
EQUALITY NOW

IMPACT REPORT 2018



DEAR FRIENDS,

The movement for gender equality is at another pivotal moment in its history. A rise in xenophobia, nationalism and fundamentalism is seeing women forced back into traditional roles and attacks on reproductive rights are gathering pace. Sex trafficking remains a \$99 billion industry. At the same time, globalisation is changing the dynamics and discourse around female genital mutilation and child “marriage” with there being consensus that these practices need to end.

As we seek to protect the rights of women, we must work increasingly closer with our colleagues in the wider human rights sector as we see the continued abuse of human rights (and human rights defenders) across numerous communities. All of this must be done in the context of huge global challenges such as the migration crisis and climate change.

On the positive side, there has been surge in activism by people from all walks of life, spurred on by disillusionment with governments and alarm at the erosion of human rights and basic decency. In particular, women are raising their voices through the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements, which have become global. We need to take advantage of this activism and direct it to lasting legal and policy change if we are to end the discrimination and violence women and girls face everyday. Cultural change and legal change must go hand in hand.



The long campaign for global gender equality requires strong foundations and support of women’s rights activists around the world. Our strategic plan requires investment in growth of the organization so that we are: present in all regions; have increased effective collaboration with partners and between our offices; focusing on learning and adapting to more effectively deliver on each of our four program areas -- Legal Equality and Access to Justice, End Sexual Violence, End Sex Trafficking and End Harmful Practices.

I hope in reading this report you will get a sense of the long-term impact Equality Now is making and a sense of the passion, energy and expertise that we bring to our work every day.

Yasmeen Hassan
Global Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Y. Hassan".

“CULTURAL CHANGE AND LEGAL CHANGE MUST GO HAND IN HAND”

THE SEX TRAFFICKING INDUSTRY IS WORTH
\$99 BILLION

200 MILLION WOMEN AND GIRLS WORLDWIDE HAVE UNDERGONE FGM

EVERY YEAR **12 MILLION** GIRLS MARRY BEFORE THE AGE OF 18

2018 HIGHLIGHTS



EXPANDING THE REACH OF OUR SUPPORT

In 2018, to better support the movement for gender equality, we:



- Opened our fourth regional office, in Beirut, to work with organizations in the Middle East and North Africa
- Established representation in Asia (India and China), Eurasia and Latin America
- Worked in 49 countries across five continents in 2018

COLLABORATING WITH GRASSROOTS AND NETWORKS

In 2018 we:



- Collaborated with 75 partner organisations
- Engaged with 2324 officials and influencers
- Amplified the voices of 559 survivors

LEADING IN OUR FOUR THEMATIC AREAS

Across 53 campaigns and The GENEROSITY of GIRLS Fund, our team of lawyers and experts at Equality Now have:



GENERATED
5000 STORIES
IN THE MEDIA

ACTIVATED OUR
SUPPORT BASE
OF **200,000**
ACTIVISTS

ISSUED **11**
REPORTS AND
PUBLICATIONS
(Found at equalitynow.org/resources_and_publications)

MADE **40**
SUBMISSIONS TO
THE UN AND
REGIONAL
BODIES

CONTRIBUTED
TO **12** STRATEGIC
LITIGATION
CASES

DIRECTLY HELPED
699 WOMEN
AND GIRLS

ENSURING THE LAW IS BALANCED FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Sex discriminatory laws demonstrate governmental disregard for the equality of half of their population and send a clear message that women and girls are of lesser worth. In 2018, we continue to have laws that prevent women from marrying based on their own choice, deprive women of custody of their children, require wife obedience, restrict women from giving evidence, travelling or

passing their nationality to their spouses or children, limit women's access to inheritance or property, disallow women from certain jobs, and allow various forms of violence against women. When governments discriminate on the basis of sex, women and girls cannot reach their full potential.



LEGAL EQUALITY GOAL



To revoke or amend any remaining laws highlighted in our Beijing +20 (and +25) reports as discriminating on the basis of sex and prevent new sex discriminatory legislation from being enacted.

KEY MOMENTS

across 11 campaigns with 23 partners in 18 countries and regions

ENGAGED WITH 782 OFFICIALS AND INFLUENCERS

36 EVENTS AND CONVENINGS

19 SUBMISSIONS TO UN AND REGIONAL BODIES

GENERATED 274 MEDIA STORIES

2018 IMPACT

Africa region

Making progress towards the adoption of the draft Right to Nationality Protocol which gives women equal rights to nationality. With State representatives agreeing on language of the draft Protocol, we draw close to having an African normative and legal framework that will set the standards for national laws. Equal nationality laws should result in less risk of child "marriage", more options for women in abusive relationships and better social and economic stability for families generally.

Tunisia and Ethiopia

Ratified the Maputo Protocol and South Sudan is in the process (the African Union is yet to update their list). We are now 14 states away from full ratification and region-wide commitment to upholding women and girls rights.

Lesotho

Amended its law to ensure that women and men have the equal ability to confer citizenship on their foreign spouses.

MENA region

The League of Arab States adopted a declaration calling

for reform of discriminatory nationality laws in the region based on international law and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Palestine

Repealed article 308 of the Penal Code that pardoned rapists and sexual abusers if they married their victim.

Tunisia

The President of Tunisia approved the Equal Inheritance Right law bringing women a step closer to being able to inherit on the same terms as men.

NOOR'S STORY

Noor was 20 years old when she was drugged and raped by her 55-year-old employer while working as his housekeeper and babysitter in Jordan. With rape still carrying a huge social stigma in her home country of Jordan, Noor knew that her family would be devastated.

"I cried and cried, not knowing what to do," she says. Noor kept her rape a secret from her family. But she soon realised she was pregnant. It was only when her son was born that Noor found the courage to report the rape.

"I decided to go and file a complaint at the police station," she says. But like many countries in the Middle East and North Africa, there was a loophole in Jordanian law that allowed a rapist to escape punishment by marrying their victim.

"He proposed to marry me under article 308 of the Jordanian Penal Code," says Noor. "With all the hatred I have in my heart, my family forced me to marry him so as to save the 'family's honor'".

Unable to bear living with her rapist any longer, Noor filed for divorce. She now faces a court battle to ensure that her rapist legally recognizes and accepts responsibility for their young son.

Noor is one of thousands of women worldwide who have been forced to marry their rapists.

Noor is one of thousands of women worldwide who have been forced to marry their rapists due to laws that protect perpetrators through marriage. Equality Now's campaigning has contributed to many countries changing their laws - including Jordan, Palestine, Tunisia and Lebanon. The work continues for changes in Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya and Syria.

ENDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE & ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Sexual violence against women and girls is rampant around the world and the legal system does not adequately provide justice to survivors or deter such violations. Worldwide, around 15 million adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 have experienced forced sex in their lifetime. Sexual violence laws often have onerous evidentiary

requirements, are based on sexist notions, or have loopholes. Legal procedures often re-victimize survivors. Police, prosecutors and judges are often influenced by sexist understandings and need re-education. All in all, the criminal justice system often fails to provide justice to survivors.



ENDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE GOAL



Laws against sexual violence enhance protections for survivors and are enforced in ways that provide access to justice to survivors.

KEY MOMENTS

across 21 campaigns in 17 countries with 16 partners

CONTRIBUTED TO 5 STRATEGIC LITIGATION CASES

9 SUBMISSIONS TO UN AND REGIONAL BODIES AND 4 PUBLICATIONS

49 EVENTS AND CONVENINGS

ENGAGED 981 OFFICIALS AND INFLUENCERS

SUPPORTED 536 DIRECT BENEFICIARIES

AMPLIFIED 94 SURVIVOR VOICES

2018 IMPACT

Bolivia

With our partners CUBE, our advocacy efforts have brought about significant changes in how representatives in the Cochabamba and Bolivian justice system implement good practice. Judges have asked CUBE for greater training on understanding sex stereotyping and its impact on sexual violence cases.

Kenya

With Equality Now's support, the Ministry of Education submitted a policy on protection of children from sexual violence in schools to schools.

Liberia

In collaboration with Solidarity for African Women's Rights Coalition (of which Equality Now is the secretariat) we

trained lawyers and activists to use international and regional agreements and laws to defend the rights of women and girls.

Eurasia

Equality Now brought together civil society from 13 countries of the former Soviet Union to confirm roadblocks to justice for sexual violence and agree on ways to address them with targeted advocacy.

SALOME'S STORY

Salome lives in Tbilisi, Georgia. At 20, Salome was studying art at college, working as a tutor and content creator to support herself. "That night I was walking back from tutoring. A man started catcalling me. Then he was right behind me. He was with two boys. Two of them caught me. The attack was 20 or 30 minutes."

"I went to the police. They said they I didn't look like a decent family girl. It was February. I was wearing a long dress and a warm jacket. I was not wearing tights. They asked me repeatedly why I was not wearing tights. As if that would have changed anything."

The police didn't make it simple for her. They asked why she would want to report the attack - that no one would marry her and that making up rape was normal for women.

They made her go for a 'virginity test' to ascertain if her hymen was broken. "I had scratches and bruises on my body." Only then did the police investigate. They found the boys

and the man a few days later. He was a 23 year old married father of two.

"A month later I felt very dizzy. I really did not think I was pregnant." The police, not believing her, made her take a third test. One of Salome's relatives paid for an abortion as the state won't pay for an abortion for women pregnant from sexual violence.

"It was very traumatising for me. I began crying very loudly." The pregnancy was taken into account as part of her case.

When her case went to court Salome was told little about the process. Court sessions would take place without her knowing and those she was asked to attend would often be cancelled without warning. "It felt like nobody was interested in me or how I felt."

During the trial, Salome felt it was inferred she was to blame. "I was asked, 'Why were you out alone at night, what did you want?'. It was

during the case that the perpetrator's lawyer told Salome that the man's family wanted her to marry him. "I laughed so much at this."

Salome testified several times. Telling her story over and over. The perpetrator denied raping her but was sentenced to 13 years in prison, and the boy six. "I think it is the right sentence. I was very happy when they were found guilty."

"Women must go to police if they are assaulted, to stop others from being attacked. And the police need to believe them. It shouldn't matter who you are, or what you wear, or what you are doing in your life."

It felt like nobody was interested in me or how I felt.

After the trial Salome published her story on a website, the aim of which is to uncover women's stories that usually remain hidden in Georgia. She received a very positive response from survivors of rape or other types of abuse.

"I think things are getting better for women in Georgia. It is just step by step, but we are starting to talk about things."

DISMANTLING THE STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS THAT LEAD TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Every year millions of women and girls suffer at the hands of traffickers and pimps who profit from the trade in human beings, and from buyers who exploit them and fuel this \$99 billion dollar industry. Some women are abducted, some are deceived by offers of legitimate work, and some are sold by their own poverty-stricken families, or are driven to sell themselves due to poverty, isolation, or abuse. Regardless of their route into commercial sexual exploitation, women and girls can become trapped in a world of violence, debt bondage, abuse, and isolation.

Human trafficking is a prevalent and pervasive crime that transcends international borders and occurs not only between countries but within countries, states, cities, and neighbourhoods. Online platforms have contributed to the expansion of this industry. The advancement and availability of the internet has completely transformed the face of sex trafficking and of sexual exploitation, increasing the ways that women and children can be exploited



ENDING SEX TRAFFICKING GOAL



The direct link between prostitution, sex trafficking and sex tourism is understood. Action is taken by governments and international bodies to protect women and girls from sexual exploitation.

KEY MOMENTS

across 15 campaigns in 16 countries with 21 partners

CONTRIBUTED TO 2 STRATEGIC LITIGATION CASES

3 PUBLICATIONS +3 SUBMISSIONS TO UN AND REGIONAL BODIES

27 EVENTS AND CONVENINGS

ENGAGED 351 OFFICIALS AND INFLUENCERS

SUPPORTED 130 DIRECT BENEFICIARIES

2018 IMPACT

Kenya

22 girls formerly in prostitution supported through The GENEROSITY of GIRLS Fund and by Trace Kenya and Life Bloom have expressed interest to go back to school. This signals a significant change in direction for the girls which will more likely result in more positive life outcomes.

Malawi

We are supporting People Serving Girls at Risk to bring forward a case in which a 15 year old girl and 18 year old young

woman were trafficked together for sexual exploitation in a local bar. This will be the first case under the recently enacted Anti-Trafficking Act against the bar owner, who sexually exploited the girls, and the man who recruited them from their village. Both survivors are being provided with holistic, needs-based support via Equality Now and The GENEROSITY of GIRLS Fund.

USA

A federal law (FOSTA/SESTA) was passed and signed into law that meant internet providers who

facilitate trafficking can be held to account. Within days of the bill being passed a website called Backpage.com (a website which facilitates commercial sexual exploitation and has been cited in many child trafficking cases in the US) was shut down and several executives arrested.

Global

We have partnered with WePROTECT Global Alliance and are feeding into the discussions on addressing online child sexual exploitation.

BEATRICE'S STORY

Beatrice came from a humble background. She dreamt of becoming a doctor. But when her parents split up and moved away she had to stop going to school to look after her siblings.

"Life was very hard. I went to look for a job cutting wood. This was when I was exploited and got my first born child."

"When you have problems you are vulnerable, people take advantage of you because you don't have other choices. My supervisor told me, "if you come and sleep with me, I will do these favors for you". But I said no so he raped me. I was 18 years old."

Beatrice became pregnant as a result and struggled to look after her son.

She hoped things would get better when she married her first husband. But he beat her and mistreated her son. After having her second child she had a stroke. She left her husband soon after and strived to raise her children by herself.

"I looked for work in the flower farms. I worked there for four years. The women in the farms are exploited and often you are not paid.

I was harassed many times. I refused to sleep with a supervisor and he told his manager that I was insubordinate and not doing what was expected. It was not my choice to leave my job, he forced me out.

I entered into prostitution because of the challenges of raising my children. Challenges can push you to places that you

never thought you would go. The first day I went, we didn't have anything in the house to eat. The flower farm hadn't paid me for 3 days. I had no choice. I thought, "I will go on the streets". I really hated myself for it. There were times I just felt like I was at the end.

Beatrice contacted Life Bloom, a partner of Equality Now. "They picked me up, built my confidence and supported me to live without a husband. In Kenya, most women do not know their rights. Now I know mine so when someone is trying to exploit me, I report it. And when I see someone else being exploited I get mad. I tell them they are not supposed to be treated that way. I speak to my sons about women's rights and teach them to respect girls."

SHIELDING WOMEN AND GIRLS FROM FGM AND CHILD MARRIAGE

Female genital mutilation and child marriage are globally recognized as violations of human rights that have significant adverse effects on women and girls physically, psychologically, socially and economically. Governments must protect girls from these harmful practices by enacting and enforcing laws against them.

These practices are often justified culturally as protective of the child and the community and religiously mandated. Neither is true. In order to end these practices, we have to work on social and cultural change alongside legal change.



ENDING HARMFUL PRACTICES GOAL



To ensure governments enact and effectively implement laws that prohibit harmful practices.

KEY MOMENTS

across 12 campaigns in 17 countries with 22 partners

CONTRIBUTED TO 5 STRATEGIC LITIGATION CASES

MADE 17 SUBMISSIONS TO UN AND REGIONAL BODIES

AMPLIFIED 114 SURVIVOR VOICES

RAISED INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION TO #JUSTICEFORNOURA

GENERATED 1310 MEDIA STORIES

2018 IMPACT

Sudan

Through international media attention and engagement with international and local bodies, the death sentence imposed on teenager Noura Hussein, who was married as a child against her will and killed her husband as he raped her, was quashed. This case drawn international attention to the struggles of Sudanese women and has garnered global support for Sudanese women's organisations and human and women's rights activists.

Kenya

Government is more effectively implementing laws against child "marriage" and sexual violence in Kwale and Kilifi counties by more thorough investigations of cases of teenage pregnancies and child marriage.

Burkina Faso

An increased number of cases of FGM have been identified for prosecution; journalists have actively highlighted cases of FGM in the media to influence public opinion against the practice.

USA

New Jersey and Delaware have increased the minimum age of marriage to 18 with no exceptions.

Global

UN General Assembly Resolution on child marriage for the first time urges States to progressively adopt 18 as the minimum age of marriage.

“NOURA'S STORY

Noura, a young Sudanese girl, was forcefully married off at 16 years of age, despite her protestations. The significantly older man she was forced to marry raped her whilst three of his male relatives pinned her down. When he attempted to rape her yet again, Noura fought him off, stabbing him with a knife in self-defense. The man died and Noura was convicted of murder. On May 10, 2018, she was sentenced to hang.

When the news of Noura Hussein's death sentence verdict broke, Equality Now mobilized our experts and networks globally and supported women's organisations and lawyers locally. It was a race against time to save Noura.

With our support, an appeal was filed on May 24, 2018 by lawyers in Sudan rightfully asserting that Noura was defending herself and that she was married off against her

will as a child. The appeal resulted in the death sentence being quashed, replaced instead with a five year sentence and a restitution payment of 337,000 Sudanese pounds (US \$18,700).

We continue to advocate for the unconditional freedom of Noura Hussein

We continue to advocate for the unconditional freedom of Noura Hussein and legal reform in Sudan on the issues of child marriage, sexual violence and male guardianship.



MOSES NTENGA JOY FOR CHILDREN UGANDA

Moses Ntenga is the founder and Director of Joy for Children Uganda, a grassroots NGO that advocates for child rights and seeks to end violence against children through capacity building, activism, psycho-social and legal assistance.

Joy for Children is at the forefront of Uganda's fight to end child marriage and female genital mutilation. At a community level, the organization applies a holistic approach providing support to girls at risk, and works to change commonly held beliefs and practices that push girls into early marriage.

Equality Now is partnering with Joy for Children to strengthen the legal rights of women and girls in Uganda, including joining forces to petition Parliament to pass the Marriage Bill, which would introduce more effective legislation to combat child marriage.

What inspires you to do the work you do?

My inspiration comes from my upbringing. When I was growing up I saw children being subjected to abuse or neglect. Lots of girls were mistreated by their families or at school, many dropped out of education, got pregnant or became house girls. It affected both rich and poor, I saw these problems and thought we have to do something.

What was the turning point which made you become an activist?

I studied social sciences at university and my focus was on child sexual abuse because it has such a devastating impact on girls. If a girl gets pregnant, she often has to marry the father, even if she doesn't want to. She drops out of school, has no income and is very vulnerable to abusive relationships. When I graduated I knew I wanted to play a role in improving my community by connecting with others and building bridges.

What is the greatest challenge you face in your work?

Back in 2006, no one talked about child sexual violence. People knew it was happening but it was seen as so common that it was

normalized. The biggest challenge - although things are changing for the better - is that it can be hard for communities to understand underlying issues, especially those that have deep cultural roots. Changing perceptions is difficult, it doesn't happen overnight and sometimes the slow pace can be discouraging. You need to give it time and have a consistent message - that's how you create long term positive change. Joy for Children has showed me how you can make things better through cooperation.

JOY FOR CHILDREN HAS SHOWED ME HOW YOU CAN MAKE THINGS BETTER THROUGH COOPERATION.

THANK YOU

Thank you to all the partners we had the pleasure in working with in 2018. You are changing the world.

- ABAAD
- Abolish 153 organization
- AFFADH
- Africa Nationality Coalition
- AMDH
- AMSOPT
- Apne Aap
- Arab Women Organization
- Baghdad Women Association
- Bahrain Women Union
- Berke-Weiss law firm
- Breeze of Hope
- CARL - Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law
- CFUWI
- Child Protection Alliance
- Child Welfare Society
- Children's Dignity Forum
- CLADEM
- CUBE
- DCI Sierra Leone
- Democratic Tunisian Women Association
- Embrace Dignity
- EVE
- Forum Against Harmful Practices
- Girl Child Network
- Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights
- GPI
- Graceland
- IHRDA
- Iraqi Women League
- Joy for Children Uganda
- Judicial Training Institute- Uganda
- Kuwaiti Women without Limits
- Karama Network
- LAWC
- Legal Action for people with disabilities
- Legal Human Rights Centre
- Leteipan and Associates Advocates
- Liberian Women Lawyers Association
- Life Bloom
- Malawi Women Lawyers Association
- Musawah
- National Coalition on Human Trafficking
- New Woman Foundation
- Open Society
- People Serving Girls at Risk
- Questiones des Femme
- REEP
- Sahiyo
- Sauti ya Wanawake Pwani
- Sisterhood is Global Institute (SIGI)
- SOAWR Coalition
- SOLWODI
- Tanzania Women Lawyers Association
- Terre des Femmes
- The Lebanese Council to Resist Violence against Women
- TIME's UP Legal Defense Fund
- Trace
- UK Feminista
- UN ICSC complainant
- UN Women
- Voix de Femmes
- WAVES
- We Speak Out
- West Point Women
- WiLDAF Benin
- WOCON
- Women Solidarity Inc
- Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counselling
- Women's Support Project
- Women's March Global
- World Bank, Women Business & the Law
- World Hope International
- WORLD Policy Analysis Center
- Young Strong Mothers



@EQUALITYNOW



@EQUALITYNOWORG



@EQUALITYNOW



EQUALITYNOW.ORG