UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women
Call for Proposals

Ending and preventing violence against women and girls in the context of COVID-19

Call Opens: 29 September 2020
Deadline for Submissions: 4 November 2020

Online Application System: https://grants.unwomen.org/

The UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) is seeking applications from civil society organizations (CSOs) working on the front lines of the COVID-19 response and recovery to address and respond to the growing reports of the rise of violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the context of the current pandemic. The UN Trust Fund will invest at least US$ 11 million through this Call, as part of UN system-wide efforts to support CSOs – particularly women’s organizations – in their existing efforts to the COVID-19 specific response and recovery.

In this call for Proposals, the UN Trust Fund will prioritize applications from women’s rights, women-led, and small women’s organizations, in recognition of them being the driving force of the ending violence against women and girls agenda, as well as being at the forefront of reaching at-risk women and girls and survivors at the grassroots level.

The funding will focus on responses to and prevention of violence against women taking into account the intersectional marginalization of women in context of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly acknowledging the increased risk of violence for some groups including indigenous women, women with disabilities, older women, domestic workers and women without access to technology.
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1. The COVID-19 Response Call for Proposals

Prior to COVID-19, the prevalence of violence against women was already alarmingly high, with nearly one in five ever-partnered women and girls (18%) having experienced violence at the hands of an intimate partner. Evidence from service providers – including existing UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women grantees – points to increased rates of violence against women and girls, fueled by household economic and food insecurity and confined living conditions due to lockdown and social isolation measures resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Current estimates indicate that for every three months the lockdown continues, an additional 15 million women are expected to be affected by violence. This Call for Proposals is designed to respond to this escalating rise in violence against women and girls (VAWG) globally, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

While rates of violence have risen across the board, certain groups of women and girls are disproportionately affected by the impacts of COVID-19 including women and girls with disabilities, lesbian, bisexual and transwomen (LBT), refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), indigenous, older women, homeless persons, members of ethnic and religious minorities and health care workers. In many instances, the intersectionality of such identities further magnifies vulnerabilities. For example, women and girls with disabilities face a range of barriers to accessing violence prevention and response interventions, which have been exacerbated with COVID-19 given the disruption of social services, assistance and reduced financial resources. Similarly, there is evidence that the situation for trans women, particularly those who self-identify as sex workers, has worsened under COVID-19 for various reasons including through losing livelihoods, experiencing increased police violence, and facing eviction.

The impact of COVID-19 and its nexus with violence against women is heavily localized and complex. Nonetheless, the most significant drivers overwhelmingly appear to be the economic impact and physical restrictions which make it more difficult for women to escape violence or seek support and justice. For example, compounded economic impacts are felt especially by women and girls who are more likely to earn and save less, hold more insecure jobs or live close to poverty. A loss of income for women in abusive situations makes it harder for them to escape, and they are experiencing greater dependence on perpetrators. The dire economic conditions also provide ample opportunities for perpetrators to exploit the needs of women and girls to attain basic necessities to survive, demanding sex in exchange for items such as food or health care. Amidst food shortages, women and girls tend to be de-prioritized with household food distribution, especially women and girls with disabilities, threatening their very survival.

The pandemic has also laid bare the lack of sustainable, structural and societal support to meaningfully address and respond to violence against women. In this context, civil society organizations continue to fill gaps in essential services and prevention programming. At the same time, these very CSOs operating on the front line of community response need sustained support and increased investment. Many shelters and support centers for VAWG survivors are closed or struggling to procure food, maintain hygiene and health care necessary to take cases. Staff on the front lines and women’s rights defenders are experiencing stress, burnout, anxiety and vicarious trauma as they navigate the ongoing impacts of the pandemic and increased need for their services, while continuing to operate in an uncertain environment.

The essentiality of CSOs as front line responders was recognized early on in the assessment of the UN Secretary-General’s report of April 2020 “Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to socio-economic impacts of COVID-19” that called on member states to recognize the role of CSOs (especially women’s organizations) in community response. The recently adopted UN-system wide Political Engagement Strategy on Gender-based Violence and COVID-19 squarely puts strengthening women’s civil society organizations as full partners in COVID-19 response and recovery work at the center of its scale-up efforts.
The UN Trust Fund’s Call for Proposals is thus timed to provide CSOs a much-needed boost of resources to adapt and enhance efforts to address VAWG both during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. We recognize this funding is critical to building CSO organizational capacity and ensuring survival of front-line responders at the moment they are needed the most. Moreover, CSOs can reach the most vulnerable using an inclusive approach, leverage connections with communities, national and local authorities, and are thus more likely to develop local and sustainable solutions that leave no one behind.

COVID-19 presents a fundamentally uncertain terrain for VAWG prevention and response and need for adaptation, which offers significant learning potential and opportunities for innovation. Amidst these uncertain times, this funding provides an opportunity to test initiatives (unique or adapted to the COVID-19 crisis) that simultaneously and comprehensively prevent and respond to the short and longer term needs of women and girls at risk. We recognize that the impacts of the pandemic are localized requiring tailored solutions and therefore remain committed to a demand driven approach. For this Call for Proposals, we welcome applications that tackle some of the specific needs identified in our analysis of the COVID-19 EVAW, aligned with the priority areas of the UN Trust Fund’s Strategic Plan 2015-2020.

For example:

1. **Adaption of EVAW service provision** to meet increasing or varying types of demands and new forms of violence (e.g. moving services online, providing telephonic counselling, or adapting service provision to mitigate the risks of VAW/G and COVID-19 transmission, assisting beneficiaries to reach services without lengthy trips in public transport, etc.).

2. **Expansion of capacities of shelters and hotlines** and amplifying of communications on the availability of GBV hotlines and other support mechanisms; exploring how technology can support those in lockdown situations to access services, being mindful of accessibility, confidentiality and privacy matters arising with such technology.

3. **Providing/ensuring availability and accessibility of legal aid, judicial protection and other essential police and justice services** for women subject to violence during the COVID-19 pandemic, including through electronic or other remote means, and potentially associated training for handling GBV cases virtually, for lawyers, prosecutors and judges.

4. **Adaptation of VAW prevention programming** or development of new or enhanced programming to integrate COVID-19 risk mitigation measures. This could include social behavioral change programmes, e.g. mass media campaigns, radio or mobile/virtual theatre as part of a broader intervention focused on social norm shifts and positive masculinities, programmes that combine economic empowerment of women and gender transformative programming for women and men, etc.

5. **Development of VAW prevention programmes** to scale-up, adapt and replicate tested methods—that ensure survivor support as a central component and that are adapted to the COVID-19 context. This could include testing prevention strategies that can rely on virtual or blended approaches (e.g. integrating survivor support virtually into programming which may also include face to face group work), or use essential physical locations as entry points (e.g. schools, food banks) and/or target particular risk factors (e.g. encourage healthy ways of coping, linking those in need with guidance and services).

6. **Adapting programmes or designing new interventions to reach those most left behind** in the pandemic and to mitigate the risk of both COVID-19 and VAW/G for marginalised groups including women and girls with disabilities and self-identified sex workers.
7. **Ethical and safe collection of data, monitoring of VAW/G and practitioner-based knowledge generation on the impact of COVID-19 on VAW** and the use of this data for advocacy to amplify the stories of survivors and inform local to national COVID-19/VAW response. This can include the development of safety and ethical protocols, trainings, support and/or tools that consider safety, privacy and confidentiality risks of women and girls when collecting data, especially when under lockdown.

8. **Providing economic support and empowerment programmes** to mitigate the vulnerabilities exacerbated by COVID-19 or to support survivors escaping violence (e.g. interventions to prevent the sale of assets or resources owned by women or to mitigate the impact of the economic crisis on livelihoods, without which women maybe forced into situations that put them at risk of VAW).

9. **Advocacy, capacity building and knowledge sharing interventions** to ensure CSOs – especially women’s rights organizations and those representing the most marginalised groups - are leading and participating fully in a local and national COVID-19 responses in a manner that supports and sustains the women’s movement (e.g. advocacy efforts with other WROs to mitigate any curtailment of existing national laws, policies and procedures to protect and prevent VAW/G in the context of COVID-19).

10. Development of programmes that increase **access to digital tools and spaces for violence prevention and response**. This could include identifying and meeting capacity needs within the organization and with beneficiaries to enhance digital access (i.e. training community focal points in the use of technology, applications for more effective community organizing or support work) and allow for a more inclusive, equitable and equal participation in the digital future.

### 2. **Our Guiding Principles**

The UN Trust Fund supports initiatives based on the following UN Women EVAW programming principles:

- **Human rights-based approaches** that place paramount priority on promoting, protecting and fulfilling the human rights of all women and girls. A human rights-based approach requires developing the capacities of ‘duty-bearers’ and ‘rights holders.’

- **Operating under ethical guidelines** that ensure interventions and services prioritize and guarantee women’s and girls’ rights to safety and security, confidentiality and privacy, expression of opinion and autonomy to make decisions.

- **Ensuring gender responsiveness** and transformative approaches that seek to create or strengthen equitable gender norms and dynamics for fundamental, lasting changes for women and girls.

- **Employing culturally appropriate measures** through interventions that identify culturally-relevant strategic entry points and institutions, and involve cultural, community, faith-based and other leaders.

- **Addressing specific forms and settings of VAWG** through interventions based on a clear understanding on the specific context in which violence takes place for effective programme design and implementation, with knowledge about specific forms, settings and population groups affected.
- **Responding to diversity** by focusing on underserved groups and those left most behind especially excluded or disadvantaged women and girls (such as women and girls with disabilities, LBT, internally displaced and refugees, indigenous, older and members of ethnic minorities).

- **Operating within the ecological model** which aims to ensure that interventions consider and address the conditions across different levels (e.g. individual, family, community and society), which affect women and girls’ risks of experiencing violence.

- **Working in partnership** with different stakeholders, such as government, civil society and community-based groups, academic and research institutions; and importantly, women and girl survivors and women-led organizations.

- **Ensuring survivor-centered and empowering approaches** that integrate women’s and girls’ own experiences and input within all initiatives and strategies as an essential part of successful programming. A survivor-centered approach is fundamental to the protection and promotion of the human rights of women and girls affected and to their empowerment.

- **Drawing on existing evidence** through interventions that are designed based on the existing knowledge of “what works” (or doesn’t) to respond to and prevent violence against women and girls, drawn from formal evaluations and assessments, research and studies, expert consensus and recommendations, shared practitioner experiences and – importantly - the feedback of survivors, and women and girls at risk.

We also expect all proposals to be based on a sound **problem analysis which is needs-based**, to be **results-focused** with a **clear theory of change, risk-informed and sustainability and resilience-oriented**. Questions in the Concept Note application will guide applicants in how to address the above. Applications must be focused on ending and preventing violence against women and girls **in the context of COVID-19** whilst ensuring that the UN Women’s EVAW programming principles are also addressed where relevant.

### 3. Our Eligibility Criteria

#### 1. Types of Organizations

- **Women-led and women’s rights organizations** that have existing and proven specialized knowledge, expertise and track record of working on women’s human rights and prevention and/or elimination of violence against women and girls. **We will prioritize applications from women’s rights, women-led, and small women’s organizations, in full recognition of them being the driving force of the ending violence against women agenda, as well as being at the forefront of reaching women and girls survivors at the grassroots level.** We require supporting documents (constitutions, by-laws, organigrammes) that will enable us to determine whether the organization is a women’s right and/or a women-led organization.

To be considered a **“women’s rights organization”**, the organization must demonstrate that its core work is in the field of women’s rights, gender equality, the elimination of violence against women, and sexual and gender-based violence. The organization’s official mission and vision statements must reflect its commitment to pursuing gender equality and empowering women and girls.

To be considered a **“women-led organization”**, the organization must demonstrate that it is governed and led by women. This requires evidence that a minimum of 51 per cent of leadership positions across various decision-
making levels in the organization, including in management, senior management and board levels are held by women.

To be considered a “small organization”, the organization’s annual operational budget must have been lower than US $ 200,000 (on average) over the last three years.

b. **Other legally registered civil society organizations** that have specialized knowledge, expertise and a track record of working on prevention and/or elimination of violence against women and girls.

c. **International women’s rights organizations and International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) that explicitly focus on gender equality only.** To be eligible under this category, you must be an INGO that has national presence in the country and/or territory of implementation. The proposal must be focused on a single country and demonstrate how the proposed intervention will contribute to national change and/or capacity development and ownership of national and local women’s organizations in the implementation. You must work with relevant partners to complement your expertise, outreach capacity and build the capacities of grassroots organizations.

Organizations can only apply once under this Call for Proposals, either as the main applicant organization or a co-implementing partner. It is recommended that a proposal includes no more than 3 co-implementing partners that will receive a portion of the requested funding.

In all cases, the applicant organization will be accountable for managing the grant award in its entirety. If applicable, the applicant organization will also be responsible for ensuring that its co-implementing partners fully understand and comply with all the requirements and obligations of the grant process. If awarded a grant, the applicant organization will also be responsible and liable for its co-implementing partner’s performance and results delivery. We highly encourage the use of Memoranda of Understanding among all partners to define roles, responsibilities, deliverables and lines of accountability.

2. **Previous UN Trust Fund grant recipients:**

Because of the special circumstances of this Call for Proposal, the UN Trust Fund will lift its current moratorium on organizations receiving grants in the last three years, from applying again. Organizations receiving a grant from the UN Trust Fund may apply in this Call, if their grant has been programmatically and operationally closed by September 2020.

3. **Ending Violence against Women expertise:** The applicant organization must demonstrate expertise and experience in implementing projects in the field of ending violence against women and girls over the past five years and provide details of the number of staff with technical expertise as well as at least one CV (resume) of a permanent/fixed-term staff member with the requisite skillset.

4. **Country coverage:** The applicant must implement a project in one of the countries and/or territories listed in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) list of official development assistance (ODA) recipients.\(^{xvi}\) *(See last page for full list of eligible countries and territories).* Interventions in more than one country or territory are not eligible.

5. **Legal status and registration.** The applicant and any co-implementing partners must be legally registered entities. In addition, either the main applicant or at least one of its co-implementing partner(s) must be legally registered in the country or territory of implementation. We require that legal registration documents for the applicant organization and co-implementing partner(s) be submitted with the application.
6. Operational and human resources: The applicant must have the necessary operational and human resources to manage the proposed project. A clear project control framework should be defined once implementation starts.

7. Certified Financial Statements and Organizational Audit Reports: The applicant must submit certified financial statements and organizational audit reports for 3 fiscal years (including 2017, 2018 and 2019).

8. Ineligible applicants: The following are NOT eligible to apply for a grant:

- Organizations proposing interventions in a country not listed in the OECD DAC list of ODA recipients
- Organizations proposing interventions in more than one country or territory
- Organizations whose work is not explicitly focused on gender equality
- Organizations that do not have a legal status in the country or territory of implementation and neither do any of its co-implementing partners
- Government agencies or institutions
- UN agencies or UN Country Teams
- Private individuals
- Private sector entities
- Organizations currently implementing a grant from the UN Trust Fund, either as the main grantee or as a co-implementing partner - unless the grant closed by September 2020.

4. Our Funding Parameters

We will fund all selected organizations for a three-year period. In doing so, we intend to ensure predictability of funding and technical assistance for the organizations we select and continuity of services for the women and girls they reach.

3-year grants of US $ 50,000 to US $ 150,000 for small civil society organizations (only organizations with an annual budget of less than US $ 200,000 qualify for this category)

3-year grants of US $150,001 to US $ 1,000,000 for all other civil society organizations

Organizations should consider their own operational and absorptive capacity when submitting a funding request. In general, an organization cannot request a grant amount that is more than twice its annual organization budget. The UN Trust Fund will also assess absorptive capacity against the financial and audit reports as well as annual organization budget information submitted at the concept note stage.

See “Annex 2: Budget Summary” for more information on general categories of expenditure.

Special budget considerations in the context of COVID-19

The UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women recognizes the need for civil society organizations working on addressing violence against women – particularly in the current and specific COVID-19 context - to ensure sustainability of their organizational functions that enables them to accomplish their mission and vision strategically, connect with key allies, and drive meaningful change within their communities. Following the consultations with civil society in the context of specific needs for COVID-19 response and recovery, the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women is responding through its 2020 Call for Proposal, by increasing organizational capacity funding and supporting institutional development and sustainability of civil society in the following ways:

1. Opening a new COVID-19 budgetary line for small organizations, to supplement general operating and other direct costs. This represents 3% of direct activity costs and is intended for organizational capacity in the
context of COVID-19. This funding is separate from and in addition to the standard 7% of direct activity costs that all organizations can currently request for under Indirect costs. These costs are directly linked to the project implementation and include all general operating costs for running an office, such as utilities, office rent, bank charges, office stationery, communication and other costs which cannot be mapped to other expense categories.

2. **Maintaining the Core Funding to small organizations up to a maximum of 7% of direct activity costs.** This funding is separate from and in addition to the standard 7% of direct activity costs that all organizations can currently request for under Indirect costs; and the **self-care budget line in the amount of US$ 2,000** to support each organization in taking care of its staff members’ physical and emotional health.

3. **Including a new COVID-19 specific contingency budget line across all grants not exceeding 4% of direct project costs.** This will allow organizations to address unforeseen requirements in the COVID-19 context, including for example, extreme currency movements and inflation; as well as other special programming and emergency issues on the ground. The contingency line may only be used with the prior written authorization of the UN Trust Fund, upon duly justified request by the Organization.

### 5. **Our Application Process**

Applicants are expected to submit proposals online in the form of a brief [Concept Note](http://grants.unwomen.org). The online Concept Note application will be available from **29 September – 4 November 2020** at: [http://grants.unwomen.org](http://grants.unwomen.org).

The **deadline for submission of the Concept Note is 4 November 2020, 11:59 pm New York Time (EDT).** We cannot consider Concept Notes received after the deadline.

Applications can be submitted in the following languages only: **English, French and Spanish. Only one application per organization will be accepted.** Multiple applications from the same organization (including national affiliates of the same INGO) or for the same proposal will be automatically disqualified.

Your online application must include all the following **required documents** to be considered complete.

- Legal Registration Documents
- Certified Financial Statements
- Documents providing evidence if the organization is a women’s rights or women-led organization

All required documents should be uploaded through the [online application system only](http://grants.unwomen.org) (we cannot accept email or paper documents). **Please note that incomplete applications will be automatically disqualified.**

You must **plan for and set aside enough time to upload documents in the online application system.** Please note that the system may experience significant delays close to the submission deadline.

**We will acknowledge receipt of a submitted online application through a confirmation e-mail. Please contact us immediately if you do not receive the confirmation email.** In the event of technical problems with the online application, please contact the UN Trust Fund Secretariat (New York, USA) by email at [unft-gms@unwomen.org](mailto:unft-gms@unwomen.org).

You will be informed of updates on the application process through email.

*Please note that in line with UN Trust Fund operating procedures and in order to safeguard the transparency of the Call for Proposals processes, all queries regarding the Call for Proposals must be addressed to [unft-gms@unwomen.org](mailto:unft-gms@unwomen.org). The UN Trust Fund Secretariat cannot accept or respond to any inquiry addressed directly or indirectly to our staff.*
Please note that due to the high volume of applications, we unfortunately cannot respond individually to those not selected for further consideration.

6. Our Selection Process

We award grants through an open and competitive process. The application process will consist of two rounds. The first round will involve the submission of a Concept Note and only those successful in the first round will be invited to submit a Full-fledged proposal. Applications will be appraised by independent experts and our Technical Review Group. A subset of final applicants will be considered for grants. Our inter-agency Programme Advisory Committee will make the final funding decisions.

Grant approvals and signing of donor agreements will take place by mid-2021. All successful grantees are expected to work closely with our Team to incorporate full technical feedback and ensure high-quality standards of programme design and rigorous monitoring and evaluation plans.

7. Useful Resources

The following COVID-19 specific resources may be especially useful when developing your proposal:


The following resources may be especially useful to consult when developing your proposal:

- **M&E and Results Based Management Terms.** The OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation available in English, French and Spanish. http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/21/2754804.pdf
- **Knowledge Management.** OHCHR. Share! Learn! Innovate! Methods and Technologies to Share Human Rights Knowledge and Ideas http://slitoolkit.ohchr.org/
- **The Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls.** UN Women. Step-by-step programming guidance. http://endvawnow.org/ (searchable by language)
  In Spanish: http://alianzaintercambios.org/documentos?idtipodoc=10&iddoc=136
  In French: http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/68353/1/WHO_FCH_GWH_01.1_fre.pdf
  In Spanish: http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/70445/1/WHO_FCH_GWH_01.1_spa.pdf
## 8. Eligible Countries and Territories

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9. About Us

The United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) is a global multi-lateral mechanism supporting national efforts to end one of the most widespread human rights violations in the world. Established in 1996 by UN General Assembly Resolution 50/166, the UN Trust Fund is administered by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) on behalf of the United Nations system.

Our ultimate vision is a world without violence against women and girls that is aligned with international human rights standards, SDGs 2030 agenda and humanitarian law of which gender equality and the elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls is an integral part.

Through our grant-making, we contribute to raising awareness about the issue, advocate for developing and implementing laws grounded in human rights standards, promote access to services and develop capacity of our partners for continued progress.

For almost 25 years, we have partnered with and supported critical actors in pursing the ending violence against women agenda, such as women’s organizations, youth groups, indigenous communities, religious and traditional leaders, human rights organizations and the media. To date, this support has been extended to 572 initiatives in 140 countries and territories for a total of US$ 182 million.

We operate based on the voluntary contributions of UN Member States, non-profit organizations, foundations, the private sector and concerned individuals. Our governance and grant-giving is guided by consultative committees at global and regional levels comprised of UN agencies, leading experts from civil society and other key stakeholders. Information on our history, past grantees and donors, can be found on our website.

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Adapted from the UNDAF Programming Principles: https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNDG-UNDAF-Companion-Pieces-1-Programming-Principles.pdf

The UN Trust Fund follows the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/DCD-DAC list of countries available at http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/daclist.htm

A certified financial statement is one that has been reviewed, approved and signed by the person authorized to sign financial documents for the organization. This can be someone from within the organization or an outside firm.

An audit report is one that has been issued by a certified, independent auditor. In addition to external auditors, organizations can also employ internal auditors.

For purposes of grant allocation, the UN Trust Fund considers an organization “small” if its annual organizational budget is less than US$ 200,000. Organizations with a larger annual budget are not eligible to apply under this grant category.

Online support and guidance on how to complete the full-fledged proposal will be available for smaller organizations with less capacity but high potential that are selected in the first round.


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