



**2021**  
Annual  
Report

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# Introduction

Human Dignity Foundation was established in 2004, and we have since supported organisations across the gamut of children’s rights causes; from developing life and employment skills in India, to building community-based child protection systems in Malawi. Our partners achieved impact and met challenges in equal measure. What our experience has taught us is that many organisations struggle with two fundamental and interlinked issues: a lack of high-quality data to assess the size and nature of a social ill, and difficulty demonstrating the proof of concept required to scale their activities. In this context, we are turning our attention to two deficiencies we see hampering efforts to protect and promote children’s rights worldwide – data and scale.

## **Prioritising Global Data**

A dearth of data synthesis and analysis is particularly stark in the fight against child sexual exploitation and abuse. Stigma, social denial, and the challenging nature of the issue have too often combined to foster a sense of defeatism and inertia. In 2021, we have taken some major steps to address this data deficiency. Two investments in the University of Edinburgh and the Moore Center, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health will begin to expose the scale and nature of abuse, worldwide. These fundings will sit alongside and complement our long-standing support for INTERPOL’s efforts to identify victims of child abuse online.

## **Understanding Prevalence**

To be able to tackle abuse effectively we need to understand prevalence. What happens? Where does it happen? How much does it happen? Unfortunately, where data does exist, it is often of mixed quality or incomparable between countries. Subsequently the response of society is limited. We need good data and high-quality analysis to design smarter responses, to advocate for better policy and to help unlock the funding so desperately needed to tackle child sexual exploitation and abuse.

HDF is establishing an independent global data institute for child safety at the University of Edinburgh. The institute will gather the most current, reliable and evidence-based data on child sexual exploitation and abuse. It will use insights from the data to inform policy and drive sustainable and coordinated action to support vulnerable children across the world.

HDF is also initiating a body of work with Johns Hopkins University to establish perpetrator prevalence over the next five years. This will develop the world’s first comprehensive estimates of the prevalence of child sexual abuse perpetration in at least six countries, yielding methodologies that can be replicated across diverse regions.

**The urgency of this issue is clear.  
Vulnerable children are at risk and  
technology-enabled exploitation  
and abuse is fuelling the fire.**

These two ventures will provide the data and analysis needed to make a real difference to the lives of children. However, we are also acutely aware that the scale of this issue demands a far larger and coordinated response across geographies, across institutions, and across industry and civil society. We call on our peers in philanthropy and our partners in industry and government to join us in tackling this gravest of threats to children’s rights.

Children can’t wait.

**Seán Coughlan**  
Executive Director



# Audit and 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 recipients 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 investment. This framework has been built upon and further refined throughout 2021. Our aim is to continue to extend this framework and thinking to recipients of HDF funds and the work they deliver.

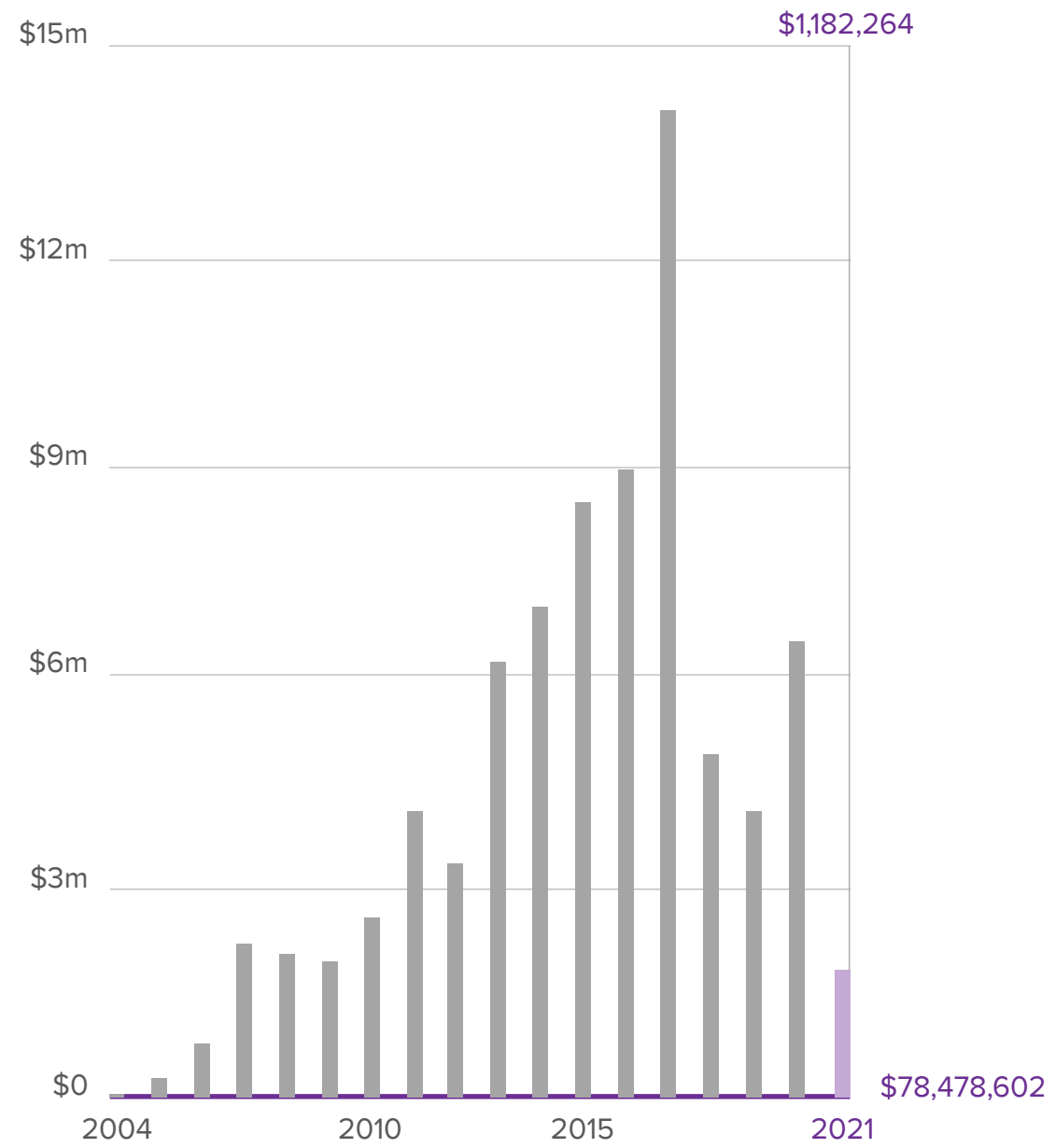
## **External Audit**

HDF's internal processes and controls are tested annually by third party auditors. The 2021 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.

## **Governance**

HDF's Board and Audit and Investment Committee meet four times annually, providing oversight of HDF's audit function, internal controls, budgeting, expenditure, and policy framework.

# Grant Expenditure



# Disbursements 2021

