

THE STOCKHOLM FORUM ON GENDER EQUALITY

# FUNDING WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND FEMINIST MOVEMENTS

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Contributors: AWID; Moderator – Hakima Abbas (Association for Women's Rights in Development – AWID, Senegal) and Rapporteur – Liliia Makashova (SI)

## OVERVIEW

Across the world, authoritarian governments are rising, and democracies are being eroded. The rise in corporate power and inequality is further restricting governments' capacity and will to govern in the interest of their people, and especially of those who are most marginalised.

For years, feminist, LGBTBIQ and women's rights movements have been consistently under-resourced, under-funded and deprioritised. In these worsening times, even the small streams of funding that used to reach them are now drying up. Yet, these movements have accelerated their efforts towards investigating and pursuing new forms of organising, funding and resourcing transformative change.

This session looked into the present and the future of resourcing, funding and financing. The speakers brought their research, experience and recommendations, as well as the outcomes and reflections of the recent CMI! Money and Movements convening, where activists and funders have strategised around future scenarios of the resources ecosystem for sustainable, diverse, effective, thriving, and resilient feminist and women's rights movements.

## KEY TAKEWAYS

### Where are we?

- There is a limited sustainability of feminist and women's rights organisations across the world.
- Women's organisations are facing severe financial crisis across the world.
- Feminist, LGBTBIQ and women's rights movements are hugely under-resourced.
- 50 per cent of these organisations have never received core support and multi-year funding.
- 30 per cent of these organisations don't have savings.
- 98 per cent have no money raised for next year.
- Many of the young feminist organisations only receive about USD 5,000 per year and are therefore turning to the use of crowdfunding sources.
- The women's movement in Africa is leading the protest movement against corporations and governments who support macro projects implemented without consent from local communities. Often these women are targeted and threatened.
- We are witnessing citizens rising up against autocratic regimes in Africa and against corporate building.

- The people who are discriminated against most frequently are often the best drivers of sustainable social change.
- Mainstream climate funders don't see the point in funding women's movements even though these issues are interrelated. Effort on climate change needs a clear gender perspective.

### **What are we doing?**

- AWID is catalysing conversation about women's movements and rights protection across Africa to stand against repressive laws. We are responsible for rapid response funding for women's organisations in Africa.
- We are actively working to protect targeted women, providing them with health and psychosocial care.
- In Marrakesh we are mobilising resources for women's movements. We contribute to movement-building initiatives and efforts.
- We are trying to build 'bigger thinking concept', which means involving agricultural and climate grants into the women's movement.
- We provide direct funding for young women movements.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Where do we go from here?**

- Funding for social justice systems is needed, not only funding for the women's movement itself.
- We have to measure the impact of funding women's organisations and spread this information among private sector players as potential grant givers.
- The funding itself and the organisations receiving funding should be diverse and flexible.
- We need to invest into long-term capacity development.
- The funding should specifically target local gender equality and women's movements.
- Funds should target education systems in order to reduce inequality in schools and universities.
- We need to engage activists to participate not only in public spaces but also online.
- Young women groups and unregistered organisations should be specifically funded since they are more threatened.
- The conditions of funding shouldn't necessarily demand a project to succeed.
- There is a need to create financial intermediaries making it possible for smaller organisations to receive funding.
- Women's own businesses should be funded.
- It's not only about money but also about creating platforms for idea exchange between different groups of activists.
- Feminists across the world stay in contact but should be funded separately within their fields.
- We need to change the funding infrastructure for feminist movements. The resources need to go directly to the women groups and rights movements.
- By shifting capital, we can shift power in the world. ■

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