

**HUMAN  
DIGNITY  
FOUNDATION**

**HDF**

**2020 ANNUAL REPORT**



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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to HDF's 2020 Annual Report. It goes without saying that this has been one of the most unique years in the foundation's history. 2020 has reminded us that the protection and promotion of children's rights is more necessary than ever.

Tragically, the past 12 months has seen a huge increase in the risk faced by children. World Vision estimates that as many as 85 million additional children were at risk of violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse. Our long-standing partners at INTERPOL have observed a worrying uptick in sexual abuse online as pandemic restrictions put millions more children, and sexual predators, in front of the screen. The viral pandemic has also focused attention on the epidemic of child abuse. At HDF, our mantra has never seemed more prescient: Children Can't Wait.

This urgency reinforces the need for us to get our legacy strategy right. As we move one year further into our final phase of funding, we are continuing to explore how our investments can leave a lasting and significant impact on our two areas of focus: tackling online child sexual exploitation and abuse and female genital mutilation/cutting.

In the fight against online abuse, we remain severely curtailed by a lack of data. What is the prevalence? How does perpetration manifest and escalate? What are the major risk factors for children in different geographies and socio-economic contexts? These are the types of questions we - as funders, practitioners, policymakers, and leaders - need to be able to answer. Unfortunately, our ability to do so globally is limited. We are actively considering how HDF will respond to this great need and invite other funders to step forward with us to tackle this critical deficiency.

Finally, we see the sharing of our experience as part of the duty of a spend down foundation. As a first step we have begun a deep analysis of HDF's funding over 16 years. This process is sometimes intensive, but always fascinating. It is revealing patterns of funding behaviour and choices that are often lost in the minutiae of grant management and pipeline development. In this year's annual report, we have featured a snapshot of some of this information and look forward to sharing more in the months and years to come.

I know I will not be alone in wishing all of us a happier, healthier 2021.

**Seán Coughlan**  
Executive Director



Like most funders, we want to know what impact our grants have had; but wanting it, and being able to assess it, are not the same thing. Over the past 16 years HDF has made a total of 194 grants to 108 organisations and individuals. Our first step in trying to explore the impact of HDF funding is to try to understand the fundamental patterns of our funding.

What issues has our funding tried to address? What type of organisations have we funded? How has our funding changed over time? And what does this tell us about the evolution of the foundation? The answers to all of these foundational questions – and many, many more – are the component parts of an emerging insight into impact.

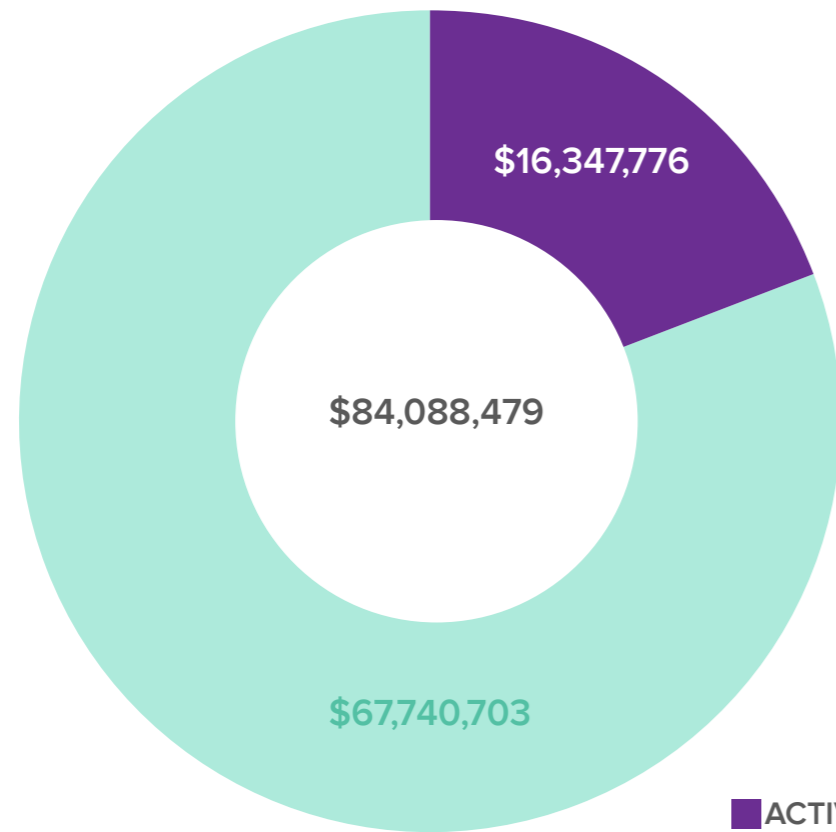
In 2020 we began this ambitious exercise in earnest. We are at the beginning of the process, no doubt, but the insights we are gaining from a thorough mapping of every grantee and every grant are already fascinating. The process is revealing a bird's-eye perspective that is so often lost in the quarterly and annual cycle of grant approval and grant management.

Two questions we are asking ourselves as we continue this exploration of impact are: who cares and who should care? Within HDF we know that a clear understanding of impact and funding behaviour is a necessary feature of accountability and performance tracking. But beyond HDF, how can this type of insight be a useful and meaningful contribution to better philanthropy and grant-making? We hope that our unvarnished insight into HDF's experience will prove valuable to both our colleagues in the children's rights sector and to early stage and emerging philanthropies that are interested in the journey of a private foundation like HDF, and the pros and cons of choosing to spend down.

Being open to unearthing the good, the bad and the ugly is really important to us. Mistakes, missteps, and well-intentioned misjudgments are the most valuable aspects of experience. They very often precipitate smarter, more effective funding and the exploration of impact can have no real value if it doesn't support more impact. So, HDF's exploration of impact will be open, honest, and we hope, productive. We look forward to exploring with you.

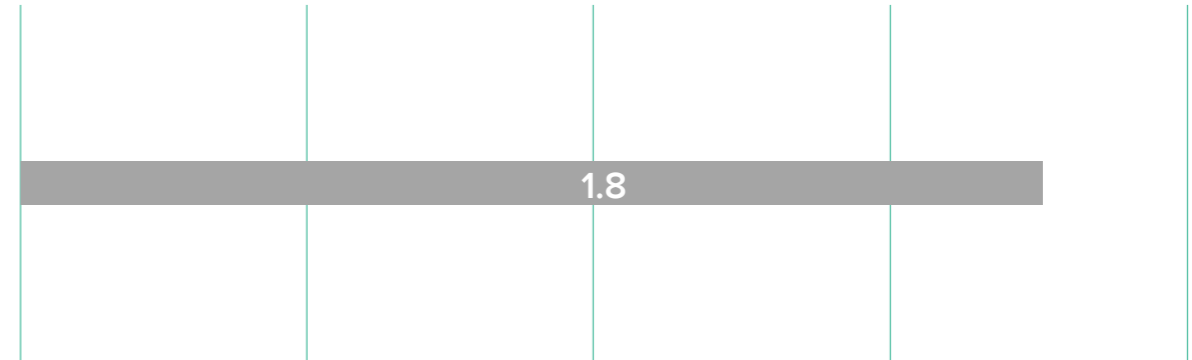
## EXPLORING IMPACT

TOTAL APPROVED GRANTS

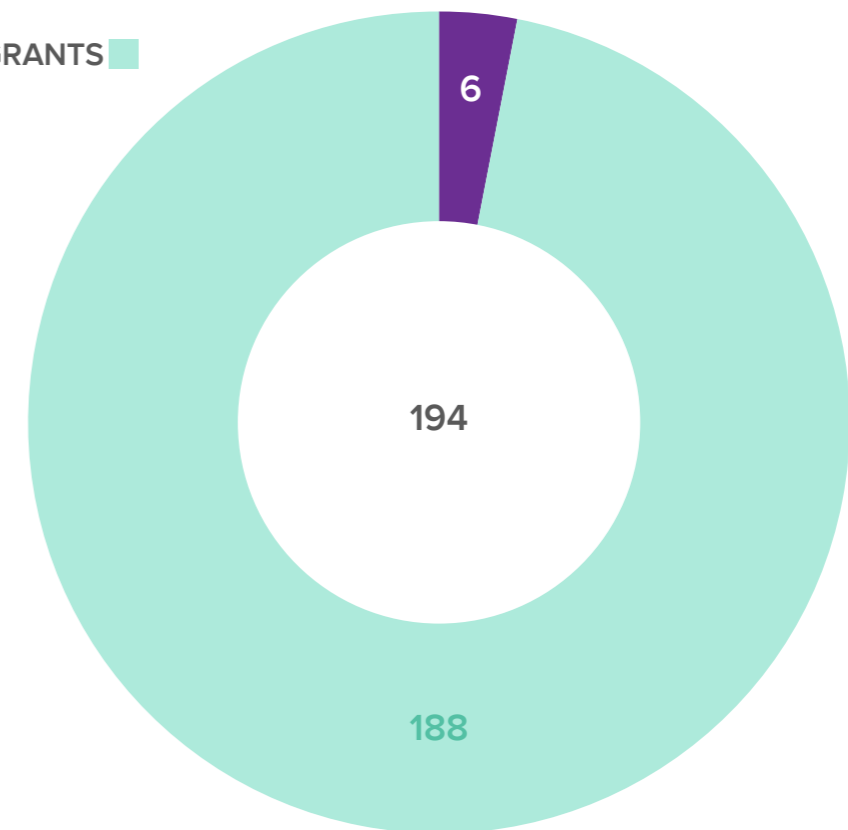


■ ACTIVE GRANTS ————— ■ CLOSED GRANTS

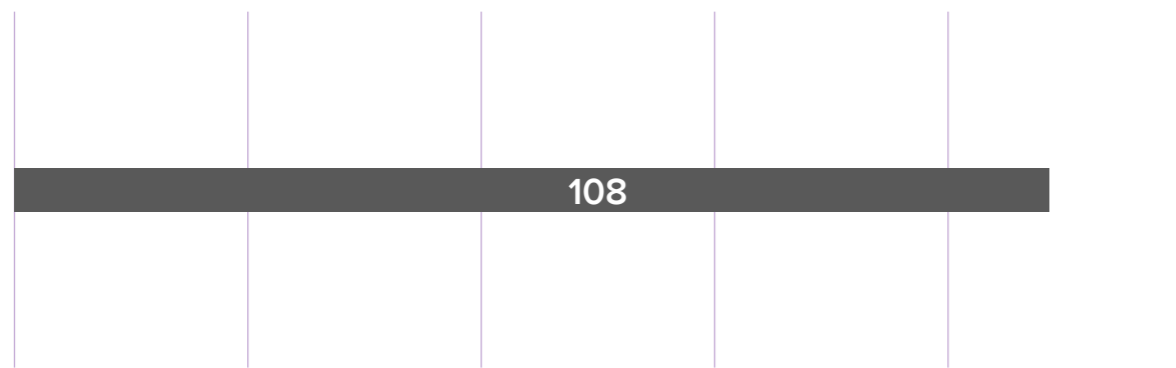
AVERAGE # OF GRANTS PER GRANTEE



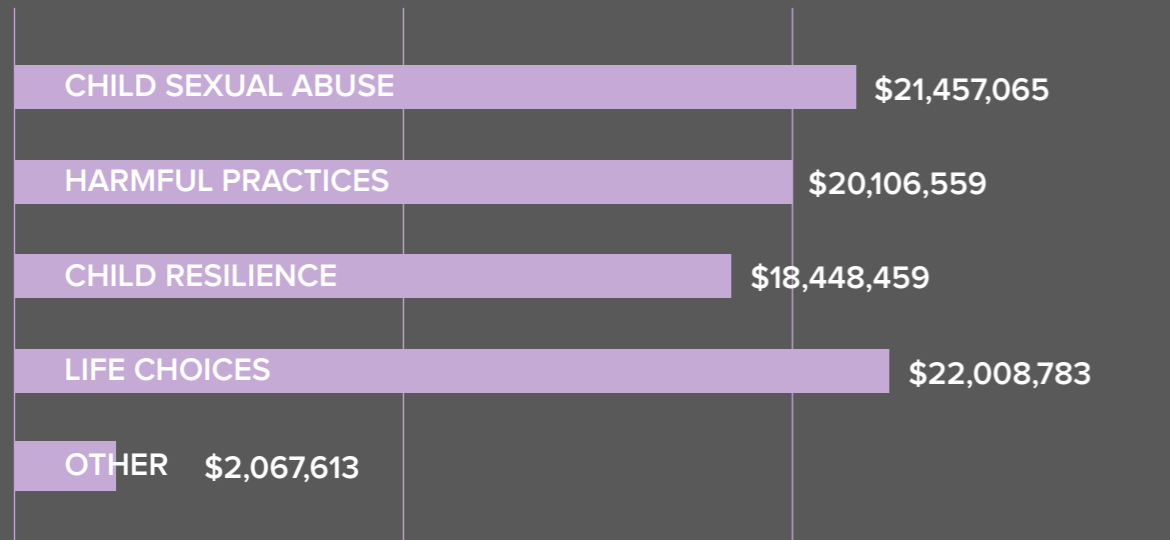
TOTAL # OF GRANTS



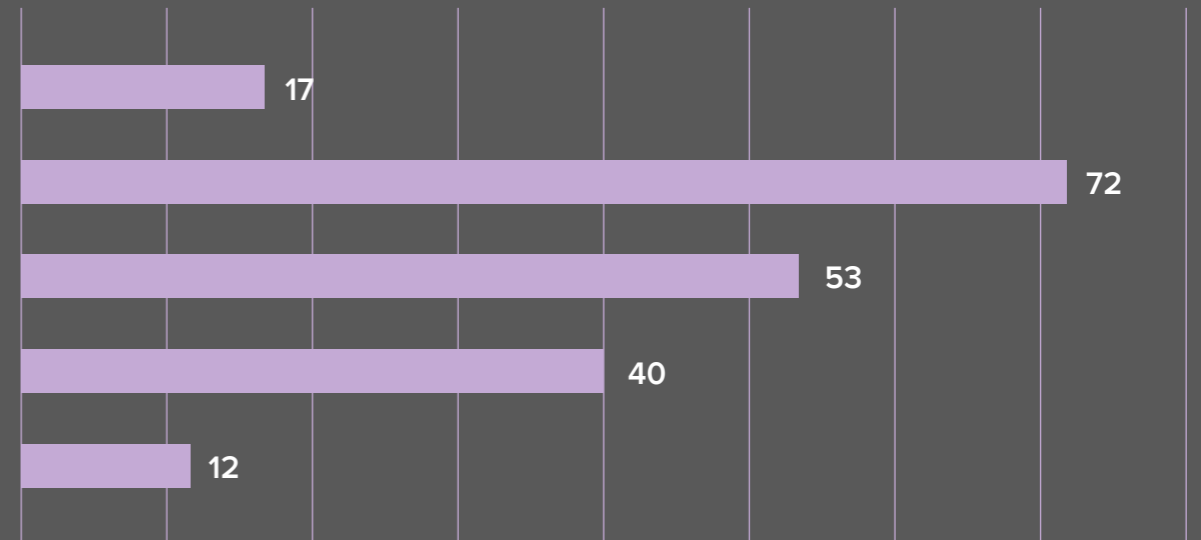
NUMBER OF GRANTEES



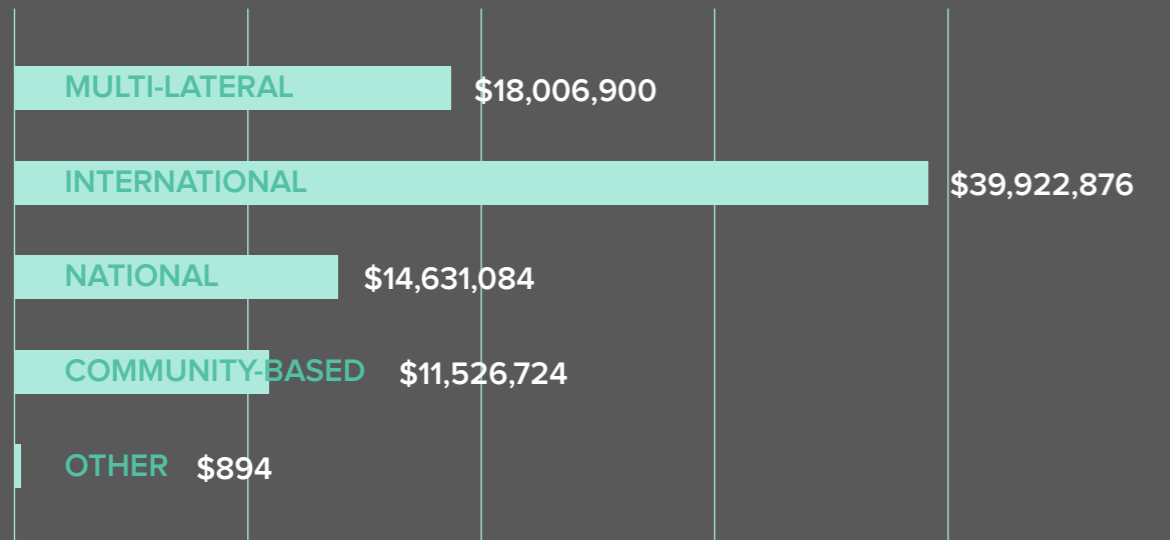
GRANTS BY WORK AREA



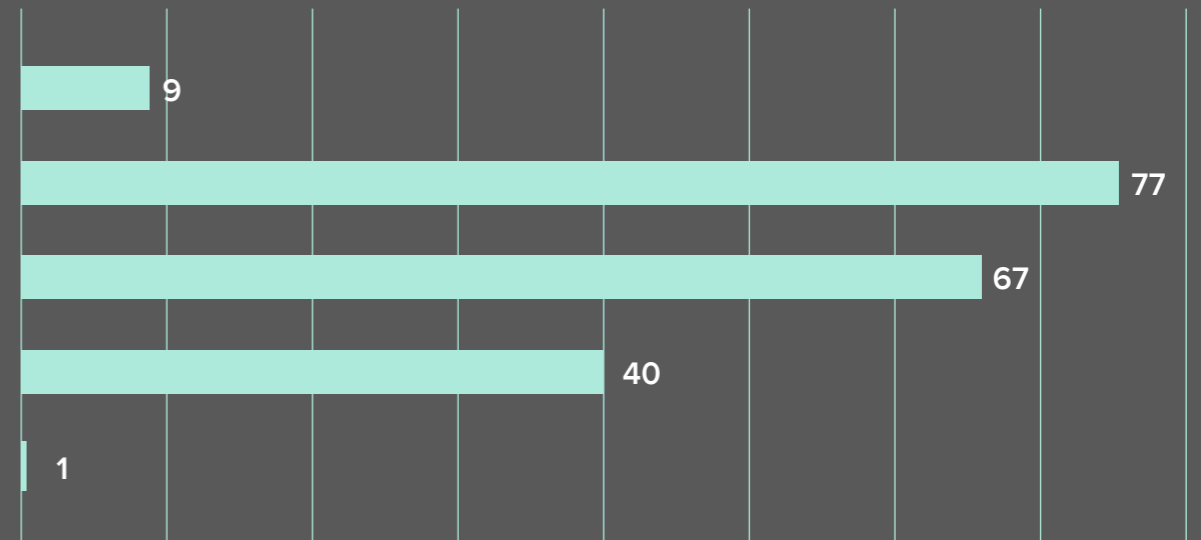
# OF GRANTS BY WORK AREA



GRANTS BY TYPE OF ORGANISATION



# OF GRANTS BY TYPE OF ORGANISATION







# AUDIT & ASSURANCE

## **PORTFOLIO OVERSIGHT**

HDF gains assurance from a wide range of activities, including in-house audits, independent third-party evaluations, and management oversight. All projects are subject to these assurance activities. Audits are particularly crucial, ensuring that HDF funds are safeguarded and that grantees are given regular opportunities to enhance their own assurance processes.

## **MANAGING RISK**

On a quarterly basis, HDF forecasts risks that could threaten the achievement of strategic objectives. This process allows the organisation to identify, quantify, and ultimately reduce its exposure to risk. In late 2019, we developed an embedded risk management framework for application at the corporate level and on each individual HDF grant. This framework has been built upon and further refined throughout 2020. Our aim is to continue to extend this framework and thinking to grantees and the work they deliver.

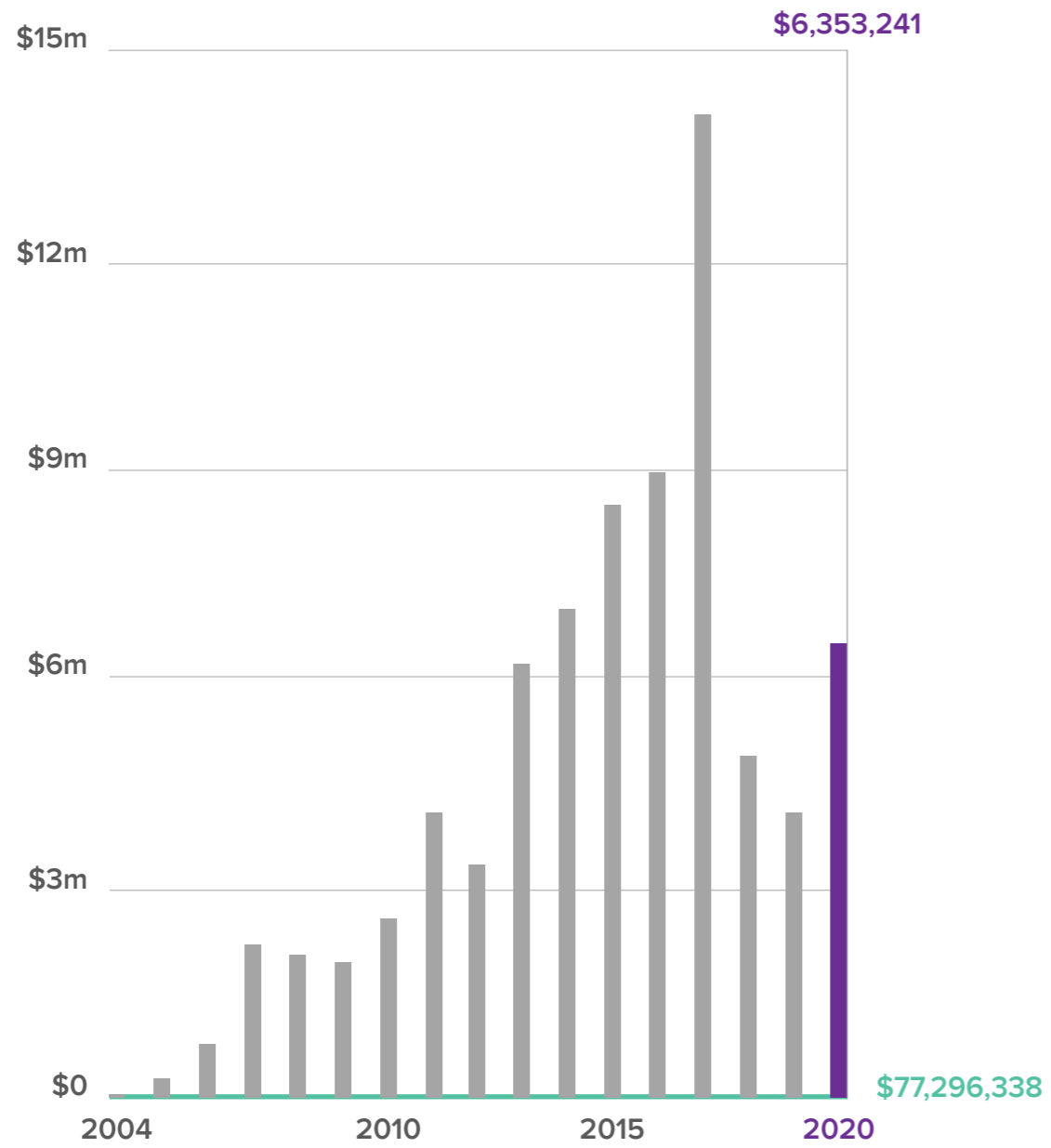
## **COVID-19**

COVID-19 continues to present new risks and unprecedented restrictions to the work of HDF. Our approach is to:

- Identify and mitigate emerging risks at both the corporate and individual grant level in order to reduce our exposure to the impact of COVID-19.
- Substitute currently unavailable assurance activities (such as site visits) with new ways of working (virtual visits) so that we continue to gain assurance over the work of our grantees.
- Limit the risk of HDF-funded activities exacerbating the pandemic.
- Restructure project activities and funding to reflect the reality of restrictions but also maintain project momentum.

## **EXTERNAL AUDIT**

HDF's internal processes and controls are tested annually by third party auditors. The 2020 audit report confirmed that HDF has a sound system of control, which in turn ensures an effective control environment. All significant internal control systems were tested and verified to be effective and in compliance with all applicable Swiss regulation.



## GRANT EXPENDITURE

# DISBURSEMENTS 2020

CENTRE FOR CHILD PROTECTION

INTERPOL

NEW VENTURE FUND

UNICEF

EQUALITY NOW

GLOBAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

ORCHID PROJECT

BUTTERFLIES

\$6,353,241

■ ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

■ FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION/CUTTING