2020 Annual Report
For every woman, girl, and newborn, no matter what.
We want a world where giving birth is safe for every mother and child.

A world where women become pregnant only when they want to.

And a world where women and girls live free from harmful practices and violence.

That’s a world that is better for women and girls, and for boys and men too.

We won’t stop until this becomes reality, NO MATTER WHAT.
Last year, a once-in-a-century pandemic disrupted nearly every facet of our lives, from how we work to where we live. But this pandemic hasn’t affected everyone equally. As UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Natalia Kanem said, “COVID-19 is indeed a crisis with a woman’s face.”

Women and girls have shouldered the burden of COVID-19. They made up 70 percent of frontline health care workers. They took on an even greater share of unpaid labor, like housework, elder care, and child care. Millions of women and girls have permanently dropped out of school and the workforce due to their increased responsibilities. And, they were more vulnerable to violence from their partners and family members while in lockdown.

The pandemic proved that, despite immense and evolving challenges, as a global community we are capable of making incredible progress toward a healthier, safer, more inclusive world.

In the United States, the murder of George Floyd sparked a movement demanding an end to police brutality and a reckoning of the inequality Black Americans and other people of color face in the criminal justice system, in health care, in schools, and in corporate settings. The disparate impact of COVID-19 on poorer countries, often populated by people of color and with a legacy of colonization, has led to calls for diverse global leadership and equitable solutions.

UNFPA’s work is paramount to reaching this future. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, UNFPA has ensured continuous access to lifesaving sexual and reproductive health care to women and girls around the world, including those in refugee or migrant camps, those surviving climate disasters, and those in conflict zones. UNFPA has adapted to the pandemic by providing supplies before they are needed, and by utilizing telehealth services, hotlines, and mobile health clinics.

In March 2020, UNFPA predicted that 7 million women would experience unintended pregnancy due to coronavirus-related lapses in family planning. But after one year of innovation and adaptation, there were only 1.4 million unintended pregnancies. While that number is still far too high, it proves that UNFPA was able to adapt and persevere, so women could receive the sexual and reproductive health care they needed. This is the lifesaving work you make possible.

Women and girls will disproportionately bear the burden of rebuilding our post-coronavirus world, unless action is taken now. The Biden-Harris Administration’s renewal of support for UNFPA is a huge step forward. But realizing a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, and every young person’s potential is fulfilled will take action from us all.

To achieve this future, we have undertaken the ambitious goal of raising $100 million by 2030. Your ongoing support of this work makes it possible to build a better world for every woman and girl, no matter what.

Thank you,

Amanda Seiler
Chief Executive Officer
Friends of UNFPA

The COVID-19 pandemic was the most challenging crisis UNFPA has faced in its 50+ year history. Around the world, health care workers put their lives on the line, sacrificed time with their families, and faced intense work conditions including working without personal protective equipment. In 2020, 17,000 health care workers died of coronavirus. Countless others became sick.

Among those who lost their lives were Seyedeh, Anousheh, and Aria, three UNFPA midwives who dedicated their lives to providing lifesaving care to women and girls in Iran. We would like to thank them and every health care worker who responded to the COVID-19 crisis, for keeping us all safe, even in the face of overwhelming uncertainty and loss.

Thank you!

Your dedication to this work ensures women and girls have the care they need, no matter what.

In 2020, your support helped:

- 1.3 million women safely give birth in fragile settings
- 1.7 million girls access child marriage prevention or protection services
- 640,000 women and girls access sexual and reproductive health care in humanitarian settings
- 14.4 million unintended pregnancies

In 2020, Friends of UNFPA received support from:

- 9,700 total donors
- 5,855 new donors
- 285 monthly donors

One donor who has been supporting access to sexual and reproductive health for 20 years

In Loving Memory

The coronavirus pandemic proved that, despite facing immense and evolving challenges, our global community made incredible progress toward a healthier, safer, more inclusive world.

Thank you!
Ending Preventable Maternal Death

808 Women die from preventable pregnancy and childbirth complications every day. Maternal deaths are more likely to occur in places that are rural or poor, have fewer health facilities, or where women have less decision-making power. One of the best ways to prevent maternal death is to provide women with access to prenatal care throughout their pregnancy and ensure a midwife is present during childbirth.

UNFPA works to make motherhood safe by providing women with access to prenatal care, a midwife at delivery, and post-birth checkups. We also distribute emergency birth kits and mama kits, which have everything a woman needs to give birth safely in a crisis and items like diapers, soap, and blankets for the first months of life.

Finally, we support fistula repair surgery for women who developed the condition during childbirth and we operate mobile health clinics to care for moms on the move.

UNFPA predicted that there could be as many as 29,000 maternal deaths and 7 million unintended pregnancies due to gaps in sexual and reproductive health care caused by COVID-19.

For every woman who dies, an additional 20 to 30 women experience injuries, infections, or disabilities, almost all of which are avoidable.

Girls aged 15-19 years old.

Complications from pregnancy and childbirth are the leading causes of death for girls aged 15-19 years old.
Ending Preventable Maternal Death
No Matter What

Child bride and fistula survivor cares for others receiving treatment
Islamabad, Pakistan

Razia has faced obstacle after obstacle. She never received a formal education and her family married her off at age 13. Soon, she became pregnant, and tragically, her husband died before the baby was born. Like many young mothers, Razia experience life-threatening childbirth complications and was in labor for four excruciating days. Her daughter was stillborn and Razia developed an obstetric fistula, a hole in her vaginal canal that leaks urine or feces. Razia endured painful isolation from her community for two years before receiving fistula treatment at a UNFPA-supported hospital. She and her current husband have two daughters, one they adopted and one that Razia miraculously conceived. Along with raising her daughters, Razia now volunteers with other fistula survivors at the same hospital where she was cared for.

20,000 pregnant women left stranded by floods
Khartoum, Sudan

Intense flooding in Sudan in September 2020 left over 200,000 women in temporary shelters. Of those women, 20,000 were pregnant and UNFPA expected 3,000 of them to experience pregnancy or childbirth complications. This is not the beginning any of these women imagined for their babies. UNFPA distributed emergency birth kits and strengthened nearby health facilities with staff and equipment. Mariam, one woman who received aid, said, “I am eight months pregnant and I received an emergency birth kit from the midwife in the mobile clinic. I lost everything in the floods. Giving birth safely is the one thing that I will not worry about now.”

Surprise triplets born into a war-zone
Al Hudaydah, Yemen

Aisha did not have access to prenatal care during her pregnancy. The clinic was several hours away by foot, the possibility of being caught in violence was too high, and COVID-19 was beginning to circulate the globe. During the last month of her pregnancy, Aisha experienced severe pain, but, like 70% of pregnant women in Yemen, she decided to give birth at home. Aisha said, “I was shocked to give birth to two sons, and my pain didn’t stop. My mother kept shouting... and I was losing blood.” At that point, Aisha’s uncle took her to a UNFPA-supported maternity ward two hours away. It was there that Aisha safely gave birth to her third son via emergency Caesarean section. “It was like a miracle. I had just given birth to triplets,” said Aisha.

Maternity homes prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Indigenous communities
Ngäbe-Buglé Region, Panama

The Ngäbe and Buglé Indigenous communities in Panama inhabit a rural and mountainous terrain, criss-crossed by rivers. For pregnant women, it can be difficult to access transportation to health facilities, and COVID-19 related travel restrictions have only made the journey harder. Carmen, like many pregnant women in her community, decided to give birth at home. When she experienced childbirth complications, Carmen had to be carried in a hammock to a clinic three hours away. Luckily, Carmen and her baby boy survived. To prevent women from traveling so far during emergencies, UNFPA established five maternity homes for the Ngäbe and Buglé communities. In these homes, women in their ninth month of pregnancy wait to give birth. When they go into labor, they are transported to a nearby clinic where midwives can ensure a safe delivery, even during a pandemic.
Ending the Unmet Need for Family Planning

Over 217 million women who want to prevent pregnancy face significant obstacles to using modern family planning. These women might live far away from a clinic; not have accurate information about their family planning options; face opposition from their partners, families or communities; lose access to family planning during an emergency; or they might face some other barrier, like discrimination. No matter the reason, every woman is entitled to decide if, when, and with whom she wants to have children.

Family planning does more than prevent unintended pregnancy. It also decreases maternal deaths, prevents sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and empowers women to reach their full potentials.

We provide women and girls with the full range of family planning options. We also provide treatment for sexually transmitted infections and empower girls with comprehensive sexuality education, so they have the information they need on their bodies and rights.

Last year, UNFPA prevented over 14 million unintended pregnancies by supplying couples with family planning.

UNFPA provided 724,643,280 male condoms in 2020.

Family planning was among the world’s most disrupted health services because of COVID-19: 7 in 10 countries reported lapses in care according to the World Health Organization.
Ending the Unmet Need for Family Planning
No Matter What

Empowering women affected by climate change
Mokhotlong, Lesotho
Regina, a midwife who works in a rural and mountainous part of Lesotho has seen climate change-induced drought change her community. Many families support themselves through small-scale farming, but they’re finding it difficult to survive. In response, women are using family planning to reduce their economic insecurity. Regina says, “In these difficult times, it is not easy to look for a job or to get employed when you have many children.” Regina’s patients are turning to self-injectable contraceptives, which have the added benefit of privacy and convenience.

Dialing in on family planning
Cairo, Egypt
Strict lockdown orders in Egypt and fears of infection have deterred many women from visiting the clinic for family planning. Nashwa, a UNFPA outreach worker, calls women to make sure they have the family planning they need. On one call she said, “You haven’t been coming and I know it is out of your hands. I am calling to make things easier for you.” Nashwa informs women that they can take home multiple packs of birth control pills or that they can receive a long-acting form of contraception. Her work is critical to ensuring that women continue to receive the family planning care that is their right.

Pursuing dreams and continuing care
Assahoun, Togo
UNFPA began distributing personal protective equipment to clinics early on in the pandemic. In Togo, this equipment allowed midwives to hold a family planning open house, where they informed community members about safety measures at UNFPA clinics and about the services that UNFPA would continue to provide. Akofa was training to become a seamstress when she visited the clinic. As she says, “I came to get a three-year implant to avoid getting pregnant during my apprenticeship.” Family planning allows women like Akofa to take control of their futures and to pursue educational and employment opportunities, even during a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Going the distance during quarantine
Kathmandu, Nepal
The mountainous terrain in Nepal can prevent women from accessing sexual and reproductive health care. So, instead of asking women to travel to a clinic, midwife Kabita scales mountains and crosses rivers to deliver care to her patients. During COVID-19, Kabita would visit couples staying in mandatory quarantine centers. She would provide them with information on the full range of family planning methods and contraception to those who wanted it. Dr. Awasthi, a regional health director in Nepal who works with midwives like Kabita, said, “It’s heartening to see how motivated they are to continue their important work. We cannot let the progress we have made in averting unplanned pregnancies slip due to coronavirus.”

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Ending Gender-Based Violence and Harmful Practices

Gender-based violence can affect any woman and girl, regardless of her social class, income, age, religion, and national or ethnic identity. It is one of the most prevalent human rights abuses in the world with at least 1 in 3 women experiencing gender-based violence in her lifetime. Two forms of violence are child marriage and female genital mutilation. These harmful practices put women and girls at risk of other types of abuse, early and unintended pregnancy, and even death. Despite the enormous harms of gender-based violence, many incidents go unreported. UNFPA works at the local, national, and global levels to care for survivors of violence, change attitudes toward women, and to collect data on gender-based violence.

Every hour, 9 women are murdered by a partner or family member.

Over 30,000 girls are married each day, often to much older men.

Gender-based violence tends to increase during crises, and the COVID-19 pandemic was no exception. Help centers around the world reported nearly twice as many calls for help in 2020 as compared with previous years.

Throughout the pandemic, UNFPA reached 930,351 survivors of gender-based violence with essential services.
Ending Gender-Based Violence

No Matter What

Providing Care and Preventing Cancer

Gaza Strip, Palestine

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among Palestinian women, and yet, 60 percent of cases are identified at a late stage. This makes the possibility of survival much slimmer. Women in Palestine often delay mammograms out of fear that if they do have cancer, their partners will abuse or leave them. Further, they fear their daughters will be unable to marry, because potential partners may believe that the daughter will also develop breast cancer in her life. UNFPA works to improve access to early breast cancer detection and treatment, which is key to ensuring that women can live long and healthy lives. Insitar, one community advocate says, “I always encourage the women I know to do a self-examination and get regular screenings.

One-Stop Shop to Stop Domestic Violence

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Dulam and her children had suffered abuse at the hands of her husband for years before they were finally able to get help. On one particularly bad night, her eldest son called a helpline where Dulam was connected with a UNFPA one-stop center, which provides safe housing, psychosocial counseling, health care, legal services, and protection to survivors of violence. The centers have been a lifeline for families like Dulam’s. Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of people seeking care in Mongolia has nearly doubled. At the center, Dulam participated in a program that supports survivors of violence in part by providing them with skills training. Today, she works as a nursing assistant and raises awareness about gender-based violence in her community.

Finding Community During a Pandemic

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Alina, a transgender woman, was bullied at school, but when she got home, she remembers, “My father sometimes beat me severely, demanding I be like other boys.” Transgender Kyrgyz often face discrimination, violence, and exclusion. It can be difficult for them to gain employment, for instance, because their official documents do not accurately reflect their identity. These challenges, coupled with the economic strain of COVID-19, left transgender people like Alina more vulnerable to food insecurity, homelessness, and health problems. Kyrgyz Indigo, a UNFPA-supported organization, opened 5 shelters for LBGTQI people and delivered groceries, hormone therapy, and antiretrovirals for HIV treatment, for members of the community, like Alina.

Overcoming Child Marriage and Decades of Abuse

Kurdistan, Iraq

At just 15, Aisha’s family married her off to a man nearly 3 times her age to settle a debt. He abused her for 22 years, in part, because she had daughters and not sons. Aisha remembers being starved after giving birth and being beaten with a cane while her husband screamed, “You are a nobody – I own you. You are worthless.” Every year, 12 million girls like Aisha become child brides. Child brides are often forced to give up their education and friends to begin childbearing and perform domestic work. They are highly vulnerable to domestic violence. Luckily, Aisha was able to escape her abusive relationship with the help of her daughters. They connected her with a UNFPA women’s center where she received health care and social services, as well as legal counseling to divorce her husband. Today, Aisha says, “I now know how worthy I am of a decent and happy life.
Reaching Women and Girls in Humanitarian Emergencies

235 million people will need humanitarian assistance in 2021, a 40 percent increase from 2020. This massive jump demonstrates how the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated already complex crisis situations. When crisis strikes, women and girls are disproportionately affected. They perform over three-quarters of unpaid care labor, including for children, the sick and the elderly. At the same time, women and girls are less able to gain income, to remain in school, or to have their voices heard by those in leadership. The needs of women and girls must not be forgotten in crisis settings. UNFPA cares for women and girls when disaster strikes and works to ensure their voices are included in emergency preparation and response efforts.

The average length of humanitarian crises has increased to 9 years leaving entire generations to grow up in migrant and refugee camps.

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNFPA reached 1,703,373 girls with child marriage protection and prevention services.

About 80 million people in the world have been forcibly displaced. Many of them require humanitarian aid due to the sudden or extreme circumstances of their migration. This is especially true for women and girls, who are less able to access legal protections and social services.

© UNFPA Yemen
Reaching Women and Girls in Humanitarian Emergencies
No Matter What

In Yemen, over 24 million people are in desperate need of humanitarian aid, including 1.2 million malnourished pregnant women. Currently, UNFPA is the only provider of sexual and reproductive health services in the country. But, in 2020, funding shortages made it difficult to continue providing this lifesaving care. Luckily, clinics stayed open and the lives of Noor and Eltaf were saved. Both women experienced excessive bleeding during childbirth, but UNFPA midwives got them the emergency care they needed.

Life and Death in the World’s Worst Humanitarian Crisis
Sana’a, Yemen
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Social Distancing in a Tent Settlement with Syrian Refugees
Mersin, Turkey
Over the course of nearly a decade of conflict, 5.6 million Syrians have found safety in places like Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan. Meryem is one Syrian woman who now supports her two children through seasonal agriculture work in Turkey. Her family lives in a tent settlement with other refugees. They have limited access to running water, and when the COVID-19 pandemic began, Meryem worried about how her family would social distance or wash their hands. A UNFPA mobile health team provided services like childhood vaccinations and financial assistance for refugees and shared information on infection prevention measures. Now, Meryem says the mobile health team are like family and that her family are, “Washing our hands all the time and trying to keep our social distance as much as possible.”

Crossing Borders for Lifesaving Care
Pacaraima, Brazil
Venezuela is facing political instability, economic collapse, and a severe contraception shortage. There are high rates of maternal death and teenage pregnancy. Nayelis was pregnant with her third child when she left the country because, “Nobody could buy food. We had to leave the country to avoid starvation.” UNFPA provided her with information on prenatal care and infection prevention measures. Reaching migrants like Nayelis with information on health services is one of the best ways to ensure that they get the care they need.

Taking Precautions in Rohingya Refugee Camps
Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh
1 million Rohingya refugees have found safety from religious and ethnic persecution in Bangladesh. They live in a network of over 30 camps, where overcrowding and sanitation conditions leave them at risk for infections like COVID-19. During the pandemic, UNFPA set up handwashing stations, increased telehealth services, and distributed personal protective equipment. Thankfully, cases of COVID-19 have remained low and refugees continued receiving in-person care. Minara, one refugee, received family planning from UNFPA health centers for three years. Last year, she decided to become pregnant and gave birth to a healthy baby in September after receiving prenatal and safe delivery care from UNFPA.

A Humanitarian Disaster Unfolds in Ethiopia
Um Raquba, Sudan
In November 2020, violence broke out in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. 2 million people have been displaced and tens of thousands of Tigrayans have fled to neighboring Sudan for safety. Gender-based violence tends to increase when women and girls are on the move, and in Ethiopia, reports of mass rape have already surfaced. One migrant said that she feared for her the safety of her daughters. UNFPA is providing psychosocial care to survivors of violence and is distributing dignity kits, which contain everything necessary to manage menstruation.
The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation is committed to protecting wildlife and the oceans, combating climate change, and strengthening communities. In partnership with Friends of UNFPA, the foundation helped prevent Ebola infections in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

What you need to know about Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo:

- **Ebola is a highly deadly virus.** The Democratic Republic of Congo has had more than ten Ebola outbreaks, including one in 2020. About half of all patients die from the illness. Sadly, prevention and containment efforts have been complicated by conflict and misinformation.

- **Women are at greater risk of Ebola infection.** Women’s roles as caretakers for the sick and the deceased put them at greater risk of Ebola infection. Further, their limited ability to negotiate safe sex also puts them at risk for sexual transmission of Ebola.

- **Pregnant women and newborns are especially vulnerable.** For pregnant women and newborns, Ebola infection is incredibly dangerous. Ebola infection during pregnancy is associated with high rates of miscarriage, stillbirth, and newborn death.

With support from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, we:

- Trained 320 health care staff, including 160 midwives and skilled birth attendants on infection prevention and control measures. Health care staff also received personal protective equipment.

- Modernized 20 health facilities, including 8 maternity wards. Each facility was equipped with essential reproductive health supplies and medicines. This improved health outcomes for mothers who had had Ebola and their babies.

- Reached 75K community members by engaging women’s and youth organizations, sharing information on the radio, and building 10 safe spaces. We ensured that these vulnerable groups were not left unprotected.

- Distributed 5K dignity kits, which provide women and girls with personal care items to manage their periods. These essential products are often forgotten in aid distribution efforts.

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“I know I’m not like before. I know many things have changed in my body. But, many women who suffered the disease were able to get pregnant and deliver their babies.”

— Rachelle, a midwife, an Ebola survivor, and a mom-to-be in the Democratic Republic of Congo
In 2020, Friends of UNFPA undertook a strategic review of our mission and goals. We aim to deliver $100 million worth of lifesaving sexual and reproductive health care by 2030. Last year, we laid the foundation for this ambitious effort.

- We raised nearly $5 million for women and girls.
- We delivered 16% more care to women and girls around the world compared with 2019.
- We recruited over 3,000 new supporters in 2020.

I have been so inspired by the tremendous support of our community, even while they faced their own hardships during the pandemic. Together, we have truly delivered on our mission to provide the world’s most vulnerable women and girls with the lifesaving care they need, no matter what. Thank you.

— Amanda Seller, Chief Executive Officer, Friends of UNFPA
Get Involved

Monthly donors are the foundation of our support for women and girls.

Their commitment to providing sexual and reproductive health care no matter what is an inspiration to us at Friends of UNFPA. As part of our Circle of Friends program, monthly donors receive exclusive updates on the care they have delivered to the world’s most vulnerable.

In addition to becoming a monthly donor, here are great ways you can get involved:

Through their gift, monthly donors like Tiffany make it possible to:

- Decrease administrative costs, ultimately giving an even greater share of their donation to vulnerable women and girls
- Deliver care quickly to where it’s needed most, like in sudden climate disasters or escalating conflict
- Ensure that women and girls have continuous access to lifesaving sexual and reproductive health care, even after a crisis has left the news cycle

In 2020, UNFPA received $1.3169 billion from intergovernmental organizations, donor governments, the private sector, foundations, and individuals like you. The agency spent $1.2281 billion* delivering lifesaving care in 155 countries.

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This is the work that your monthly donation makes possible. Below, you can see where these funds went and what programs they supported:

2020 UNFPA Program and Institutional Budget

- Integrated sexual and reproductive health services
- Adolescents and youth
- Gender Equality
- Organizational effectiveness
- Analysis on population dynamics
- East and Southern Africa
- West and Central Africa
- Arab States
- Asia and the Pacific
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Eastern Europe and Central Asia
- Global and regional interventions
- Global activities

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*UNFPA recognizes donor contributions based on its revenue recognition policy on an accrual basis when an agreement is signed and legally binding. The implementation of the program activities is undertaken on the receipt of donor funds as UNFPA does not pre-finance any activities until the receipt of funds.

Friends of UNFPA 2020 ANNUAL REPORT