



Donor Direct Action
A FUND FOR WOMEN

— An Initiative of the Sisterhood is Global Institute —

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



www.donordirectaction.org

The **Sisterhood Is Global Institute** (SIGI) is a feminist think tank founded in 1984 by Robin Morgan and Simone de Beauvoir and women from 80 countries pledged to "visionary yet pragmatic action in support of women's rights, freedoms and power." **Donor Direct Action**, a SIGI initiative, strengthens front line women's rights groups around the world by increasing their access to financial resources, political leaders, and public visibility with minimum bureaucracy and maximum impact. Since its inception in 2011, Donor Direct Action has regranted over US \$4.2 million to front line women's organizations where resources are most needed and have the highest impact. Today, Donor Direct Action supports 16 partners in 15 countries and operates two funds: The Efua Dorkenoo Fund to End Female Genital Mutilation, which has 5 partners in 5 countries, and the Gloria Steinem Equality Fund to End Sex Trafficking, which has 10 partners in 10 countries.

I have witnessed first-hand the needs of women's rights organizations working on the front lines where so much is done with such limited resources. Donor Direct Action enables anyone anywhere to help these organizations and make a real difference in the lives of women and girls around the world.

Navi Pillay, Co-Convenor, Donor Direct Action

Nothing is more crucial than getting money to projects on the ground. Donor Direct Action knows how to get the funds where they are most needed and where they will make a real difference.

Gloria Steinem, Co-Convenor, Donor Direct Action

The Sisterhood Is Global Institute, the first global feminist think tank, proudly welcomes the Donor Direct Action initiative - the answer to what global feminism has been asking: minimum bureaucracy, maximum effectiveness, support, contact, empowerment.

Robin Morgan, President, The Sisterhood Is Global Institute

COVER IMAGE: *Migrant domestic workers participate in a protest organized by KAFA Lebanon to demand their rights, Beirut, Lebanon*



Murals representing Afghan women breaking the shackles of inequality and injustice painted in multiple locations across Kabul by volunteers of Humanitarian Assistance for the Women and Children of Afghanistan.

2020 was a calamitous year around the world, and we are hopeful that 2021 will be a year of recovery, an opportunity to build forward rather than build back. The silence around violence and discrimination is ending – slowly but steadily. Every day women are speaking out in greater numbers and with greater support. Every day the call for a new way grows louder. There is a growing recognition of intersectionality – in particular the movements for racial and gender justice and the power and importance of global solidarity.

COVID-19 put a magnifying glass on the inequality that pervades and sustains our world order. The pandemic shattered the lives of marginalized people around the world, leaving women poorer with exponentially more work and increasing their vulnerability to gender-based violence. The #MeToo and Black Lives Matter movements are mobilizing the growing frustration with the slow pace of change, and giving us hope for a world that will no longer tolerate inequality and will take effective action to end violence and discrimination.

At Donor Direct Action we have been working to support front line women's rights activists around the world who do so much with so little. Our vision is radically simple – we entrust resources to strategic front line organizations who face the most pressing needs and know best how to change their communities, and how to change their countries' laws and practices.

We need to be audacious in our giving in 2021 to address the needs of today's broken communities around the world. It is a moment of desperate need and a moment of great opportunity. I hope you will join Donor Direct Action and our front line partners as we emerge from this devastating global pandemic with a deep commitment and fierce determination to build forward.

Jessica Neuwirth
Founder & Director

IMPACT

MONEY RAISED FOR FRONT LINE PARTNERS

From our inception in 2011 to the end of 2020, Donor Direct Action has raised more than \$4.2 million for its partners around the world from more than 1700 donors in 54 countries. In 2020 we raised over \$660,000 to support the work of the front line women's movement.

\$660,145
Raised
in 2020

1712
Donors
in 54
Countries

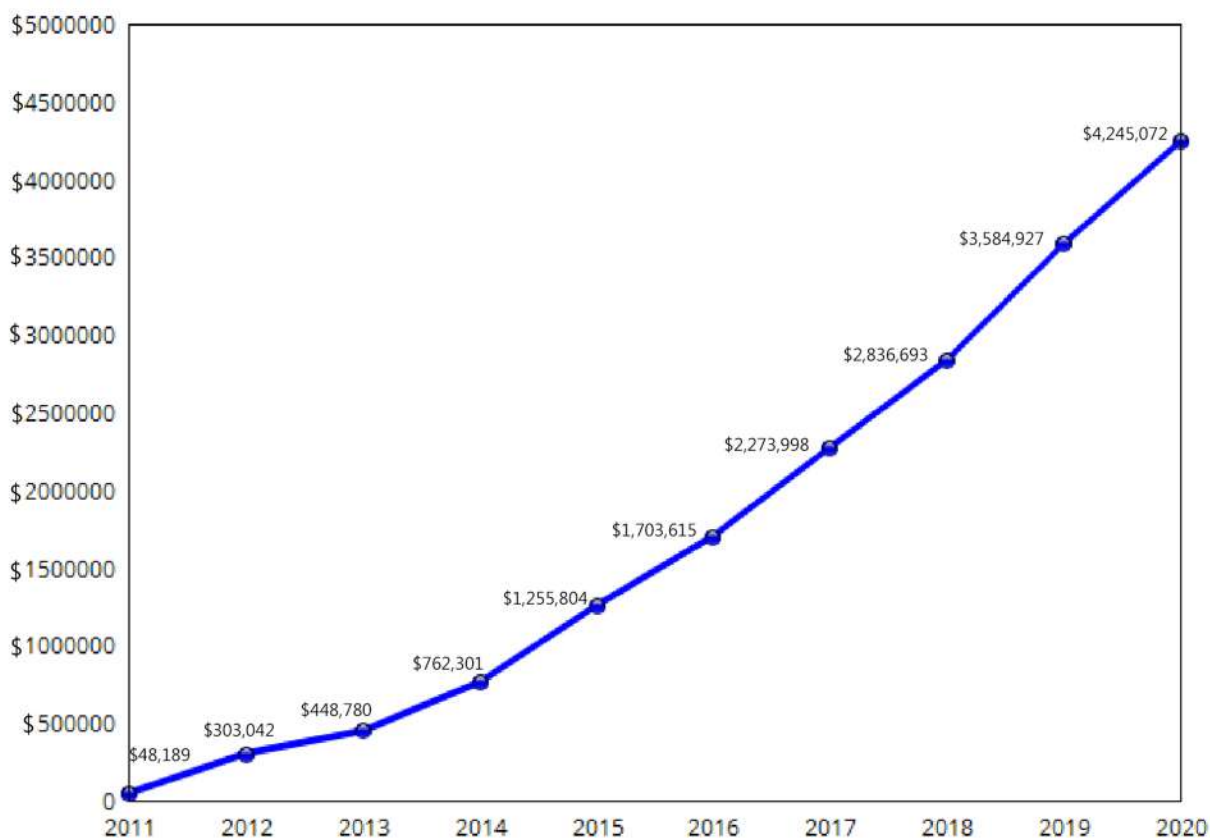
OUR COMMITMENT

Minimum Bureaucracy for Maximum Impact



90% of all donations made to support our partners' work is re-granted directly to them. Donor Direct Action retains 10% to help cover operating costs.

Donor Direct Action Funds to Partners



FRONT LINE WOMEN LEAD THE WAY

In protecting vulnerable communities through COVID-19



An Afghan woman receives a food package during an emergency food distribution drive by Humanitarian Assistance for the Women and Children of Afghanistan (HAWCA)



Staff of Amazonian Initiative Movement explain social distancing rules in a community outreach program in Sierra Leone



Congolese women trained by Synergie des Femmes' income generation program sew masks to distribute among marginalized communities in DR Congo

Synergie's staff distribute long-handled baskets to street vendors to help them maintain social distancing in DR Congo



A woman receives emergency supplies from the staff of Organización de Mujeres Salvadoreñas por la Paz in El Salvador



A portable hand-wash station designed by the Galkayo Education Center for Peace and Development (GECPD) in Somalia

Masks stitched and distributed by women in the tailoring classes organized by GECPD in Somalia



Food distribution drive conducted by Tasaru Ntomonok Initiative in the Maasai Region of Kenya

FIGHTING COVID-RELATED HUNGER AND VIOLENCE IN AFGHANISTAN

The steady deterioration in Afghanistan in recent times has been both familiar and deeply unsettling. Afghan women's rights activists faced an onslaught of challenges in 2020. They had to fight hard to not be sidelined in the United States-led peace talks with the Taliban and to ensure that Afghan women's rights, safety and concerns were addressed as part of the negotiations. The security situation in the country worsened significantly for women after the US announced its exit strategy and peace negotiations began. Extremist attacks targeting women included a mass shooting at a maternity clinic in Kabul killing 16 people in May 2020, and the shootings of TV anchor Malala Maiwand and women's rights activist Freshta Kohistani in December 2020. The COVID-19 lockdown worsened poverty levels drastically leading to a humanitarian crisis and widespread hunger. Women's rights activists witnessed a surge in domestic violence and child marriages as young girls were being forced into marriages in exchange for bride price.

"Afghanistan is not a place to live in. There is no hope for peace. Tell the tailor to take your measurement (for a funeral shroud), tomorrow it could be your turn."

Tweet from Freshta Kohistani in November 2020, a month before she was killed.

Since its inception, Donor Direct Action's Kabul-based partner, Humanitarian Assistance for the Women and Children of Afghanistan (HAWCA) has provided humanitarian assistance to Afghan women and children, refugees and internally displaced people.



HAWCA staff distribute tailoring and emergency kits to women in their women's empowerment program

Anticipating the crisis that was about to unfold, as early as March 2020 just as COVID-19 began to spread in Afghanistan, HAWCA sprang into action to mobilize relief efforts.

HAWCA conducted several food drives to feed thousands of families in Kabul and remote areas. And through the pandemic HAWCA kept its Women Protection Center open, despite the challenges, and provided psycho-social and legal counseling to women victims of domestic violence. HAWCA also conducted women's empowerment campaigns in remote rural areas of Nangarhar, which recorded low enrollment of girls in schools and high incidence of forced and early marriages.

The near future seems very grim for Afghan women and girls. The targeted killings of prominent Afghan women activists, media professionals, judges, police officers, and political leaders by the Taliban and Islamic State are steadily on the rise. As the US prepares to leave Afghanistan in 2021 we must ramp up international support to front line Afghan women activists and leaders more than ever before to protect the hard-won achievements of Afghan women over the last two decades.

RAMPING UP THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST FGM DURING SCHOOL CLOSURES IN SOMALIA

As Somalia went into lockdown in April 2020, Somali girls became increasingly vulnerable to female genital mutilation (FGM). Traditionally Somali girls are subjected to FGM during summer holidays, but because of COVID-related school closures girls returned home earlier in 2020. According to media reports, circumcisers went door-to-door offering to cut girls, and in some places mass circumcisions were organized to cut up to 20 girls at one time. The regular community outreach programs of anti-FGM activists were severely restricted because of the pandemic, and the absence of an anti-FGM law in Somalia further exacerbated the situation. It is feared that early marriages may have also increased in Somalia as FGM is a precursor to marriage.

Donor Direct Action's long-time Somali partner Galkayo Education Centre for Peace and Development (GECPD) has worked for



Young Somali men organized by GECPD pledge to fight FGM

over two decades educating communities in Galkayo, Harfo, Ba'adweyn and Bursalla about the harms of FGM. GECPD ramped up its campaigns to warn community members not to subject girls to FGM during COVID and organized a public debate in February about the health consequences of FGM. GECPD also organized young men to join the movement to end FGM.

GALVANIZING EMERGENCY SUPPORT FOR WOMEN AFFECTED BY THE BEIRUT BLAST

On August 4, 2020 a massive explosion struck the city of Beirut. The explosion destroyed the lives of many women and children who were supported by KAFA, our Lebanese partner. Women lost their jobs, their homes were destroyed, some lost family breadwinners and many were physically injured. Donor Direct Action launched an urgent fundraising drive to help KAFA provide emergency services. Within weeks we regranted over US \$53,000 to KAFA from 57 donors in 12 countries.

KAFA provided women affected by the blast with food, clothes, hygiene kits, and cash assistance. KAFA also helped with basic structural repairs for their homes and offered



KAFA's Emergency Response team

psychological counseling. KAFA helped 711 beneficiaries, repaired 84 houses and provided 77 psycho-therapy sessions under this emergency program. Additionally KAFA's anti-trafficking program assisted 202 beneficiaries affected by the blast.

EXPANDING PROTECTIONS FOR WOMEN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE IN LATVIA

Latvia, like most other countries around the world, saw a significant rise in gender-based violence during the COVID-19 lockdown. According to Iluta Lace, Director of MARTA Centre, Donor Direct Action's partner in Latvia, the number of state police emergency calls increased by 35-40% in comparison to the previous year. Early in the lockdown MARTA Centre advocated for and was granted authorization for remote consultations with the Ministry of Welfare and Riga Social Service. This ensured continuation of support services for victims of violence. In 2020, MARTA Centre assisted 443 victims of gender-based violence. MARTA's services include shelter, psychological counseling, legal support and consultations with social workers.

In addition to direct services, MARTA engages in advocacy for victims of gender-based violence and sex trafficking. In a noteworthy step forward for women in Latvia, the government repealed the rules on administrative sanctions for prostituted persons in July 2020, and penalties for women in prostitution are no longer applied in the country. MARTA also advocated for strengthening the police response to domestic violence. In August 2020, amendments to the Cabinet of Ministers' regulations came into force, which require police to notify social services and, if necessary, the custody court about domestic abuse incidents.

A LIFE-SAVING HELPLINE FOR NEPALI WOMEN DURING COVID

22 year-old Gagana from Khajura was severely abused by her husband. On Sept 1, 2020 he came home drunk at 11:00pm and threatened to kill Gagana by forcing her fingers into an electric socket because she had not opened the door fast enough. The following day Gagana's mother-in-law held both her hands and her husband hit her on the head. They also injured Gagana's brother by punching him and hitting him with a stick. Suffering physical and mental trauma from the incident, Gagana decided to leave her marital home on September 2, 2020 and contacted the legal helpline for domestic violence survivors at the Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD), Donor Direct Action's partner in Nepal. An FWLD lawyer drafted a complaint application and accompanied Gagana to the Women, Children and Senior Service Center of Police Office in Banke District. The lawyer also accompanied Gagana for a medical exam at a one-stop crisis center. A summons was served on



*Puspa Poudel, legal officer of FWLD counsels a client over the phone in Kathmandu, Nepal.
Photo: UN Women/
Uma Bista*

Gagana's husband asking him to report to the Women's Cell at the police station. FWLD continues to support Gagana with the police and courts.

Nepal saw a rise in domestic violence assaults during the lockdown. FWLD staff members operated their legal helpline through the pandemic and provided legal information and consultation to victims who did not have access to legal services during COVID-19. In the 6 months following the onset of the pandemic, FWLD received 358 cases, of which 91 were domestic violence, 28 were incest/rape cases and 5 were marital rape. FWLD also created and distributed an online questionnaire for victims who could not discuss their cases over the phone.

MOBILE PHONE APP TO PROTECT WOMEN FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN EL SALVADOR

El Salvador has historically recorded high rates of domestic violence making it one of the most unsafe countries for women and girls in Latin America. A 2017 National Survey of Violence against Women carried out by the Department of Statistics and Census noted, “of every 100 women, 67 have experienced some kind of domestic violence in their lifetime, but only 34 have filed formal reports.” When El Salvador went into lockdown in March 2020, women’s rights activists anticipated a sharp rise in gender-based violence in the country. Hotlines were established for victims and as expected the numbers of calls steadily increased through the pandemic.

Donor Direct Action’s Salvadoran partner ORMUSA, in conjunction with other feminist



ORMUSA's mobile phone app APPFEM makes it easy for domestic violence victims to seek help and resources in El Salvador.

groups in the country, launched an updated version of a mobile phone app called APPFEM to help domestic violence victims access information and help. The app has a directory and map of geo-referenced resources of public offices that are responsible for dealing with violence against women and provide assistance, care and support to victims.

EMPOWERING PERUVIAN WOMEN ARTISANS IN THE ANDEAN PLATEAU

In a welcome break from pandemic news in December 2020, Donor Direct Action’s Peruvian partner Manuela Ramos celebrated a much-needed moment of global recognition. Textile artisans from Manuela Ramos’ Las Manueles project were recognized at the Ibero-American Design Biennial. The Las Manueles project promotes the economic autonomy of women artisans in Puno, a region in Peru that has maintained its millenary techniques and artistic expression in textiles and weaving. Women from this Alpaca-rearing region of the Peruvian Andes produce handmade artisanal thread used in embroidery.

Manuela Ramos seeks to empower women participating in the project to become independent and work in an organized collaborative. This holistic project addresses



*Peruvian women artisans organized by Manuela Ramos
Photo Credit: thelittlemarket.com*

diverse topics through a gendered lens including self-esteem, sexual and reproductive health, sustainability, digitalization, organization and marketing.

EFUA DORKENOO FUND TO END FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

In 2017, Donor Direct Action launched the **Efua Dorkenoo Fund to End Female Genital Mutilation** (FGM) to address the fact that grassroots activism – key to ending FGM – is disproportionately underfunded.

Sierra Leone



Rugiatu Turay, Founder of Amazonian Initiative Movement (AIM), was honored with two awards in 2020 that recognized her groundbreaking work to end FGM. Nominated by the

government of Sierra Leone, Rugiatu was named Humanitarian Heroine on World Humanitarian Day 2020 and in November 2020, Rugiatu won the prestigious Theodor Haecker Prize for her steadfast commitment to ending female genital mutilation.

Gambia



In 2020, despite setbacks from the COVID-19 global pandemic, GAMCOTRAP launched its Acceleration of the Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation intervention in the Central River Region (CRR) of The Gambia. The objective of the intervention was to raise awareness of the increase in number of FGM cases performed secretly during the COVID-19 lockdown. GAMCOTRAP created task forces comprised of women and girls, community leaders and youth leaders to tackle the rapid increase of FGM.



(Left to Right) Meryl Streep, Efua Dorkenoo and Gloria Steinem. Efua was a Ghanaian-British women's rights activist who pioneered the global movement to end FGM.

Burkina Faso

Although Burkina Faso outlawed FGM in 1996, it is still practiced in the country with a prevalence rate of over 75%. Voix de Femmes works in the forefront of the anti-FGM movement there. In 2020, with the support of the Fund to End FGM, Voix de Femmes organized an advocacy meeting for 171 local elected officials in the municipality of ZAM. They sensitized internally displaced women and girls in Kaya about the dangers of FGM and organized a panel on FGM for customary and religious leaders in the province of Comoé. Through 2020, Voix de Femmes' anti-FGM campaigns targeted 60 villages in rural Ouagadougou and its youth education program on FGM was attended by 400 youth in the province of Mouhoun.



Women in an IDP camp in Kaya attend a community meeting organized by Voix de Femmes to discuss the dangers of FGM.

GLORIA STEINEM EQUALITY FUND TO END SEX TRAFFICKING

In 2018, Donor Direct Action, in partnership with The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) and SPACE International, launched the **Gloria Steinem Equality Fund to End Sex Trafficking**, (The End Trafficking Fund). This fund was created to address the stark lack of support for front line women's groups that are working to end the commercial sexual exploitation of women and girls around the world. In 2020, The End Trafficking Fund supported 10 grantees in Argentina, Germany, Iceland, India, Italy, Latvia, Lebanon, Nepal, South Africa and South Korea.

SOLWODI Germany

In May 2020, 16 Members of Parliament in Germany urged the German government not to re-open brothels once the country was to re-open from its lockdown. They also called for Germany to adopt the Equality Model of prostitution legislation, which decriminalizes prostituted persons while criminalizing the pimps and buyers. Additionally, the Frauen Union, the Conservative Women's Union, endorsed the Equality Model.

In conjunction with our German grantee Solwodi, Donor Direct Action circulated an open letter of global support for the 16 MPs in Germany urging the adoption of the Equality Model. The letter was signed by almost 300 individuals and organizations from around the world and sent to each of the 16 Members of Parliament.

Tribute to Per-Anders Sunesson



*Per-Anders Sunesson, Sweden's first
Ambassador-at-Large for
Combating Trafficking in Persons*

Sweden is celebrated as the first country to enact a law, in 1999, that recognizes the system of prostitution as a form of gender-based violence and discrimination ensuring that the people bought and sold in the sex trade, almost always women, are entitled to protection and services, while those who perpetrate harm against them - sex buyers and pimps must be held accountable.

In 2016, the Swedish Government appointed Per-Anders Sunesson as its first Ambassador-at-Large for Combating Trafficking in Persons. From the grassroots to the highest levels of international decision-making, Ambassador Sunesson effectively championed the Swedish Model, also now known as the "Equality Model." The collective movement of sex trade survivors, women's rights activists, front line service providers and human rights advocates, each dedicated to ending the sex trafficking and prostitution of women and girls, rarely has the opportunity to reap the benefits of political, governmental, and thought leadership that Ambassador Sunesson gifted us through his post. He carried forward Sweden's groundbreaking vision with extraordinary determination and passion. The global abolitionist movement is indebted to his tireless commitment to ending sex trafficking, eradicating the system of prostitution and promoting women's equality on every continent.

Taina Bien-Aimé
Executive Director
Coalition Against Trafficking in Women

EVENTS WITH PARTNERS

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DURING COVID

On April 3, 2020 Donor Direct Action organized a live online discussion on Domestic Violence and COVID-19 in collaboration with the Roosevelt House Human Rights Program at Hunter College. The discussion brought together partners Carmen Espinoza (Manuela Ramos, Peru), Shafiq Noori (HAWCA, Afghanistan), Randa Siniora (WCLAC, Palestine), with Diane Rosenfeld (Harvard Law School, US). The event was well attended and widely shared on social media.



(Left to Right) Diane Rosenfeld, Carmen Espinoza, Randa Siniora and Jessica Neuwirth.

TALK - WOMEN'S RIGHTS PALESTINE



On July 14, 2020 Donor Direct Action hosted an online dialogue about the issues facing Palestinian women in 2020. The discussion brought together American actor/comedian Maysoon Zayid (of Palestinian descent) and women's rights activist Randa Siniora, the Executive Director of the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC), Palestine.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, WCLAC rolled out an emergency plan to mitigate the increase in gender-based violence caused by the pandemic. The plan included free 24-hour helpline service as well as e-counseling, securing protection for survivors in shelters, carrying out media interventions and awareness campaigns on gender-based violence, coordinating with other women's rights organizations locally and globally, and continuing to document human rights violations against women in Palestine. Since the pandemic, WCLAC's gender-based violence hotline has received approximately 200 calls per month.

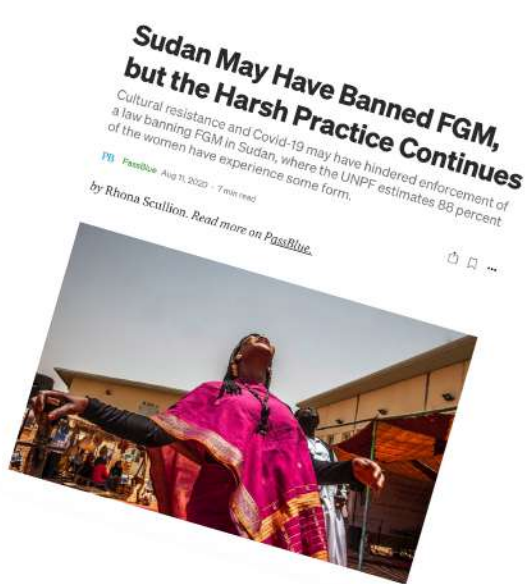
ADVOCATING FOR SECURITY AT PANZI HOSPITAL



MONUSCO blue helmets provide security to Panzi Hospital and Dr. Mukwege. Photo Credit: infocongo.net

In August 2020 Donor Direct Action initiated an emergency campaign calling on the United Nations to reinstate MONUSCO protection for Dr. Denis Mukwege and Panzi Hospital following a series of threats to his life, his family and the hospital. We worked on this campaign in collaboration with Physicians of Human Rights and Panzi Foundation, and in September 2020, we were able to secure the restoration of MONUSCO protection for Panzi Hospital. Among others, Margot Wallström, the former Foreign Minister of Sweden, and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton were instrumental in the effort to ensure that UN security was restored for Panzi Hospital and Dr. Denis Mukwege.

MEDIA COVERAGE

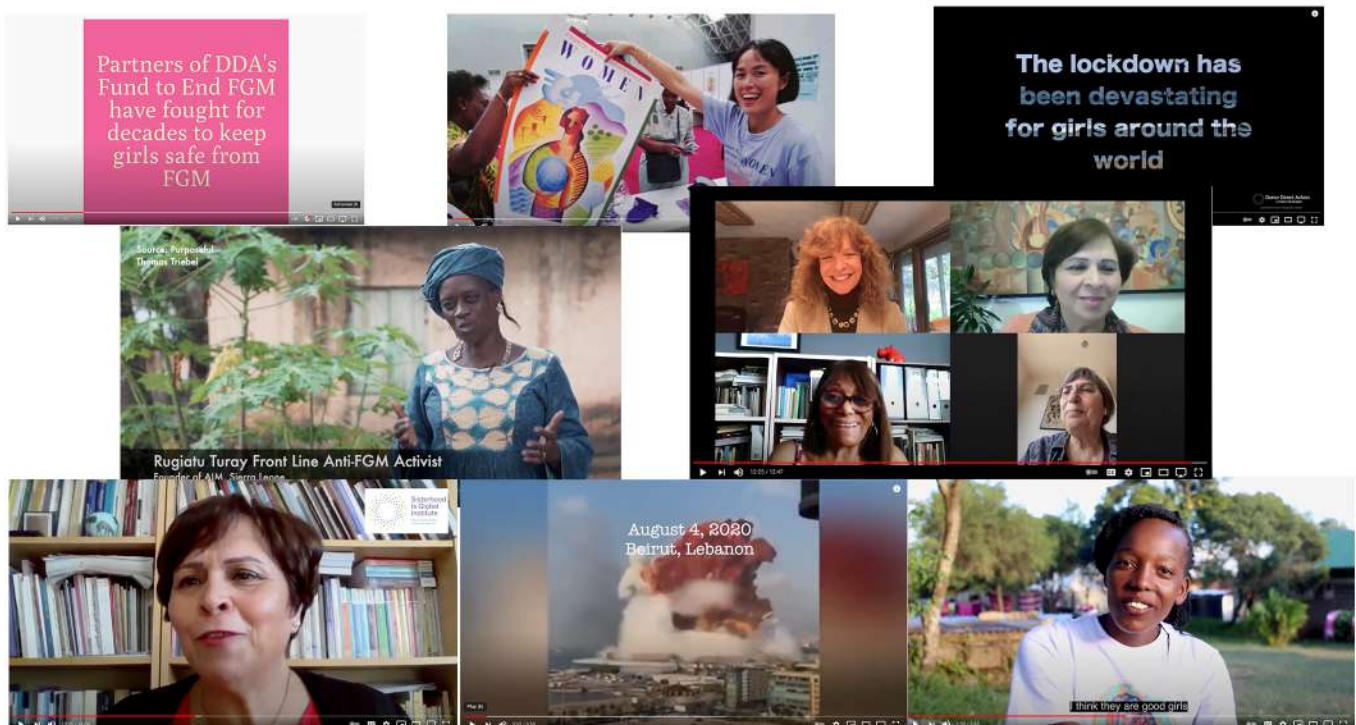


"Jarai Sabally, a program officer from Donor Direct Action, which promotes women's rights, suggested that the pandemic only jump-started an FGM season that takes place each summer in Somalia as well as Sudan."

"Jessica Neuwirth, director of Donor Direct Action, a nonprofit organization that finances women's groups in the global South, told PassBlue that when Verveer ran the office it was very active and used its cross-agency role to good effect, adding, "It got high-level cooperation, and other agencies took them seriously.'"

VIDEOS

In 2020, Donor Direct Action produced eight short videos highlighting the work of partners. Please visit Donor Direct Action's YouTube channel to view all of our videos at: <https://youtube.com/DonorDirectAction>



THANK YOU

We are deeply grateful to everyone who has supported Donor Direct Action and the Sisterhood Is Global Institute during the past year including:

2-4-3 Foundation	Jason Hackmann	Irene Neves
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Amina Goodwin	Kathy Najimy	Maysoon Zayid
Agnes Gund	Gloria Neuwirth	Paul Zivney
Robin Gutch	Michael Neuwirth	

FINANCIALS*

ASSETS

2020

2019

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$195,620	\$232,864
Pledges receivable	\$450,000	\$639,305
Prepaid expenses and other assets	\$31,093	\$9,535
Investments in certificates of deposit	\$1,193,964	\$1,014,404

TOTAL ASSETS

\$1,870,677 **\$1,896,108**

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accrued expenses	\$32,487	\$22,883
Deferred revenue	\$35,475	-
Grants payable	\$154,500	\$10,000
Total Liabilities	\$222,462	\$32,883

NET ASSETS

Net assets without donor restrictions	\$1,026,884	\$1,016,346
Net assets with donor restrictions	\$621,331	\$846,879
Total Net Assets	\$1,648,215	\$1,863,225

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

\$1,870,677 **\$1,896,108**

Change in Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions:

PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Contributions and grants:

Foundations	\$70,500	\$336,000
Individuals	\$12,821	\$552,375
Governmental	\$19,240	-
Corporations	-	-
Donated services	\$80,000	\$80,000
Donated use of facilities	-	-
Special events, (net)	\$9,511	\$382,836
Service fees	\$13,200	\$12,200
Interest income	\$17,712	\$13,275
Realized gain (loss)	-	\$4,074
Unrealized loss (gain)	\$17,372	(\$5,668)
Public Support and Revenue Before Releases from Restrictions	\$240,356	\$1,375,092

Net Assets Released from Restrictions

\$989,423 \$749,885

Total Public Support and Revenue

\$1,229,779 **\$2,124,977**

EXPENSES

Program services	\$1,073,044	\$1,529,092
Management and general	\$108,193	\$124,265
Fundraising and development	\$38,004	\$43,665
Total Expenses	\$1,219,241	\$1,697,022

Change in Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions

\$10,538 \$427,955

NET ASSETS, Beginning of Year

\$1,863,225 \$989,671

NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR

\$1,648,215 **\$1,863,225**

* Copies of the complete audited reports may be obtained from Donor Direct Action or from the State of New York, Department of Law, Office of Charities Registration

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Lebanon

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Libya

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Nepal

Forum for Women, Law and
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Palestine

Women's Centre for Legal Aid and
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