

The Power of Investing in Women's Rights and Empowerment:

A Mid-term Summary
of the MDG3 Fund and
its Gender Equality Outcomes

Compiled by Alexandra Pittman, AWID

The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) is an international feminist, membership organization committed to achieving gender equality, sustainable development and women's human rights. AWID's mission is to strengthen the voice, impact and influence of women's rights advocates, organizations and movements internationally to effectively advance the rights of women.

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Acronyms

- APC** Association for Progressive Communications
- AWDF** African Women's Development Fund
- AWID** Association for Women's Rights in Development
- CAWF** Central American Women's Funds
- CREA** Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action
- ECOSOC** Economic and Social Council
- FEMNET** African Women's Development
and Communication Network
- FTA** Free Trade Agreement
- GAD** Gender and Development
- GDP** Gross Domestic Product
- OECD-DAC** Network on Gender Equality
- GFW** The Global Fund for Women
- HC** Huairou Commission
- HLF2 / 3 / 4** High Level Forum on
Aid Effectiveness 2 / 3 / 4
- IADG** Internationally Agreed Development Goals
- ICC** International Criminal Court
- ICESCR** International Covenant on
Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- IFIs** International Financial Institutions
- ILC** International Labour Conference
- ILO** International Labour Organization
- IMF** International Monetary Fund
- INWF** International Network of Women's Funds
- JASS** Just Associates
- MDGs** Millennium Development Goals
- MDG3 Fund** Millennium Development Goal 3 Fund
- MFA** Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- NGO** Non-governmental Organization
- ODA** Official Development Assistance
- OECD** Organization for Economic
Co-operation and Development
- OWFI** Organisation of Women's Freedom in Iraq
- PD** Paris Declaration
- PRSPs** Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
- UN** United Nations
- UNIFEM** United Nations Development Fund for Women
- UNSCR** United Nations Security Council Resolution
- VAW** Violence Against Women
- WB** World Bank
- WID** Women In Development
- WIGJ** Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice
- WLP** Women's Learning Partnership
- WWG on FfD** Women's Working Group
on Financing for Development
- YFF** Young Feminist Fund

This brief shares an assessment of the Dutch MDG3 Fund, highlighting the mid-term outcomes of grants made to a sample of women's organizations worldwide. It provides an example of how a collective assessment of outcomes can be used to make the case on the importance of funding women's organizations.¹ The findings reveal how critical support to women's organizations, working from a rights-based approach, catalyzes a broad and wide-reaching set of outcomes that truly make a difference in women's lives, rights, and participation around the world.

Introduction

In 2008, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) awarded 45 projects (and 48 civil society organizations) funding through the Millennium Development Goal 3 (MDG3) Fund. The EUR 70 million Fund, distributed from 2008–2011, represents a **historic commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment**, allowing key actors in the women's movement to expand their reach, take on new projects, and make a deeper impact on discriminations and injustices worldwide. The Dutch are looked to as a model of progressive gender equality funding across much of the world, particularly given their substantial historical contributions and commitment to the cause of gender equality and human rights. In addition to building on this history, the Dutch MFA through the MDG3 Fund has innovated a **cutting-edge funding model that is quite unique amongst the broader development field**, particularly in that it targets civil society organizations and supports their role in advancing gender equality.

In fact, the MDG3 Fund was the first of its kind developed in response to the global trend

that showed decreasing and scarce resources for women's rights and gender equality work.² See the "Value Added of the MDG3 Fund" box on page 2 for a description of why the MDG3 Fund is **unique, necessary,³ and fills a critical gap** in development funding for gender equality today. These realities underscore the need to replenish the MDG3 Fund, as well as highlights the importance of greater resources overall for gender equality, in order to maintain the specific gains that can only be made by supporting the groundbreaking efforts of civil society organizations with close partnerships, alliances, and networks with local women's rights groups and marginalized women.*

* Indeed, due to the hard work and lobbying of the Dutch gender lobby, Dutch political support, and MDG3 grantees the MDG3 Fund was renewed in 2011 under the new name, Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women (FLOW). See AWID's Friday File and Minbuza website www.minbuza.nl/flow

1. The methodology for the analysis was participatory with a dedicated commission of MDG3 Fund grantees responsible for gathering mid-term outcomes from a sample of women's organizations that received MDG3 Fund grants. For more information, please contact a.pittman@awid.org

2. See Clark, Cindy, Ellen Sprenger, Lisa VeneKlasen, Lydia Alpizar Duran, and Joanna Kerr. 2005. "Where is the Money for Women's Rights?" AWID.

3. Investing in women's empowerment and gender equality is critical. Indeed empirical studies have shown that gender equality initiatives catalyze achievement toward meeting development aims, and specifically the Millennium Development Goals, such as maternal health, poverty reduction, and education. For example see WHO 2008 www.who.int/gender/documents/EN_womens_emp.pdf; Ahmed et al 2010; Helen Clark 2010. <http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/2010/march/helen-clark-remarks-at-the-2010-asia-pacific-human-development-report-launch.en>

Value Added of the MDG3 Fund

The MDG3 Fund is the largest existing fund targeting civil society organizations working on gender equality. The Fund distributes sizeable grants in a short timeframe to innovative, seasoned groups in order to significantly improve women's daily lives and to increase women's participation in decision-making processes, from the local to the global levels.

The Fund prioritizes reach to grassroots organizations. This is achieved by funding intermediaries with partnerships and close links to grassroots and local women's organizations and movements. The MDG3 Fund is distinctive from other funds that primarily support implementation activities, not regranting. Channeling funding through larger organizations as a way to reach smaller organizations makes MDG3 Fund administration more streamlined than if the Fund tried to reach multiple smaller organizations separately. This also makes funding accessible to a wider range and scope of women's organizations. Perhaps most importantly, the MDG3 Fund's partnership prioritization differs from other funds, which focus on multiple granting targets, such as private-public partnerships, UN teams, or civil society organizations that are not women's organizations.

The Fund supports a broad range of gender equality work, including gender based violence, women's empowerment and leadership, as well as legal reform. Widening the range of issues that falls under the MDG3 goal significantly contributes to international development discourse, highlighting the importance of gender equality to meeting basic development goals. This Fund is different from other funds that focus on a specific issue or small number of key outcomes, as it allows grantees to invest in grassroots women's capacity building, knowledge building, and relationships with local authorities in addition to other issues listed above.

The Fund adopted an expansive approach to MDG3 by prioritizing multiple strategies. The flexibility and support of multiple approaches and mechanisms for women's empowerment is rare, and values the richness in diversity and context that is

central to solving development problems. This unique philosophy runs counter to prominent development discourses of modernity and magic bullet solutions.

The Fund helps organizations scale up the organizing and rights work that they specialize in. Central to the MDG3 Fund's creative funding strategy was the support of a mix of well-known women's organizations in addition to lesser-known and newer organizations. The delivery mechanism of the Fund injected grantees with a sizeable amount of money in a relatively short time period. This investment enabled existing organizations with strong programs and track records to take their work to the next level, expanding the scope and reach of their programs. This strategy has multiple outcomes not only allowing for the scaling up of programs, but also reinforcing women's rights and gender equality networks and increasing their visibility.

The Fund supports core funding, which is critical for women's organizations to make deeper and sustainable impacts. Support for core funding is critically important to the long-term sustainability of organizations. It helps organizations protect themselves from external risks brought about by shifting and, at times, threatening external crises, such as war, conflict, repressive regimes and powerful countermovements, as well as internally protects organizations from being donor and project driven. Since many women's organizations working for changes in empowerment and equal rights require deeper systemic work that transforms existing social and political institutions, the resources and strategies required must be diverse, flexible, and adaptable. A growing number of supportive donor allies are recognizing the centrality of supporting core funding and the need for organizations to be responsive to external pressures, while also ensuring strong institutional strength (financial and organizational capacity, accountability processes, etc). The MDG3 Fund is among these cutting edge donors.

The outsourcing of MDG3 Fund administration makes it a sustainable model of bilateral funding. Donors can easily outsource the administration of the fund to share the administrative burden. This model has in fact facilitated stronger collaboration amongst Fund grantees.

1. The Overall Impact and Reach of MDG3 Fund Grants

Given that the MDG3 Fund project cycle was not yet finished at the time of this assessment and publication, it was not possible to do a formal impact assessment. However, AWID collected data from 16 MDG3 Fund grantees to conduct the following mid-term analysis of some of the key outcomes achieved thus far. The following sections detail some of the basic demographic findings and initial results of the grants for this sub-sample of 16 women's rights organizations (Note: 35 out of the 45 MDG3 Fund projects were awarded to women's organizations).

The MDG3 Fund's reach is global and local. MDG3 Fund resources support global and local civil society organizations engaging in cutting-edge gender equality, rights, and empowerment work in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East and North Africa, reaching more than 93 countries.⁴

Across a sub-sample of 13 MDG3 fund grantees, over 1,900 civil society organizations were supported worldwide, around 150,000 women and men were directly impacted by the support, and over 3.5 million people indirectly benefited from the gender equality initiatives supported. This catalytic impact captures less than one third of the 45 Fund grantees total reach.

MDG3 Fund resources support the most marginalized women in communities.

- ◆ For example, **African Women's Development Fund (AWDF)**, the largest recipient of funds, regrants to the most difficult to reach and

marginalized community groups and women, including young women living with HIV/AIDS, widows, poor women, women experiencing domestic abuse, and sex workers.⁵

The MDG3 Fund supports grassroots women's organizations. The MDG3 Fund is the only fund of its kind with this type of extensive grassroots reach.

- ◆ For example, **International Network of Women's Funds (INWF)** and **Central American Women's Funds (CAWF)** received a EUR 1 million grant. 80% was channeled to small grassroots organizations supporting young women's efforts to challenge gender inequalities and discriminations in a variety of contexts in the Global South.
- ◆ The **Global Fund for Women (GFW)** used the MDG3 Fund to award USD 1,324,900 to 83 grassroots women's rights groups in 23 countries in Asia and the Pacific and South Asia. GFW was able to increase the availability and accessibility of resources through the MDG3 Fund, as well as foster opportunities for collaboration and connection for women-led, civil society organizations in Asia and the Pacific that are working to achieve the priority goals identified by the MDG3 Fund.

4. This calculation was made based on responses from 12 organizations. The total number of countries reached through the MDG3 Fund is over 99. Minbuza. www.minbuza.nl/en

5. Some examples of projects that have been supported include enhancing the skills and knowledge of women for greater involvement in decision making and politics as in Nigeria; providing income earning opportunities for diverse groups of marginalized women such as widows, commercial sex workers, women living with HIV, and young women; providing shelter to women who have suffered abuse and violence in Kenya; and supporting a recuperating facility for women living with HIV who are reacting badly to antiretrovirals provided in Ghana.

6. The MDG3 Fund supports all of the Strategic Initiatives and programming through their grant, which include Where is the Money for Women's

Through the MDG3 Fund, women's organizations have been able to scale up in a way that was previously not possible, amplifying their impact around the world.

- ◆ For example, AWDF is funding an additional 124 grassroots women's organizations across sub-Saharan Africa in 15 countries.
- ◆ **Kvinna till Kvinna** was able to support nine women's organizations in Serbia and Montenegro, which without this fund would have been without any form of financial support.
- ◆ **Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice (WIGJ)** increased their outreach from 1300 to 2000, an increase of 35%. This funding has also allowed their organization to strengthen institutionally with nine staff based in three countries (The Netherlands, Uganda and Egypt) and a mobile office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). WIGJ has been able to expand advocacy and engagement in peace processes including in Uganda, the DRC, and Darfur as well as continue their leadership in strategic political and legal advocacy for the prosecution of gender-based crimes through the International Criminal Court (ICC).
- ◆ Since its inception, **Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action (CREA)** has worked with over 50 grassroots organizations in Indian Hindi speaking states on building feminist leadership and social movements. The "Count Me In" project has given CREA an opportunity to leverage its networks of grassroots organizations and begin a door-to-door, vernacular, community based advocacy program in collaboration with five community based organizations. This campaign as of today reaches out to over 30,000 women directly and uses grassroots interventions to fracture gender

stereotypes and challenge the ideology of son preference in mostly rural and semi-urban communities.

The MDG3 Fund has increased the visibility and power of strong secular voices for democratic gender equality in politically unstable and contentious settings around the world.

- ◆ For example, the **Organisation of Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI)** has been revolutionary in increasing the visibility of a secular feminist voice in Iraq. Islamists have been dominating the airwaves with their own radio stations channels; however, with the MDG3 Fund grant, there is now a strong feminist radio station and feminist voice is amplified in the public discourse.

The MDG3 Fund strategically supports women's organizations to implement locally driven and designed initiatives, allowing for greater local relevance and impact.

- ◆ For example, the flexible nature of the MDG3 Fund, allowed the **Huairou Commission (HC)** to make significant investments in grassroots women's organizing and networking, particularly in the areas of women's participation in decision-making and security of assets. This flexibility enabled women to define their own priorities and perceptions of empowerment and as a result, groups have developed a number of innovative mechanisms to support women's empowerment at the grassroots. For example, one partner that HC supported in India developed a "Leadership Fund", which provided small funds to grassroots women leaders to design their own community development projects.

Shareefa chose to use her Leadership Fund to work on sanitation issues. She promoted the construction of individual toilets in Lohara. To do so, she solicited the support of and joined with the village grampanchayat. Together they decided to educate the community on sanitation and toilets through an education campaign. Shareefa contacted and convinced a resource person on water and sanitation to help with the campaign. She sent invitations through the grampanchayats and organized women not only from her village but also from 45 other villages. More than 5000 people came to the "information mela." The result of the campaign was a readiness to construct toilets. The next step was finding the money to do so. Shareefa visited banks and the district rural development department and found out about a scheme: a INR 2200 subsidy program for toilet construction to Below Poverty Line beneficiaries. She convinced them to give the subsidy and continued to contact the bank for those ineligible for the subsidy. Shareefa was successful in obtaining a toilet construction loan from the bank, which was distributed through the self-help groups. The materials for toilet construction were collectively purchased for all the villages, which reduced the costs. Within a four month period, about 1200 toilets were constructed and are currently being used.

The MDG3 Fund facilitates a focus on the importance of collective organizing for social change and gender equality, which is critical to sustaining social change efforts necessary for challenging entrenched gender inequalities and discriminations.

- ◆ Since October 2008, the MDG3 Fund grant has had an impact on **Just Associates'** (JASS) collective organizing strategies and movement building initiatives in ways that have far exceeded their expectations: contributing to the growth and increasing visibility of programs in three regions (Southeast Asia, Southern Africa, and Mesoamerica) and internationally; facilitating the development of diverse, young, activist leadership with the skills to organize and mobilize women around common feminist agendas and practical solutions; and multiplying the reach and organizing power of JASS women in
- their communities and beyond through cross-regional connections for learning, creative communications and international human rights advocacy on sexual rights, and against political repression of feminist activists. Since 2008, JASS has produced 15 YouTube videos reaching over 13,500 viewers and increased media coverage on a range of critical events from the coup in Honduras in 2009 to the repression of gay rights allies in Zimbabwe in 2010.
- ◆ In 2009, AWID supported 25 inspiring organizing projects through their 2008 AWID Forum seed grants proposals. Grants supported a diverse range of projects with extensive global reach, including 20 countries in most regions of the world in Latin America and the Caribbean, Central and Eastern Europe, North America, the Pacific, Southern Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, West Africa and the Middle East. Projects included strengthening leadership opportunities of indigenous women and young women in Mexico; the development of a documentary entitled "Jensaneya", tracking the lives of two Palestinian women, who participated in a sexual health education training, as they educate others and make a difference in their communities; strengthening the integration of Argentinean sex workers in the women's movement; and developing an online training resource on Disability, Sexuality, and Rights. These are but a few of the innovative projects supported; for further information see the **AWID website**.
 - ◆ In June 2010, AWID facilitated a groundbreaking collaboration between Dutch MDG3 Fund administrators and Fund grantees to explore collective learning and assessment mechanisms of the unique Fund. AWID and other MDG3 grantees are working together, drawing from dynamic approaches to measuring social

change in different contexts, developing innovative messages for analyzing the outcomes from the MDG3 Fund experience, and committing to continuing to grow the pot of resources available for gender equality and women's rights work.

- ◆ WIGJ has established extensive partnerships with grassroots women's rights activists and victims/survivors in four conflict situations and is successfully building a movement within and between women in armed conflicts. In the past 12 months, with the support of the MDG3 Fund, WIGJ has experienced an expansion of their networks and the emergence of a number of grassroots organizations, which identify themselves as 'members' of the Women's Initiatives. They now have over 155 direct 'members' and key partners across four armed conflict situations that are in turn connected to a wide range of other networks. As such, WIGJ's ability to reach an extensive and diverse range of local activists and allies for advocacy and mobilization around key issues at critical moments across four conflict situations has broadened.

The MDG3 Fund supports core funding as a critical strategy for sustainably advancing women's rights and equality.

- ◆ The MDG3 Fund supports AWID's core funding and their prioritization of emerging issues of importance.⁶ However, the flexibility of core funding allows AWID to prioritize new and emerging issues as they arise. For example, the negative impact of systemic and interlocking global crises placed women in more vulnerable positions due to increasing poverty, reduction in government spending on social programs,

and erosion of women's rights. Since AWID had core support they were able to strategically respond to the emerging global economic recession and interlocking crises with MDG3 Funds. Thus, the organization was able to maximize their ability to directly respond to falling investments in women's rights across different sectors and the fragile situations of many women's rights organizations in the Global North and South. Throughout 2009 and 2010, AWID made organizational decisions to shift resources to address changes in the global context and developed new initiatives on the global crises. In response to the significant impact of the economic crisis on women worldwide, AWID's Women's Rights Information (WRI) and Influencing Development Actors and Policies (IDeA) Strategic Initiatives collaborated to launch a new trilingual online Portal, providing feminist analysis and information on the global crises. They commissioned briefs on the impact of the crisis on women and women's rights from well-known feminist scholars and economists in ten different sub-regions of the world and those studies were published along with a global analytical document. The Portal aims to provide AWID's constituency, and the public more generally, with information specific data and ideas to make visible the way in which the crisis is affecting women and women's rights gains and to assist in strengthening their responses and advocacy work around the crisis. AWID's initial tracking reveals that between November 2009 and March 2010, the total number of home page views of the Portal was 1,701, which showed a 50% increase in page views compared to the previous six months. The total number of hits on all content related

Rights?, Resisting & Challenging Religious Fundamentalisms, Building Feminist Movements & Organizations and Young Feminist Activism, The AWID International Forum, Women's Rights Information, and Influencing Development Actors and Practices for Women's Rights.

7. The Portal is the only one at the international level that presents a broad range of information on the impact of the crisis on women, with information

to the crisis is 4,433. An analysis of how visitors arrived to the site reveals that the majority of visitors do so through Google searches. This is an achievement in itself; AWID is the first result when one enters “impacts of the crisis on women”.⁷

- ◆ In addition, AWID started to do increased work on support to women human rights defenders at risk. This support was prioritized given the significant increase in the number of cases of violence against them, and AWID's commitment to respond to their needs as a key constituency.

available for women's human rights and gender equality worldwide. In addition, AWID works collaboratively in civil society development networks to help open concrete spaces for women's rights organizations and movements to participate in key policy-making venues at the global level, such as at the OECD Working Party on Aid Effectiveness and the ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum.

The MDG3 Fund supports critical analysis and research that is central to: effective advocacy, lobbying for resource mobilization and agenda setting, as well as for sharing information and experiences across movements.

- ◆ For example, supporting some of AWID's more recent groundbreaking research on “Where is the Money for Women's Rights” has made important contributions to agenda-setting and resource mobilization opportunities. The research is used by women and other actors around the world to lobby for and increase access to enhanced quality and quantity of resources. AWID's research and advocacy has made meaningful contributions to the creation of focused funds and budget lines such as the Dutch MDG3 Fund, the Norwegian Women's Rights Program, the Fund for Gender Equality managed by UNIFEM and the Indigenous Women's Fund, which resulted in increase of financial resources

from all continents and in three languages. The Portal includes over 500 articles (in both English and Spanish, with fewer in French), scientific reports, statements and other type of information gathered from weekly reviews of about 100 different sources and specialized search engines.

8. See Pittman, Alexandra. “A Summary of the ‘Leading to Choices’ Program Evaluation in Morocco: A Women's Learning Partnership Training

2. Mid-term Impacts on Women's Leadership and Empowerment

Fostered greater women's leadership capacities and participation, where women recognize and challenge the multiple inequalities they face. Women's leadership is not just about increasing the number of leaders that are women, but also about increasing the quality of leaders that challenge discriminatory power structures. This requires supporting the collective dimension of leadership and feminist projects for sustainable gender equitable change. As such, the MDG3 Fund supports catalytic initiatives where women's leadership is used as a strategy for broader gender equality gains.

- ◆ In the past 18 months, with the assistance of the MDG3 Fund, WIGJ has held seven strategic and capacity building workshops for 200 women's rights activists, victims/survivors in all four conflict situations under investigation by the ICC. These workshops have led to: enhanced leadership capacity amongst local women rights activists in conflict situations for the benefit of their organizations, local communities and gender justice issues; an increase in technical skills and knowledge regarding documentation along with the initiation of localized sexual violence documentation programs in conflict areas under investigation by the ICC, thus contributing to political advocacy with the Court for the prosecution of gender-based crimes; and expansion of grassroots momentum around gender justice issues.
- ◆ **Women's Learning Partnership (WLP)** has trained 4,400 people since October 2008, mostly women through the participatory training program. WLP evaluations show that participants consistently report a sustained shift in their view of leadership from hierarchical and power-oriented models to democratic models

based on consensus-building, participation, and cooperation. Following the trainings, participants also establish more equal relations in the family and participate in civil society and political activities at higher levels than non-participants.⁸

- In Morocco, MDG3 Fund support has helped bring about real change for the women of the Soulaliyates ethnic community, an indigenous people living on collective lands. After a group of Soulaliyates Women (women of collective lands) participated in WLP's women's leadership program in Morocco and shared stories about their lives and struggles, they realized they should not let discrimination continue as it had for their mothers and grandmothers. Unequal laws governing the lands allowed only men to collect monetary or housing compensations. A group of women used the advocacy tools gained through the training and organized a grassroots campaign to demand equal rights to men in their right to compensation for collective lands. They wanted full access to the lands they worked on, including their share of proceeds from the land. They also wanted equal rights with men to transfer lands to their children, especially to their daughters. They came together to change the status quo, speaking out and demonstrating on the streets to make their voices and demands heard. In September 2009, the Moroccan government acknowledged the right of Soulaliyates women to benefit equally as men in the next round of compensations, overturning a century-old law. Hear the voices of the Soulaliyates women and read more on **WLP's blog**.

Curriculum." November 2010.

9. 28% of the MDG3 Fund resources are supporting efforts to end gender-based violence (GBV) and Violence Against Women (VAW). This support

- ♦ JASS shares a similar story of the far-reaching outcomes stimulated from training women leaders in collective organizing and leadership skills. For example, Tiwonge Gondwe, a leader in Malawi's Rumphi District, reflected on the JASS process that empowered her to galvanize her community. "In my activism, the impact cannot be seen within a year but as I grow, I see I have made progress. To take someone who has little education, just coming from the grassroots, to see and do all these things...! I can say that I'm another person from three years ago. My life has changed." Through a community-based organization, Women's Forum, she mobilized other women to meet with local chiefs. As a result and contrary to custom, three women have been allocated tracts of land. Tiwonge also facilitated training on the Prevention of Domestic Violence against Women Act with over 80 women across the country. Tiwonge plans to run for office in her district in 2011. Among a number of targets, she hopes to focus on reproductive health care, women's economic empowerment, and access to ARVs.

solidarity amongst domestic workers around the world. 2010 brought a number of successes in this initiative as domestic workers voices and recommendations were heard and recognized at the International Labour Conference (ILC). Lobbying is continuing to ensure that a recommendation is passed at the 2011 ILC and a vote occurs on the convention on domestic work. See **WIEGO's website** for further details. Below is a testimony from Sonu Danuwar, chairperson of Nepal Independent Domestic Workers Union and vice-chairperson of the International Domestic Workers Network.

Increased economic empowerment of grassroots women.

- ♦ WIEGO and partners established the Voice for Domestic Workers project, a three-year project to support domestic workers in their efforts to gain recognition and rights as workers through a global Campaign for an International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention and for national legislation. During their campaign to have domestic workers' right recognized by the ILO, they used a variety of innovative strategies, some of which included producing in-depth research and fact sheets on the status of domestic workers worldwide, conducting personal consultations and lobbying for increased rights and legal recognition, and making their message visible through a patchwork apron, showing global unity and

I started to work as a child domestic worker when I was seven years old. I worked in my village, in Dhulabari. I did washing, cleaning, child care and I went to the jungle to collect wood. My employers had 4 domestic workers. Three were children. I got up at five a.m. and worked until nine or ten p.m. everyday. No holidays. No money. Sometimes, my employer gave rice and used clothes to my family. The grandmother of my employer's family, everyday she ordered me to work. If I sit down, she said "Get up! Get up!" She slapped my face. I run away. My face swelled.

Later on, I worked in Kathmandu until now. Child domestic work is the most difficult. There are many cases of sexual harassment and child domestic workers killed. It's a heavy work. Employers give orders and we must work. No holidays. Everyday we work. No schooling. No good food. No good room. Child domestic workers sleep in dog's house. No light. No wind. Some sleep under the staircase. Many have been sexually abused. Many are tortured.

In 2007, we formed domestic workers union. Union is important. We want to solve the problems together nationally and internationally.

This time I bring with me a giant apron made by ADWN (Asian Domestic Workers Network, a network of local adult domestic workers) and IDWN. More than 3,800 domestic workers put in the demands and we sewed into a giant apron. We altogether demand for an ILO convention for domestic workers. Decent work, dignity for domestic workers in every country. Minimum wage, social security, health and working hour limit, insurance for domestic workers.

- ◆ The Huairou Commission is supporting organizations to enhance the economic empowerment of poor and marginalized grassroots women in central, east, and west Nepal. Collective efforts to gain economic power have resulted in political engagement in defining priorities and advocacy strategies at local level. Impacts thus far include:
 - Expanded saving and credit groups, promoting economic empowerment.
 - Twenty new women's saving groups were formed in 2009-2010.

- ◆ A new cooperative formed with 16 saving groups and a total membership of 305 women affiliated was registered in Latipur. Their total savings has reached INR 256640 (USD 3,515) and share capital as of INR 865000 (USD 11,849).

- ◆ Fostered learning and knowledge exchanges: cooperatives improved management skills and expanded relationships.
 - Representatives from 20 cooperatives shared knowledge and practices regarding cooperatives and common problems (including climate change and food security; loan insurance scheme; women's safety; farming techniques; and administration policies within the cooperatives) in order to develop an advocacy agenda for public policies from a grassroots perspective.

to establish an independent **Young Feminist Fund (YFF)**. The YFF aims to support young women's feminist activism as research has shown that this age group is often underfunded but their work is making meaningful contributions to advance women's rights and gender equality worldwide. This initiative also aims to contribute to strengthening women's organizing by investing in its longer-term sustainability.

Supported the development of new institutional structures to more deeply catalyze changes in women's empowerment and gender equality work, particularly for young women.

- ◆ AWID's work together with the Central American Women's Fund over the past few years has included the implementation of initial stages

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Spread awareness about the importance of ending violence against women (VAW), particularly with hard to reach or marginalized communities.

- ◆ **Association for Progressive Communications (APC)** is supporting a community wide anti-VAW campaign reaching out and involving the whole community and targeting 400 women and girls in local organizations and schools. This project, led by Asociación Agropecuaria las Quince Familias, is located in Villapaz, a poor black community of slave descendents, where women are actively fighting for women's rights and the rights of black people.
- ◆ The MGD3 Fund grant supported Breakthrough's ongoing, innovative **Bell Bajao** campaign, which has sensitized 130 million people across India. VAW work requires sustained community engagement and awareness raising efforts in order to see deeply entrenched norms around patriarchy and power relations change. Breakthrough does this by drawing from their leadership training, which involves intensive on-ground community mobilization, and also works with the Government and trained law enforcement agencies in addition to broader public campaign awareness raising work. Increased awareness of anti-VAW efforts has been seen across India. Specifically, through media activities like mobile video vans rolling with the campaign and public educational events, campaign messages reached approximately 27,000,000 people. Through direct interventions, which include building leadership capacities of youth from the community, government, community based

organizations and other institutions they have reached 75,000 people. Recently, Breakthrough has seen a 400% increase in website traffic. Thousands visited the Bell Bajao! website. On average, the website receives 3,250 visitors each month. The **blog features** numerous posts addressing diverse topics including issues related to gender, sexuality, violence against women, culture, media, and current affairs.

Mobilized women to lobby for full implementation of peace agreements and human security.

- ◆ WIGJ mobilized over 180 women's and human rights networks in eastern DRC to challenge the legality of peace agreements which contravene UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 and advocate for implementation of peace agreements, which will provide greater security for the civilian population and credible forms of accountability.

Ensured gender-based crimes were prosecuted against and remained a central issue in the ICC.

- ◆ As a result of WIGJ's work, made possible by support from the MDG3 Fund, gender-based crimes have been charged in all four conflict situations before the ICC (Uganda, the DRC, the Central African Republic (CAR) and Sudan) in which there have been indictments, and in all legal proceedings except three since 2007. It has been acknowledged that without WIGJ programmatic and political advocacy, the ICC would not have felt compelled to include sexual violence in its cases.

is critical as a recent report UNFPA (2010:17) cites VAW as a major obstacle to the Beijing Platform of Action in its review and claims that efforts to transform this barrier must span multiple institutional settings. GBV interventions have been identified as a key strategic area for sustainable development and reaching gender equality objectives.

- ◆ WIGJ made history by being the first NGO to file before the ICC and in July 2009, with the support of the MDG3 grant, they became the first, and to date only, international women's human rights organization to have been granted *amicus curiae* status by the Court. They have filed in two of the first three cases proceeding to trial.

Increased access to VAW resources, support, and networks.

- ◆ APC supports multiple local organizations to support women facing violence and ensure that VAW is deemed unacceptable.
 - In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Se Jeunisse Savait, is developing a project using the Freedom Fone, an interactive answering system that allows women human rights defenders and survivors of sexual violence to send, store, and access confidential information safely.
 - In Colombia, Asociación Femenina Integral Comunitaria is training local women to document testimonies of women who have suffered violence in conflict situations (in the internal war in Magdalena del Medio). They are also creating short radio programs about their lives and experiences.

Strengthened research and movement building to end violence against human rights defenders.

- ◆ Women human rights defenders in Mesoamerica face countless dangers and threats, whether they are promoting labor, civil and political, indigenous, reproductive, or other rights. In July 2010, JASS and its allies helped to bring this to the attention of Margaret Sekaggya, U.N. Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders. A study prepared by JASS staff details the violence perpetrated against women human

rights defenders in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico by armed factions, the state, and members of their families and communities. In a region, where femicide and other forms of violence against women occur with increasing and disturbing frequency, the report considers not only violence suffered specifically as a result of their work, but also intimate-partner, family, and community violence. Following a regional meeting in April 2010 of 60 Mesoamerican women human rights defenders from five countries, activists began organizing their peers in Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras (with El Salvador to follow) to build a cross-movement coalition fighting for the rights of women defenders. See **video** for further information.

- ◆ AWID has been supporting coordination of more effective strategies to defend women's human rights defenders at risk and working in a wide range of partnerships and alliances around security issues. A recent output of a collaboration with Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition has been the publication of a **new resource tool for human rights defenders**. The tool shares resources and existing manuals on the security and protection of defenders, women activists' wellbeing and self-care, how to document and monitor violations of women's rights, and rights and mechanisms available to protect women human rights defenders at risk.
- ◆ AWID is also concerned with the rise of religious fundamentalisms and their negative repercussions on women, development, and human rights. Recognizing a gap in this area, AWID's research on global trends of religious fundamentalisms has contributed to building knowledge and analysis not previously

available to a wide range of women's organizations, increasing understanding of the ways these actors and their agendas are impacting women's daily lives and security. The groundbreaking research report *Towards a Future without Fundamentalisms: Analyzing Religious Fundamentalist Strategies and Feminist Responses* was launched in 2010 as part of AWID's contribution to the 16 Days of Activism Campaign.

4. Mid-term Impacts on Law, Policy, and Advocacy Reform

Contributed to national law reforms that substantially increase women's status, participation, and equality in the family, politics, or community.

- ◆ Women's Learning Partnership (WLP) and local partners have contributed at the national and local levels to the following reforms since receiving the MDG3 Fund grant:
 - Bahrain's Council of Ministers approved a reform that extends fee exemptions for public education and health care services to children of Bahraini women married to foreign nationals.
 - Jordan removed its reservation to Article 15 of CEDAW, which grants women the right to travel freely and choose their place of residence.

Developed awareness raising and lobbying campaigns for just law reforms, such as equality in nationality laws, family codes, constitutions, and international frameworks.

- ◆ Participants in a WLP workshop in Mauritania developed and launched an advocacy campaign focused on "Eliminating Domestic Violence", while youth participants in Palestine launched

a campaign titled "Say No to Early Marriage." WLP also strengthened campaigns for just citizenship laws, family laws, and full implementation of CEDAW and continued to support the Iranian One Million Signatures campaign to end discriminatory laws against women through issuing a series of human rights alerts, facilitating strategy exchanges with activists in Muslim-majority countries, creating curriculum and convening trainings to bolster campaigner's advocacy efforts, providing media and web publicity, and disseminating advocacy tools. One Million Signatures campaign activists, including several WLP colleagues and program participants, gained international attention in June 2009 as the women's movement came to the forefront of political activism during Iran's disputed presidential election.

5. Mid-term Impacts on Political Participation

Improved relationships with decision-makers and increased participatory governance.

- ◆ With the support of the MDG3 Fund, WIGJ has been involved in two judicial elections in the past 18 months advocating for the appointment of gender-competent judges. Through their advocacy, WIGJ contributed to more women having been elected to the bench of the ICC than any other international court, resulting in a precedent-setting election of 11 women judges to the ICC. This means women are now the majority of judges on the bench of the Court. This has never been achieved at any of the other international Tribunals in over 15 years.
- ◆ Huairou Commission reports an incredible and significant improvement in their partner's capacity to dialogue and negotiate with decision-makers. In May 2010, more than 50 community leaders of "Ponte do Maduro", an irregular residential area (Santo Amaro, Pernambuco, Brazil) met with the President of the state housing department. Fifteen men and 45 women discussed how community leaders would participate in the land regularization process of Ponte Maduro. Women raised the importance of prioritizing female householders and received commitment from the local authority.

Increased women's political participation, particularly young women.

- ◆ WLP is mobilizing women to participate in upcoming elections, both as candidates and voters in several partner countries. More

women are running for local and municipal elections in partner countries such as Afghanistan, Brazil, Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon, Nigeria, and Palestine. Over the past year our partner in Jordan campaigned intensively on reform of the elections law. Their efforts contributed to doubling the number of seats allocated to women in the parliament. They are currently focusing on training women candidates and youth. Following a WLP leadership Institute in Sierra Leone, participants are working to have a 30% quota for women enshrined in the constitution.

- ◆ FCAM shares a concrete example of increases in the presence of young women's political participation in civil society in their support of "Red de Mujeres Jóvenes de la Colonia Cruz Roja, Colectiva de Jóvenes Universitarias de Honduras". This increased political participation was directly linked to the after effect of the coup d'état experienced in Honduras, which led to a concrete increase of young women's political participation in civil society. The youth organizations generated an activated social movement base in coordination with other organizations, which in turn led to the strengthening of the construction of social movements in Honduras.