

2,497 distinct sheltering agencies around the world recorded how many women and children they helped on one day

Global Shelter Data Count

November 2015

“[Shelter] gave us awareness that we are not the only ones that suffer.”
- Nicaragua

Afghanistan
Armenia
Australia
Austria
Bosnia and Herzegovina

The **Global Network of Women’s Shelters** is made up of shelter organizations from around the world.

The founding member organizations come from the following regions: Armenia, Australia, Canada, Denmark, England, Iceland, Rwanda, Israel, Sweden, Italy, Mexico, the United States, Nepal, Vietnam, the Netherlands and Pakistan.

Its’ international membership is bound together by the following goals:

1. To be a strong and active global network with a recognized international voice
2. To ensure global awareness of violence against women and their children
3. To support and strengthen the women’s shelter movement
4. To promote effective policies and their implementation in order to prevent violence and protect and empower women and their children
5. To promote social change that ends violence and oppression against women and their children

Cameroon
Canada
Croatia
Cyprus
Ecuador
Egypt
England
Ethiopia
Finland
Germany
Guatemala
Honduras
Iceland
Israel
Italy

How the Global Shelter Data Count Started and is Growing:

In September 2008, shelters from around the world came together for the first ever World Conference of Women’s Shelters in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. This landmark event was organized by the Alberta Council of Women’s Shelters. A number of action items were identified at the conference – one of which being the need to conduct a global data count. The first Global Shelter Data Count was conducted on one day during the fourth quarter of 2009. In February 2010, the results were presented to the Commission on the Status of Women in New York. In 2012, the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEVD) organized the Second World Conference of Women’s Shelters in Washington, DC and our contact list for the data count grew even larger. We’re proud to release this 6th Annual Global Shelter Data Count report at the 3rd World Conference of Women’s Shelters in The Hague in 2015.

This year 137 organizations participated in the data count (106 reported as individual shelters and 31 who reported the results for many shelters) for a total of 2,497 agencies reporting either individually or through a network.

Shelters around the world were asked to share the numbers and the thoughts of those they help on one day in 2014/15.

Japan
Kosovo (Republic of)
Lebanon
Liechtenstein
Luxembourg
Malaysia
Malta
Moldova (Republic of)
Morocco
Nepal
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nicaragua
Pakistan
Palestine
Portugal
Puerto Rico
Romania
Rwanda
Saint Lucia
Scotland
Slovenia
Taiwan
Turkey
USA
Wales

Number of Participating Countries

2009: 24	2012: 44
2010: 30	2013: 41
2011: 36	2014/15: 46



On one day around the world*:

Number of women helped: 53,230

Of these, how many were pregnant: 340

Number of children helped: 34,794



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Number of women turned away from shelters due to lack of resources 7,337

Number of children turned away from shelters due to lack of resources 4,410

Women's, and even children's, comments reveal the desperation they felt before entering the shelter.

"I have never thought there could be such a place. I thought I had no place to go and nobody would even listen to me. I never believed I could find way out of this hell."

- *Yerevan, Armenia*

"I'm here because my Daddy wants to kill me"

- *Perth, Australia*

"If the police had not taken me to the women's shelter, I would not be alive anymore."

- *Vienna, Austria*

"Thank you for saving my life."

- *Berlin, Germany*

"Merhba Bik was and will always be my Salvation. Thanks to them I am still alive as without their love and shelter I would have been dead months ago. All they did was care for me. I love them as if they are my own family."

- *Balzan, Malta*

"Just right now, we're struggling to deal with the risks by introduction of the new system giving every citizen an ID number in October. If the victim's new identity number will be delivered to her husband's address, it would be a disaster."

- *Japan*

"Gangs are a serious problem for this family."

- *Honduras*

Abused migrant and refugee women face unique challenges, often learning their rights when staying in shelter. Those who are undocumented are in a precarious situation once they leave.

"I did not know services like you existed; My husband told me that I was a nobody in this country and that no one would believe me and help me (this is from a Muslim woman we helped to return to Malaysia.)"

- *Cairns, Australia*

"Thank you to the people who helped me. I'm grateful that I will be going back to Indonesia. After experiencing this hardship, I have become more mature and more courageous to face my difficulties."

- *Taiwan*

"Women and children's comments tend to be very positive regarding the assistance they receive, however their needs are sometimes greater to what we can provide within our resources, this particularly applies to immigrant women without income due to their immigration status in Australia."

- *Adelaide, Australia*

"Migrant women often report that they feel very isolated and only find understanding and support in our shelter."

- *Belconnen, Australia*

"We assisted a survivor apply for a VAWA visa (her own immigration status) after she came to us for help. Her husband abused her for years and told her that if she went to the police, she would be deported. After working with us, she told us she felt, 'free as a butterfly'."

- *Virginia, United States of America*

"I am sick in my heart, I can't go back to my country they will kill me but Australian Government doesn't seem to want me."

- *Melbourne Victoria, Australia*

* We acknowledge that there are a significant number of shelters around the world helping women and children whose numbers are not yet included in this Count. This Global Shelter Data Count is our attempt to provide a glimpse into the extent of the problem.

Shelters provide much needed access to information, including legal advice, education, and assistance with children.

“After coming to shelter my problems were solved and I am now able to read and write.”
-Kabul, Afghanistan

“The shelter workers have done so much for me. Without you I would not have applied for my divorce.”
-Vienna, Austria

“During residing at shelter we are satisfied with vocational skill training and after getting the training on their need assessment, our organization has been given an opportunity of small grants so that we should establish our own business.”
- Pakistan

“We helped a client, who was recently diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, reestablish physical therapy and gain access to medical supplies. Her perpetrator had been denying her medical supplies and had canceled her physical therapy appointments. She obtained a restraining order and has moved into a safe place.”
- California, United States of America

Many women describe the new beginning the shelter gave them. They leave empowered to care for themselves and their children.

“I’m very happy, now I can face my ex-husband when I bring him the children and I know, I’m free and don’t need to be scared.”
- Radolfzell, Germany

“I deserve respect and love, these are my rights.”
- Ajaltoun, Lebanon

“Since my stay at Blijf Groep, I’m free again. I can set my own rules and define my own life. Contrary to the past, I am now in charge. I was a slave to my ex-husband. I only lived for my children, they gave me the strength to go on. Now we are all doing very well, what we have been through has brought us closer together and that gives us more strength to go on. Life is beautiful and my children and me are going to enjoy it at the fullest.”
- Amsterdam, Netherlands

“It is a human effort. And if so it is superhuman, because I see the hand of God in all you!”
- Puerto Rico

“Thank you for noticing that something was wrong. You have opened my eyes so that I could realize that I deserve better.”
- Ljubljana, Slovenia

“We are in a magical house”
- Child from a shelter in Canada

Women and children find peace, calm, and understanding when entering a shelter. Many report sleeping soundly for the first time in years.

“My body feels lighter, I feel so much safer.”
- Bendigo, Australia

“I feel safe here, and that is all I need right now.”
- Zagreb, Croatia

“Always on edge... terrified...sleepless nights.... Merhba Bik was the place which lightened my life once again.”
- Balzan, Malta

“I slept like when I was with my parents (a Mother of two fleeing her Husband).”
- Rabat, Morocco

“I liked when we played together and you listened to me.” (6 year old child)
- Ljubljana, Slovenia

“finished... here I think understand that one has the right to be happy, to live free and Yes, right now I can say I am a free woman...”

- *Ecuador*

“...when the life of the survivors change, it energizes [us] to do more.”

- *Ethiopia*

“Their experience [working in the shelter] has been fulfilling.”

- *Malaysia*

“A new life before us, a new challenge set, Encouraged by most of the people we’ve met. Time to step forward to make this new start, we’d both like to thank you with all of our hearts!”

- *Wales*

“They [women in shelter] were very thankful for providing them a safe place when they needed [it] most along with medical support and counseling.”

- *Nepal*



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Can you share an approach, program, initiative that has worked well in your shelter or as part of your work to end violence against women?

“Where possible, the most successful outcomes have been with women that have been able to get their own homes.”

- *Broome, Australia*

“Our services are specifically focused on servicing needs of immigrant, refugee and asylum seeking women and children. All our staff have bi-lingual and bi-cultural skills that enable them to better overcome social taboos and stigma related to domestic violence, thus motivating women to focus on their and their children safety.”

- *Adelaide, Australia*

“The Aardvarc Mother and Children’s healing program can make a difference with the children’s belief that they caused their father to be violent. The program heals rifts between the mother and kids caused by the perpetrator, as well as helping the woman and her children to understand the purpose and process used by the perpetrator; his use of power and control tactics to support the women and kids to not take responsibility for his use of violence.”

- *Townsville, Australia*

“We have established very good cooperation with several social welfare centers, police and judges through our project funded by the UN Fund to End Violence.”

- *Zagreb, Croatia*

“We offer a weekly sharing circle facilitated by two indigenous elders”

- *Alberta, Canada*

“The last couple of years we started offering art therapy to the children staying at the shelter. This was received well by the children and their mothers since the children have the opportunity to express and explore their feelings.”

- *Nicosia, Cyprus*

Shelter workers from around the world almost universally express satisfaction at being able to help women and children, but repeatedly show frustration with strained resources and the limited services, including housing, available once women leave the shelter. Comments from women echo these universal barriers.

“The shortage of housing is an absolute disgrace and many women will return to the perpetrator for somewhere to live. It is frustrating knowing that we often have to send women back to potentially dangerous places due our shelter only being short stay crisis accommodation.”

- *Broome, Australia*

“It’s getting more difficult to offer the help we would like to deliver as a result of lack (of security) of funding, reduction of the number of places, reduction in the length of the period we can offer in the shelter and the increase of the caseload for the staff.”

- *Groningen, Netherlands*

“Sometimes I feel so helpless, but sometimes so rewarded, when I realize that we really helped someone to change her/his life.”

- *Zagreb, Croatia*

“With the economic crisis now in Cyprus our work is harder to support the women and help them. There is a lot of unemployment so it is not easy to find work. The government does not support them financially or offer them housing so they stay longer at the shelter. This often leads the staff feeling disappointed because some women choose to go back to their abuser or we see them revictimised by the system.”

- *Nicosia, Cyprus*

“What we need in German women’s shelters is a good and reliable financial situation and less bureaucracy! Often women can not easily get access to a women’s shelter because of financial barriers.”

- *Tubingen, Germany*

“I can’t work, because I have a baby and I don’t have enough money to pay the kindergarden.”

- *Turkey*

“The intervention in period of crisis is well realized in our center, but there is a lack of money and politics when we talk about medium and long term assistance for women with children, orphan children or children left without any care.”

- *Chisinau, Republic of Moldova*

“More challenging work, and heavy, but we feel very good when you have the opportunity to help women in need.”

- *Mitrovica, The Republic of Kosovo*

“...they [survivors] are unsecured in terms of housing and financial situation.”

- *Bosnia and Herzegovina*

“Sometimes the helping support of the public institutions is missing.”

- *Italy*

“I had been able to do nothing in court because I don’t have money for a lawyer.”

- *Guatemala*

“We are continuously humbled and happy with our role in assisting women and children in our centers. At the same time it’s frustrating and depressing when you are not able to help. But when things work out then it gives you the courage to continue.”

- Rwanda

Country	Number of Women Helped Today	How many women were pregnant?	Number of children helped today	Number of women turned away from your shelter today due to lack of resources	Number of children turned away from your shelter today due to lack of resources
Afghanistan	368	1*	20*	0	0
Armenia	19	0	18	0	0
Australia	1031	39*	798	52	74
Austria	194	3	180	1	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1237	-	579	0	0
Cameroon	20	2	18	15	18
Canada	3781	114	2508	302	221
Croatia	21	1	4	0	0
Cyprus	31	^	7	+	+
Ecuador	22	3	29	1	2
Egypt	10	^	3	4	1
England	1791	+	1669	112	84
Ethiopia	87	32	48	8	+
Finland	78	3	37	0	0
Germany	300	11*	253	33	42
Guatemala	152	0	5	0	0
Honduras	8	1	6	0	0
Iceland	17	-	0	0	0
Israel	152	18	248	5	16
Italy	690	8	226	8	7
Japan	6	3	0	0	0
Kosovo (Republic of)	15	1	12	0	0
Lebanon**	2	-	1	0	0
Liechtenstein	6	0	4	0	0
Luxembourg	102	5*	63	6	4
Malaysia**	7	1	1	1	+
Malta	59	2*	20	3	6
Moldova (Republic of)	6	0	15	3	5
Morocco	18	1+	5	1	1
Nepal	6	0	1	0	0
Netherlands	900	38*	828	27	28
New Zealand	554	20	148	8	16
Nicaragua	84	5	20	10	4
Pakistan	64	1	32	0	0
Palestine	3	0	2	0	0
Portugal	402	0*	479	18	27
Puerto Rico	116	4	51	0	0
Romania	10	0	5	0	0
Rwanda	18	0	2	4	0
Saint Lucia	3	0	6	0	0
Scotland	859	16	400	31	17
Slovenia	8	0	4	0	0
Taiwan	39	4	124	0	0
Turkey	19	1	16	2	1
USA	39,861	-	25,869	6678	3831
Wales	54	2*	30	4	5
TOTALS	53,230	340	34,794	7,337	4,410

Legend

(-) indicates information not collected.

(^) indicates information not known

*not all agencies/shelters know or collect this information.

(+) did not provide data.

** yearly data provided. Numbers on chart have been averaged to daily numbers and rounded to the nearest whole number.

