, [ECC COVID-19 Situation Update 103 - 01 December 2020](#).

<sup>3</sup> These countries are Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Coordination and cooperation to respond to family violence** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 5: Data). The programme held consultations with the CARICOM Secretariat and its relevant organs, including the Council for National Security & Law Enforcement, the Regional Security System, and institutions such as the Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, aimed at aligning efforts and interventions to ensure better coordination and to leverage each organ's comparative advantages in delivering VAWG and family violence services. The Spotlight Initiative is planning to increase policy coordination and functional cooperation across the region to specifically address family violence. This will be completed through setting regional standards for monitoring the implementation of regional and national family violence laws and policies. Increasing the capacity of the personnel within these influential regional institutions gives impetus to streamlining of information about VAWG and family violence and building a network of skilled and informed service providers. Additionally, the conceptualization of a qualitative study on existing public policies and legislative frameworks on family violence that impact the lives of LGBTQI+ youth are underway. The Spotlight Initiative will develop and strengthen regional protocols and standards for family violence data management systems to improve timely and cross-sectoral analyses and programmatic responses at the national level. The production of regionally-owned data will ensure that policy and programmatic approaches are evidence-based and that the region will have a robust data observatory/repository. The programme also plans to further strengthen the capacity of governments to collect, analyse, use and report on data on indicators related to family violence. It will contribute to the revision of police and justice standards and scaling up of Community of Practice and/or Coordination Platforms for exchanging knowledge between stakeholders working on VAWG and family violence.
- ✓ **Enhanced Comprehensive Sexuality Education interventions** (Pillar 3: Prevention). An evidence-based Caribbean model of cultural and behaviour change across the life course will inform primary family violence prevention and sexual and reproductive rights programming across the region. The Spotlight Initiative recruited a consultant to support with in-school and out-of-school Comprehensive Sexuality Education interventions, which are expected to strengthen regional capacities to advocate for and deliver quality Comprehensive Sexuality Education for in- and out-of-school youth. A mapping is underway of the Gender Equality, Prevention of Violence Against Children and Caribbean New School Model to inform key areas for synergies and measurement, and strategies to strengthen education systems in relation to enabling environments within educational settings and gender-responsive teaching and learning are on-going. These activities have all been affected by the disruption of school due to COVID-19, but preparation for school reopening and *Bringing Girls Back* is underway. The programme also plans to design advocacy strategies to implement in collaboration with traditional and non-traditional influencers to challenge harmful social norms.
- ✓ **Reaching those left behind through intergovernmental and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)** (Pillar 2: Institutions and Pillar 6: Women's Movements and Civil Society). The programme provided small grants to women's rights groups and relevant CSOs, including those representing youth and groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, resulting in the scale up or creation of new and innovative interventions and more effectively influencing and advancing progress on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and ending VAWG. Women's organizations and CSOs will be equipped to monitor and support family violence responses and prevention programming and develop the capacity and connectedness to advocate for state and intergovernmental accountability to end family violence. Further, regional intergovernmental institutions will have the capacity to drive improvements in national-level delivery of essential services to respond to family violence. A draft framework for gender competencies was completed, including stakeholder consultations with participants from CARICOM officials and Eastern Caribbean service providers. This will support regional intergovernmental institutions to drive improvements in national-level delivery of essential services to respond to family violence.

## Innovative, Promising or Good Practices

The Spotlight Initiative has developed a sustainable and innovative cross-cutting approach to strengthen the capabilities of Regional Institutions that have a mandate and responsibility to provide technical cooperation to national level partners. Family violence interventions are integrated into pre-existing activities addressing other issue areas (e.g. citizen security and disaster response), promoting the sustainability of the interventions. Gender-responsive budgeting will be integrated in these and other sector areas, ensuring that family violence is sustainably integrated into budgets and that interventions continue to be appropriately funded. Regional activities leverage existing institutions with political influence (e.g. CARICOM Secretariat, and the Council for Human and Social Development [an organ of CARICOM]) to carry out new activities, giving these activities an established home from which to grow and be sustained. Women's organizations and CSOs will also be key partners in all institutional strengthening activities, ensuring widespread buy-in and uptake. Strengthening regional coordination and accountability mechanisms will contribute to building new systems to ensure VAWG work will be conducted effectively and in a coordinated manner beyond the life of the Spotlight Initiative.

# PAPUA NEW GUINEA 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 17,088,442	 USD 15,680,000	 USD 1,408,442	2020 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF

**Other partners:** OHCHR, Ministries of Community Development, Youth and Religion; Health; Education; Justice and Attorney General; Royal PNG Constabulary; National Statistics Office; National Office for Child and Family Services; Social Workers Association of PNG, International and National Non-Governmental Organizations, Faith Based Organizations, Grassroots Women-led, Women Rights Organizations, Private Sector companies, National Research Institute

## Context

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is spread across 600 islands and divided into 22 provinces and 89 districts, with 85% of the population living in rural areas, many of them with limited access to services. Although funded from the national budget, each region has its own development plan and violence against women and girls (VAWG) taskforce. Thus, providing essential services to address violence against women and girls following global standards in differently resourced areas presents logistical challenges. PNG ranks 159 out of 189 countries on gender equality; at least 60% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetimes. Only 33% of those abused sought help, and only 13% of them reached out to the police, medical services, or social services. Moreover, a survey of those brought to care for sexual abuse found that 50% were children, and 1 in 6 were under the age of 5. In a recent survey by the Papua New Guinea Counsellors Association, states that 50% of PNG women have been raped in their homes. More recent research with young people documents that they expect violence in their relationships. Under the COVID-19 lockdown, calls to a national referral hotline on VAWG increased by 300%, suggesting the situation may be much worse than prior to the pandemic.

## Spotlight Initiative s Response

The Spotlight Initiative in Papua New Guinea garnered significant visibility and mobilized sustained, politically influential support for a whole of government response in addressing its high levels of violence against women and girls. This was made possible through coordinated engagement by the Recipient UN Organizations (RUNOs) and the support of the European Union, who were instrumental in securing the government s overall support for the programme. RUNOs intervened at high levels on practical concerns, such as gaining formal approval for the first national, online case-management database using Primero/CPIMS platform. They were also sufficiently nimble at leveraging national outrage over publicized cases of femicide to launch the advocacy campaign for passage of an improved Women s Health Protection Bill expanding women s access to sexual and reproductive health services and free medical and psychosocial services for survivors.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Accelerated shifts in social norms through national events on violence against women and girls policy** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 3: Prevention). The Spotlight Initiative PNG mobilized Members of Parliament to discuss men s violence against women and girls in a landmark and highly publicized National Gender-based Violence Summit that brought together the Coalition of Parliamentarians to End gender-based violence (GBV) and 750 government, corporate, civil society, youth, diplomatic, religious and development leaders from across the country. The core message reflected acknowledgment of men s contribution to the problem and the solution and the need to integrate messaging and programming on violence against women and girls and violence against children as the two are intrinsically related. The Summit also resulted in the appointment of the first-ever Special Parliamentary Committee on GBV. Among the year s major wins was the National Youth Policy aligned with policies on GBV, child protection, and disability rights which directly addressed both violence against women and girls and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, setting a policy precedent to support youth-led and youth-focused organizing

on ending violence against women and girls. As the youth of PNG are often marginalized, the Spotlight Initiative expanded both youth livelihood opportunities and access to digital tools for campaigning and coordination. At a local level, parenting for child development programmes and the youth-led Sanap Wantaim campaign are accelerating community mobilization, challenging harmful norms around violence against women and children.

- ✓ **Technical and management capacity of provincial-level institutions and governance structures strengthened** (Pillar 2: Institutions and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). In line with the decentralized governance structure of PNG, the Spotlight Initiative focuses its advocacy, capacity-building, and technical support at both provincial and national levels. To demonstrate the importance of cross-pillar approaches at the subnational level, the technical team supported two Governors to develop their own comprehensive violence against women and girls strategies. Their strategies were then used as models to encourage their fellow Governors in other provinces. This modality has developed into the exploration of a sub-national peer network of GBV officers that links to the National Strategy and the Coalition of Parliamentarians to end GBV. To ensure such efforts are tailored to the unique challenges and resources of each region, the Spotlight Initiative is expanding capacity-building for national and local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on e.g. programme management, monitoring, and evaluation, as well as other core skills. RUNOs will work directly with all provincial government representatives by supporting 5 experts at Provincial level to ensure alignment with the national framework, countering the challenges to develop common strategies with a decentralized system.
- ✓ **Improved access and quality of essential services for survivors based on reliable data** (Pillar 4: Services and Pillar 5: Data). The Spotlight Initiative is strengthening the capacities of specialist violence against women and girls police units to manage cases, the justice department to document cases and to track protection orders, and the health sector to provide all essential services to survivors. Social workers are a critical human resource base, staffing preventive, responsive and promotive programmes for vulnerable groups. The programme is supporting both the professional association and government to develop a roadmap to strengthen the social workforce. In the long-term, sector and workforce planning will be informed by current, reliable, comparable data from all regions. The national database, which enables centralization and integration of violence against women and girls case and protection data from government institutions, social services, humanitarian and development agency workers, will capture data on both violence against women and girls and violence against children through the most up-to-date Primero/CPIMS and CommCare software.

### **One Story of Impact: Expanding civil society engagement through UN Reform**

CSOs are best able to reach those marginalized by status or geography. To leverage such great partnerships and ensure suitable staffing, the Spotlight Initiative team is operationalizing UN Reform efforts through joint calls for proposals – an application for multiple agencies. This also harmonizes processes among the RUNOs and helps in evaluating a CSO applicant based on both technical competence and expertise in the subnational region of interest. Shared training sessions by RUNOs and online videos on how to complete proposals/applications also helped build capacity. Longer-term strategies include the continuation of joint meetings, sharing costs and fostering synergies as well as a CSO Capacity-Development Hub, which will train CSO partners across all agencies in programme management, monitoring, and evaluation, as well as other core skills.

#### **In their own words...**

We need to discuss GBV with every Member of Parliament in the country and make sure they take it back to their District Development Authority all the way down to their Local Level Government. GBV needs to be addressed at all levels of government. The answer lies within PNG... We do need support... need our friends from overseas... need our development partners, but the answers lie within. - Former Papua New Guinea Parliamentarian, Dame Carol Kidu

### **Innovative, Promising or Good Practices**

To ensure technical cohesion and coordination of content between in-school and out-of-school sexuality education programmes and between provinces and regions of Papua New Guinea, the Spotlight Initiative supported the formation of a Steering Committee. The Spotlight Initiative worked extensively with the Department of Education to revise the most recent curriculum to sufficiently address gender, sexual and reproductive health and intimate relationships. The Spotlight Initiative is also working with the Local Education Group Steering Committee, which facilitates communication and coordination between the education sector and other sectors – a resource which will be particularly relevant in addressing a complex issue that requires a multi-sectoral response. The substantive linkages between the Committee monitoring content and implementation of the programmes and the whole of government approach of the Spotlight Initiative offers significant potential to become an innovative practice in which Comprehensive Sexual Education becomes a truly transformative intervention.

# SAMOA 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 3,497,739	 USD 2,900,000	 USD 597,740	2020 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO, UN Women

**Other partners:** Civil Society Nation Reference Group, Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development; Health; Education, Samoa Bureau of Statistics, National Civil Society Organizations, Community Based Organizations

## Context

Most Samoans observe highly respected traditions of the Samoan way, including exclusively male village councils and justice mechanisms that have not always held perpetrators of violence fully accountable. The past decade has seen very high rates of violence against women and girls (VAWG) who remain limited to traditional roles, with low levels of formal employment. It is also reported that 7.8% of girls and 2.1% of boys aged 15 to 19 are currently married. The preliminary findings of the most recent population-based study found that 52.3% of women experience physical violence by an intimate partner and 41.5% by a non-partner. Additionally, 35.1% of women believe a husband is justified in hitting a wife and only 40.6% have sought help. Among children ages 1 to 14, 90% experienced physical or psychological aggression by caregivers; and 80% of parents believe violence is necessary for disciplining children. However, Samoa has multiple family-violence laws, including criminalizing marital rape; has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and is updating its child protection bill with particular concern for girls. Despite these efforts, low awareness of the laws, rights, and protection services remain, particularly in the majority rural population.

## Spotlight Initiative s Response

The Spotlight Initiative in Samoa raised the visibility of VAWG at the highest level with the Prime Minister's participation both in the programmes and in an 11-country virtual launch of the International Technical and Programmatic Guidance on Out-of-School Comprehensive Sexuality Education. Further, the UN team adapted quickly to the COVID-19 crisis by creating a One UN emergency mechanism, modeled on that created for the measles epidemic a year prior. Broad-based community-level visibility was facilitated by linking the issue of VAWG to expansive COVID-19 prevention campaigns including the CSNRG led 16 days of healing campaign. With the support of the European Union, and in keeping with the principles of UN Reform, the agencies also leveraged flexible funding to maintain support for partners addressing VAWG. Joint agency action under the Spotlight Initiative was able to leverage both this experience and new networks established.

## Key Results

- ✓ **VAWG prioritized in national plans and policies** (Pillar 1: Policy and Legislation and Pillar 2: Institutions). The recently completed plan for Samoa's law and justice sector addresses domestic and gender-based violence in relation to all of the plan's strategic outcomes and with reference to all relevant national agencies including courts, police, the Ombudsman and the Ministry for Women, Community, and Social Development evidence of renewed commitment to gender-based violence. Input on the plan from women's organizations, youth groups, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI groups, and others identified a need to strengthen overall civil society engagement mechanisms.
- ✓ **Revitalized country commitments on comprehensive sexuality education and engaging new sector actors needed for a more holistic response** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 4: Services). The Out-of-School Comprehensive Sexuality Education programme is engaging new actors including church leaders through a national multi-media campaign. Churches reach nearly

all communities as just about all Samoans affiliate themselves with a particular church, and the influence of churches on norms and behaviors is well documented. The Spotlight Initiative is helping to create new partners to reach those least able to access services and information on VAWG by launching six Village Safety Committees. These are closely tied to the village governing structure: in addition to working with the rural and urban chiefs and village councils, the Spotlight Initiative works with Komiti a Tina ma Tamaitai (Women's Committees). The Women's Committees, who support the Safety Committees, have been meeting with the male governing Councils to press for enforcing village policy and penalties vis-a-vis domestic and intimate partner violence. An established partner, the Samoa Victim Support Group, operates in 90% of villages in Samoa, oversees case management, and is the only Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) officiated to apply for protection orders on behalf of victims. The Spotlight Initiative has reached out to the sports community through various consultations to address their internal practices in relation to VAWG and engage them as a highly visible national champion on the issue. Audio-visual knowledge tools have been developed by partnering young survivors with radio broadcasters to voice their messages.

- ✓ **National data on VAWG made available informing programmes and policies with further outreach to new constituencies** (Pillar 5: Data and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). The Spotlight Initiative supported the inclusion of the Domestic Violence Module in 2019/2020 national population-based survey, DHS-MICS<sup>1</sup>. The results revealed new patterns of violence (by type, age, and a wide range of characteristics including behavior and attitudes and of use of survivor services. This data is informing implementation of the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women. Going forward, services and capacity-building will be informed by the new national VAWG database. Efforts to roll out the gender-based violence administrative data systems and strengthen capacity of national stakeholders on data are underway. To further amplify the voices of young women advocates, the Spotlight Initiative Samoa partnered with Samoa Victim Support Group Juniors through a series of training which resulted in mobilizing the youth. The Spotlight Initiative assessed the training and resource needs of CSOs working on gender equality and VAWG and found that whilst capacity of all to implement is high and expertise was strong, assistance on staffing, access to funding opportunities, and capacity-building is critical. A second assessment will inform a training plan from the Samoa Umbrella for Non-Government Organizations.

### One Story of Impact: A Win for ending Violence Against Women

Engaging with the sports community to bring visibility and accountability on the issue of VAWG is a signature element of the Spotlight Initiative's Samoa programme. The Spotlight Initiative sees sports as providing opportunities for women to participate equally with men and to have their rights taken seriously. While longboat Fautasi traditional racing is a male-dominated sport, it is a very important national sport in this island nation. A major national competition was held just before the launch of the 16 days of activism campaign. A rare, all-women team dressed in the orange color of the international ending violence against women campaign beat out three all-male teams. Coming in second place, the women's team provided a highly visible and truly national message on women's equality.

#### In their own words...

What a day. What an experience. What an achievement. What history. It was honestly a dream come true for me. This is an experience that will forever be one of the top of my list as the most memorable and fulfilling in my life. Thank you to the Spotlight Initiative for the opportunity to highlight the issue of domestic violence against women and girls which is a rampant disease that has plagued and sullied our paradise for a long time. If we have achieved something in this experience, I hope it was to highlight this issue and the need to empower our women and our girls and treat them with love and compassion. One day, I hope this experience can inspire my own daughter to follow her dreams and let nothing get in the way. That as a girl and a woman, she can do anything, she can overcome anything, she can be anything. - Muriel Lui (Fautasi o Toa Rower)

### Innovative, Promising or Good Practices

The regional launch of the 2020 International Technical and Programmatic Guidance on Out-of-School Comprehensive Sexuality Education has created momentum at the highest levels of political and faith-based leadership and will continue to be the focus at major regional meetings in 2021. An innovative practice necessitated by the restrictions of COVID-19 was to hold a virtual conference and launch in which national hubs in each country were networked through a virtual platform. This adaption increased the event's regional visibility and political capital and allowed increased Samoan participation (including the Prime Minister). The process has demonstrated the potential for a forum for discussing country-specific applications of the curriculum. For example, Samoa has a 99% rate of women's literacy, as compared to Papua New Guinea (women 63%) or Timor Leste (women 53%); thus educational work may need to be different.

---

<sup>1</sup> Demographic and Health Survey Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey

# TIMOR-LESTE 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 10,838,786	 USD 9,900,000	 USD 938,785	2020 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women

**Other partners:** Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education Youth and Sport, Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion, Secretary of State for Youth and Sport, Secretary of State for Equality and Inclusion, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Timor-Leste, National Police of Timor-Leste, Secretary of State for Vocational Training and Employment

## Context

While Timor-Leste has in place certain progressive laws and policies, the country faces major challenges in building the institutions and capacities necessary to sustain equitable and inclusive development. Among the starkest indicators of this dilemma is violence against women and girls (VAWG). The culture of impunity and silence is a significant impediment to change, with up to 59% of women surveyed reporting that they have experienced physical violence in the context of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). In the subnational municipality with the lowest rates of IPV (Baucau city, with 25% of women reporting IPV), 65% of women say a husband is justified in hitting his wife. In the municipality with the best access to services for survivors (the capital, Dili), over 60% of women survivors never sought help or told anyone about the violence they were facing. Conditions are assumed to have worsened under the extended state of emergency triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, as areas already marginalized are further isolated from limited services and support.

## Spotlight Initiative s Response

The Spotlight Initiative was designed to demonstrate integration across sectors, multi-level coordination, inclusive strategies for Leaving No One Behind, and UN Reform, through interagency collaboration in addressing VAWG. In Timor-Leste, the Spotlight Initiative supports a gender-transformative approach, complementing other VAWG programmes in the country. The programme provides practical examples to the government on how to localize implementation of the development investments needed for VAWG and to eliminate inequalities within the country. Within its first year, the Spotlight Initiative launched an effort to reform the existing National Action Plan on Gender-based Violence (GBV), ensuring its inclusiveness and responsiveness to all contexts in Timor-Leste such that the whole of government approach would link the national, sub-national, and grassroots levels. Important investments were also made in the health sector through sensitivity training for Health Managers on VAWG, including the impact of COVID-19, referral pathways, and client-centered responses. With the European Union s support, the Spotlight Initiative pilots different interventions in three distinct municipalities: Ermera (the most impoverished, with the highest rates of IPV), Bobonaro, and Viqueque (among the wealthiest, with the lowest rates of IPV).

## Key Results

- ✓ **Legal and policy frameworks strengthened** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 2: Institutions). Through the Spotlight Initiative, the National Training Institution through which all judges, prosecutors, and defenders must pass added a dedicated section to its curriculum directly addressing the interpretation and enforcement of the domestic violence law as well as basics on how to manage judicial procedures involving survivors of trauma. A national, government-led workforce leadership and training group has also brought pre-service and in-service training to social welfare workers who play a central role in case management and following referral pathways. This training addressed, in particular, enhancing skills and sensitivity to survivors within subnational service cadres which have resulted in Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) becoming the default service providers at that level. Partnership with such CSOs remains critically important as these organizations have the local expertise

and trust as well as extended efforts to support women's economic empowerment and broader gender equality interventions. The Spotlight Initiative complemented the investment on the National Action Plan on GBV by creating a more inclusive government network of Gender Working Groups, including the assignment of a gender specialist to each of the municipal-level groups to help link work on VAWG to the subnational workplans of the National Action Plan on GBV.

- ✓ **Informed planning through building service providers' data capacity and survivors' trust in services** (Pillar 4: Services and Pillar 5: Data). Managed by the Department of Justice, the Spotlight Initiative's experience with multi-sectoral approaches is informing a major revision of the VAWG services-based administrative data system to link data across sectors which has been revealed as a major issue with the existing tools. For example, the recent training of municipal-level social workers led service providers to contribute inputs to document service use patterns in different regions. The Spotlight Initiative has also supported the design of specialized survivor-centred services for adolescent girls, which helps provide data to strengthen age-appropriate service provision. The Spotlight Initiative has prioritized outreach and enabling access for the rights-holders most often excluded, aligning with the Leaving No One Behind principle, while informing planning based on actual demand for services. This work is expected to provide data on service use by women and girls, further expanding the provision of such services nationally.
- ✓ **Broad-based work on transforming norms and building CSO networks supports sustainable change across sectors** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). To foster a shift in attitudes and norms, the Spotlight Initiative supported curricula on gender, rights, respect, and violence prevention, both in national school-based life-skills programs and multiple out-of-school programs. The Spotlight Initiative ensured the national curricula were adapted to age and context through translating materials into local languages, including local examples and stories, and providing companion curricula for parents. The Spotlight Initiative further supported the dissemination of the gender-oriented (and violence prevention) non-school-based curricula of the Scouts, SASA! for faith-based groups, and the Boys and Girls Circles – a specialized programme for adolescent survivors and at-risk groups. The work with a diverse mix of CSOs (e.g. youth networks, labor unions, academia) is expected to inform efforts to mainstream VAWG work into other sector programmes, expanding reach especially in rural areas with fewer services.

### **One Story of Impact: Immediate Results from Workplace Training**

The Spotlight Initiative supported a national trade union's development of introductory training on VAWG and gender norms. The training was prepared with two partners: a legal aid organization and an LGBTI organization. The purpose was to enable the trade union to better support marginalized workers who are disproportionately affected by IPV and harassment. Immediately after the training, the union registered a case of domestic violence and connected the victim to the referral system.




#### **In their own words...**

(As we) focus attention to ending violence against women and girls...Youth must actively participate and take part in decision-making at all levels, and they must be actors to build stability and promote peace and security. We thank the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative for being with us to educate our youths as agents of change. - Ms. Idelta Maria Rodrigues, Chairwoman of União Nacional dos Escuteiros (National Union of Scouts) de Timor-Leste

## **Innovative, Promising or Good Practices**

The Spotlight Initiative is supporting two long-term recovery programmes, often a gap area. One such programme aims at breaking traditional practices and targets the most marginalized survivors, increasing their knowledge of and access to quality essential services. This programme also provides supporters with financial and training support to launch initiatives as female entrepreneurs, addressing the economic independence needed for longer-term recovery. In partnership with an international and a national CSO, and with the oversight and guidance of the Ministry of Social Services, the second programme is a specialized model for personal empowerment and psychosocial support for girls – both survivors of violence and those at risk. This new approach is an innovative practice that will be piloted in the Ermera municipality and will address the lack of specialized survivor-centred services for adolescents. It will also combine prevention, response to violence, and training for a greater personal agency, which is critical for long-term recovery.

# VANUATU 2020 Country Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 2,785,042	 USD 2,475,000	 USD 310,042	2020 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, IOM

**Other partners:** UN Women; Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination; Prime Minister's Office; Ministries of Justice and Community Services, Health, Youth and Sport, and Education and Training; National Disaster Management Office; Vanuatu Skills Partnership Programme; Vanuatu National Statistics Office; National Human Rights Institute; Department of Labour; Judiciary Office of Public Prosecutions; Police; Department of Women's Affairs; Civil Society Organizations

## Context

Vanuatu has one of the highest rates of violence against women and girls (VAWG) globally: sixty per cent of women aged 15-49 years have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetimes.<sup>1</sup> Sexual abuse of girls under the age of 15 years - usually perpetrated by a family member or intimate partner - is nearly thirty per cent. Violence against women and girls is exacerbated during emergencies, and Vanuatu is the most vulnerable country in the world to natural disasters, according to the Global Risk Index. In 2020, Vanuatu experienced both COVID-19 and massive destruction from the Category 5 Tropical Cyclone Harold, which coincided with a tripling of reported domestic violence cases. While the Government of Vanuatu has ratified the UN Conventions on the rights of women, children, those with disabilities, and those with different sexual orientations or identities, and the National Sustainable Development Plan commits to addressing violence and discrimination, responsible Ministries have limited resources.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

Supported by the European Union, the Spotlight Initiative in Vanuatu was adapted to respond to COVID-19, with a particular emphasis on addressing socio-economic impacts. Specifically, this has involved discussions on the potential longer-term socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 and implications for Vanuatu's data collection system on VAWG. COVID-19 also drew attention to the impacts of seasonal work on labour migrants and their families. The Spotlight Initiative recognized this as an opportunity to formalize educational programmes with a focus on gender-based violence (GBV) prevention for migrants and their families. Local youth volunteers, initially mobilized for emergency response, were also retrained to support the Spotlight Initiative's community-based child protection work. The programme also prioritized capacity-building to address VAWG in humanitarian emergencies, work that contributed to the entire region.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Laws and policies reflect realities of survivors' lives, informed by quality, disaggregated and globally comparative data** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation and Pillar 5: Data). The Spotlight Initiative is supporting the Ministry of Justice and Community Services to review legislation and policies to end VAWG. Beyond surfacing insights on what did and did not work in past implementation, the review focuses on how to turn future policies and laws into action. The programme has also emphasized the need to ensure parliamentarians have the tools to develop gender-responsive laws in the future. Ensuring comparable data across the country and among countries of the region is uniquely important in the Pacific, given common labour migration patterns, shared cyclones, and the particular challenges of small-island developing nations. In the spirit of UN Reform, the Spotlight Initiative, together with the kNOWVAWdata initiative on safe and ethical data collection, laid the foundation to work across agencies around the Pacific to collect, analyse and use data. In 2020, the Spotlight Initiative also advanced strategic planning in close collaboration with the Pacific Community and University of Melbourne, leading to the development of work plans that better respond to the changing context linked to COVID-19 and natural disasters and to support the localization of the

<sup>1</sup> WHO (2017), [WHO supports the end of violence against women and girls in the Pacific](#).

kNOwVAWdata initiative in the Pacific. The Spotlight Initiative coordinated with relevant ministries and organizations for prioritization of candidates from Vanuatu for the kNOwVAWdata training, which will support capacity building to ensure safe and ethical data collection standards are met. Through the Spotlight Initiative, preliminary work has advanced to develop the statistical frameworks for domestic and intimate partner violence in Vanuatu.

- ✓ **Essential services reflect global standards and contextual specificities** (Pillar 2: Institutions and Pillar 4: Services). The Spotlight Initiative will support capacity-building for the provision of Essential Services in line with global standards, emphasising accessibility for a geographically dispersed population. Training is planned with the health, legal, and security sectors to ensure an integrated approach to service delivery and enhance service accessibility. Services for survivors of violence need to be linked with comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services and connected to long-term recovery efforts; these are current gaps. The focus will be on marginalized communities at particular risk, including child survivors of violence and sexual abuse, and those living with disabilities. Working with its National Disaster Management Office, Vanuatu is placing emphasis on training for prevention, mitigation and response to GBV in emergency settings, as well as developing emergency protocols, minimum standards, and guidelines for trainers to comprehensively address violence during crises.
- ✓ **Conversations with communities and educational programmes for high-risk groups foster normative change** (Pillar 3: Prevention and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). The programme supported the development of a national strategy for the structure and scale-up of community dialogues on ending violence, supporting a whole of community approach to prevention. Informed by a recent survey on family violence that the programme completed on five of Vanuatu's islands, these dialogues will be led by trained community facilitators to advance a social movement of non-violence among community leaders and youth. The Spotlight Initiative has tailored programming to two high-risk groups, Year 11 students and labour migrants. For Year 11 students, the national Family Life Education programme is being adapted to teach gender and human rights. For labour migrants, the support focuses on GBV prevention. As shifts in attitudes and beliefs at community level can only be sustained with support from the grassroots, the Spotlight Initiative provides small grants and training for women's rights groups.

### One Story of Impact: Preparing for the Future

Vanuatu faces high rates of violence and abuse against children, including sexual violence against girls under 15. Children face vulnerability on the internet, which is often heightened during emergencies. To address this, the Spotlight Initiative focused on efforts to integrate prevention of violence against girls in digital spaces, where adolescents and children may spend increased time learning, communicating, and playing games. The programme supported a national multi-sectoral strategic workshop to revise the national strategic framework for child online protection, originally published in 2014 and largely outdated. The workshop convened partners from Government, non-governmental institutions, telecommunications operators, private sector and development sector to collectively set the direction for the national strategic framework for child online protection, which will be published in 2021.

### In their own words...

We need to involve everyone and do things differently; we need to involve chiefs, women, girls in remote areas, the UN, civil society, etc. We need to change behaviours and mindsets – educating people on gender-based violence because a lot don't realize it's not culture, it's not normal. – Anne Pakoa, Founder and Secretariat of Vanuatu Human Rights Coalition

## Innovative, Promising or Good Practices

Each year, nearly 10,000<sup>2</sup> workers travel from Vanuatu to participate in labour mobility programmes in Australia and New Zealand. Due to their mobility, labour migrants have historically proven difficult to reach with GBV prevention education, and never before alongside their spouses. To support labour migrants and their families to maximize the socioeconomic impact of their work and prevent GBV, the Spotlight Initiative, in partnership with the Vanuatu Department of Labour and World Vision Vanuatu, is developing *Famili i Redi*, a 5-day pre-departure training for labour migrants and their intimate partners, which covers healthy relationships and GBV prevention. The *Famili i Redi* curriculum is informed by global guidance and best practice for GBV prevention and is tailored for the cultural context. By providing the training to partnered ni-Vanuatu, *Famili i Redi* creates a common set of values, standards and tools between intimate partners that can foster empathy and support communication between physically-separated family members.

---

<sup>2</sup> This is four per cent of the total population (as most are men, seven per cent of the male population); however, impact is greater for e.g. Torres Island which sends the most workers yet has a population of under 1,000. Available information is [here](#) and [here](#).

# PACIFIC 2020 Regional Programme Results

Total Budget Phase I	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 7,835,932	 USD 7,077,830	 USD 758,102	2020 - 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, IOM

**Other partners:** Government and Intergovernmental Organizations, Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team, UN Agencies/Programme Partners, Civil Society Organizations, Academic Institutions

## Context

The Pacific region has some of the highest recorded rates of violence against women and girls globally, with almost 2 out of 3 women who have been subjected to physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, nearly double the global average. In addition to the repercussions of COVID-19, the region has faced significant shifts in the broader social, political and economic context, mainly linked to natural and climate disasters and changes in Government. These exogenous challenges have affected implementation of the Spotlight Initiative Pacific Regional Programme and caused delays in the development and implementation of work plans with both Government and civil society partners. Yet, under the overall strategic oversight of the Resident Coordinator, with close coordination among Recipient UN Organizations, and the support of the European Union, the Pacific Regional Programme remains on track with work plans underway, having been able to re-assess programming to ensure that regional activities integrate considerations for the impact of natural and climate disasters and the global pandemic of COVID-19.

## Spotlight Initiative s Response

During the first year of implementation, key results of the Pacific Regional Programme have focused on the set up of the programme, establishing partnerships and setting in place the platforms to ensure the principles of UN Reform and leaving no one behind are well integrated into the programming. Engagement with Government and Civil Society representatives has been ongoing during the reporting period, facilitating the establishment of diverse programme partnerships and development of work plans, as the programme defines agreements and advances implementation. Other critical partnerships have been established, for instance with the Fiji and Solomon Islands Parliaments to help legislators shape laws to ensure they reflect gender-sensitive priorities and recognize the needs of domestic violence survivors in particular. The Spotlight Initiative in the Pacific<sup>1</sup> focuses its work on Domestic Violence and Intimate Partner Violence through five key pillars, (i) policies and legislation, (ii) institutions, (iii) prevention, (iv) data, and (v) women s movement and civil society.

## Key Results

- ✓ **Gender Responsive Budgeting increasingly galvanized** (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation, Pillar 2: Institutions and Pillar 6: Women s Movement and Civil Society). Over the course of 2020, significant headway has been achieved to elevate and seek political buy-in for gender-responsive budgeting, with a focus on budgeting related to ending violence against women and girls as a wedge to broader gender-responsive budgeting. The programme supported numerous gender-responsive budgeting policy efforts, such as the Secretariat for the Regional Working Group on Domestic Violence Legislation and national initiatives to mainstream gender in budgets led by Ministries of Women, Ministries of Economy and other government departments. Concomitantly, the programme bolstered the costing of violence research to include a capacity strengthening component for governments and civil society and resourced civil society partners to undertake policy and legislative advocacy in parallel to this research. Foundational processes and relationship-building dialogues with civil society partners were also supported to strengthen their policy advocacy partnership agreements.

<sup>1</sup> This includes Fiji, Samoa, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Nauru, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tokelau, Niue and Cook Islands.

- ✓ **Comprehensive Sexuality Education efforts strengthened** (Pillar 3: Prevention). In the policy landscape, the programme continued to advance realization and awareness on sexual and reproductive health via the regional launch of the International Technical and Programmatic Guidance on Out-of-School Comprehensive Sexuality Education. The virtual launch reaching over 700 participants from 11 countries in the region brought to the fore the importance of young people and sexual and reproductive health and rights as a contribution to health, equality, and an end to violence. The launch event was presided by the Prime Minister of Samoa, alongside the Cardinal of Tonga, and attended by senior Government Ministers, officials, members of Diplomatic corps and donors, regional and international agencies, and civil society organizations, including heads of religious institutions and youth representatives. More specifically, this activity was successful in increasing awareness on the need for comprehensive sexuality education for young people and informing national strategies to implement comprehensive sexuality education for marginalized and largely out-of-school youth.
- ✓ **Strengthened comprehensive data collection** (Pillar 5: Data and Pillar 6: Women's Movement and Civil Society). The groundwork was laid to support holistic data efforts to tackle prevalence, multi-sector administrative data and capacity-building on data for the Pacific. In the context of the Gender-Based Violence Multi-Sector Administrative Data space and in the spirit of the UN reform, a regional technical working group has been set up between UN agencies in partnership with the Pacific Community and University of Melbourne to foster synergies, leverage best practices and jointly roll out the Gender-Based Violence Administrative Data systems across the region. In addition, a knowledge management website is in its pilot phase to support accessibility for Pacific stakeholders, including civil society partners, to information and materials relating to prevalence and administrative data specific to the Pacific region. Quality data on violence against women and girls can then better inform decision-making, policies and advocacy efforts in the region. National mechanisms and partnerships were strengthened to ensure ownership of the administrative data systems being built and for sustained advocacy for data to be considered fundamental in all Gender Based Violence conversations.

### **One Story of Impact: Engaging faith-based organizations in innovative prevention efforts**

As faith plays a central role in the lives of a broad cross-section of Pacific island populations, with the majority of community members engaging with Churches and faith-based organizations, the programme established a partnership with the Pacific Conference of Churches to ensure that the Christian faith community are reached through respected and trusted community and faith leaders committed to the prevention of violence. The programme is thus directly contributing to a broad movement of faith-based organizations that are acknowledging and taking ownership of the spiritual and moral imperative for ending violence in the congregations and communities they operate in. The Pacific Conference of Churches utilizes resources from the Spotlight Initiative and other initiatives to put forward a holistic approach for faith-based norms shifts. This partnership to eliminate violence against women and children has contributed significantly to change at the grassroots level, by creating space for dialogues on accepted norms relating to violence, through the Churches' ability to influence change through the deep faith of Pacific peoples. Moreover, a framework for Church Engagement in Child Protection has been developed, which clearly outlines the movement for visible unity and collaboration among Pacific churches in acknowledging past failures and committing to lead the change.

#### **In their own words...**

Our goal is to support churches in their mission to become the safest institution for children in the Pacific. Some churches have child protection policies but there remains a need for more to be done around developing policies that provide deeper theological and biblical reflections around protecting what Christianity terms as God's precious gifts to us, the children. - PCC Child Protection Coordinator, Mariana Waqa

### **Innovative, Promising or Good Practices**

During the reporting period, Spotlight Initiative was able to capitalize on the Small Grants mechanisms of UN agencies, building on existing corporate policies and facilitating funding to grassroots organizations in small island states, in addition to providing support to strengthen and adapt their capacities in response to COVID-19. The Spotlight Initiative Pacific Regional Programme re-programmed funds for small grants to grassroots and frontline civil society organizations, especially those addressing the social and economic impact of COVID-19, which are anticipated to make a substantive impact in the Pacific. By targeting countries that have little to no access to funding for eliminating VAWG and by simplifying the application process, the programme was able to break the mold on feminist partnerships and support groups with a more intersectional focus, reaching the most marginalized groups.

# UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women

GRANTS to CIVIL SOCIETY in AFRICA and LATIN AMERICA 2020 Programme Results

Total Budget	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 26,297,170	 USD 26,297,170	 N/A	Jul 2019 - Dec 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** UN Women (UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women)

**Other partners:** Civil Society Organizations and Women's Rights Organizations (WROs)

## Context

The Spotlight Initiative, with the support of the European Union, has partnered with the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) – a global, multilateral, demand-driven grant-making mechanism that supports efforts to prevent and end violence against women and girls. Capitalizing on its unique funding mechanism and grant monitoring systems, the UN Trust Fund directly supports women's rights organizations and the human rights-based work of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

The UN Trust Fund's Calls for Proposals and grant-making have focused on Sub-Saharan Africa (including single-country and multi-country projects) and Latin America (in Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico). In 2020, the Spotlight Initiative repurposed USD 9.1 million to support institutional strengthening with institutional funding for 44 existing grantees in Sub-Saharan Africa. Of this amount, USD \$500,000 was allocated to create a practitioner-based online platform to enhance knowledge exchange on the intersection of crisis response, organizational strengthening and ending violence against women and girls (VAWG). In 2019 and 2020, the UN Trust Fund cumulatively awarded **USD 24 million in direct grants to 55 CSOs in 25 countries** in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa. Of these, 35 grants were awarded in 2019. In 2020, additional resources were allocated to 44 CSOs/WROs in Sub-Saharan Africa for their institutional strengthening in the context of the COVID-19 Response Framework (24 existing Spotlight Initiative grantees and 20 UN Trust Fund grantees).

- 52 of 55 grantees are women-led and/or women's rights organizations, and 93% of the overall funding was invested in these women's organizations;
- 70% of funding went to national and grassroots women's rights and women-led organizations;
- Of the initial cohort of 35 grants, 33 organizations were new partners for the Trust Fund.

## Key Results

- ✓ In total, **27,264,407 people** were reached by UN Trust Fund grantees funded under the Spotlight Initiative in 2020. The initially selected 35 projects **directly served at least 85,219 women and girls and reached 25,312,951 people**, such as through awareness campaigns. 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**. The 44 projects receiving COVID-19 related Spotlight Initiative funding **reached 25,809,211 people and directly served at least 142,005 women and girls, 14,162 survivors of violence and 5,824 women and girls with disabilities**.
- ✓ 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 is strengthening their organizational resilience and crisis response abilities. Grantees **reached 56,915 right holders/beneficiaries with food, hygiene supplies, sanitation** and other emergency parcels to ensure the stability of the project and reach those most marginalized and at risk.

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, a grantee distributed food packages to self-identified sex workers living with HIV who had lost their income. This also served to ensure continued engagement with these beneficiaries. Grantees also provided economic support to women and girls to mitigate the financial impacts that escalated VAWG. 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 survive 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 VAWG, the Honduras Parliament **approved a new piece of legislation on emergency measures**.

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

- ✓ Grantees directed funds to **ensure organizational resilience**, including to enable remote work modalities. At least 515 staff/partners worked from home effectively due to this funding. Several grantees also saw unintended positive consequences; **operating virtually, for instance, 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 being 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, which **allowed 100% of interventions previously on hold because of COVID-19 to resume by the end of 2020**.

### One Story of Impact: Women's leadership in decision-making roles

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 VAWG and for women's leadership in decision-making. The project has so far through local advocacy 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 violence against women and girls. 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 the grantee is providing services.

### In their own words...

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

## Innovative, 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**, one grantee rolled out national awareness raising campaigns through radio, TV and social media **reaching at least 2 million individuals**. In addition, in **Zimbabwe**, one grantee **reached 3.6 million people** through a movement building project that engages and connects a number of women's rights organizations through TV, radio and social media.

# Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund

GRANTS to CIVIL SOCIETY in AFRICA, CARIBBEAN, ASIA, PACIFIC 2020 Programme Results

Total Budget	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
 USD 13,075,472	 USD 13,075,472	 N/A	Jul 2019 - Dec 2022

**Recipient UN organizations:** Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund

**Other partners:** UN Women Country Offices, Civil Society Organizations

## Context

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is one of the most widespread and devastating human rights violations globally, with the recurrence of conflicts and humanitarian crises further exposing women and girls to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and harmful practices. The Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) is a global, pooled funding mechanism that aims to re-energize action and stimulate a significant increase in financing for women's participation, leadership and rights in humanitarian response and peace and security settings. The WPHF supports interventions to enhance the capacity of local women-led and women's rights organizations to prevent conflict and VAWG, respond to crises and emergencies, and seize key peacebuilding opportunities. Focusing on strengthening civil society organizations and building women's movements, the partnership targets local, grassroots and community-based women's organizations, with grants ranging from USD 2,500 to 200,000.

## Spotlight Initiative's Response

The partnership between the WPHF and the Spotlight Initiative, supported by the European Union, facilitates the channeling of funding to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), in particular women's rights organizations, working on eliminating VAWG in conflict-affected and humanitarian settings. The programme covers four Spotlight Initiative countries in Africa – Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria and Uganda – as well as the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In 2020, the Operational Steering Committee approved USD 6 million in grants to be channeled through the WPHF to CSOs in Afghanistan, Haiti and Papua New Guinea. The calls for proposals for these grants, launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, were designed to respond to COVID-19 by providing institutional and programmatic funding to grantees. 2020 was marked by the alarming spread of the COVID-19 global pandemic and its profound gendered impacts, including in the countries of focus under this partnership. In line with the principle of Do No Harm, the WPHF Secretariat developed guidelines to offer existing grantees the opportunity to adapt their project activities and budgets, due to the pandemic restrictions and inflation of prices, but also to prevent and respond to the increasing rise in VAWG.

## Key Results

- ✓ In 2019 and 2020, the WPHF awarded USD 4.4 million in direct grants to 48 civil society organizations in project countries in Africa,<sup>1</sup> of which 100% were national and grassroots organizations and 97% were women's organizations. 33 out of the 48 selected grantees in Africa are new partners to the UN. WPHF partners funded by the Spotlight Initiative reached overall 30,934 direct and 1,067,184 indirect beneficiaries during the reporting period. 70% of the direct beneficiaries were women and girls, with 19,663 women 18 years of age and above and 2,041 girls reached. Among the direct beneficiaries, different age and population groups were reached, including survivors of VAWG, human rights defenders, indigenous populations, refugees, people with disabilities, people living with HIV, child mothers, and female sex workers.

<sup>1</sup> The data is collected from the RUNO's central ERP system.

- ✓ In 2020, local CSOs and women's networks as well as health and psychosocial workers increased their knowledge on VAWG prevention, referral systems, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights communication, peacebuilding as well as conflict management and resolution. This increased knowledge led to the establishment of new structures and/or improvement and increased uptake of existing structures to support survivors of violence. Initial project results also show the importance of economic independence as an effective deterrent of VAWG. During the reporting period, skills trainings have enhanced women's incomes, leading to decreased vulnerability of violence and increased resilience. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, 60 psychosocial worker and paralegals were trained and acquired new knowledge on the administration of evidence in matters of rape and VAWG. As a result, they have supported the identification of 395 VAWG cases, and effectively contributed to the protection and promotion of women's rights, peace and social cohesion through awareness sessions organized in their villages, within women's groups and through radio broadcasts. Grantees have also developed innovative tools and mechanisms to address VAWG. In Uganda, Slum Aid Project wrote a song called Wise Up with a South African based artist Mthetho Tshemese. Together, they are mobilizing fellow Ugandan artists to use music to change individual social behaviors that fuel gender-based violence. The song Wise up challenges men to participate in domestic responsibilities, stop perpetrating violence on their female family members and participate in community welfare activities. The song will be used as a social mobilization tool in the coming period to raise awareness on VAWG.
- ✓ Three Calls for Proposals were launched between July and September 2020 in Afghanistan, Haiti and Papua New Guinea. To support the application process, 8 information sessions for prospective applicants were organized and attended by a total of 133 CSO representatives across the target countries. A pilot tutorial video was also developed by the WPHF Secretariat and streamed online for prospective applicants in Papua New Guinea for additional support in the application process, especially for those applicants with no prior UN funding experience. This support led to an increased number of new partners.

### **One Story of Impact: Economic empowerment of people with disabilities enables them to address vulnerability to VAWG**

People with disabilities face structural barriers in the social sphere, education and employment and face widespread discriminatory attitudes that limit their equal opportunity and leave many economically disadvantaged and dependent. In Uganda, the WPHF grantee Umbrella of Hope Initiative trained a group of people with disabilities in bag-making and entrepreneur skills as well as soft skills and is supporting and mentoring the group. The group members are now making reusable bags and selling them to their communities, an opportunity for the women to earn income and to better their welfare and protection against violence. Abalo Jennifer Oloya is the leader of Lacan Pe-Kun Persons with Disabilities group in For God Village, in the Bardege Parish Gulu District. Jennifer is visually impaired and is the leader of the group that consists of 40 members with different disabilities. She recounts that non-governmental organizations had not previously considered the group of people with disabilities for any economic empowerment interventions, which left them even more vulnerable to violence. Jennifer believes that development interventions should economically empower people with disabilities as resourceful actors and assets to their communities, as the interventions from the Umbrella of Hope Initiative have done.

#### **In their own words...**

We must empower local women's organizations to acquire... the resources they need, to demonstrate their own skills, and insights. Supporting women's organizations should be prioritized. - Agnes Kyambadde from Slum Aid Project, Uganda

## **Innovation and Promising or Good Practices**

In Liberia, Foundation for Community Initiatives developed the SAVApp for the collection of data and reporting on VAWG. The app particularly targets school-going girls who face multiple forms of abuse at home, in their communities and at school. Not only is the app useful at community level, but it will also be linked to the national data collection system. The app aims to ensure more effective and streamlined data collection and reporting on VAWG. The data for the SAVApp is managed by Girls for Change Institution, a women's rights Community Based Organization, and ongoing engagement is underway for a wider extension to introduce the App to Gender Justice Clubs, Men Champions, and stakeholders to other counties. A similar app is also being developed by the grantee for the blind and visually impaired.