



saving
women's
lives

safe abortion
action fund
coordinated by  IPPF

safe abortion action fund

The Safe Abortion Action Fund (SAAF) was established in 2006 to save lives by increasing access to safe abortion services. It is a reserve fund that is distributed, through grants, to non-governmental organizations working in abortion services, operations research and/or advocacy.

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) administers SAAF on behalf of civil society groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and IPPF Member Associations worldwide.

By increasing access to safe abortion services and the right to safe abortion, SAAF is closing one of the greatest health inequities in the world. SAAF is innovation in action to 'achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015' (the new target for Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Five). In addition to MDG Five – to 'improve

maternal health' – SAAF is contributing to the achievement of MDG Three – to 'promote gender equality and empower women'. Enabled by the contributions of donors, partners, volunteers, project grantees and IPPF, the Safe Abortion Action Fund is saving lives.

The Safe Abortion Action Fund is made possible through the generous support of the governments of the United Kingdom, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. Funding currently amounts to a total of \$11.6 million over two years.



Early in 2006, IPPF launched a report entitled '**Death and Denial: Unsafe Abortion and Poverty**' to raise awareness about the state of unsafe abortion worldwide. In this report, IPPF demonstrated that unsafe abortion is one of the most neglected public health and human rights issues facing women throughout the developing world. This preventable human tragedy is an epidemic, one which highlights the failure of national governments and the international community to address a public health issue that perpetuates a great social injustice and that sets poorer nations apart from the richer ones.

In May 2007 the Safe Abortion Action Fund awarded grants to NGOs in 32 countries to fund 45 two-year projects dedicated to advocacy, operations research and/or service delivery. The Fund prioritizes work that is focused on poor and marginalized women who have the greatest need for safe abortion.

The process

In July 2006 the Safe Abortion Action Fund made a call for proposals with a deadline of 31 October 2006. Proposals were submitted in English, French and Spanish, covering many countries and many areas of abortion services and programmes. A total of 172 projects were submitted, demonstrating a clear need for resources and a demand for safe abortion services and programmes that exceeds what is currently available.

After IPPF conducted an initial review to determine their eligibility, members of the Technical Review Panel worked in pairs to assess proposals for their feasibility and relevance to the aims and criteria of SAAF. The Technical Review Panel then met as a group and deliberated over two days to select projects and recommend them to the Board.

The projects

Project proposals revealed the huge extent of the challenges and tragedies related to unsafe abortion around the world.

Applicants related in detail the unique circumstances faced by women in their respective country contexts and the ensuing consequences for public health. Links between unsafe abortion and maternal mortality were, understandably, at the forefront of these descriptions.

Stigma related to abortion was identified as a major problem. Many women who present themselves for treatment after an unsafe abortion are then faced by doctors who mete out 'punishment' by, for example, performing dilation and curettage without anaesthetic. Such examples are not rare and demonstrate the need for funding and support to those organizations that are willing and able to work on an issue which has been neglected and ignored by many governments around the world.

In most of the countries where projects are being funded abortion

is only available in cases of rape, incest, threat to a woman's life or foetal abnormality. The aim of many projects is to ensure that abortion is available to the fullest extent of existing laws. Many projects aim to:

- **Raise awareness** among health providers of the abortion services that are permitted by law
- **Train health providers** in modern abortion techniques
- **Increase women's knowledge** of what is possible within the law
- **Increase understanding** among policy and decision makers of the impact of unsafe abortion on women's lives and public health

In those countries where abortion is legal under broader criteria the projects aim to improve the quality of services and to reach women who are refugees or who are displaced, poor, marginalized, abused or living in rural areas. Several projects will gather data on unsafe abortion and its consequences which will be used to better inform policy makers of the urgent need to address the issue.

The Director-General of IPPF established a Board to oversee the work of the Safe Abortion Action Fund

Board Members

Dr Berit Austveg (Norway/Norad)
Ms Valerie DeFillipo (IPPF)
Ms Sandra MacDonagh (UK/DFID)
Ms Liz Maguire (Ipas)
Dr Pierre Moonens (FIAPAC)
Ms Monica Oguttu (individual abortion activist)
Ms Mónica Roa (individual abortion activist)
Dr Shabnam Shahnaz (MSI)
Ms Lyn Thomas (IPPF/Chair)

The Board developed byelaws, criteria for the selection of projects and established an independent Technical Review Panel to assess the submissions and make recommendations. The Board evaluated and acted on the Technical Review Panel's recommendations to award the Safe Abortion Action Fund grants.

Technical Review Panel (TRP) Members

Dr Anibal Eusebia Faundes
Ms Ann Furedi
Dr Daniel Grossman
Dr Selma Hajri
Dr Mary Khachikyan
Ms Frances Kissling
Ms Patricia Larue
Ms Maria Consuelo Mejia Pineros
Dr Roland Mhlanga
Ms Susheela Singh
Dr Margaret Sparrow
Dr Joar Svanemyr
Dr Marcel Vekemans
Ms Cristina Villareal Velasquez
Ms Carine Vrancken

Safe Abortion Action Fund grantees for 2007-2009

Albanian Center for Population and Development
 Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir (CDD)
 Córdoba, Argentina
 Centro de Estudios de Estado y Sociedad (CEDES)
 Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition
 Ipas Bolivia
 Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir, Bolivia
 Center for Research in Reproductive Health of Campinas (Cemicamp)
 Feminist Center for Studies and Advisory Services (CFEMEA)
 Cunha Coletivo Feminista

Institut Supérieur des Sciences de la Population (ISSP)
 Marie Stopes International Viet Nam
 Red de Salud de las Mujeres Latinoamericanas y del Caribe (RSMLAC)
 Orientame
 Fundación Educación para la Salud Reproductiva (ESAR)
 Asociación Demográfica Costarricense
 Association Ivoirienne pour le Bien Être Familial (AIBEF)
 Marie Stopes International Ethiopia
 Pathfinder Ghana
 Pathfinder International India

Kazakhstan Association on Sexual and Reproductive Health (KMPA)
 PPFA International ARO, Kenya
 Reproductive Health Alliance, Kyrgyzstan
 Comunicación, Intercambio y Desarrollo Humano en América Latina (CIDHAL)
 Grupo de Información en Reproducción Elegida (GIRE)
 Fundación Mexicana para la Planeación Familiar A.C.
 Pathfinder International Mozambique
 Center for Research on Environment Health and Population Activities (CREHPA)
 Sunaulo Parivar Nepal (MSI)

Women's Health & Action Research Centre
 Centro de la Mujer Peruana Flora Tristan
 General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action (GABRIELA)
 Mosaic Training, Service and Healing Centre for Women
 Pathfinder South Africa
 Ibis Reproductive Health, South Africa
 PPFA International, Sudan
 Women's Health & Reproductive Rights Foundation of Thailand
 Iniciativas Sanitarias – Sociedad Civil
 Mujer y Salud en Uruguay (MYSU)

SAAF in numbers

Funds available	\$11.6m
Projects submitted	172
Projects funded	45
Countries	32
Largest grant	\$312,588
Smallest grant	\$27,038



Each year, an estimated 19 million women and girls, faced with unintended or unwanted pregnancy, risk the deadly consequences of unsafe abortion. Nearly 70,000 of these women and girls will die, and hundreds of thousands of others will be left with debilitating and/or lifelong injuries as a result. Over 96 per cent of these women will come from the world's poorest nations.

Out of the more than 500,000 annual maternal deaths, 13 per cent are due to complications from unsafe abortion, with the toll rising to as high as 50 per cent in some developing countries. During the United Nations World Summit in September 2005, world leaders expressed their commitment to women's rights and maternal health; reaffirming their commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, including the goal of reducing the number of maternal deaths and improving women's health. In June 2006, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Secretary General's recommendation to adopt a new target under MDG Five: 'to achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015'. The new target ensures the centrality of reproductive health in improving maternal and infant health and reducing poverty in the international development agenda. However, funding for work in this area is far behind projected estimates of what is needed to make significant headway.



Changing lives: increasing access and the right to abortion

The generous support of some European governments has enabled the Safe Abortion Action Fund to be a catalyst for action that will save and improve women's lives. The Safe Abortion Action Fund is a one-off opportunity to support 45 local non-governmental organizations in 32¹ countries. Data clearly shows that where abortion is safe, legal and accessible the risk to women's lives and health is significantly reduced. The work of SAAF is a firm step forward in increasing awareness of the impact of unsafe abortion and improving women's health.

Many projects submitted from NGOs in the least developed countries were not able to be supported. Many of them needed significant technical support to create realistic plans for implementation and monitoring and evaluation. Should future funding become available, these organizations may have the opportunity to fully realize their goals: to access funds and undertake work on abortion-related programmes.

The 45 projects that have received funding will make progress in reducing unsafe abortion and, consequently, in reducing maternal mortality and empowering women. To sustain this vital and life-changing work, however, the Safe Abortion Action Fund needs long-term funding and support.



Contact the Safe Abortion Action Fund

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IPPF is a UK Registered Charity No. 229476

1. Albania, Argentina, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina, Faso, Cambodia, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, Sudan, Thailand, Uganda, Uruguay, Vietnam.

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