



SAAF

SAAF Annual Report 2020

Persevering during a global pandemic

The Safe Abortion Action Fund (SAAF)



SAAF is the only global fund focused exclusively on the right to safe and legal abortion. Through our funding and support, we work to de-stigmatize abortion and to enable organisations in low- and middle-income countries to deliver abortion-related initiatives based on their context and expertise.

SAAF also creates opportunities for organisations and networks working on abortion to connect with like-minded partners, with the goal of supporting a thriving intersectional movement to advance reproductive rights for all, especially communities which experience marginalization.

This Annual Report provides an overview of SAAF's work as a fund from January to December 2020 and showcases the incredible achievements of the organisations we provide funding to.

In 2020, SAAF started funding 28 new organisations, with a total commitment of over \$2.2 million USD.

Overall, in 2020 SAAF was funding a total of 84 organisations across 46 countries; with a total grant commitment of \$13,987,947 USD since the round of funding began in 2017.

SAAF also provided additional funding of over \$1 million USD to existing grantee partners, to enable them to purchase personal protective equipment necessary to stay safe during the pandemic, and to extend the duration of their grants. A total of 28 SAAF grantee partners benefitted from this additional funding.

"SAAF has supported us in resilience through a fund dedicated to the prevention of COVID-19, which has enabled us to fight the pandemic effectively."

Response to the SAAF grantee partner survey



VODA Uganda (Tommy Trenchard)
VODA staff and volunteers

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A Message from the Chair of the SAAF Board

It was in January 2020 that the World Health Organisation first declared COVID-19 to be a global public health emergency. By the end of March, one third of people around the world were under some form of lockdown. By June 2021, we have seen a devastating 3.5 million deaths worldwide caused by the virus.

Although highly effective vaccines have been developed, and administered in some parts of the world, the distribution of these vaccines has been grossly inequitable. At the time of writing, only 0.2% of vaccine doses have been distributed in low income countries. The global health community must continue to fight against these unethical and growing inequalities, both in access to COVID-19 prevention and treatment.

As a global fund, SAAF has witnessed the uneven impact of the pandemic across countries and regions. Grantee partners have told us how their daily lives and work has been affected - by illness and bereavement, travel and gathering restrictions, and access to resources. I am proud of the way SAAF was able to respond swiftly and flexibly, providing additional funding to procure protective equipment to keep staff and communities safe, but also to adapt programmes to reflect local needs and priorities. SAAF also provided funding to 28 new organisations, already producing excellent results in the face of

adversity. I am in awe of the creativity and strength we have seen from SAAF grantee partners determined not to let obstacles stand in the way of their life-saving and vital work.

Some specific achievements include the bill legalizing abortion in Argentina passed in December of 2020. SAAF grantee partners played a key role in the national, and even regional movement pushing for access to safe abortion. An impressive 'green wave' of people power which continues to this day to fight for sexual and reproductive health rights and gender equality in the region. We hope this major win will not only improve material access to safe abortion in Argentina, but will also be an inspiration to others fighting for the decriminalization of abortion around the world.

The global reproductive rights community also had cause to celebrate in January 2021, when newly elected US President Joe Biden repealed the 'Global Gag Rule' which blocks US funding reaching any overseas non-governmental organisation providing or merely supporting abortion, even if with the organisation's own funds. While this temporary retraction provides much needed breathing room for SAAF grantee partners, the political and financial damages caused by this policy will not be undone overnight. We must all continue to

advocate for the permanent repeal of the Global Gag Rule and other restrictions such as the Helms Amendment which justify the perpetuation of health inequalities and social injustice, resulting in preventable maternal deaths. As SAAF, along with grantee partner organisations, we shall continue the fight to destigmatize abortion and ensure it is recognized as an essential human right and legitimate healthcare need.



Manuelle Hurwitz,
Chair of SAAF



The Areas of Work we Fund

SAAF directs funds to organisations based in low- and middle-income countries that work to increase access to and build support for safe abortion. Any project that aims to improve the enabling environment for the promotion and delivery of safe abortion services through locally-led changes in legislation, policy, service delivery and attitudes is eligible for funding.

All SAAF funded projects satisfy one or more of the following categories, and objectives and activities are decided by the organisations receiving funding.



Supporting progressive abortion laws and policies through targeted advocacy

In 2020, a total of **5** advances were made towards improved abortion laws, policies and guidelines as a result of SAAF grantee partners' advocacy work.

27 SAAF grantee partners were contributing members of coalitions working on more progressive abortion laws, policies, guidelines and regulations.



Improving access to safe abortion services

In 2020, **59,519** abortion related services were provided through SAAF funded projects. **38%** of these services were for people aged 19 and below.

240 service providers were trained on abortion provision and post abortion care through SAAF funded projects.



Breaking the silence and changing attitudes and norms towards abortion through awareness raising and behaviour change

20 SAAF grantee partners reported reduced abortion stigma in the communities they work with as a result of their project activities.



Generating understanding and evidence on abortion through research

3 SAAF grantee partners started working on new studies aiming to increase knowledge on abortion.

Driving change and making history

Spotlight on SAAF grantee partners working to change laws and policies



Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir Argentina
Abortion rights activist

ARGENTINA

An historic abortion rights win for Latin America

In December 2020 the Argentinian Senate finally voted to legalise abortion up to 14 weeks.

The National Campaign for the Right to Legal, Safe and Free Abortion has been organising for the past 15 years. They presented a bill to liberalise the abortion law in Argentina on eight separate occasions, only to face rejection at some point in the process. However, this diverse group of feminists and activists, including SAAF grantee partners **Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir Argentina (CDD Argentina)** and **Socorristas En Red**, did not give up.

This was a truly historic result, in a country with a majority Catholic population. CDD Argentina's work is led by catholic feminists in support of abortion and this engagement with other people of faith has been a crucial part of the national campaign.

Socorristas En Red (which translates to 'lifeguards of abortion') is a network of 58 feminist collectives, including a network of health professionals in support of legal abortion. **In 2020 they provided an incredible 17,534 people with necessary and life-saving abortion care and support.** Their defiance and commitment to ensuring safe abortions were possible even during the restrictions of the pandemic helped to bring the reality of abortion in Argentina to the media and wider public.

"As Catholic and feminist activists, we pose the need to remove religion from the heart of the debate."

CDD Argentina





Tamtang Group
Public demonstration for abortion rights in Thailand

THAILAND

Abortion now available on request up to 12 weeks of pregnancy

The feminist collective **Tamtang Group** has made a big impact on the movement to decriminalise abortion in Thailand. In February 2020, Thailand's Constitutional Court ruled that the existing abortion law was unconstitutional and violated rights to life and liberty. By February 2021 the legal change to allow abortion on request in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy came into effect. Tamtang was a progressive voice within the national movement, organising advocacy meetings with diverse political parties and NGOs, and public protests which garnered support from others involved in the pro-democracy movement and resulted in international media coverage.

Though the legal change marks a step in the right direction, abortion remains within the criminal law and comes with certain restrictions. Tamtang continues to advocate for full decriminalisation of abortion, but also the proper implementation of the law.

MOLDOVA/EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

Updating national abortion guidelines across the region

Though abortion laws in Eastern Europe and Central Asia have been fairly liberal for more than 60 years, unsafe abortion rates are still high, in part due to lack of accessible information and high quality services. Based in Moldova and acting as a support hub, the **Regional Training Center (RTC)** has now supported six countries to assess their existing abortion provision and develop new clinical protocols in line with WHO recommended best practice.

Through the project so far, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Moldova and Kyrgyzstan have had their updated country guidelines approved by their respective Ministries of Health, as well as translated and disseminated to ensure up to date, high quality abortion care is universally supported. For example, in Moldova, the National Safe Abortion Standards now prohibit the use of dilation and curettage (an outdated and less safe abortion method), and, for the first time, include information about medical abortion via telemedicine.

MALAWI

Mobilising political support for a bill to legalise abortion

In Malawi, abortion is only legal to save a woman's life, and deaths from unsafe abortions contribute to a high maternal mortality rate. In 2020, SAAF funded three organisations working to support the passing of the Termination of Pregnancy Bill, which seeks to ensure safe abortions are legal and accessible in some circumstances.

Between them, the **Foundation for Children's Rights (FCR)** in Mzuzu, **Rights Institute for Social Empowerment (RISE)** in Lilongwe, and **Centre for Solutions Journalism (CSJ News)** in Blantyre reached tens of thousands of people through community sensitization activities (including radio shows and in person workshops). They gathered petitions in support of the proposed bill, and successfully brought on board politicians, traditional and religious leaders to speak in favour of the bill.

The bill was finally tabled to be discussed by parliament in March 2021 but was withdrawn, seemingly due to ongoing pressure from anti-abortion groups. These organisations, which have seen first-hand the devastating impact of unsafe abortion in their communities, continue to fight for the amendments to be made.



Reaching the most underserved

Spotlight on SAAF grantee partners increasing access to safe abortion care



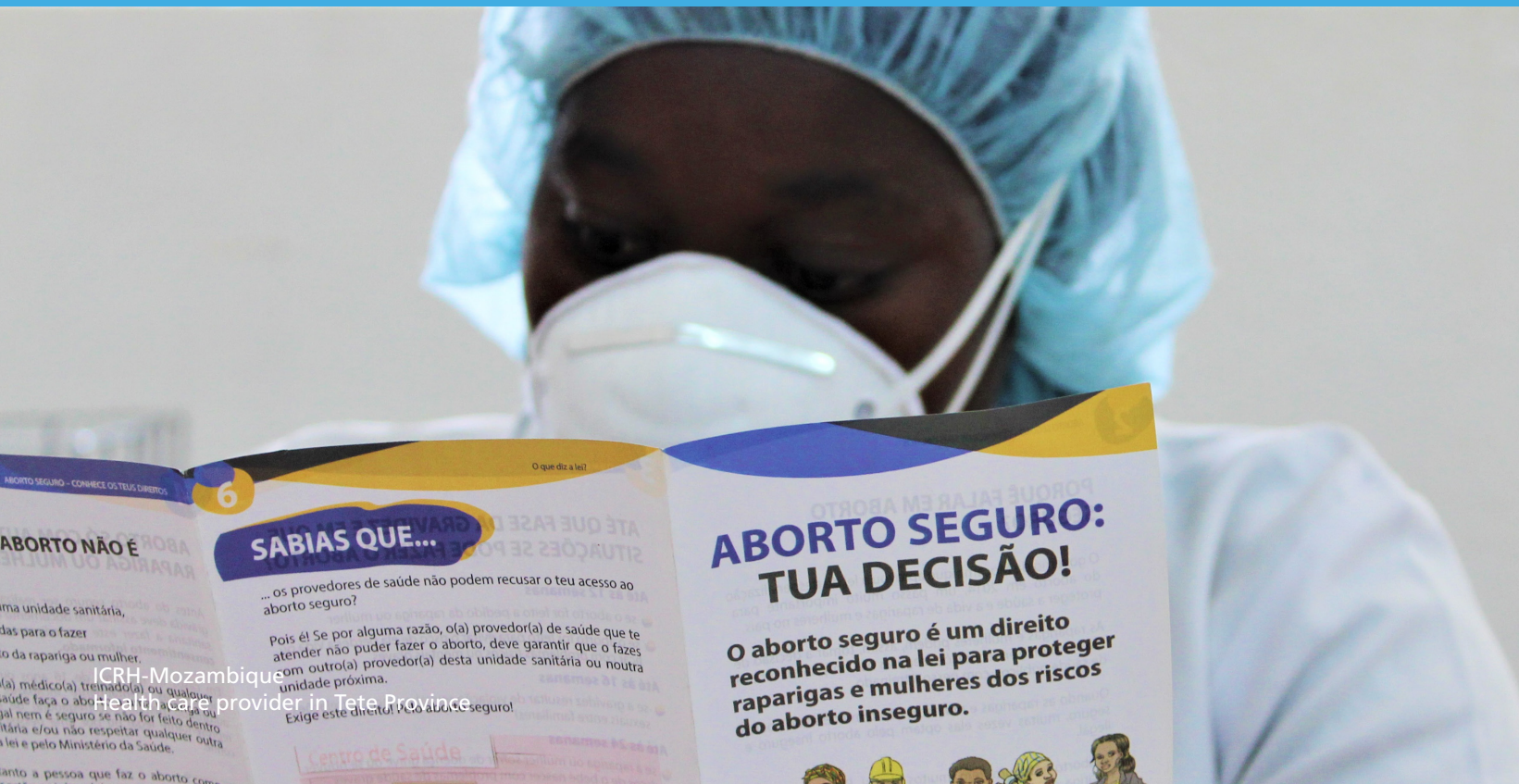
MOZAMBIQUE

Increasing access to safe abortion and choice of method in the Tete Province

Though abortion was decriminalised in Mozambique in 2014, access to safe, high quality, confidential services is still an issue. **Centro Internacional para Saúde Reprodutiva (International Center for Reproductive Health - ICRH-M)** began their SAAF funded project in January 2020, and have managed to improve abortion care in the Tete Province, despite barriers caused by COVID-19.

ICRH-M trained 136 health care staff on abortion, to ensure awareness of methods and understanding of best practices. 20 health care providers were trained on provision of abortion and post abortion care, with supportive supervision visits arranged to ensure good practice and accurate data collection methods were upheld.

Thanks to their training of health care staff, provision of necessary equipment and medications, and community awareness raising, 532 abortion/post abortion services were provided through ICRH-M's project in 2020. In line with the project objectives, the percentage of these services which were medical abortions increased from 9% in the first quarter to 45% in the final quarter. Increased knowledge and availability of abortion medications meant that more patients were offered a choice of method.



ICRH-Mozambique
Health care provider in Tete Province



BOLIVIA

Supporting safe abortion access for the LGBT+ community

Though the law in Bolivia establishes that abortion should be available free of charge in cases of rape, or when there is a risk to the health or life of the pregnant person, this is not always respected in health care facilities. This is due to a combination of people lacking information about their rights to demand abortion services, but also some opposition by health care providers.

SAAF grantee partner **Manodiversa** has found that lesbian and bisexual women, as well as transgender men, experience so called 'corrective rape' and for this and other reasons, are in need of abortion and other reproductive health care services. Unfortunately there is little awareness on this need so Manodiversa works to improve access to safe and non-judgmental services for lesbian, bisexual and trans and gender diverse people.

In 2020 Manodiversa held workshops with 125 health care workers – seeing a positive result of more providers in rural areas now being willing to provide abortion support and care. They have also arranged camps for a team of 33 'brigadistas' (peer educators) from the LGBT

community to learn more about reproductive rights and safe abortion access. Through this peer outreach and a dedicated confidential hotline 20 people have now been accompanied to safe abortion services, and pregnancy tests as well as emergency contraception pills have been distributed.

CAMEROON

Eradicating the use of unsafe abortion methods in a humanitarian setting

An **anonymous grantee partner** in Cameroon has successfully reduced the use of D&C (Dilation and Curettage – a less safe method of abortion, discouraged by the WHO) through their SAAF funded project. The organisation has trained health providers and medical students on safer methods of abortion, and has provided kits for MVA (manual vacuum aspiration) to the 40 health care centres they are working with. All have now eradicated D&C methods thanks to this practical training and provision of equipment.

The organisation has also undertaken community outreach, through working with traditional healers to improve their knowledge of safe abortion methods and encourage referrals to trained, reputable providers. They have provided community nurses with phones to act as referral points for women and girls in rural areas to ensure access to non-judgmental support with sexual health issues. In 2020, 367 safe abortion services were provided through the project.

NIGERIA

Ensuring high quality reproductive health care for young people

In Nigeria, abortion is legally restricted and unsafe abortions are common. Girls and young women are one of the most at risk groups for these unsafe procedures. Working with private facilities along with youth friendly clinics, the **Women Friendly Initiative (WFI)** has seen great success in their efforts to improve access to safe abortion care and contraception for all ages.

Since their most recent SAAF funded project began in 2018, through training providers and youth counsellors, and strengthening referral links and commodity supplies, WFI has supported just under 6000 women and girls to receive safe abortion/post abortion care services. 30% were those under 19 years of age. 97% of those who took up the service went on to voluntarily adopt a method of contraception within a month following the procedure.



Breaking the silence

Spotlight on SAAF grantee partners
changing harmful norms on abortion



CAMBODIA

*Improving media coverage of abortion
related issues*

Community stigma remains a key reason that unsafe abortions persist in Cambodia despite a liberal law. Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC) is working with a range of stakeholders and communities to reduce abortion stigma and increase access to safe abortion services. One element of their project has been to train journalists, to encourage more accurate and compassionate reporting on abortion. A three day values clarification training was provided to media professionals and their knowledge increased from 44% pre-test to 76% post-test. 85% of training participants displayed a positive change in attitudes towards people who have abortions. RHAC has continued to support these journalists, taking them on field visits to gather information for national media coverage which portrays the reality of abortion in Cambodia.

“If we do not eliminate stigma or encourage women to seek safe abortion services when they need them, they may face access to services that endanger their health and life. We should explain to the public so that they understand how to reduce their risks”

Senior journalist trained by RHAC



Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia
Training on safe abortion

UGANDA

Reducing abortion stigma in religious communities

Volunteers for Development Association in Uganda (VODA) has been funded by SAAF since 2014 and has made steady progress in destigmatizing abortion in religious communities, and increasing access to safe, high quality SRH services. VODA has worked sensitively with religious leaders to speak about the dangers of unsafe abortion and has gradually built up trust to the point where they are now invited to lead sessions to discuss reproductive health care in churches and mosques.

They host prayer days where those affected by unsafe abortion, such as grieving family members, can speak about the importance of access to abortion and information. Using the Stigmatizing Attitudes, Beliefs and Actions Scale (SABAS) tool to survey over 1000 community members throughout the course of the project, they have seen a steady reduction in stigmatizing attitudes thanks to their targeted interventions.



VODA Uganda (Tommy Trenchard)
Education session with young people

KYRGYZSTAN

Working with parents and teachers to support girls' sexual and reproductive health

The young women who lead the **National Federation of Female Communities of Kyrgyzstan (NFFCK)** 'Girls to Girls' project know first-hand the barriers to sexual and reproductive health care and rights in their country. They designed a project to tackle silence and stigmas around sexuality and related issues such as child marriage.

NFFCK provided a five day training on SRHR to 835 girls across Kyrgyzstan as well as training 66 teachers to be better equipped to support their students. They have seen great success in engaging parents – training doctors to speak to them about the importance of sharing accurate information with their children, which just under half have already committed to doing. As a result of the project NFFCK has seen an increase in girls' awareness of sexual health services and their rights, with 452 girls reached by the project now seeking medical support and information, supported by their parents.

"After the participation in the project mothers and their girls began to discuss issues of reproductive health. The project was able to break the stereotypes that have developed for centuries among the people...Our Department of Education has started to implement the project in all 54 schools in our district. Which is really good for all of us!"

Education specialist trained by NFFCK



National Federation of Female Communities of Kyrgyzstan
Girl-led training on sexual health and rights

Sharing the evidence

Spotlight on SAAF grantee partners undertaking research



Somali Gender Justice
Speaker at community meeting

SOMALIA

Centering the stories of survivors in safe abortion advocacy

Sexual violence is extremely common in Somalia, and UNICEF estimates around a third of cases involve children. Women who have been raped rarely receive any kind of justice, and can struggle to obtain necessary support and after-care.

Based in Puntland, **Somali Gender Justice** is seeking to 'break the silence' on the need for access to health care, including safe abortion, following sexual assault. As part of their SAAF funded project they interviewed survivors of sexual assault, medical professionals and community leaders and found that in cases of pregnancy resulting from rape, *"women do not seek abortion services, attributing it to a culture of silence and shame among Somali women, even if she is in urgent need."* Videos and drama workshops based on survivors' stories have been shared along with the [report](#) to begin the conversation amongst women's groups and decision-makers in Somalia.





MAMA Network
MAMA Network staff and partners at the Inroads Global Gathering

KENYA

Sharing data from African safe abortion hotlines with an international audience

Mobilizing Activists around Medical Abortion (MAMA) Network is a collaboration of grassroots activists and feminist groups based in Sub-Saharan Africa. The network currently has 42 members with a shared aim to “reduce maternal mortality and morbidity due to unsafe abortion.” Members across the region carried out community interviews and collected data from their safe abortion hotlines. In 2020 MAMA Network had three abstracts accepted for international conferences to share updates on the important work being done to advance self-managed medical abortion across Africa.

BRAZIL

Revealing public support for abortion access in cases of rape

In Brazil abortion has been legally permitted for those who become pregnant as a result of rape since 1940. However, many women are not aware of this right, or face barriers imposed by providers who still refuse to provide abortions within the legal allowances. **Instituto Patricia Galvao (IPG)** carried out an online survey with 2000 people in September 2020 in order to shed more light on this situation. They found that over half of

respondents (52%) knew someone who had been raped. The majority of respondents (82%) agreed that abortion should be available to those who have been raped. The report was widely disseminated in the national media, in an effort to normalise and secure the right to safe abortion services in Brazil. IPG is now working on a guide for journalists to ensure messaging and imagery on sexual assault and abortion is accurate and non-stigmatising.

Instituto Patricia Galvao
Podcast on abortion and the law



Responding to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to reach across the globe, affecting nearly all of our lives in some way. Many SAAF grantee partners, already working in under-resourced settings, felt the full force of the pandemic on their work and personal lives. In order to recognise this moment of loss and uncertainty, SAAF reminded grantee partners of the freedom to adapt their work accordingly, and also provided project extensions and additional funding to support the purchase of safety equipment. Keeping in contact with grantee partners it is clear that many organisations were having to think fast and creatively to continue serving the communities they work with. We are sharing some examples of such flexibility below.

- A survey of SAAF grantee partners found that **92%** of respondents felt supported by SAAF's response to the pandemic.

“At that moment we felt supported, we felt that SAAF cared for us, we did not feel alone. Besides the support it gave us in biosecurity materials, it inspired us to knock on other doors - other donors joined to bring other support in general to our communities.”

- **11** organisations reported newly starting work to support self-managed abortions during the pandemic. **96%** of those reporting work on self-managed abortion intend to continue this work beyond the effects of the pandemic.

“We will continue because when we accompany the self-management of an abortion, they too accompany us. Because one by one the stories are woven together and we heal and grow, it makes us united, unbreakable. Because every hug and every thank you from the women who have abortions gives us peace, in the midst of war. We will continue accompanying women and girls who have abortions, because forced maternity is not just.”

PAKISTAN

Bringing SRH services to people's doorsteps

Through their SAAF funded project, **Peace Foundation Pakistan** has reached women and girls in rural areas with their mobile clinics since 2017. During the COVID-19 pandemic they found that clients were scared to come to the mobile clinic, for fear of virus transmission. They set about training staff and volunteers on working safely during the pandemic, and SAAF provided additional funding for masks, sanitizers and other essential protective equipment. Facing issues with transportation early in the pandemic they used local food transport to ensure essential contraceptives and abortion medication was still reaching village pharmacies throughout their project region.





Comité D'échange Et D'information Sur La Femme Et Pour Le Développement
Staff reach rural communities by canoe

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

Reaching coastal communities by canoe

SAAF grantee partner **Comité D'échange Et D'information Sur La Femme Et Pour Le Développement (CEIFD)** works in South Kivu, in the East of the DRC. South Kivu is a conflict zone with high incidence of sexual violence, consequent high levels of unwanted pregnancy and unsafe abortion and limited availability of reproductive health services.

During the pandemic they faced even greater barriers to ensuring availability of safe post abortion care and contraceptive services. CEIFD staff took to a canoe to reach people on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, in areas which are difficult to reach by road. They also changed their project to share information over the radio rather than through large public meetings. The number of post abortion services provided through the project actually rose from 2180 in 2019 to 3429 in 2020.



Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights
Album cover for 'Pasya'



Visible Impact
Education session with young people in Nepal

PHILIPPINES

Hosting online feminist art workshops to reach a wider audience

Facing restrictions to travel and in-person connection during the pandemic, the **Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR)** utilised a number of online platforms for their advocacy work to decriminalise abortion in the Philippines. They worked on a number of artistic and creative activities to engage youth activists with the campaign – bringing together artists and storytellers to advocate for legal and societal change. WGNRR attracted international support for the campaign through online feminist arts workshops and the creation of a hip-hop album focused on safe abortion which was launched in 2021 and featured in international media outlets.

NEPAL

Training and engaging youth champions online

Visible Impact works to increase young people's knowledge of safe abortion, which is legally available in Nepal but still stigmatised. The pandemic forced their training of Youth Champions to take place online, via Zoom, which they have found to be highly effective and well received. To keep youth volunteers engaged and up to date, they have created messenger groups, and carry out regular phone calls with the team. Each volunteer was provided with financial support for their data costs to ensure their participation.

UGANDA

Personal delivery of emergency contraception pills

In 2020 **Tusitukirewamu Group Bwaise** experienced restrictions on public transport which affected their work reaching people in the urban slum areas of Kampala. To get around this, they printed posters in English and Luganda and shared information on social media to let people know about available services during the lockdown. Transport (using cargo trucks, because personal vehicles and taxis had been stopped by the President) was arranged to take people to the clinic and back to their homes, and medications like emergency contraception were delivered door to door by staff riding bikes.

Meet the people making change happen

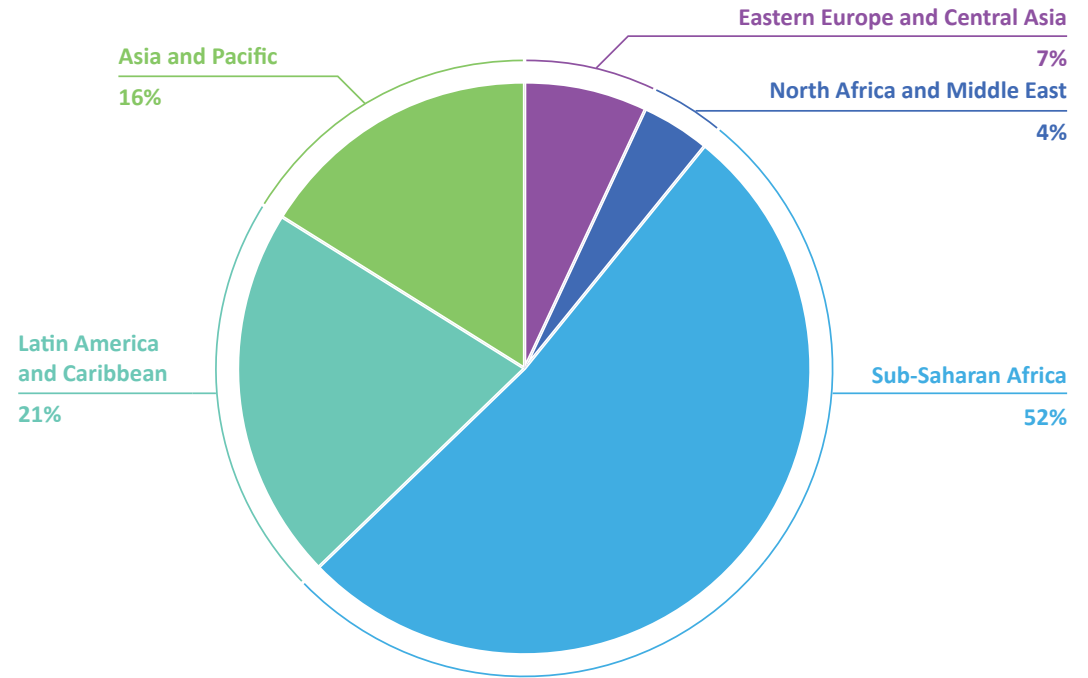
Interviews with SAAF Grantee Partners



Mama Network
The Mama team with regional members

SAAF provides funding to organisations across five regions of the world:

Distribution of funding for current SAAF Portfolio
(Projects funded from October 2017 – March 2022)



We interviewed individuals from organisations in each of these regions who started their SAAF funded project in 2020 to find out a little more about their challenges and achievements for the year.

INDIA

Jasmine, Aisha and Athira – Hidden Pockets Collective

Why do you work on safe abortion?

Abortion is considered to be the most taboo issue within Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. We believe abortion is the absolute manifestation of the right of people over their bodies.

What are you most proud of from your SAAF-funded work in 2020?

Every natural disaster and pandemic forces people and the state to narrow down their priorities, and abortion always get left behind. In a country like India, where abortion is legal but many people still resort to unsafe methods, what happens to all those with unwanted pregnancies? We were really proud to continue helping people who did not want to continue with pregnancies throughout the lockdowns.

What positive change do you hope to see in your country with abortion access and rights?

India is moving towards huge changes thanks to the reproductive justice movement. We are really looking forward to laws becoming more people-focused and more use of technology coming in.



BURKINA FASO

*W Cécile Thiombiano -
l'Organisation pour les
Nouvelles Initiatives en
Développement et Santé
(ONIDS)*



able to access our SOS number to seek safe and legal abortion services and care when they didn't know where to go.

What positive change do you hope to see in your country with abortion access and rights?

I hope to see the taboos lifted at the community level. I want to see an evolution of the legal framework for abortion so that Burkina respects its commitment to the Maputo Protocol. Finally, I also dream of a relaxation of legal and judicial procedures, especially for those girls and women who are displaced in the sites that are subject to terrorist attacks in Burkina.

TUNISIA

*Sophie Basso - Right & Access
for Women to Safe Abortion
in Mena Region (RAWSA)*



Why do you work on safe abortion?

In the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa) women do not have access to safe abortion, except in Tunisia. Abortion is either a taboo or criminalized because of the conservative mentality. Thus, women are hiding themselves to get an abortion and risking their lives. Working for safe abortion is a way to protect women's

health and women's rights which is a prerequisite for a healthy society.

What are you most proud of from your SAAF-funded work in 2020?

Despite the difficulties we are facing in our region to talk about safe abortion and to connect with organisations and partners who often fear to be associated with our cause, step by step we managed to create a core of activists and feminists defending the right to safe abortion in their countries. We are proud to provide them with a safe place to exchange ideas and experiences during the webinars we are organising.

What positive change do you hope to see in your country with abortion access and rights?

We hope that women across the entire MENA region could have access to safe abortion in the future. As a first step we would like to see feminists and activists able to advocate for safe abortion without fearing prosecution, and every woman able to seek safe abortion without being stigmatized.

NICARAGUA

Dorotea Wilson T. - Red de Mujeres Afrolatinoamericanas, Afrocaribeñas y de la Diáspora (RMAAD)

Why do you work on safe abortion?

We are a feminist organisation that works for the rights of Afro-descendant and indigenous women - vulnerable populations (who suffer discrimination because of their ethnic, gender and economic status), and one of our principles is the right to decide about our bodies.

Safe abortion is a right and to be able to guarantee it is an obligation of the State, however, in our country's current context, it is criminalised and also stigmatised. Therefore, we fight every day for women to have more access to safe abortion and for it to be decriminalised both in the law and in the social imagination.

What are you most proud of from your SAAF-funded work in 2020?

Reaching women who do not have the financial resources to access safe abortions for free, and providing sexual health services and information to adolescents and young people on the coast. The information campaign in mother tongues (Creole, Miskitu and Spanish) has reached the coastal population and their rural communities.

Despite the negative impacts of Covid-19, we have also strengthened our technological skills, adapting our work methodologies to continue providing access to safe abortion from home.

What positive change do you hope to see in your country with abortion access and rights?

Free and legal abortion for all; legal support for safe abortion; revision of pro-choice laws and policies. For health care providers to provide care without taboos and prejudices; for the education system to stop perpetuating violence against women's bodies and lives; for the right to decide about our bodies not to be an ideal but a reality.



KYRGYZSTAN

Nargiza Nurlankyzy - National Federation of Female Communities of Kyrgyzstan (NFFCK)

Why do you work on safe abortion?

Every girl has the right of access to a safe abortion. The younger generation does not have access to contraceptives, does not have enough knowledge of how to use them, how to protect themselves from STIs, and from unwanted pregnancy. Girls are increasingly exposed to violence from society.

We want to teach girls from an early age how to reduce sexual risks and prevent unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions and STIs.

What are you most proud of from your SAAF-funded work in 2020?

The project has increased the understanding of parents and teachers about the need for an open conversation with teenage girls without hesitation about the issues of SRHR, overcoming the stereotypes and breaking the taboos that have existed for many years. Many rural girls and their parents and teachers evaluate the project as being effective, since girls are now using education and medical services on SRH issues with confidence.

What positive change do you hope to see in your country with abortion access and rights?

For every girl to have a right to access safe abortion. Unfortunately, many girls still terminate their pregnancies through unsafe and traditional methods. I want to live in a country where people know and respect girls' rights, and where unwanted pregnancies can be terminated safely in a health center without any religious or social barriers.





Participants at the SAAF Latin America Gathering

Supporting and Connecting Grantee Partners

As a global fund focused exclusively on the right to safe and legal abortion, SAAF creates opportunities for organisations working on abortion to connect with like-minded partners.

Grantee partners have informed Secretariat plans for capacity strengthening, networking and partnering, and monitoring and evaluation support and we continue to work with all partners to ensure the support and networking opportunities we provide are inclusive and effective.

Webinars

SAAF hosted 10 webinars for grantee partners on the following topics (all are available in English, French and Spanish):

- Funding proposal development for new projects
- Budget development for new projects
- SAAF policies and procedures
- Providing abortion care during the pandemic
- Digital security
- Data quality and utilization

Many of these webinars were presented by SAAF grantee partners sharing their technical expertise with others around the world. For example, webinars on ensuring quality data were presented by FLAMA in Uganda (English), ONIDS in Burkina Faso (French) and Socorristas En Red (Spanish).

- On average, **91%** of those who attended the webinars found them to be useful or somewhat useful

In person meetings

Before the pandemic stopped travel, grantee partners were able to meet up at the Inroads Global Gathering in February and also the SAAF Latin America Gathering in Cali, Colombia in March. The gathering in Cali was proposed, organised and run in a fully consultative manner with grantee partners. SAAF provided funding and logistics coordination, but all substantive aspects of the meeting were organised by grantee partners themselves, via an organising working group. Grantee partners selected the agenda items and delivered the majority of sessions.

- One third of respondents who attended the Latin American Gathering have stayed in touch with at least one person they met there and **70%** made changes to their work because of something they learned.

“It was an inspiring meeting, which has helped to reaffirm our commitment, but also to make new links between women human rights defenders.”

Attendee of the Latin American gathering

Virtual gatherings

Due to travel restrictions SAAF organised online meetings to ensure contact and connection between grantee partners.

One gathering, facilitated by SAMA, a SAAF grantee partner based in India, was organised for 12 partners in the Asia region in September 2020.

In November, in response to requests from grantee partners to gather and discuss how the pandemic had affected their work another virtual gathering was held for all partners around the world. It was very well attended with 75 participants and simultaneous translation into English French and Spanish. Discussions were held on: how the pandemic had affected work on safe abortion; youth friendly services; advocacy, and hotlines.

“These are incredible spaces for information sharing, learning and strengthening our resolve as advocates. It’s a good feeling to know that you are not alone and that there many other people out there pushing for the same agenda but who are also sharing similar challenges.

The collective laughter at seeing and greeting each other was healing.”

Attendee at the SAAF online Global Gathering



Virtual and in person visits

Due to travel restrictions, SAAF increased the number of support calls to grantee partners in 2020, and introduced structured 'virtual visits' to learn more about new partners.

Two in-person visits were made to visit four grantee partner organisations in Nigeria and Argentina at the beginning of the year.

Five organisations which started receiving funding from SAAF in 2020 took part in online 'virtual visits'.

- 95% of those who received a visit from SAAF staff found it useful, 5% found it somewhat useful.

"SAAF is professional and very attentive in engagements. It remains focused on the essentials and does not play the role of an auditor but of an effective partner who provides guidance and suggestions."

Grantee partner survey response

Workplace

Launched in 2019, the online SAAF Community group on the Workplace platform has continued to be a crucial space for sharing and communication between SAAF grantee partners. With an automatic translation feature and the ability to share photos and videos as well as text, this has been a way to stay connected and share good practices.

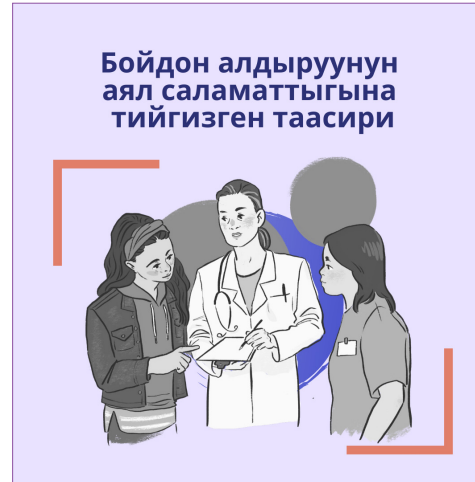
- 76% of survey respondents reported that the work of SAAF partners shared in the Workplace group inspires them.
- Six SAAF grantee partner organisations have reported successful grant applications to other funders which came from information shared on the Workplace group.

"The SAAF Community Workplace is a fabulous platform to stay in touch with our colleagues from around the world, see the critical work that they are involved in, and appreciate their accomplishments."

Grantee partner report

Visibility and Communications

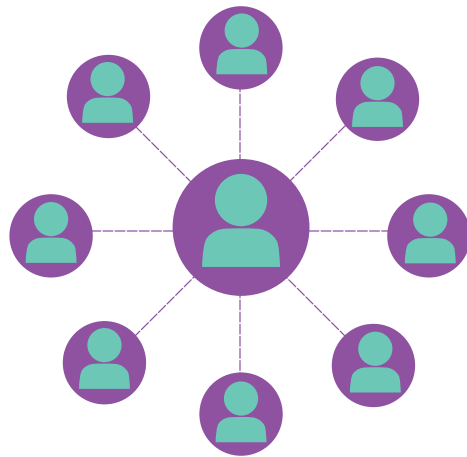
- In 2020 SAAF and a number of SAAF grantee partners were featured in national and international media outlets and a partnership with the [Girls Globe platform](#) provided an opportunity for 10 grantee partners to publish blog posts about their work on abortion to a global audience.
- A quarterly [SAAF newsletter](#) was launched in 2020 to provide updates to our partners, with a regular 'spotlight' on the work of a grantee partner organisation.
- SAAF collaborated with grantee partners in six countries to create a [short film](#) for International Safe Abortion Day, highlighting the importance of access to abortion medication.
- SAAF's range of leaflet and poster templates, and illustrations, have been used by a wide range of grantee partners to support their communications and messaging work.



Examples of SAAF illustrations being used by grantee partners in Kyrgyzstan, Uganda and Kenya.

The SAAF Board and Governance

SAAF is governed by an independent Board which consists of representatives from international NGOs, donor governments and individuals with relevant experience and technical expertise. The Board provides strategic direction and oversight of the fund, sets policy and guidelines; considers and discusses the grant recommendations of the SAAF Technical Review Panel and the Secretariat, and approves applications eligible for SAAF funding.



SAAF Board Members

Alexandra Teixeira

Senior Technical Advisor

Technical Excellence Department, Ipas

Camilla Holst Salvesen

Senior Adviser

*Global Health Section, Norwegian Agency
For Development Cooperation, (Norad)*

Felogene Anumo

Coordinator

Association Of Women's Rights In Development (AWID)

Génesis Luigi

Consultant

On Sexual And Reproductive Health And Rights

Kelly Blanchard

President

Ibis Reproductive Health

Manuelle Hurwitz

Director

Programmes Division, IPPF

Pushpa Joshi

Youth Champion

Asia Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP)

Dr Tlaleng Mofokeng

Medical Doctor

*UN Human Rights Council Special
Rapporteur on the Right to Health*



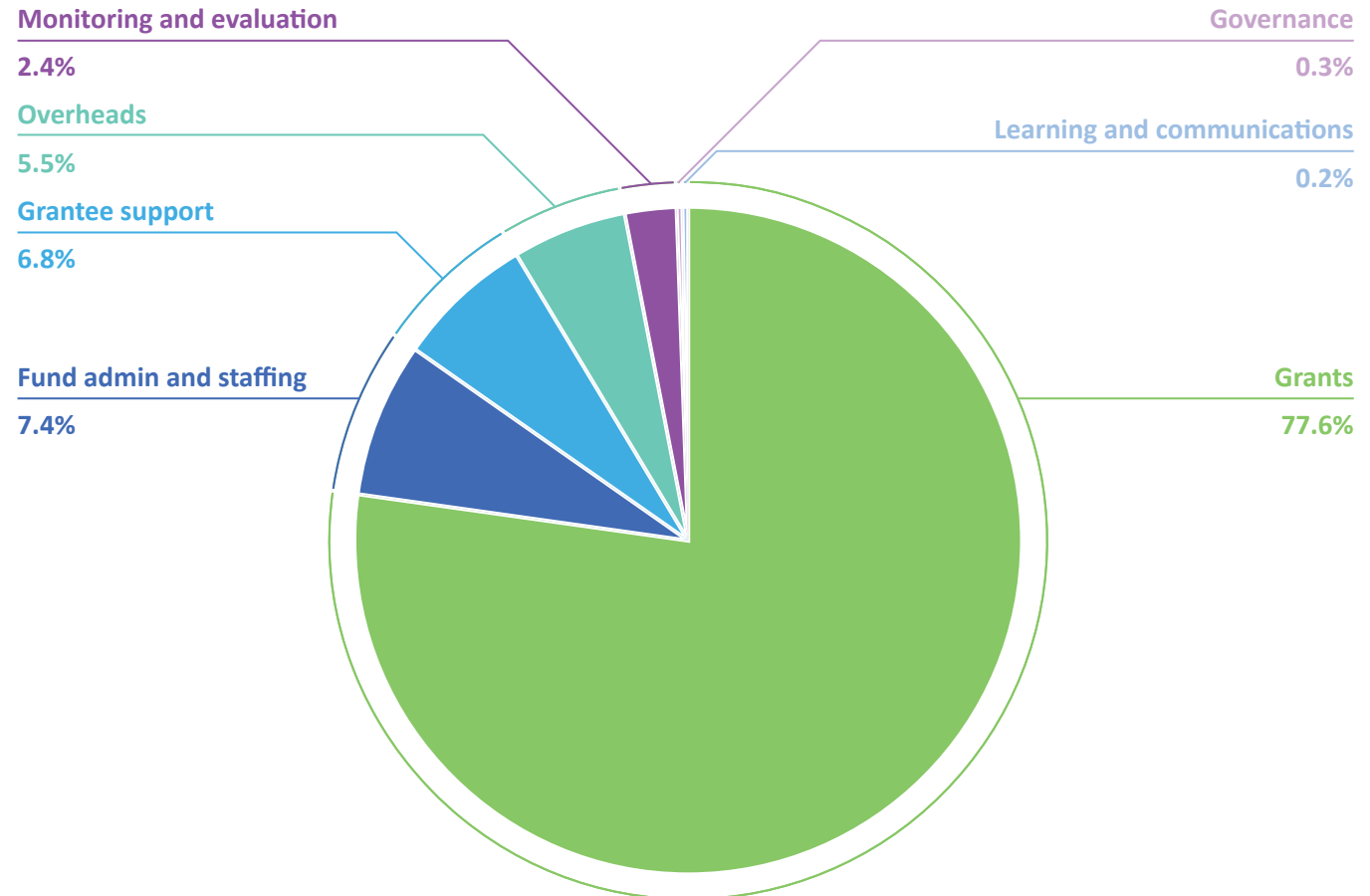
“Banning or denying access to abortion care, whether in policy or practice, constitutes a violation of the rights to sexual and reproductive health. Many regressions have seen fewer people accessing abortions and SAAF is committed to proving support to organisations that work to protect these rights and seek dignity for those who seek abortions.”

SAAF board member, and UN Special Rapporteur for the Right to Health, Dr Tlaleng Mofokeng

SAAF Financial Information

SAAF's total expenditure in 2020 was \$5,111,894.78 USD. The majority of this expenditure (\$3,968,610 USD) was project funding to grantee partner organisations.

In 2020 the fund was supported by the governments of the Netherlands, Norway, the UK, and by an anonymous donor.



Shaping a new SAAF

Strategic Review and our new Theory of Change

- In late 2020, the SAAF Board went through a strategic review process that included consultation with various stakeholders such as grantee partners, current and potential donors, and other key partners in the abortion field. With this feedback, the new **SAAF Theory of Change** was agreed for 2021 onwards and will be used to design SAAF's next round of funding and work moving forward.
- Following the board's strategic retreat in December 2020, a **governance review** has been carried out to inform the next round of recruitment and process for SAAF board members when the current term comes to an end in Quarter 3 of 2021.

SAAF External Evaluations

- Consultants at [Hera](#) undertook an independent external evaluation, to assess the performance of the fund from 2017-2020. The team reviewed 442 documents, carried out 53 interviews with SAAF grantee partners and other key stakeholders, and collected 83 online survey responses. **93%** of SAAF grantee partners reported that they were satisfied with how SAAF manages funds, and provided useful insight. The full report findings, along with recommendations were shared with all grantee partners and donors.
- To ensure its processes are efficient, fair, and meeting the needs of grantee partners, SAAF has also initiated an **external review of its grant making mechanism**. Recommendations for improvement, gained from grantee partners and other key stakeholders will be implemented from 2021 onwards.



SAAF Grantee Partners

In 2020, SAAF funded a total of 83 organisations.
One organisation's grant was terminated due to fraud.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Regional

Consortio Latinoamericano
Contra el Aborto
Inseguro (CLACAI)

Mexico
Balance Promoción para el
Desarrollo y Juventud
Equifonía, colectivo por la
ciudadanía, autonomía y
libertad de las Mujeres AC
Anonymous Organisation

Venezuela
Anonymous Organisation

Belize
Belize Family Life Association

Guatemala
Asociación Civil, Colectivo
para la Participación de la
Infancia y Juventud (COPIJ)

Nicaragua
Asociación Red de Mujeres
Afrolatinoamericanas,
Afrocaribeñas y de la
Diáspora (RMAAD)

Colombia
Anonymous Organisation

Peru
Centro de la Mujer Peruana
Flora Tristán
Anonymous Organisation

Bolivia
Manodiversa

Chile
Fundación Colectivo Alquimia
Fondo para Mujeres

Argentina
Asociación Civil por el
Derecho a Decidir (CDD
Argentina)
Socorristas en Red- Feministas
que Abortamos

Brazil
Anís – Institute of Bioethics
Bloco A
Católicas pelo Direito de
Decidir Brasil (CDD Brazil)
Instituto Patrícia Galvão –
Mídia e Direitos

North Africa and the Middle East

Regional

Groupe Tawhida Ben Cheikh/
RAWSA

Lebanon
Anonymous Organisation

Palestine
Palestinian Family Planning
and Protection Association
(PFPPA)

Iraq
Nujeen For Family
Democratizing Organization

Sub-Saharan Africa

Regional

Mama Network

Sierra Leone
Women's Health and
Reproductive Rights
Organization (WHRRO)

Liberia
Consortium: Women
Solidarity Incorporated, Sisters
Aid Liberia and Her Voice
Liberia

Burkina Faso
Communauté d'Action pour
la Promotion de la Santé
Sexuelle et Reproductive au
Burkina Faso (CAPSSR-BF)
Organisation pour de
Nouvelles Initiatives en
Développement et Santé
(ONIDS)

Ghana
Ghana National Association
of the Deaf
MABIA-Ghana

Sao Tome & Principe
Santomense Association for
Family Promotion

Nigeria
Generation For
Environmental Education and
Enhanced Renewal (GREENER)
International Centre for
Poverty Alleviation and
Sustainable Development
(CENPAD)
Women Friendly Initiative

Cameroon
Anonymous Organisation

Congo (DRC)
Comité d'Echange et
d'Information sur la femme
et pour le Développement
(CEIFD)
Groupement des Femmes
Vivant avec le VIH
Si Jeunesse Savait
Anonymous Organisation

Zambia
Copper Rose Zambia

South Africa
The Western Cape Health
Foundation
Women's Legal Centre

Burundi
Réseau SOS femmes en
Détresse

Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Regional

Regional Training Center

Georgia
Union of PLHIV in Georgia
"Real People Real Vision"

Kyrgyzstan
Kyrgyz Family Planning
Alliance
National Federation of
Female Communities of
Kyrgyzstan (NFFCK)

Tajikistan
Tajik Family Planning Alliance

Afghanistan
Sustainable Development
Organization for Women

Pakistan
Peace Foundation
Shirkat Gah – Women's
Resource Centre

Nepal
Action Works Nepal
Population, Health and
Development Group
(PHD Group)
Visible Impact

Asia and the Pacific

Bangladesh
Bangladesh Women's Health
Coalition (BWHC)

Thailand
Tamtang Group

Vietnam
Vietnam Family Planning
Association

Philippines
Women's Global Network for
Reproductive Rights (WGNRR)

India
Hidden Pockets Collective
Sama Resource Group for
Women and Health
The YP Foundation

Cambodia
Reproductive Health
Association of Cambodia

Ethiopia
Talent Youth Association
(TaYA)

Somalia
Somali Gender Justice

Kenya
Kenya Legal & Ethical Issues
on HIV and AIDS (KELIN)
Trust for Indigenous Culture
and Health (TICAH)
Women Promotion Centre

Uganda
Association of Obstetricians
and Gynaecologists of
Uganda (AOGU)
Center for Health, Human
Rights and Development

Malawi
Centre for Solutions
Journalism (CSJ News)
Foundation for Children's
Rights
Rights Institute for Social
Empowerment (RISE)

Mozambique
Centro Internacional para
Saúde Reprodutiva (ICRH-M)

Zimbabwe
Women's Action Group

Kyetume Community Based
Health Care Programme
Lady Mermaid's Bureau
St. Augustine Community
Health Centre (SACH)

The Community Health Rights
Network (COHERINET)
Tusitukirewamu Group
Volunteers for Development
Association in Uganda
(VODA)
Anonymous Organisation
Anonymous Organisation

“The idea of having a dedicated fund on abortion, a topic that we could approach as a human right. With other funders, you have to approach this through other topics, often indirectly via Sexual and Reproductive Health more broadly. This funding allowed us to focus on specific aspects of abortion as a right, which would have not been possible otherwise.”

SAAF grantee partner response in external evaluation



SAAF is hosted by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)

IPPF, 4 Newhams Row London SE1 3UZ United Kingdom

For quarterly updates on SAAF’s work please [join the mailing list](#).



Tusitukirewamu Group
Young woman holds up SAAF tote bag