A TRIBUTE TO WOMEN AMID GLOBAL CRISIS

As the world grapples with an unprecedented pandemic, UNDEF concludes the month of March with a celebration of those who hold up half the sky -- women everywhere. We pay tribute to women striving for greater political participation on behalf of all their sisters; women building initiatives in the face of climate change; women working against the odds in countries ranging from Sudan and Sierra Leone to Ecuador and Haiti. As Covid-19 spreads around the globe, UNDEF is working to ensure that all its partners are supported in necessary precautions when implementing UNDEF projects. This includes ensuring all projects proactively practise social distancing, even in countries where such Government guidance is not in place yet, by replacing all physical gatherings with virtual ones, or postponing them until the peak has passed. Like all at UN Headquarters in New York, UNDEF staff have adapted to a remote working environment since mid-March, and remain in close contact with all projects to ensure safe and smooth continuation.

Over 2,500 Organizations Apply for UNDEF Support

UNDEF’s Fourteenth Round of funding received over 2,500 applications. The proposals originated from organizations across the globe, the vast majority local NGOs in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean. The share of proposals per region is illustrated in the chart below.

UNDEF continues to see an increase in the number of applications, receiving 237 more this year than in the previous Round Thirteen. This year’s Round encouraged applications focused on media and freedom of information, in addition to themes of gender equality and female empowerment, community activism, rule of law and human rights, youth engagement, strengthening civil society interaction with government, electoral processes and promoting tools for knowledge.

The UNDEF Secretariat is undertaking a rigorous assessment process which will establish a first short-list of applications, expected to be confirmed mid-2020, after which the process moves to the next phase. Each short-listed applicant will be contacted with a request for a draft project document.

The project document negotiation requires the applicant to provide a more elaborated project design, as well as scrutiny and due diligence enquiries by UNDEF. Only upon successful conclusion of the project document negotiation will the project proposal formally be approved for funds disbursement – usually after September every year.
NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Engaging Women in Elections in Sudan

Launched in 2018, an UNDEF project in Sudan is working to support urban women living in poverty to elevate their voices in politics. The project supports women to formulate their own political agendas through training, and supporting them with community outreach and civic engagement in an effort to promote gender equality in the 2020 Sudanese general election. By enabling women to engage in Sudanese democratic processes, the project elevates female agendas as active and informed voters and as potential candidates who can influence change at local levels.

In early February, The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa Network successfully implemented its first milestone activity, whereby they conducted leadership-focused trainings for 50 women. The training built the capacity and skills of a select group of female leaders in the grassroots community in order to help mobilize, organize and voice their political agendas in the upcoming election.

Promoting Gender Responsive Governance in Nepal

In rural Nepal, an UNDEF project is strengthening gender-responsive democratic local governance to promote participation and protection of the rights of marginalized and indigenous women in two Nepali municipalities, Icchakmana and Kalika, of Chitwan. The project has been following a three-pronged approach of rights holder empowerment, the promotion of accountability among duty bearers and the improvement of civil society’s capacity to promote social accountability.

Over the last year, UNDEF and the NGO Development Exchange Center Nepal have been able to provide training to 20 young Chepang female leaders like Santa Kumari Chepang, who were then given the additional resources to provide training to more than five hundred Chepang women through cascade sensitization workshops across Icchakmana and Kalika. Together, these trained individuals have established the Women Chepang Leadership Action Platforms (WOCLAP), a group which will continue to raise the capacity of females within Nepal and to engage in collective negotiations with respective local authorities to demand for the improvement of public service delivery for all genders.
NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Empowering Women for Climate Resilience in Cambodia

An UNDEF funded project in Cambodia is working to empower female leaders to better respond to climate change in their communities. Implemented by partner Cambodia Development Resource Institute, the project ‘Empowering Women for Climate Resilience in Cambodia’ provides capacity building to teach community leaders how to adapt effectively to climate change processes, access climate-related information and funding for their communities, and ultimately integrate that information into community development and investment plans. Project activities include training workshops, exposure visits and networking sharing forums.

Thus far the project has trained 80 female leaders on how to conduct a vulnerability reduction assessment for climate change. Twenty-four stakeholder consultation meetings have also taken place, where findings of best practice of women’s adaptation to climate change were presented and small grants were directly allocated to eight networks so that they can implement what they’ve learned into their own community activities.

Building Women’s Capacity for Democratic Dialogue in Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, an UNDEF project is working to boost the participation of women in democratic processes, and enable them to hold government to account. Implemented by partner Campaign for Good Governance, the project empowers women to influence the government’s commitments to mainstreaming issues related to women’s political, social and economic advancement in Sierra Leone’s development agenda.

The project created national level summits which were held between community women and 100 diverse stakeholders in the electricity, water and health sectors. These summits, hosted by the project serve as accountability platforms where women can make appropriate demands in a cooperative and non-confrontational manner.
NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Amplifying the Voices of Syrian Women Through Media

Launched early in 2019, an UNDEF project seeks to amplify the rights and voices of Syrian women and girls and increase their participation in social, political and cultural life. Tools include radio programmes that discuss violations of basic rights as well as economic and psychological challenges. Beneficiaries include 500,000 diaspora Syrians across Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey.

Implemented by Association Radio Rozana, this project has seen the completion of five motion videos and audio messages amongst many other project activities since its introduction. Such media content explores violence against women, including topics such as workplace harassment, children’s harassment and honor crimes. Content is being well received and reaching thousands of viewers.

Gender Equality and Youth ‘Artivism’ in Ecuador

In light of the alarming figures of sexual abuse and feminicide in Ecuador, a UNDEF supported project is working to empower 100 young leaders in Quito and strengthen their levels of civic engagement to help fight gender-based violence. The project plans to achieve through an innovative campaign that uses ‘artivism’, a concept that combines art and activism to explore where art can be used as a tool to fight against gender-based injustices. The main goal of the campaign is to increase awareness about gender-based violence and in doing so, decrease rates of violence in the district.

Since its introduction, the project has trained 100 adolescents on artivism. Through technical-artistic workshops, trainees produce artwork in line with the message of the campaign. Artwork ranges from short films and videoclips to photographs and posters. A jury then selects outstanding pieces of artwork to be exhibited in public spaces to raise awareness. Traditional and non-traditional media is also used throughout the campaign to disseminate the message of the campaign, reaching a wider audience.
Eliminating Toxic Masculinity in Tunisia

In Tunisia, an UNDEF project aims to combat the prevalence of toxic masculinity and improve both gender equality and gender equity in the nation. The project takes place in three marginalized regions: Siliana, Gabes and Kasserine where activities work to strengthen the capacities of young activists through mentorship. Both young men and women from each region will be mentored on the benefits of reducing toxic masculinity and the vital role gender equality and equity plays in democratization efforts. Participants will also be taught advocacy techniques on how to raise awareness of the importance of gender equality.

Last November, the project successfully conducted its first milestone event, whereby 45 debates on gender equality that were led by mentors were held. The project also supports various capacity building activities and improves communication between the public and the government.

Promoting Female Leadership in Haiti

An UNDEF project in Haiti works to develop women’s community leadership and engagement in civil society. Implemented by Fanm Deside, the project aims to impart skills that women can then use to run for office and navigate the political system.

In an effort to amplify women’s voices, Fanm Deside successfully recruited 10 female community representatives. Each of these representatives were guided under the direction of five experts (mostly women) with expertise in gender equality and community leadership. Implemented during the first phase of the project, the training succeeded in accomplishing its goal of ensuring that the women representatives acquired the theoretical knowledge and practical skills on gender and development. Once they had undertaken the training, the women were encouraged and supported to practice the skills learned through a three-day deployment in the three districts of the Sud-Est Department of Haiti.