

WEAVING NETWORKS

Finance and Strategies in the Fight
Against Human Trafficking in
Latin America and the Caribbean





Civil society organizations (CSOs) play a crucial role in the fight against human trafficking, but they face various **obstacles in accessing the funds** that allow them to carry out their activities.

The geographical context, the size of the organization, and the nature of the projects affect this process.

LET'S START...



Where does the money come from?



National Governments

A portion of their budgets is allocated to anti-trafficking programs and projects; however, investment levels often remain **insufficient**.



Private Donors and Self-financing Mechanisms

Private foundations, various churches (*Catholic, Evangelical, Protestant—among others*), businesses, and individuals often donate to CSOs for their work against trafficking. However, these have proven to be **weak mechanisms for CSO self-sustainability and project implementation**.



International Cooperation

NGOs and international and multilateral organizations such as the European Union, the Organization of American States (OAS), and specific agencies and funds from the United Nations like IOM, UNODC, UNHCR, as well as cooperation agencies from various donor countries, provide **funds to support anti-trafficking initiatives** in Latin America and the Caribbean.

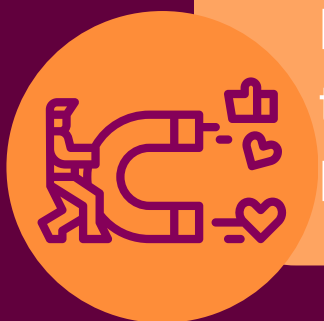
Some general observations



Only about twenty countries voluntarily contribute to nearly all public funds.

The United States is the top donor, followed by Germany, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and Sweden. Notably, some major economic powers, including China, Russia, Indonesia, and Mexico, are absent from the list of leading donor countries.

The proportion of gross national income (GNI) destined to aid ranges from over 0.15% of Luxembourg, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark to just 0.03% or 0.04% of the United States, Canada, Qatar, Italy, and New Zealand.



Each donor State has the discretion to allocate its funds to the countries of its choice, thereby favoring certain causes over others.

In 2020, States allocated 83% of the budget provided to UN agencies. This undermines a fundamental principle of humanitarian action: **impartiality**, stipulating that aid should be distributed solely on the basis of need, free from discrimination.



Donor generosity is influenced by cultural, linguistic, and historical ties to crisis-affected populations.

Large-scale disasters, like the 2004 Indonesian tsunami and the 2010 Haiti earthquake, have historically prompted the most significant humanitarian aid.



NGOs from poor countries seem to be the big losers in this funding model.

In fact, the organizations working on the ground are almost exclusively from European or North American countries. In 2022, only 1.2% of international aid was allocated to NGOs located in countries affected by crises.

Some International Cooperation Funds



UN Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking (UNVTF), from UNODC, grants funding for up to 2 years to CSOs specialized and on the front lines in the assistance to trafficking victims, including humanitarian, legal, and financial aid. Its funding ranges from \$20,000 (immediate, emergency assistance) to \$60,000 (medium- to long-term assistance).

<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking-fund/unvtfhomepage.html>



UN Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary forms of slavery (from OHCHR), funds projects with a maximum duration of 12 months for civil society organizations to provide humanitarian, psychological, social, legal, medical, financial, and other assistance to men, women, and children affected by slavery worldwide. Their funding ranges from \$15,000 to \$30,000.

<https://www.ohchr.org/es/about-us/funding-budget/trust-funds/united-nations-voluntary-trust-fund-contemporary-forms-slavery/how-apply-grant>



USAID, the U.S. Agency for International Development funds many anti-trafficking programs and projects in Latin America. Most funding is awarded competitively through contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements. USAID funding comes from the U.S. Congress.

<https://www.usaid.gov/business-forecast/search>



European Commission, in Latin America and the Caribbean, funds projects focused on protection, food, education and disaster preparedness in areas of conflict, socioeconomic crises, migration, and natural hazards.

[Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal](#)

How easy is it to access grant funds?

✓ **Administrative requirements:** certifications, organizational policies, detailed reports, audits and evaluations can make the funding **process very complex and rigorous**, especially when their submission contrasts with the **limited technical, administrative and financial capabilities of organizations** to comply.

✓ **Language barriers:** funding calls may be in languages that are **not accessible** to all organizations.

✓ **Competition for funds:** if many organisations compete for the same funds, competition increases and the chances of success are reduced.

✓ **Political Conditions:** In some cases, donors may **impose political conditions** on applying organizations, limiting their autonomy and capacity to act independently.

UN Agencies:

Receive and concentrate large funds, hindering the distribution of resources to CSOs.

Sub-contract local organizations to do fieldwork, reducing human and financial resources for CSOs.

Sexuality

Reproductive rights

LGBTIQ+ rights

Where Does the Money Go?

Prosecution and Punishment

Investigations and prosecutions of traffickers, strengthening the capacities of law enforcement and the judicial system.

Prevention

Awareness campaigns, educational and training programs, promotion of safe migration.

Protection

Helplines, assistance services for victims of trafficking, including housing, legal, medical, and psychological support, and social reintegration programs.

International cooperation

Exchange of information, best practices, and experiences between countries, strengthening regional networks, and cooperation to combat transnational criminal networks.



With What Results?

The objective that always drives us is **to eradicate human trafficking**.

For many years, donors have invested a lot of money and social organizations have put in considerable efforts to achieve this goal. However, to date, we have not succeeded.

1 We have fragmented our efforts, lacked coordination and wasted resources and synergies.

2 We do not have reliable and comparable information that can quantify the actual scope of the problem in our countries and evaluate the impact of our interventions.

3 We have failed to demonstrate that human trafficking is an urgent and priority problem (*for decision-makers and the general public*), overshadowed by other social problems, considered more urgent and visible, such as poverty, insecurity, or violence.

★ **Governments** have a broad and structural focus, investing in public policies, justice systems, and international cooperation. They conduct research, train public officials, sign agreements with other countries, prevent trafficking by protecting borders, and strengthening border controls.

★ **Civil society organizations** tend to focus on more direct and personalized actions, working closely with communities and victims and, on the other hand, advocate for the strengthening of laws and policies against trafficking and monitor the implementation of existing laws and policies.



01 For our **GOVERNMENTS**

- Increase investment.
- Strengthen institutions.
- Create effective coordination mechanisms.
- Ensure that national laws align with international standards.
- Strengthen cooperation with other countries.

02 For **CIVIL SOCIETY**

- Strengthen capacities.
- Build networks and share experiences and resources.
- Advocate for more effective public policies and the allocation of greater resources.
- Empower victims.

03 For **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

- Provide flexible funding.
- Facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences between countries in the region and other countries with more experience in the fight against trafficking.
- Provide technical assistance to countries to strengthen their institutional capacities.

04 For the **GENERAL PUBLIC**

- Promote citizen participation in the prevention and detection of trafficking cases.
- Work to change attitudes and stereotypes that contribute to the demand for human exploitation.

Some Recommendations



Gracias

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