Impact is our north star. At The Fuller Project, we track the outcomes of our reporting constantly as a way to measure progress towards our vision: journalism that fully represents all women, giving readers The Full Story and spurring gender equality.

By doing a deep dive into the policy and life changes that result after our reporting, we learn how we can best make a difference.

In 2021, our reporting sparked a response from NYC’s housing authority to address safety concerns affecting children; was followed by President Biden updating his guidance to Custom and Border Patrol about women who give birth in custody; and forced immediate action from Kate Hudson’s clothing brand Fabletics after we exposed abuses in the supply chain. Our continued reporting from Afghanistan has been sourced by a dozen other news outlets, ensuring that the voices of Afghan women are centered in the news.

Here, we’ve challenged ourselves to share the story of our impact in text, photo and video. This semi-annual report is built by our communications team, which has won five 2021 industry awards and was an official Webby Award Honoree.

In 2022, you’ll hear more from us about the impact of our newsroom partnerships, which allow us to address gender bias in news at a more systemic level than can be accomplished with our reporting alone. Through editorial collaboration, we foster deeper journalism about women that can be sustained by our partners over time.

Thank you for reading, sharing and supporting The Fuller Project, and for sharing your feedback with me: Xanthe@fullerproject.org.

Xanthe Scharff, PhD

Please share this report with a friend who you think needs to know about our journalism.
Our Impact This Year

9M Readership
97 Stories
11 Industry Awards

Our Vision

Our vision is journalism that fully represents all women, giving readers The Full Story and spurring gender equality.

Our Mission

Through investigative and enterprise reporting about women, and by fostering a committed community of editors, we disrupt bias and redefine traditional news.

Lede with Integrity

We are independent and nonpartisan. Our reporting begins with an open notebook. We draw on diverse perspectives and value each person’s voice equally.

Redefine the Headline

We center our reporting on women’s often unheard stories through investigative and enterprise reporting. Our journalists are on the ground long before stories break, reporting on the data, history and consequences of systemic inequality.

Co-Byline Radically

We intentionally collaborate at every stage of our journalism. We enrich our partner newsrooms’ engagement with the source networks, research and evidence that underpins great journalism about women.

Refiloe Mashaba Nkune, freelance reporter for The Fuller Project, reports on the ground in Lesotho.

Photo by DeLovie Kwagala
Afghan women tell their own stories

In August, the world watched in horror as Kabul fell to the Taliban, ending America’s longest-ever war and turning the lives of Afghanistan’s women upside down. As they grieve the futures they have lost and the dangers they now face, the question of what comes next for Afghan women is on all of our minds.

Since our founding, The Fuller Project has reported the ways in which US and global policymakers fail to listen to, protect or serve women during warfare — reporting deeply informed by our editors’ work on the ground in Afghanistan and grounded in the expertise of local contributors. In anticipation of the US withdrawal, we began working with the woman-led Afghan newsroom Rukhshana Media several months before the Taliban’s rapid return to power to document what the end of the war would mean for the women living through it.

We are sharing their firsthand accounts in our ongoing series, “Ending America’s Forever War: What is next for Afghan women?” In the 15 dispatches we have published so far, ordinary women — students, journalists, dressmakers, pharmacists — have spoken out to tell their own stories about life under the Taliban, creating an invaluable archive for our audience today and for future generations to understand this crucial time in history.

Some of these women, like Elhan Husseini (names changed to protect women’s security), tried to flee their homeland for their lives when Kabul fell, braving sewage and barbed wire in desperate attempts to get a flight to safety. “I have written this experience,” says Elhan, “to show the world that we, the people of Afghanistan, are already oppressed. Please do not crush us more.”

Some of these women, like Elhan Husseini, tried to flee their homeland for their lives when Kabul fell, braving sewage and barbed wire in desperate attempts to get a flight to safety. “I have written this experience,” says Elhan, “to show the world that we, the people of Afghanistan, are already oppressed. Please do not crush us more.” In “What Afghanistan’s Women Stand to Lose,” Afghan journalist Zahra Nader and Fuller Project contributing editor Amie Ferris-Rotman worked quickly to put the peril and fear for women during the fall of Kabul on record. Published with Rukhshana Media and TIME, the story was also highlighted on the cover of TIME’s print edition. It reveals how women who have stayed in the country face different perils: Nargis Omar spent years proving to her family that women can excel academically and professionally, and was working with the women of many different villages as an agricultural engineer. Now, she faces forced marriage as the second wife of a relative who joined the Taliban along with most of her family. For Afghan women, she writes, “This fall was not just the fall of a country, it was the fall of our aspirations and achievements, for which we worked for 20 years.”

We remain committed to amplifying the voices of women like these around the world, centering them in their own history and following their stories for the long run.

“The collaboration between Rukhshana Media and The Fuller Project has brought the Afghan women’s narrative to a wider audience, an audience that Rukhshana wouldn’t be able to reach alone. Over the past two decades, Afghan women weren’t really telling our own stories; they were told by international correspondents and Afghan men. Working for organizations that center women’s voices is critical because they give us a platform to talk about what is really happening to us in our daily lives, and how women are being affected by politics and war — where women define what is news and what is worth covering from our perspective.”

Zahra Nader, Editor, Rukhshana Media, and Contributing Reporter, The Fuller Project
Exposing dangerous child care conditions in New York City

Jessica Washington’s October reporting, published as part of our ongoing partnership with THE CITY, examines the unsafe and unsanitary conditions of child care facilities in New York City’s public housing. During the pandemic, the city housing authority has largely left child care providers to pick up the tab for repairs on their own.

“@THECITYNY we’ve been documenting lead, mold, and busted elevators in NYCHA housing complexes since we launched. Now, thanks to @jessica_m_wash and @FullerProject we are able to better cover impacts for kids and those who care for them.”
Nic Dawes, Executive Director, THE CITY

Though NYCHA housing has long been plagued with a lack of heat and hot water, lead, mold, leaks and pests, providers in the roughly 400 child care centers within these complexes say the city needs to pay special attention to the danger these conditions pose to children.

Our story was mentioned in POLITICO’s New York Playbook and republished by Chalkbeat, Patch and Gotham Weekly. Yvette Ho, director of the child care center at the Jacob Riis Neighborhood Settlement, told us that the day our story ran, the center was contacted by several people within building management to respond to longstanding issues — though they started potentially dangerous repairs in the child care center without warning, piercing the wall of a classroom in use with large drills. “That is exactly what I meant when I spoke about systemic issues,” she writes. “Thank you again for listening to our story and for bringing attention to our issues.”

Reader support

Since we published our early investigation with the Associated Press into the devastation the pandemic brought to supply chains, Alexandra Orozco — who was laid off after four years by JCPenney in 2020, and featured in our story — says she has received an outpouring of support. Readers have reached out to tell her she has inspired them not to give up after losing their own jobs, and supported her new business selling makeup and jewelry.

“The women of the Yurok tribe’s fight for food sovereignty

The women of the Yurok Tribe, who live along northern California’s Klamath River, are responsible for feeding their families. But their traditional foods are vanishing. Severe drought and government mismanagement of the river mean that Klamath River salmon, a cornerstone of the tribe’s diet and culture, are dying in droves — and the Yurok people’s nutrition and way of life are in peril. For The Fuller Project, in partnership with the Guardian, contributing reporter Lucy Sherriff wrote about how the women of the Yurok Tribe are protecting their tribe’s health and fighting for food sovereignty.

The story was shared hundreds of times on social media by notable environmentalists – including Leonardo DiCaprio, who shared the story to his audience of more than nine million Twitter followers and 19 million Facebook fans.

For vulnerable new mothers, a chance to pursue asylum claims

In a February investigation with the Guardian, The Fuller Project found that at least 11 new mothers and their U.S. citizen newborns were sent back to Mexico within days of birth without an opportunity to collect the children’s birth certificates. “Expelled” under the controversial Title 42 policy initiated by the Trump administration and continued under Biden, they were also prevented from appearing in front of a judge and being screened for asylum claims. One 23-year-old mother from Haiti was dropped off on the side of the road along the San Diego-Tijuana border three days after giving birth — just 25 minutes after she was discharged from the hospital.

Since publication, all of the mothers whose cases we reviewed have been paroled back into the US, where they can pursue their claims for asylum. The Biden administration has issued guidance to Customs and Border Patrol that “public health and humanitarian interests may weigh in favor of an exception from [Title 42] for mothers who have given birth while in CBP custody and require medical attention.”

11 mothers paroled into the U.S. to pursue their asylum claims
Indian journalists document their country’s COVID-19 disaster

As one of the world’s most severe outbreaks of COVID-19 swept India this March, our newsroom and contributors worked around the clock to report on the crisis through the eyes of the women who shouldered the burden. As many western journalists rushed to Delhi and Mumbai for a few days of reporting, The Fuller Project saw an urgent need for timely reporting by Indian journalists living through the surge themselves, particularly outside major cities. The resulting series, “Gasp for Breath: Women Provide a Glimpse Into India’s COVID-19 Disaster,” exclusively features the work of reporters from India and India-administered Kashmir. They documented the crisis from Tamil Nadu to Uttar Pradesh, centering the voices of the country’s most marginalized: women and transgender people, particularly those also oppressed on the basis of religion, caste and class. Their stories drew a wide audience to The Fuller Project’s site and held as our most-read content through April and May, demonstrating the hunger for voices missing from the larger media landscape. Many of them say they are overworked, sexually harassed, discriminated against, and the pandemic has further diminished the minimal freedoms they once had.

Domestic workers speak out on TikTok

Far from home and in unfamiliar settings, domestic workers in the Gulf – the vast majority of them women – have long used social media to keep in touch with friends and family. The Fuller Project, in partnership with The New York Times, published the first in-depth examination of how domestic workers in the Middle East have turned to TikTok to share intimate details of their lives – and the consequences they could face for speaking out. They have increasingly turned to TikTok after the platform’s popularity exploded last year, opening up about their lives and working conditions. Many of them say they are overworked, sexually harassed, discriminated against, and the pandemic has further diminished the minimal freedoms they once had.

50

Our reporter connected with more than 50 domestic workers on TikTok

A lifeline for FGM survivors

In the United Kingdom, it’s thought that some 137,000 women are living with the consequences of female genital mutilation – from constant pain, cysts, complications in pregnancy, urinary tract infections, to anxiety, difficulty having sex, or depression. Most of these survivors only come into contact with NHS services when they’re pregnant. Those who are not may never be seen by health practitioners.

In partnership with the Guardian, Fuller Project reporter Louise Donovan profiled Hawa Bah, an FGM survivor and asylum seeker who is using her own experiences to connect the African diaspora in the UK with pilot clinics specializing in care for FGM survivors. Since publication, many NHS healthcare professionals have contacted our reporter for more information on these clinics, spreading the word through their networks.
For exploited foreign domestic workers, a safe return home

Nearly three million Filipina women work abroad as migrant domestic workers, where they are paid low wages to clean homes, cook meals and care for comparatively wealthy families — under often exploitative conditions. A year into the pandemic, we partnered with the Guardian to report on thousands of these workers who found themselves stranded with even fewer options to flee exploitation.

After our story ran and was featured in the Guardian’s Today in Focus podcast, dozens of readers and listeners asked how they could support Rowena, one of the women profiled in our story, and many offered to pay for her flight home. The Philippine Embassy in Bahrain intervened, and helped Rowena leave her employer. Embassy staff moved Rowena and two other women with the same employer to the Embassy, where they were given food and shelter until flights home could be arranged. The Philippine Ambassador to Bahrain confirmed that they recovered unpaid wages from Rowena’s employer, and that our reporting “brought to light” Rowena’s circumstances and “paved the way” for the Embassy to intervene. Rowena was repatriated to the Philippines on March 5.

Addressing abuse in Lesotho

Our eight-month investigation into sexual, verbal and physical harassment at Hippo Knitting, a Lesotho-based factory supplying Kate Hudson’s Fabletics activewear brand, had impact before it was even published: after reporters Louise Donovan and Refiloe Makhaba Nkune reached out to Fabletics for comment, the brand vowed to do “everything in [their] power” to remedy the situation. Fabletics immediately suspended all operations with the factory, flew a “senior leader” to Lesotho within days to conduct an investigation and promised to keep providing workers’ full pay during this period. The owners of Hippo Knitting launched an independent audit and internal investigation, placing the factory’s HR manager on administrative leave — she has since been let go.

The investigation was published in print and online in partnership with TIME, as well as in print in the Lesotho Times, the country’s most widely read newspaper. Since publication, police say they’re investigating at least three cases of sexual offense and public indecency at Hippo Knitting. “There are more allegations,” a police spokesperson told The Fuller Project, “though the victims are skeptical about reporting in fear of losing their jobs.”

At least 50 employees have now stepped forward about abuses. According to the Independent Democratic Union of Lesotho, it was our reporting that made these workers feel safe enough to speak up.

Because of our story, Hippo Knitting, Fabletics and IDUL have announced a formal plan to combat gender-based violence at the factory including career development and management opportunities for women, their representation in factory committees and trade union structures, a toll-free number workers can call for assistance and a memorandum of understanding signed with both the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations. Hippo Knitting and Fabletics have also launched a corrective action plan for the factory that includes a new grievance procedure for reporting workplace violations, a new anti-intimidation and anti-retaliation policy and a new process for non-invasive searches that includes dedicated privacy screening areas.
Working with leading news outlets at the local, national and international level is essential to our vision of a world where women are equally represented in the news. As we change the industry through these partnerships and collaborations, fostering a community of editors and reporters dedicated to addressing gender bias, local reporters and editors bring the deep history and context that is essential to good journalism. This year, we have collaborated with 23 outlets around the world, from TIME to the Lesotho Times. Through our long-standing partnership with Foreign Policy, we’ve covered domestic violence in France, female farmers in India, parental rights in Spain, Pakistan’s lone lactation consultant, revenge porn laws around the world and so much more. We’re working with FiveThirtyEight to report on what teachers are facing as we enter the third school year of the pandemic. For the Nation’s Gender Desk in Kenya, we provide global coverage of issues affecting women.

This year we’ve embarked on a new kind of long-term partnership, embedding our reporters in local outlets to strengthen gender journalism at the community level.

Partnerships

- DOCUMENTED
- FORTUNE
- RUKNSHA MEDIA
- NBC LATINO
- WIRED
- FIVETHIRYTEIGHT
- GAL-DEM
- RECKON
- THE NEW YORK TIMES
- TATLER PHILIPPINES
- FOREIGN POLICY
- IL POST
- THE CITY
- THE LILY
- LES GLORIEUSES
- THE ATLANTIC
- THE GUARDIAN
- TIME
- THE ECONOMIST’S
- 1843 MAGAZINE
- VICE
- THE CUT
- THE NATION
- VIRGINIA QUARTERLY REVIEW
The Fuller Project is embarking on a long-term partnership with Reckon, the Alabama-based newsroom dedicated to deep exploration of the tough and important issues facing the American South. Each outlet holds a deep commitment to centering the stories and perspectives of those who legacy media has long failed to see – starting this fall, we will embed an enterprise reporter with Reckon to cover women’s issues, lives and perspectives in the region. Their reporting will be driven by the voices missing from current conversations, historical and systemic contexts, and getting readers involved in driving solutions.

“The Fuller Project and Reckon share a sense of urgency for shining light when our public institutions don’t live up to their promises to create democracy that is accessible to everyone. This important partnership is the result of deep listening over the past few years, and couldn’t happen at a more crucial time. Reckon and The Fuller Project have always known the power of collaboration, which is why this long-term partnership is the critical next step in our impact and accountability journalism.”

Ryan Nave, Editor-in-Chief, Reckon

As the situation in Afghanistan develops, we are deepening our partnership with Rukhshana Media, an Afghan women’s media organization created in 2020, in memory of a 19-year-old woman stoned to death in 2015 in Ghor Province. The outlet focuses on stories by and about Afghan women, and has persisted in essential coverage despite the serious danger now posed to women journalists by Taliban rule. Together, we’ve published fifteen dispatches from women on the ground, with more to come.

“At a time when Afghan women have lost not only their rights to work and education but also their social identities, the world needs to hear their voices. The partnership between Rukhshana Media and The Fuller Project provides an opportunity for Afghan women to tell their own stories in their own words. It enables them to tell how the return of the Taliban to power is influencing and shaping their everyday lives and how they feel about it. Our partnership with The Fuller Project is an excellent example of how international media can amplify the voices of Afghan women.”

Zahra Joya, Founder, Rukhshana Media

The Fuller Project and THE CITY, a nonprofit, nonpartisan digital news platform dedicated to accountability reporting that serves the people of New York, have launched a long-term partnership to report on the often unheard stories of women in New York City. In the coming months, we will cover maternal health, caregiving, education, housing and more through the cross-cutting issues that affect women across all five boroughs of the city. So far, Jessica Washington, a staff reporter for The Fuller Project embedded with THE CITY, has covered the unexplained death of a young Black mother in a Queens hospital, the future of former mayoral candidate Maya Wiley’s signature community care proposal, and the dangerous conditions of child care facilities in New York City’s public housing.

“The Fuller Project makes an indispensable contribution to ensuring that issues affecting women get more of the attention they so urgently need, and that women’s experiences and voices are more consistently centered. We are thrilled to have Jessica working with our team of reporters and editors to bring that perspective to journalism that addresses the compound inequities faced by women in New York. This kind of deep partnership between newsrooms with shared values and complementary expertise will be crucial if we are to build resilient local news infrastructure that delivers impact, and fosters a better civic conversation.”

Nic Dawes, Executive Director, THE CITY

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Nic Dawes, Executive Director, THE CITY
In the Media

Our journalism has earned attention and amplification from the wider media, allowing our stories to inform a broad international audience about the issues we cover. Our reporters have been featured on international broadcasts such as MSNBC and BBC’s Woman’s Hour. Our reported Twitter thread after Kabul fell to the Taliban was cited by CNN Reliable Sources, Fortune’s Broadsheet and CJR’s The Media Today. And many more Fuller Project stories have been cited by other news outlets, shared across social media and informed the broader field of gender journalism.

107
We engaged directly with 107 civil society organizations

128%
Our website traffic increased by 128%, with readers from 175+ countries

2x
Social media followers doubled
To support The Fuller Project’s plan to deepen editorial partnerships in select geographies with embedded reporters, the development department strategy centers on diversifying The Fuller Project’s income to fund its growth from an early-stage nonprofit to a sustainable long-term institution. The focus is on expanding our institutional giving and individual gift program with leadership from a healthy and engaged board of directors to advance the organization’s strategic priorities.

"On global issues ranging from conflict, COVID and the culture wars, I look to The Fuller Project for nuanced coverage that centers the lived experiences and voices of women. Understanding how any issue impacts the women in a society generally provides the best analysis of what’s really going on.”

Sarah O’Hagan, Chair, Board of Directors, The Fuller Project

“We support The Fuller Project because of their deep commitment to quality journalism, illuminating issues and systems that are impacting people’s lives around the world. Their reporting centers women with dignity and nuance, reminding us that what affects women affects the world. “

Liz Baker, Humanity United

Following our groundbreaking coverage of the crisis in Afghanistan through firsthand accounts, our community showed their support by increasing donations by 167%.

Thanks to funding from the Helen Gurley Brown Foundation and the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, we were able to publish more stories on environment, gender and justice and significantly increase our environmental reporting.
HOW TO DONATE:

The Fuller Project is an independent nonprofit journalism organization (501c3). We are funded through the philanthropic support of foundations and individuals. Your support brings us closer to a world where women’s voices are fully represented in the news.

Donate now to support our mission securely through our website www.fullerproject.org, or send a check made out to Fuller Project for International Reporting to 712 H St NE, PMB 37, Washington, DC 20002.

For questions about ways to support, please email cknowles@fullerproject.org.