

# Third Annual Report of the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

2020





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# Foreword

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I am pleased to introduce the third annual report of the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. This report highlights activities conducted, and contains a financial overview for 2020, along with some more recent updates.

The turbulence caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 affected the implementation of projects in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Liberia. Jointly with the Victims' Rights Advocate, I sent a message to field missions in April 2020 so that they had guidance on provision of support and assistance to identified victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel, as well as any new victims who came forward. We were heartened by the excellent efforts of Conduct and Discipline and Senior Victims' Rights Officers and Field Victims' Rights Advocates to maintain contact with victims and coordinate support for services, even during the restrictions of movement.

We are grateful to the 24 countries that have supported the Trust Fund so far. The Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance sent out a fundraising appeal to all Member States with the goal of raising \$3 million over the course of two years so that the Trust Fund can continue to help restore the dignity of victims, break stigma and facilitate reintegration within communities. We have received close to \$1.5 million since the appeal was issued, and we look forward to additional contributions.

This report highlights the positive impact of the projects on the lives of communities, even with delays encountered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We remain engaged with entities across the United Nations system to encourage them to develop projects that provide seed funding for income-generating activities to put victims on the path to sustainable economic empowerment and independence.



**“ We remain engaged to put victims on the path to sustainable economic empowerment and independence. ”**

*Catherine Pollard, Under Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance*

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We continue to engage victims and communities so we can benefit from their feedback on the projects in which they participate and their ideas for the future. They are at the heart of our response and at the core of the implementation of the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. I hope that we will be able to continue this important work with the support of Member States and global and local partners.

Catherine Pollard  
Under Secretary-General for Management Strategy,  
Policy and Compliance



# Our work

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The Trust Fund supports United Nations and non-governmental organizations to implement projects that provide support to complainants, victims and children born as a result of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff members and related personnel. Trust Fund projects also support those in the most vulnerable situation in communities and those at risk of sexual exploitation and abuse.

The Trust Fund does not provide funds directly to the complainants, victims or children born as a result of sexual exploitation and abuse.

The funding provided through the Trust Fund is used for projects that:

- Provide specialized services required by victims and children born as a result of sexual exploitation and abuse, including medical care, legal services, and psychosocial support
- Address service gaps in the provision of assistance and support
- Raise awareness on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse among the victims and the community, including reporting channels
- Provide additional support and communications for complainants, victims and children born as a result of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Since its establishment, the Trust Fund has supported 12 projects, with 7 projects active or completed in 2020. The focus areas of the projects are described in the next pages.



## PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

One of the main purposes of Trust Fund projects is the provision of psychosocial services for women and children. The victims are provided with psychological first aid and counselling and are referred to specialized mental health clinics. In addition, victims receive enhanced social support reintegration into their communities, or through the provision of peer-to-peer support.



## MEDICAL CARE

Victims receive treatment for the consequences of sexual exploitation and abuse, including referrals to services such as HIV post-exposure treatment, post-exposure prophylaxis, and reproductive and sexual health care. To address immediate needs, victims receive dignity kits and other sanitary materials.



## INCOME GENERATION

Being a victim of sexual exploitation and abuse has effects well beyond the psychological and physical. Victims are often stigmatized by their families and community members, and must provide for themselves. Trust Fund projects provide sexual exploitation and abuse victims the knowledge and tools to facilitate sustainable economic empowerment and help them to reclaim their dignity and rebuild their self-esteem. Through participation in vocational training, for example bread-baking, basket weaving, dressmaking or hairdressing, victims gain skills. They learn how to start their own businesses, sell their products to generate income and provide for their families.



## AWARENESS-RAISING

To increase the knowledge of victims and communities about their rights and support available, awareness-raising campaigns are an essential part of projects supported by the Trust Fund. Project teams engage with communities throughout the entire life of a project.

Community-based complaint networks are instrumental in encouraging reporting of complaints and coordination and provision of victim assistance support. They link the United Nations, beneficiaries and community leaders. Community-based complaint networks ensure stakeholders have accurate information about projects and their objectives, while project activities address the needs of the victims.

# Trust Fund projects

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While support and assistance to victims were maintained as much as possible throughout the last year in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdowns, activities that required people to gather, such as training, were suspended. Project activities continued after several months.





**PROJECT:** Victim assistance and support in Beni, Bunia, Goma, Kalemie, Kavumu and Uvira

**LOCATION:** The Democratic Republic of the Congo

The projects aim to support women in vulnerable situations, at risk of sexual exploitation and abuse, and victims of sexual exploitation and abuse in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The projects build the capacities of the community-based complaint network in the region to receive and transmit complaints of misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse, and implement prevention activities.

The expected outputs of the projects include:

- 420 beneficiaries in the six communities of Beni, Bunia, Goma, Kalemie, Kavumu and Uvira trained in dressmaking, hairdressing, bread-baking, pastry-making, improved cooking methods, basket weaving, farming/animal husbandry and small business management
- 60 children provided with two-year scholarships
- Capacity-building of 120 members of the local community-based complaint networks in reception and reporting of complaints and support to income-generation activities for beneficiaries of the project.

Project activities are expected to be completed over a period of 12 months with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) with Siri Ya Mazingira (SYAM), a local non-governmental organization, leading implementation. The projects were extended through 2021 due to COVID-19.

Over the course of 2020, the project implemented the following activities:

- Recruited 18 trainers (3 in Beni, 3 in Bunia, 3 in Goma, 3 in Kalemie, 2 in Kavumu and 4 in Uvira)

- Identified project beneficiaries and established a project database
- Identified 477 beneficiaries, including 82 children for schooling activities and 395 for vocational training, over the course of six field visits conducted by SYAM
- Organized a survey in Goma, Kavumu and Uvira, and collected information on the status of beneficiaries
- Purchased and distributed school kits to 82 children who benefit from project scholarships. Each received a uniform, a bag, exercises books, shoes and other items
- Identified vocational centres and rented training centres in Beni, Bunia, Kalemie and Uvira
- Installed hangars and ovens in selected vocational centres for pastry production
- Equipped the centres with furniture, machines and training materials
- Organised three training sessions for 60 community-based complaint network members.

The following activities continue to be implemented in 2021:

- Provision of scholarships to 82 children
- Training of beneficiaries in sewing, hairdressing, pastry-making, improved cooking methods and dyeworks
- Provision of starter kits and guidance for income-generating businesses, including training on implementation of business plans, information on money and credit management, and marketing




- ▶ Training of community-based complaint network members on gender, human rights and children's rights, as well as assistance to victims
- ▶ Support to community-based complaint

network members, including police officers, to conduct community outreach and awareness to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse.



Photo credit: Thomas Freteur



**PROJECT:** Adult literacy programme in eight communities in the Montserrado County

**LOCATION:** Liberia

In 2020, the project jointly run by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the National Adult Education Association of Liberia (NAEL) aimed to address educational gaps of individuals in the most vulnerable situations, including victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. The literacy and numeracy classes continued after a brief delay due to COVID-19 lockdowns. To reduce the impact of the pandemic on the progress of the project, participants were provided with guidance on practising their literacy and numeracy skills in their homes.

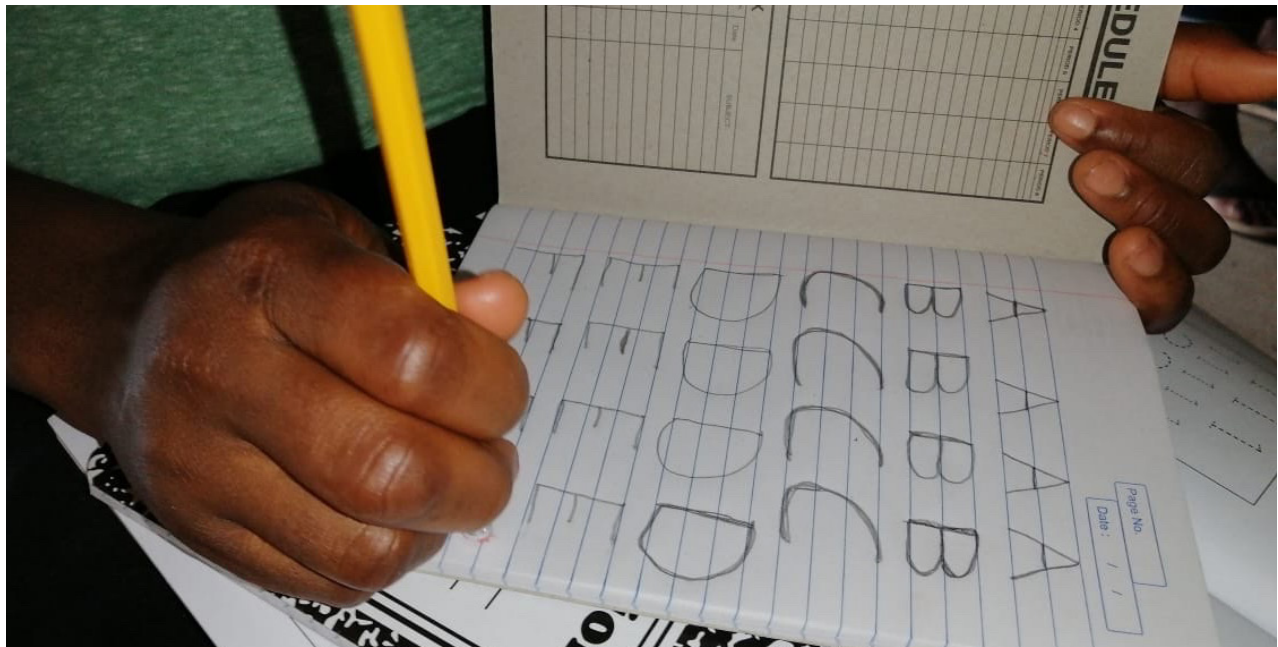
The main activities implemented in 2020 were:

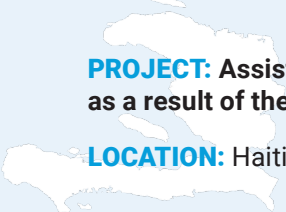
- ▶ Literacy classes supported by 16 facilitators, holding high school diplomas and with prior teaching experience

- ▶ Two-week refresher training for facilitators
- ▶ Delivery of classes to 183 beneficiaries in eight communities, each with 25 students, over the course of seven months. Classes were conducted in the evenings so beneficiaries could fulfil their daily responsibilities.

The 183 beneficiaries finished a two-cycle literacy and numeracy training programme, which not only addressed education gaps, but also motivated the beneficiaries to enrol in formal education.

Following the successful implementation of the numeracy and literacy programme, UNESCO and NAEL are planning a new project to provide women with vocational and business and leadership skills. The project is expected to support 200 women, including graduates of the literacy and numeracy programme.





**PROJECT:** Assistance for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse and their children born as a result of these misconducts

**LOCATION:** Haiti

### Upcoming projects

In 2020, the Review Committee approved a project offering assistance for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse and their children born as a result of these misconducts in Haiti. Project activities are being implemented over the course of 24 months until the end of December 2022. This is the first Trust Fund project

in Haiti. It is managed by the United Nations Development Programme and implemented by Associazione Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale (AVSI), which provides holistic support to 34 children (17 girls and 17 boys) and other victims.



# Impact



**24**  
**COUNTRIES**

Democratic  
Republic of  
Congo

477

**660**

DIRECT BENEFICIARIES  
FOR ONGOING PROJECTS

183

Liberia

Democratic  
Republic of  
Congo

60

**2,220**

INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES<sup>1</sup>

2,160

Liberia

**7**  
**PROJECTS**

<sup>1</sup> Indirect beneficiaries are those who would have been reached by outreach and awareness raising activities.

# Testimonies

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**Training facilitator (Liberia):** "I am so happy for the students in this community. Some are able to write and recognize letters and numbers. They can stand up and express themselves. They have no fear to get up and write on a blackboard."



**Beneficiary (Liberia):** "The project allowed me to learn how to read and write. This has motivated me that I want to go back to school, so I can learn other good things for the future."



**Beneficiary (Liberia):** "I knew nothing upon my arrival at this literacy training. I used to ask people to help me write my name. But right now, I won't ask again because I am learning. I can do it for myself. My thanks and appreciation go to those who are helping us. If we just sit home doing nothing, we will not learn anything. The literacy programme has made me learn things I didn't know."



**Project manager (Liberia):** "We are talking about people who had been sexually abused and exploited. And, not everyone is willing to talk about some of the things they have passed through because sometimes people are stigmatized."



**Beneficiary (Democratic Republic of the Congo):** "I didn't know if after the rape there was life. I was humiliated and disregarded after the birth of my daughter. Everyone saw me as a carrier of the curse. Now that I can bring something in terms of money in our houses, even my elder brother calls me 'dada', which means my best sister."



**Beneficiary (Democratic Republic of the Congo):** "Our family is poor. Mama doesn't live with me. She left me at my grandmother's house in 2015. Every time I go to my mother's house, my siblings say I am MONUSCO, I am Chinese, I am muzungu (black). For the past two years, my grandmother has been sending me to sell cakes so that we can have the money for my school fees. This project really meets my needs, I study in peace, I am not chased away anymore; it gives me hope to live."



**Beneficiary (Democratic Republic of the Congo):** "I never went to school because my parents died a long time ago; they were killed by rebels in the hills of Masisi. With this support, I will make my life, I will be autonomous."

# Financial information

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## Summary of all funds disbursed between 2017 and June 2021

**\$3,290,059**

Contributions received since 2016

**\$547,714**

Withheld payments

**\$3,837,773**

Total

**\$1,471,423<sup>2</sup>**

Funds disbursed/committed between 2017 and June 2021 for 12 projects (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central Africa Republic, Liberia, Haiti, including first 3 projects in the Democratic Republic of the Congo)

**\$2,366,350**

Projected balance

<sup>2</sup> In 2020, the Trust Fund disbursed \$360,000 in support of projects in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Between January and June 2021, the Trust Fund disbursed \$149,843 in support of the project in Haiti.



List of the 24 Member States who have provided voluntary contributions (as of June 2021)

|   |                              |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
|    | Albania<br><b>2,000</b>      |    | Luxembourg<br><b>50,000</b>        |
|    | Australia<br><b>150,954</b>  |    | Nigeria<br><b>100,000</b>          |
|    | Bangladesh<br><b>100,000</b> |    | Norway<br><b>123,337</b>           |
|    | Bhutan<br><b>10,000</b>      |    | Pakistan<br><b>10,000</b>          |
|    | Canada<br><b>232,132</b>     |    | Philippines<br><b>7,500</b>        |
|   | Cyprus<br><b>17,900</b>      |   | Portugal<br><b>49,503</b>          |
|  | Ecuador<br><b>1,000</b>      |  | Slovakia<br><b>35,352</b>          |
|  | Finland<br><b>60,045</b>     |  | Sri Lanka<br><b>10,000</b>         |
|  | Germany<br><b>120,000</b>    |  | Switzerland<br><b>52,000</b>       |
|  | India<br><b>100,000</b>      |  | Uganda<br><b>10,000</b>            |
|  | Italy<br><b>578,816</b>      |  | United Kingdom<br><b>1,099,520</b> |
|  | Japan<br><b>200,000</b>      |  | United States<br><b>170,000</b>    |

**TOTAL: 3,290,059**  
**WITHHELD**  
**PAYMENTS: 547,714**

**OVERALL TOTAL**  
**3,837,773**

# Way forward

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The United Nations implements a system-wide approach to realizing victims' rights to assistance, including through provision of support to partners delivering projects financed by the Trust Fund. The Trust Fund's goal is to provide seed funds and support to address gaps in services, while broader efforts continue in the United Nations system for coordinated and integrated efforts through a victim-centred approach. United Nations entities and civil society partners will continue to devise sustainable pathways for victims through existing programmes, national mechanisms and national human rights institutions in collaboration with the Victims' Rights Advocate and partners in field locations.

Priorities for 2021 and 2022 include:

- Support project submissions from South Sudan and the Central African Republic
- Support implementation of Trust Fund projects
- Strengthen outreach to encourage more project ideas and proposals from agencies, funds, programmes and civil society partners
- Continue collaboration with the Office of the Victim's Rights Advocate and Senior Victims' Rights Officers on mapping, gaps in services and specialized projects
- Collaborate with the communications team in the Department of Peace Operations to strengthen awareness-raising activities and capacity-building for community-based complaint networks
- Continue documentation of the impact of projects and feedback from beneficiaries
- Disseminate information on the impact of the Trust Fund and testimonies of beneficiaries through the Trust Fund website, social media campaigns and various United Nations and Member State events
- Develop an online toolkit of materials providing guidance for proposals, monitoring and evaluation and creation of impact-based reporting on projects.





