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Cover image by Susie Ang
The Fuller Project is the global newsroom dedicated to groundbreaking reporting that catalyzes positive change for women.
In our strategic planning this year, we’ve focused very tightly on this idea of groundbreaking reporting. Until now, we described our work as enterprise and investigative journalism centered on women. But after six years of work, we know it is more than that. Groundbreaking reporting brings to light new information about stories that would otherwise go untold, spotlights critical issues and exposes injustice.

We are committed to catalyzing positive change because the world will be a better place for all people when women have equal standing in society. Our contribution is the rigorous, in-depth reporting read by policymakers and corporate leaders, leading to better outcomes for women.

This year we defined reporting areas that are universally consequential for women, and in which our long-term reporting efforts can spark change at a large-scale: climate, health and labor. In this report you’ll read highlights from the newsroom in each of these issue areas, with deep dives into: climate change in South Asia, exploitation of migrant domestic workers and factory workers, and data-backed health reporting grounded in women’s experiences from Pakistan to Poland to the Southern United States.

To reach a wide and influential global audience, we partner and publish with renowned news outlets such as The Washington Post, Foreign Policy and TIME, and inside the largest and most respected newsrooms around the world from Afghanistan to India to Kenya. Everywhere that violence and authoritarianism threaten and eclipse women’s rights, women fight back. Our reporting highlights women from Nigeria to Ukraine to Afghanistan, where we partner with Rukhshana Media.

In Kenya, we partner with Nation, the flagship paper of the largest media company in the region, to coreport investigative and enterprise stories that have spurred policy change and new funding for women. We commissioned an independent evaluation of this partnership, which showed the outsized impact of their Gender Desk and our collaboration, and offers lessons learned to the broader field.

Having welcomed Eva Rodriguez in April, we’ve set an even higher standard for our reporting, building our data reporting and highlighting women who advance movements and solutions. Our long-standing focus on women, especially those facing racial or other forms of bias, leads to journalism that by challenging conventional thinking inspires action.

Today, The Fuller Project is a strong organization with a clear sense of mission. In ‘23, we are hiring to expand our global and US presence, and our data and accountability reporting. Thank you for having shared in our mission these past six years, and please stay with us for what is still to come.

Xanthe Scharff, PhD
CO-FOUNDER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Producing groundbreaking and deeply reported stories of women who are too often unseen and unheard has never been a higher priority at The Fuller Project. We do not waver and we do not get distracted by what may be the buzziest news of the moment. This is our mission each and every day and with each and every story.

In addition to focusing our efforts on three areas that impact women around the world in unique ways - climate, labor and health - we've launched a new reporting initiative around movements that highlights the courageous work of women and their allies in combating obstacles that undermine women’s attainment of freedom, autonomy and justice.

Over the past year, The Fuller Project produced exclusive, in-depth reporting on the women in Ukraine who confront danger and economic uncertainties to provide food to their communities and the world; the health consequences for the generations of women working in Kenya’s landfills; and the mobilization of a student-led network in the United States that delivers emergency contraception on college campuses – including those in the most restrictive states in the country.

Our work with TIME on the meager wages earned by restaurant workers in Pennsylvania – the majority of them women – led to changes this year in the state’s minimum wage laws. Another project with TIME revealed the harassment and abuse of women at a Lesotho factory that supplied Kate Hudson’s Fabletics clothing brand. Our story triggered the dismissal of the perpetrators and sparked an overhaul of workplace rules to protect women from such wrongdoing. And our reporting with Reckon on the failure of states to identify drug overdoses and suicides in maternal mortality statistics predated by months the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s decision to urge states to break out these often preventable deaths so that their prevalence could be addressed.

And there is more to come. Disha Shetty is examining the link between climate change, extreme weather events and a spike in domestic violence experienced by hard-hit communities in the Global South. Much attention – legitimately so – has been paid to the deaths of male migrant workers on World Cup construction sites in Qatar, but little was known about the thousands of migrant women brought in to work in hospitality venues. Louise Donovan shares the disturbing results from her months-long investigation and why the women who suffer sexual abuse or harassment are unlikely to obtain justice. Erica Hensley continues her reporting on the aftermath of the U.S. Supreme Court’s reversal of Roe v. Wade by embedding with a clinic in Georgia to show how an essential community health clinic is adapting to the tectonic shift in the legal landscape.

In every story, across every subject area, we start with a simple, but profoundly important question: What about the women? Too often unasked, this question forms the moral core of what we do at The Fuller Project: We focus all of our energy and resources on spotlighting problems that have for too long been unseen or ignored and by exposing them to the light of day, spurs the kind of accountability that brings about change for the better.

Eva Rodriguez
EDITOR IN CHIEF
HEALTH
Documenting the systemic obstacles preventing women from accessing reliable health care, including reproductive health services, and the consequences of not prioritizing women’s safety and security, including the eradication of domestic violence.

ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE
Illuminating the disparate and often ignored impacts on women resulting from environmental factors and climate change and pinpointing the causes and possible solutions.

LABOR & ECONOMY
Spotlighting the unique challenges faced by women in the global workforce -- from lower wages to sexual and physical abuse and human trafficking -- and holding accountable those who perpetrate or allow such injustices.

MOVEMENTS
Chronicking the courageous and cutting edge work of groups and individual women in the fight for women’s rights, justice and positive change around the globe.
Five people changed the course of the United States on July 24, 2022, when a majority of the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, the landmark 1973 case that recognized a federal right to an abortion. Weeks before, a leaked draft of the opinion signaled a radical sea change was at hand. The Fuller Project weighed in with analysis of how Roe’s reversal could undermine other high-court rulings on such things as same-sex marriage, how other countries reacted to the decision and what it meant for birthing people that employers held such sway over access to reproductive health care. We consistently updated our abortion map to provide readers with real-time information on shifting abortion restrictions in the states. Through the year, we also produced in-depth reports from India and the U.S. South on maternal suicides and the different approaches – and obstacles – to preventing such tragedies. We chronicled how early puberty cases in girls spiked during the pandemic and documented how women’s reproductive health was being adversely affected because of the toxic level of air pollution in India.

Air pollution is worsening reproductive health outcomes for women

“No matter what I do, I am exposed.”

Why deaths by suicide often go uncounted in states’ maternal mortality studies

Overdose and suicide deaths are on the rise among pregnant and postpartum people. But few states are keeping track — making it harder to prevent future fatalities.

How major abortion laws compare, state by state

Early puberty cases have surged during covid, doctors say

We examined the increase in precocious puberty cases across the world, from India to Italy to the United States.
ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE

As our story on how indoor air pollution is worsening reproductive health outcomes shows, women are disproportionately impacted by environmental pollution. They are more likely to spend time in the home, inhaling smoke from indoor fires, and more likely to do jobs that expose them to risks like the toxic fumes that Kenya’s women trash-pickers breathe in as they work. Yet because these gender-specific impacts are underreported and under-researched, they are often not factored into climate solutions. We seek to bridge that gap through stories that show how women and girls in some of the poorest parts of the world are bearing the brunt of climate change and environmental degradation. From the Himalayan villages largely abandoned by men where women farmers are struggling to grow even drought-resistant crops to the rising levels of child marriage in the Sundarbans in eastern India, our reporting has demonstrated how climate change is affecting women’s lives and deepening gender inequalities.

A toxic trash site in Kenya is making women sick

Kenya’s waste pickers are exposed to toxic chemicals, and scientists say that reproductive health risks are being overlooked.

On these women-run Himalayan farms, even climate-resilient crops are failing

Millet is being promoted as climate-resistant crops but women farmers in the Indian Himalayas find that simplistic solutions don’t work.

India’s investments in early warning systems have unintended benefits for women

Women’s economic gains underscore why gender should factor in climate policy.

In the Sundarban, climate change has an unlikely effect — on child sex-trafficking

Thousands of girls go missing in West Bengal every year, and the numbers are climbing.
Despite rising education levels, women around the world remain less likely than men to be in paid work. Even when they are, most earn less than their male counterparts and many face discrimination and abuse—barriers to success that often go unreported. We seek to expose those barriers and catalyze change. In India, we showed how heat waves and poverty combine to negatively impact women’s ability to work in homes without air conditioning. In the United States, we reported on how low pay and burnout from the pandemic are driving nurses out of the profession, while in Ukraine we have shone a light on the women farmers battling to get their crops to market against a backdrop of war.

Beyond the world of work, our Financial Pandemic series examined how inflation is having an impact on the lives of women the world over, from a middle-class household in Argentina to a refugee camp in Lebanon.

‘Every shift, we’re just barely making it’: What nurses want us to know about the South’s COVID crisis

Nurses are retiring early, taking more lucrative jobs or leaving the field altogether, driving the industry to the brink of collapse.

‘We have to fight back.’ Afghan women are losing their hard-won right to work under the Taliban

Millions of Afghan women entered the workforce in the past two decades, but that progress is being rapidly erased under the new Taliban regime.

As heat waves sweep South Asia, they take a hidden toll on women

Women are more likely to work indoors as caregivers leading to reduced access to water and ventilation.

The Ukrainian women farmers fighting to keep the world fed

The war in Ukraine is exacerbating an already crippling food crisis, which is taking a disproportionate toll on women and girls.
This year has seen a further rollback of Afghan women’s hard-won freedoms. In May, we reported on how these measures are forcing women out of work, with dire consequences for them and their families in a country where poverty is leading parents to sell their daughters into marriage. Women are at the forefront of the anti-Taliban movement in Afghanistan and we are committed to reporting on their struggle, even as it fades from the headlines. This is part of our efforts to spotlight the work of women mobilizing for positive change around the world, from Afghanistan to Nigeria, where women targeted by Boko Haram are fighting to secure justice, and the United States, where college students are stockpiling Plan B drugs to help women who need them. Earlier in the year, as Ukrainian women flooded into Poland to escape conflict, we looked at the women helping those refugees to access abortion care in a country with one of Europe’s most restrictive abortion laws.

"Don’t kill us for the crime of being a woman.”

A year after the Taliban took control in Afghanistan women are still protesting for their basic human rights.

Women victimized by Boko Haram forced to choose peace over justice

Survivors who were kidnapped, sexually assaulted and tortured are fighting to have their experiences acknowledged and their abusers punished.

How a network of college students is preparing for post-Roe campuses

In the wake of the Supreme Court decision, young people are distributing reproductive health products to those with shrinking options.

Pregnant Ukrainian refugees struggle to get abortion care

Ukrainian OB/GYN Myroslava Marchenko volunteers with a reproductive rights organization offering advice to fellow refugees in Poland, which has some of Europe’s most restrictive abortion laws.
Susie Ang

Erica Hensley warned earlier this year that government data failed to include suicides and drug overdoses in maternal mortality, hampering efforts to prevent these deaths. In September, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention overhauled its guidance to states on how to report on maternal deaths. The CDC report showed that 8 out of 10 maternal deaths are preventable, while a quarter are due to underlying mental health issues, including suicide and overdose. This is the first time national data showed these two factors as major causes of maternal mortality. Hensley’s article earlier this year pointed to overdoses and suicide as leading causes of deaths among pregnant and postpartum people and underscored that with few states keeping track, it’s harder to prevent future fatalities. CDC’s new guidance suggests federal momentum to help states improve their data collection and marks what experts say is a big moment for maternal mortality prevention.

Read the Story

Waitress Christina Munce was making the Pennsylvania minimum wage for tipped workers. (Malcolm Burnley)

Our exclusive TIME magazine cover story about waitresses making as little as $2.83 an hour in Philadelphia fueled subsequent changes to the law governing the minimum wage. The article sparked widespread national media coverage and commentary from U.S. Democratic Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey and former senator Claire McCaskill of Missouri, and Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf, who had made the wage hike a central issue in his administration. An independent regulatory review commission and the Pennsylvania attorney general approved the governor’s proposal to increase the minimum wage for tipped workers in 2022; the regulations took effect in August.

Read the Story

Fuller Project health and data reporter Erica Hensley warned earlier this year that government data failed to include suicides and drug overdoses in maternal mortality, hampering efforts to prevent these deaths. In September, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention overhauled its guidance to states on how to report on maternal deaths. The CDC report showed that 8 out of 10 maternal deaths are preventable, while a quarter are due to underlying mental health issues, including suicide and overdose. This is the first time national data showed these two factors as major causes of maternal mortality. Hensley’s article earlier this year pointed to overdoses and suicide as leading causes of deaths among pregnant and postpartum people and underscored that with few states keeping track, it’s harder to prevent future fatalities. CDC’s new guidance suggests federal momentum to help states improve their data collection and marks what experts say is a big moment for maternal mortality prevention.

Read the Story

Factory workers head home at the end of the day in Maseru, Lesotho. (Lindokuhle Sobekwa/Magnum Photos for TIME)

When we revealed widespread abuse inside Hippo Knitting, a Lesotho garment factory that supplies Kate Hudson’s athleisure brand Fabletics, the company took responsibility, launched an investigation, and fired the perpetrators. Soon after the company issued a corrective action plan, including a new anti-intimidation and anti-retaliation policy and grievance procedure for reporting workplace violations. Numerous media outlets cited our reporting, and in an interview on CNBC, Kate Hudson called the abuse “horrendous and unacceptable.” The impact continued throughout the year. The 2021 Lesotho Human Rights Report cited our reporting, and confirmed that the Ministry of Labor, Hippo Knitting, and local trade unions signed a memorandum of understanding to eradicate gender-based violence and harassment in the factory, and appointed a local NGO to oversee its implementation. Lifestyle influencer Melanie Murphy, a former brand ambassador for Fabletics with hundreds of thousands of followers, cut ties with the company, saying she no longer felt comfortable representing the brand.

Read the Story

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

Since we launched in 2015, our reporting has influenced new legislation, helped end life-threatening practices, and led to large scale releases of public data. We report exclusive stories centered on women that otherwise would not be told. Our long-standing focus on women, especially those facing racial or other forms of bias, leads to journalism that by challenging conventional thinking inspires action.

Read the Story
How our Groundbreaking Journalism Catalyzes Positive Change

In 2019, The Fuller Project’s newsroom partnered with the editorial team at Nation, the flagship paper of the largest media company in East Africa. The Fuller Project supported the launch of Nation’s Gender Desk, the first in the region, with investigative and long-form reporting centered on women.

Our editors and reporters collaborated and jointly assigned reporting teams with journalists from both newsrooms. The Fuller Project editorial team brought these stories to influential global outlets, including Foreign Policy, TIME and The Guardian. The articles were cited and linked to an average of 30 times each by institutions including Harvard University and the United Kingdom’s Home Office.

Our co-reporting reached an influential global audience and catalyzed positive change such as the creation of a new financial vehicle for widows and state funding for a volunteer group addressing the most harrowing aspects of reproductive care failures.

“Their common cause, we have changed the lives of many women, told thousands of their stories from a local, regional and global lens; and realized that women’s issues, worldwide, are similar. Lessons we have learned are more than we would have on our own – they are immense.”

Dorcas Muga-Odumbe, Nation Gender Desk Editor

The Fuller Project and Nation reported local stories in a global context that would otherwise be untold. The Gender Desk set a new standard for reporting on women in the region through over 1000 articles centered on women. The partnership amplified the visibility of the Gender Desk and Kenyan reporters, and informed The Fuller Project’s partnerships in India, Afghanistan and beyond.
Our journalists spotlight critical issues and expose injustice with in-depth reporting published in renowned news outlets such as The New York Times, The Washington Post and Foreign Policy, and in partnership with the largest and most respected newsrooms around the world, from India to Afghanistan to Kenya. Partnering with legacy news outlets ensures our rigorous reporting reaches the broadest global audiences. Our reporting is relied on by policymakers, corporate leaders, influencers and individuals across the globe, leading to better outcomes for women and their communities.

Our exclusive reporting on spikes in early puberty during the pandemic reached millions of Washington Post readers. Our reporting from Poland on the link between the limitations on reproductive services and the erosion of democratic rights was read by influencers and policymakers in the pages of Foreign Policy. Our publishing partnership with TIME on abuses of women at a Lesotho factory that supplied Kate Hudson’s Fabletics line reached the highest echelons of the company and spurred significant reforms.

As women’s standing in society improves, so does the potential for stronger democracies, and economic and political stability. A single authoritative story about women can create awareness to spark change.
Multiple United Nations agencies have warned that climate change will increase the exploitation of minors, including trafficking. For the Sundarbans, the world’s largest mangrove rainforest and one of the most climate-vulnerable locations on the planet, this fear is already reality. Thousands of girls are recorded missing each year — and the numbers are growing. In a joint investigation for The Fuller Project and The Wire, Ritwika Mitra spoke with child trafficking survivors, activists, lawyers, environmental experts and government officials who described how repeated cyclones, floods and environmental changes have pushed families out of their homes and into desperate poverty, making them increasingly vulnerable to human trafficking. The reporting won the 2022 Lorenzo Natali Media Prize honoring brave journalism.

This woman is fighting to save Bangladesh’s oldest brothel  

"This Woman is Fighting to save Bangladesh’s oldest brothel,” published with The Economist’s 1843 Magazine, won the 2022 SOPA [Society of Publishers in Asia] Award for Excellence in Feature Writing and a second for Editorial Excellence, and was a Fetisov Journalism Award Finalist. The piece profiles Monowara Begum, who was trafficked into a brothel in Bangladesh in 1988, when she was 12 years old. Over the following three decades, it became her home. Today, she’s one of the brothel’s leaders - and she’s fighting for its survival, up against the threat of local moralists, corrupt officials and the coronavirus.
IN THE MEDIA

Our journalism has been picked up by the wider media, allowing our stories to inform a broad international audience about the issues we cover. Our story about precocious puberty, co-published with The Washington Post, was featured in CNN’s As Equals and WebMD, and cited by The New York Times. Our map detailing state-by-state abortion restrictions was highlighted in Yahoo News and in several industry newsletters. Minnesota Public Radio and WNYC’s The Takeaway interviewed our reporter about her investigation into the child welfare system’s impact on Native families. CNN Reliable Sources, Fortune’s Broadsheet, Politico Playground and Talking Biz News wrote about Eva Rodríguez’ arrival as our new editor in chief. 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.

Fuller Project Co-founder and CEO Xanthe Scharff was interviewed about the coverage of women in war in Foreign Policy, pegged to her OpEd and a Foreign Policy event on the same topic. Fuller Project leadership and reporters have moderated panels and spoken at numerous events on climate reporting, labor rights, abortion access and other topics.
COVID ‘Crisis Moment’ for Families With Children in NYC Pre-K and 3K Programs | Jessica Washington, THE CITY


Trauma Can Be Hard to Talk About. It Can Also Be Hard to Hear: Reporter’s Notebook | Jessica Washington, The Fuller Project

In the Sundarban, climate change has an unlikely effect — on child sex-trafficking | Ritwika Mitra, The Wire

Minnesotafoster care system perpetuates legacy of racist boarding schools, Native mothers say | Jessica Washington, Star Tribune

India’s women-only social safety net | Mahima Jain, Foreign Policy

In rural India, stricken by pandemic, necessity of invention fills in for the state | Puja Changoiwala, The Fuller Project

‘Every shift, we’re just barely making it’: What nurses want us to know about the COVID crisis in the South | Erica Hensley, Reckon

Women victimized by Boko Haram forced to choose peace over justice | Shola Lawal, VICE World News

The South’s abortion battle has a new front: telemedicine | Erica Hensley, Reckon

India’s investments in early warning systems have unintended benefits for women | Disha Shetty, Scroll and Health Policy Watch

The Taliban are harming Afghan women’s health | Zahra Nader & Nargis Amini, Foreign Policy & Rukhshana Media

Dating in the time of the Taliban | Zahra Nader & Kreshma Fakhri, The Cut

Do police help or hurt domestic violence survivors? New York City council members take a stand | Jessica Washington, THE CITY

DA Alvin Bragg still won’t drop charges against Manhattan woman charged with murder who says she acted in self-defense | Jessica Washington, THE CITY

Where democracy falters, so do reproductive rights | Hanna Kozlowska, Foreign Policy

Early puberty cases in girls have surged during covid, doctors say | Puja Changoiwala, The Washington Post

Air pollution is worsening reproductive health outcomes for women | Disha Shetty, Scroll and Health Policy Watch

Why deaths by suicide often go uncounted in states’ maternal mortality studies | Erica Hensley, Reckon

Reporter’s Notebook: Indoor air in India can be just as bad as the country’s toxic smog. Was I wrong to be surprised? | Disha Shetty, The Fuller Project

Queer Afghan lives are at risk under the Taliban | Zahra Nader, Foreign Policy

Pregnant Ukrainian refugees struggle to get abortion care | Hanna Kozlowska, The Cut

With the Supreme Court set to overturn Roe v. Wade, New York prepares to become an abortion safe haven | Jessica Washington, THE CITY

‘We have to fight back.’ Afghan women are losing their hard-won right to work under the Taliban | Zahra Nader, TIME

Financial Pandemic: As living costs spiral in Kenya, a mother sacrifices to spare family from ‘dire times’ | Agatha Gichana, Nation

Financial Pandemic: Sri Lanka is not a country for poor people now | Rathindra Kuruwita, Nation

Financial Pandemic: A Lima woman is fighting to feed her community as food prices soar | Jimena Ledgard, Nation

Violent crime victims in New York struggle to access funds due to them | Jessica Washington, THE CITY

A toxic trash site in Kenya is making women sick | Louise Donovan and Moras Obiria, VICE World News and Nation

Reporter’s Notebook: Women’s invisibility in climate stories erase their narratives. The result is bad policy | Disha Shetty, The Fuller Project

The mental health crisis facing Black mothers in the South | Erica Hensley, Reckon

Baby formula marketing practices are still too aggressive | Melissa Chan, Foreign Policy

How a network of college students is preparing for post-Roe campuses | Erica Hensley, Reckon

As heat waves sweep South Asia, they take a hidden toll on women | Disha Shetty, Scroll

Financial Pandemic: For a refugee in crisis-hit Lebanon, even buying bread is a struggle | Katherine Pangonis, The Fuller Project

India is trying to reduce maternal mortality without engaging with a key contributor: suicide | Disha Shetty, Scroll and Health Policy Watch

Financial Pandemic: In Argentina, even a professional woman feels the pinch | Fran Blandy, The Fuller Project

The Ukrainian women farmers fighting to keep the world fed | Amie Ferris-Rotman, TIME
SUPPORT OUR WORK

The Fuller Project relies on generous support from foundations and individuals like you. Our donors share the organization's commitment to rigorous, evidence-based journalism about women and the issues that most impact them around the world. Your gift will help support this important work. Help us catalyze positive change for women today!

Donate now through our secure site at fullerproject.networkforgood.com 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 our work, please email khunt@fullerproject.org.

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