

Achieving gender equality through feminist grantmaking **THE WOMEN'S FUNDS MODEL**



ABOUT

This report was made possible with the financial support of Erasmus+ on behalf of Women's Funds Europe, part of Prospera - International Network of Women's Funds.

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union.

Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



Co-funded by
the European Union

Author

Karen Weisblatt, Founder and CEO, Weisblatt & Associés

Editor

Elizabeth Brahy, Weisblatt & Associés

Weisblatt & Associés is a Paris-based philanthropic advisory firm focused on creating impact for social change. Founded by Karen Weisblatt in 2005, it specialises in philanthropy and social sector consulting, and is committed to promoting respect, diversity, equality and innovation.

Learn more at: www.weisblatt-associates.com

Graphic Designers

Carolina Mota
Andrea Martínez Medina

January 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	Who are we?
5	What do we do?
6	What issues do we address?
7	Why engage with us?
9	Our model & approach
10	<i>1. Funding</i>
17	<i>2. Capacity Building</i>
22	<i>3. Research & Advocacy</i>
27	<i>4. Bolstering Feminist Philanthropy Through an Intersectional Lens</i>
33	<i>5. Collaboration & Networking</i>
36	Recommendations
37	About Prospera - International Network of Women's Funds

WHO ARE WE?

Women's Funds Europe (WFE) is the European branch of Prospera - International Network of Women's Funds. We are a coalition of 13 Women's Funds based in 11 countries led by and for women, girls, trans, intersex, and non-binary people in all their diversity. Our core values are feminist and rooted in justice, equality, respect, freedom, and accountability, expressed through an intersectional lens. Together, in 2020, our organisations mobilised 29 million euros across 76 countries, providing grants to organisations and activist initiatives working towards gender equality, and strengthening women's rights groups and movements on the continent and worldwide.

Our loosely-structured coalition includes the following funds:

Bulgarian Fund for Women (Bulgaria)

<https://bgfundforwomen.org>

Taso Foundation (Georgia)

<https://taso.org.ge>

Calala Fondo de Mujeres (Spain)

<https://calala.org>

Ukrainian Women's Fund (Ukraine)

<http://uwf.org.ua>

Ecumenical Women's Initiative (Croatia)

<http://eiz.hr>

Reconstruction Women's Fund (Serbia)

<https://www.rwfund.org>

FemFund (Poland)

<https://femfund.pl>

Slovak-Czech Women's Fund (Slovakia and Czech Republic)

<https://www.womensfund.sk>

filia.die frauenstiftung (Germany)

<https://www.filia-frauenstiftung.de>

Women's Fund Armenia (Armenia)

<https://womenfundarmenia.org>

Mama Cash (The Netherlands)

<https://www.mamacash.org>

Women's Fund in Georgia (Georgia)

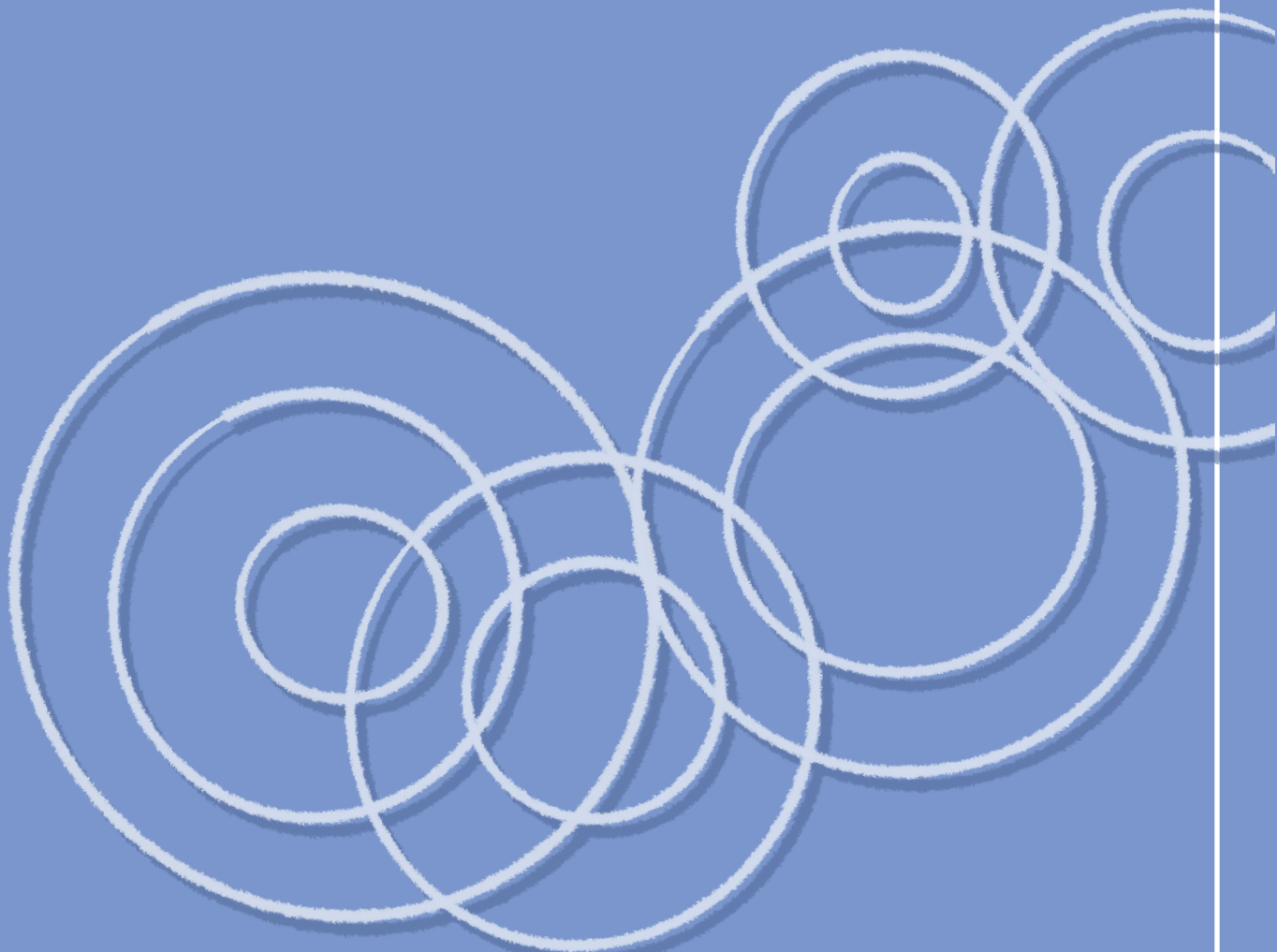
<https://www.womenfundgeorgia.org>

Mediterranean Women's Fund (France)

<https://www.medwomensfund.org>

WHAT DO WE DO?

We take a holistic approach to achieving social and policy change by combining grantmaking, movement strengthening, fundraising, capacity building, advocacy, and efforts to motivate individuals to support feminist activism and philanthropy. We engage with individual activists and groups facing multiple forms of discrimination, identifying and creating opportunities for peer learning and leveraging knowledge. In addition to raising funds to sustain and empower these grassroots efforts, we successfully partner with local and international donors, including foundations, bilateral and multilateral organisations, local and national governments, and corporations.



WHAT ISSUES DO WE ADDRESS?

- Antiracism
 - Climate and Environmental Justice
 - Closing Space of Civil Society
- Democracy
- Freedom and Human Rights
- Gender-Based Violence
- Gender Equality
- Global Justice
- LGBTIQ+ Rights
- Migration
- Peace and Conflict Resolution

WHY ENGAGE WITH US?

As creators of a culture of feminist philanthropy, as movement strengtheners, as funders, and as fundraisers, our goal is to advance women's rights and gender equality both locally and globally to create a fairer and more inclusive world. Women's Funds in Europe have been created by feminists working together because we believe when social change efforts are led by those most impacted, everyone benefits. We are values-oriented, basing our approach on the principles of trust, inclusion, collaboration, openness, transparency, accessibility, and collective decision-making. Our expertise in the field, emphasis on action-oriented achievements, and intersectional framework makes us uniquely positioned to connect donors with grassroots organisations and bolster the field of feminist philanthropy.

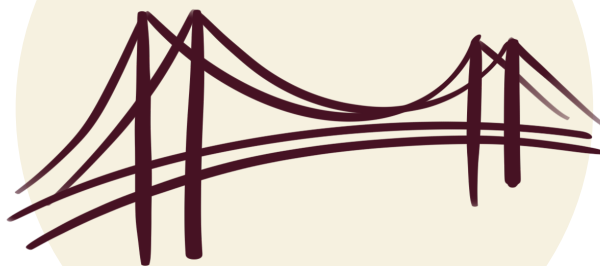


WE STRENGTHEN MOVEMENTS

by supporting the organisational capacities of our grantees. We are often the first, main, and sometimes only source of support for grassroots initiatives launched and led by women, girls, and trans people, including groups that are not legally registered. We can act fast or provide emergency assistance to activists at risk. We are strongly committed to lifting up the next generation of leaders. Our application and reporting procedures are both rigorous and flexible, ensuring that emerging groups can tap into critical funding and are supported throughout the process, with a strong emphasis on evaluation tools to learn, adapt, and track impact, taking into account that change takes time.

WE BUILD BRIDGES

by helping donors invest funds strategically for greater impact, allowing them to engage with local activists and small, frontline organisations. Working from a participatory model that centres those on the ground, we collaborate to improve fundraising and financial management, to deepen alliances and networks.



WE BOLSTER DEMOCRACY

by participating in civic life, engaging in advocacy, and supporting and funding local initiatives, ensuring that the perspectives of those most impacted are included in debates about policy priorities. We create and support networking and collaboration backed by open and effective communications, expanding the ability of new and established organisations to enact social and policy change. In addition, we strengthen democratic structures and participation by establishing participatory grantmaking models through which those most impacted decide or co-decide via advisory boards and collective decision-making structures about the distribution of resources/grant distribution.



OUR MODEL & APPROACH

To achieve our goals, we engage in five interconnected and complementary areas of work: funding; capacity building; research and advocacy; bolstering feminist philanthropy through intersectionality; and collaboration and networking.

1.
Funding

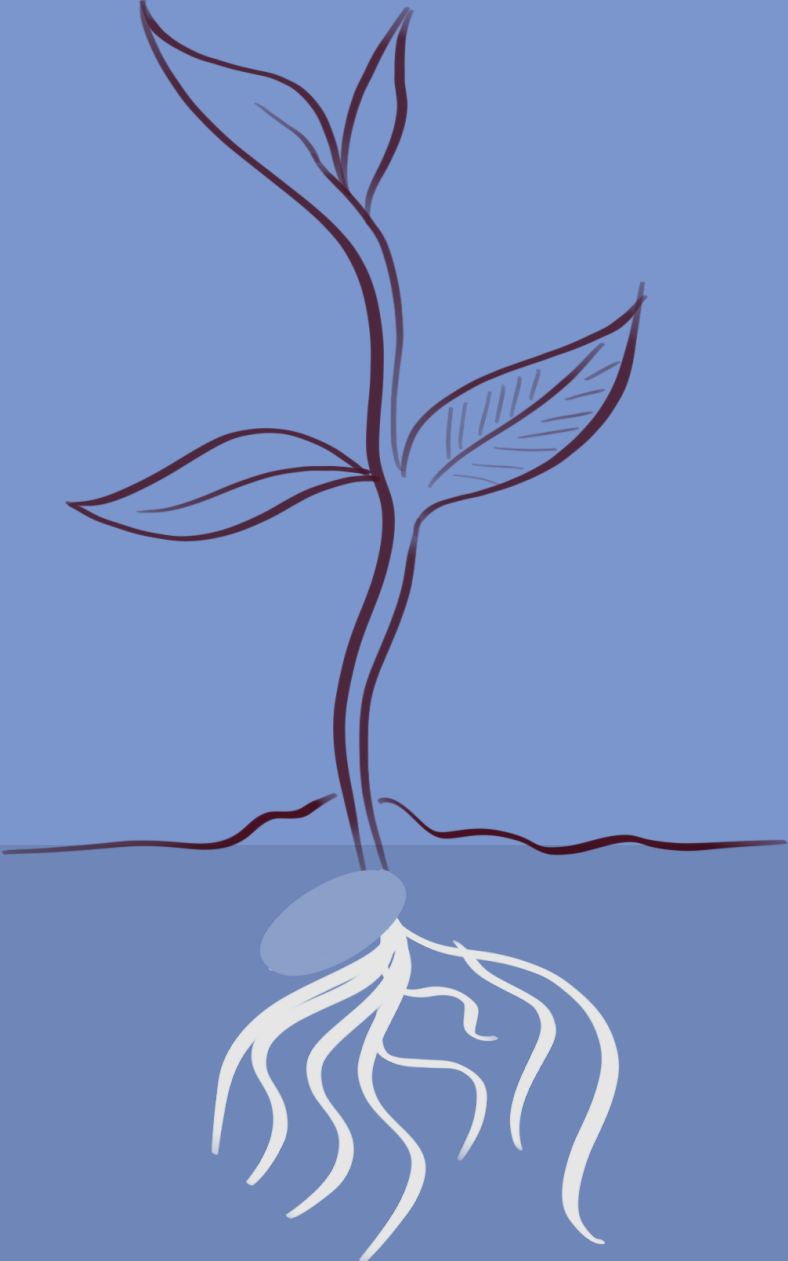
2.
**Capacity
Building**

3.
**Research &
Advocacy**

4.
**Collaboration &
Networking**

5.
**Bolstering Feminist
Philanthropy Through
an Intersectional Lens**

1. FUNDING



WE SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS LED BY THOSE MOST IMPACTED

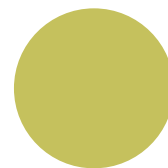
Making progress toward advancing gender equality requires centring the priorities of those who face discrimination, stigma, violence, and oppression based on their gender identity, gender expression, sexuality and/or sex characteristics, sexual orientation, race, class, caste, ethnicity, language, migration status, and (dis)ability, to name a few, and also based on the intersections of these identities. In particular, racialised women and women with disabilities face multiple oppressions. Organisations created and led by the ones who are experiencing these challenges are best placed to address them. We aim to support programmes reaching all women, including those who identify as trans and non-binary. Funding with this lens ensures that no one is left behind.

Accompanying the Migrant and Racialised Women's Movement in Spain

Calala Women's Fund

Migrant and racialised women face racist and sexist discrimination, impediments to accessing public health care, decent housing, and employment, especially when they are undocumented, and are more likely to live with gender-based violence. The migrant women's movement is responding to these needs through advocacy to improve the rights of domestic and care workers and support to women experiencing gender-based violence. Services offered include the implementation of meeting spaces for migrant women, collective healing and arts activities, trainings on asylum and refugee processes, awareness-raising on the rights of migrant mothers or legal advice on housing, among others.

To aid their efforts, in 2021 we awarded 25 migrant and racialised women's organisations €85 665 in grants in the framework of our Migrant Power Programme. In addition, 68 women have participated in training and exchange workshops focused on issues like self and collective care, shared and diverse leadership and resource management. We are also innovating by facilitating the movement's own efforts to document its origins and history through a genealogy of the migrant and racialised women's movement in Spain. This is the first time these narratives have been collected for publication, which is seen as a milestone by the participants and a starting point to develop new lines of work for advocacy,



internal cohesion, and intergenerational transfer.

As a result, the groups reported in evaluation surveys that they have improved their individual and collective capacities and increased their connections and influence. Our approach focuses on participatory grantmaking and decoloniality, and both

the workshops and the genealogy process have been led and facilitated by women from the movement. We have collected our learnings in a publication to encourage other organisations and donors that work with this movement to reflect and learn from our experiences and generate new alliances.

Empowerment Programme for Refugee Women*

filia.die frauenstiftung (Germany)

Refugee and migrant women, as well as inter, trans, queer and non-binary refugees and migrants, face enormous obstacles: uncertain residence status; inappropriate accommodation in camps; restricted access to education, health services and the labour market. Many refugee women experience gender-specific traumas and multiple discriminations. Yet despite this, they are organising, networking and fighting for their rights. With our programme, which has been running since 2020, we support these groups and initiatives to be more visible in society and to take control over their own futures. We take a multi-lingual approach to outreach, social media and networking, ensuring visibility and accessibility to grassroots groups who may have little contact with funders.*

While our ultimate aim is to foster long-lasting structural change, we believe that political empowerment begins at the individual and collective levels. Our grant-

making prioritises projects that are self-led by newcomers, refugee and migrant women. They shape and decide their own activities and goals and how they want to apply funds. To date, we have awarded ten impulse grants of up to €5 000 (launched in 2020); two strategic grants totalling €20 000 (2020 and 2021); and twelve grants of between €3 000 and €8 000 (launched in 2021). Projects we support include the first intersectional co-working and social space in Germany; a reception centre for peer-to-peer empowerment; and the production of radio broadcasts/podcasts where those who have had to flee tell their various stories.*

In addition to our grantmaking, we organise a networking weekend with all the partners so they can get to know each other, exchange knowledge and share experiences. We are also planning a collaborative, bilingual publication (in English and German) to share the experiences of this participatory programme.

WE PROVIDE FLEXIBLE, LONG-TERM CORE FUNDING TO ACTIVISTS

We think that the very existence of women's organisations is essential, which is why we are committed to long-term general support, or "core funding," which enables our grantee partners to respond to changes and new opportunities, cover their operating costs, and invest funds where they are most needed. This long-term support, preferably for a period of five to ten years, is the best way to ensure meaningful and lasting change. Women's Funds have expertise in making small, flexible grants, which enable groups to decide how best to allocate their funds, accompanied by the necessary capacity-building support.

Funding Reproductive Health & Healing for Trauma Survivors

Reconstruction Women's Fund (Serbia)

We take a holistic approach over a long-term period of 10-15 years working in rural areas with local NGOs. In the Uzice region (Western part of Serbia), we partner with the Jefimija Breast Cancer Center, covering the needs of around 200 000 women. Jefimija lobbied local lawmakers to enhance testing and social services and through these efforts, managed to reduce late diagnosis by 17% and lower deaths from breast cancer by 11%. The area now holds the national record in breast cancer screenings (93.1% compared to the national average of 55%). The services provided include information and support from doctors and survivors; psychological counselling to aid with panic and fear during treatments; and workshops on how to change behaviours to help with healing—all completely free. Our support has helped sustain numerous programmes, including "Give the Pedal to Cancer" and "Flower that Means a Life," which raise money and awareness.

Another example of our long-term holistic outlook is the way we explore alternative approaches to learning and evaluation. This is especially helpful when purely data-driven methods are insufficient, such as in our work with the Incest Trauma Centre (ITC). When surveying survivors of trauma, satisfaction levels must be measured differently. This is done not only by tracking the number of women who are offered psychological and legal help, but the number of girls and women ITC stays in contact with—to date over 75%—accompanying them on their journey. In addition, change can be measured in other ways, like new policies and trainings. For example, ITC helped the Ministry of Education draft a new strategy for the protection of children from abuse and offers trainings in schools on how to implement the strategy. In this way, we can see the concrete and long-lasting impact of our work.

WE CAN FACILITATE EMERGENCY FUNDING IN CRISIS SITUATIONS

We provide targeted, rapid response funding in the timeliest manner in extreme situations, including wars, pandemics, disasters, and other humanitarian conflicts.

Rapid Response Grants

Ukrainian Women's Fund

With the ongoing war in Ukraine, getting funds to those who need them most is critical. We are one of the few organisations engaged in rapid response grants which support grassroots women's organisations and local activists whose voices are not always heard and who may be difficult to reach. We provide over 100 grants in Ukraine, which is a substantial number for the country, and they go to both experienced and inexperienced organisations. For many we are their first donor, and the only one willing to collaborate with them due to their lack of grant history.

Funding has helped rescue women and girls with disabilities or limited mobility; provided basic necessities to relocated people and their families; and supplied clothing and equipment. We have supported the creation of a chat-bot to respond to war-time requests for assistance, evacuation, and volunteer opportunities, and webinars for non-psychologists on basic psychological first aid techniques, such as how to bring a person out of a catatonic state or deep stress and trauma, and how not to get consumed by emotions when supporting others.



We base all of our work on the values of openness, transparency, simplicity and collective decision-making. As a local donor, the eyes of civil society are on us, and we therefore do our best to make the applications as easy and uncomplicated as possible. Our selection process involves internal and external experts, and regional partner organisations to coordinate with supported organizations and enhance the synergic effect. We continue to advocate for flexibility in the application, implementation and reporting stages, and engage in quick decision-making—often within 72 hours—to facilitate rapid access to funds for those working on the front lines. We listen to the women we support. We talk to them, we visit them, we laugh and cry with them and remain in constant contact.

WE CONNECT DONORS WITH SMALL, FRONTLINE ORGANISATIONS

Our grantees are often small, frontline organisations that do not have access to other funders. Women's Funds use simplified applications and reporting formats to reduce bureaucracy and make resources accessible to grassroots activists while engaging in robust due diligence and operating at the highest level of standards. In this way, funders can partner with a diverse ecosystem of activist-led funds. Most government, multilateral, and other large donors do not have the mechanisms to reach these movements directly, making it all the more critical to partner with those who do.

Mini-Grants Programme

FemFund (Poland)

Our flagship mini-grants programme launched four years ago has been enthusiastically welcomed by communities of women, girls, queer, and transgender persons engaged in feminist activism all over Poland. In 2022, we have supported 28 initiatives so far with small, flexible grants of up to €1 050. These funds go to supporting such diverse activities as installing menstrual aid points ("pink boxes") in the rural Krotoszyn commune; free workshops on lactation and breastfeeding for young and expectant mothers; a relaxation and development trip to the mountains for mothers and carers of children with disabilities with their children; and live drag performances by trans women.

By providing these grants, we support initiatives from the margins of the feminist movements, those undertaken by groups and persons with fewer privileges, minority identities or poorer access to resources, who are particularly vulnerable to discrimination. These include female refugees



and migrants, women living in the countryside, sex workers, young women and seniors, queer, transgender and non-binary persons, persons with disabilities, and those in difficult socioeconomic situations. We know money is important because money is power and redirecting resources to these groups and individuals helps counteract injustice and makes the world a better place.

But our commitment does not stop at financial support. We are dedicated to building authentic relationships and creating virtual and real spaces of intersectional feminism that build solidarity and friendship. Through social media and in-person gatherings, we stay in contact with our partners, learn from each other and contribute to an open exchange that turns feelings of helplessness into action.

Community Philanthropy

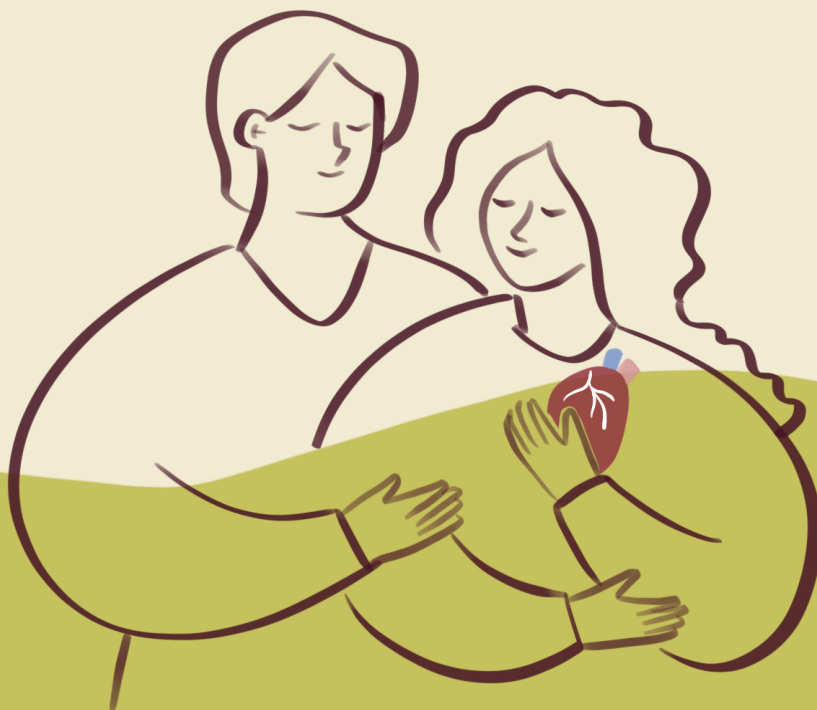
Taso Foundation Georgia

Working in rural Georgia since 2004, and operating independently since 2007, we focus on developing Community Philanthropy in poor environments where people struggle for survival. Through our activities we offer educational opportunities, skills development, grants and confidence-building to improve the quality of women's lives and empower them to engage in social activism.

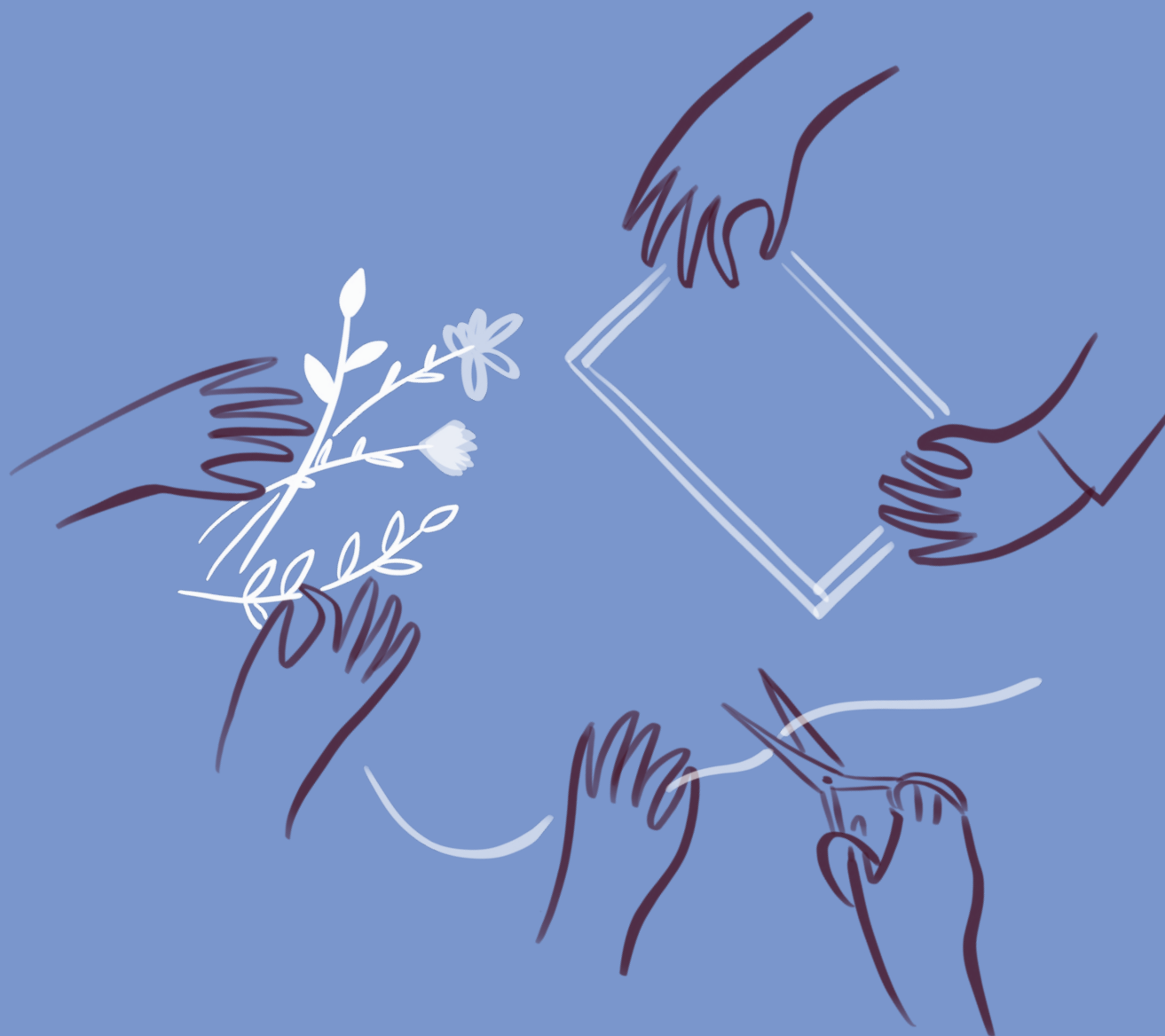
In 2012, we initiated the Network of Community Foundations (CFs), which now includes 11 members in 156 communities. Since 2013, we have awarded 103 small grants totaling \$48 262, making "big impact with small money." This funding has helped mobilise dozens of groups of women and young volunteers to actively fight for the welfare of their villages and to make a better future for themselves.

In addition, these groups are gaining the recognition and appreciation of their local governments, who have in turn contributed to institutionalising their accomplishments. Some notable examples include the founding of four community libraries, a music school, a kindergarten, as well a peace festival. In 2015, more than 3 000 community members were involved in a two-week long campaign to combat VAW culminating in the celebration of International Women's Day for Rights and Equality.

Connecting donors with these small grassroots Community Foundations has fostered the creation of a culture of volunteerism amongst young girls and women with an ever-widening geographical reach. These young change-makers continue to raise civic awareness and strengthen democratic development in rural areas, ensuring a better future for all.



2. CAPACITY BUILDING



WE ENGAGE WITH ACTIVISTS TO BUILD CAPACITY

Organisations, especially those led by under-resourced communities, require more than money to be sustainable. It is our responsibility to ensure that our grantee partners have what they need to heal, survive, thrive, and build. We listen to their challenges, provide emotional support and solidarity through moments of crisis and struggle, and offer hands-on advice as well as more “traditional” donor capacity building, including trainings, awards, etc. This includes assistance with legal and fiscal needs and resources to support learning, growth, and sustainability. We also introduce innovative methodologies and new perspectives.

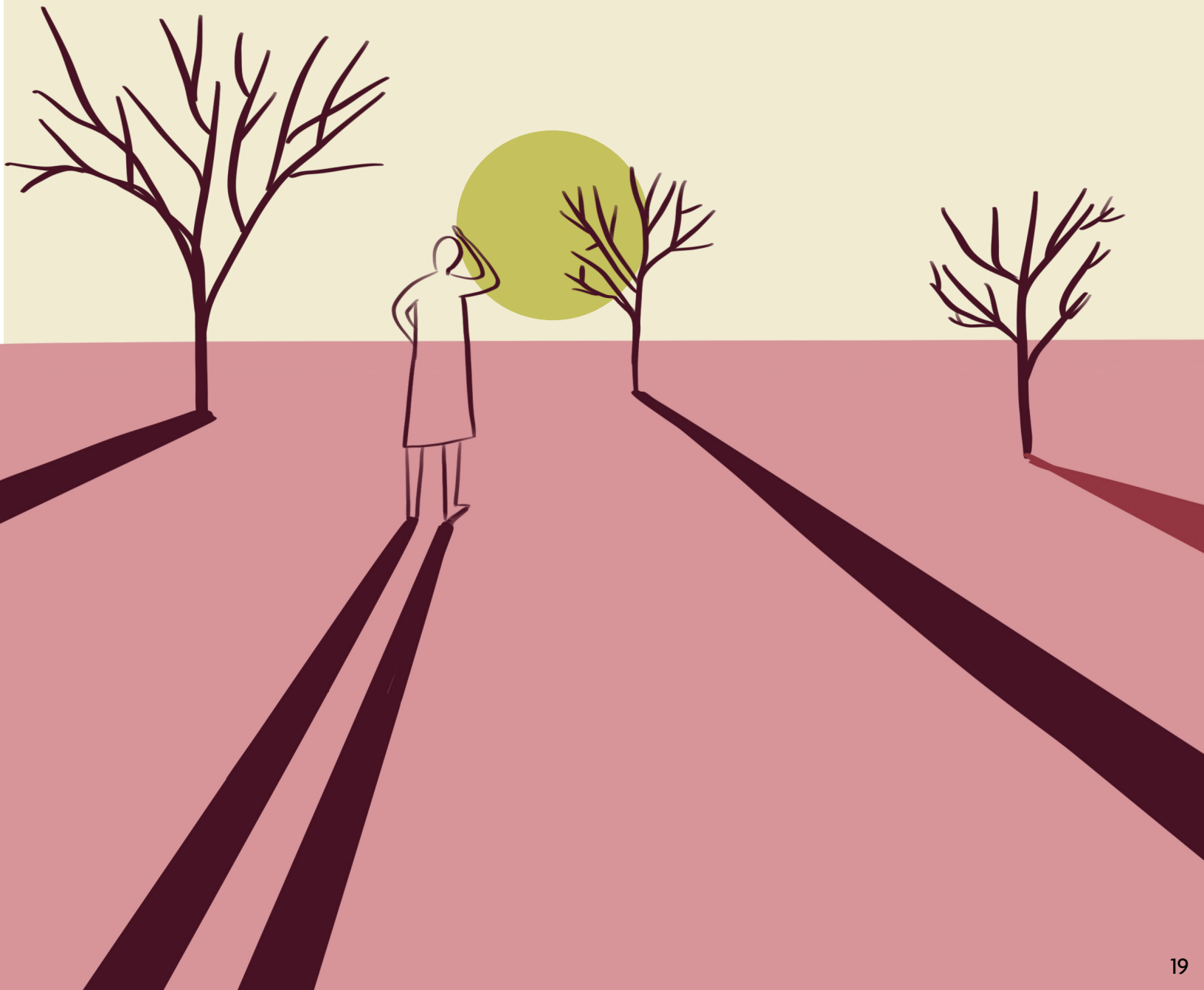
Gender Equality and Environmental Justice

Women’s Fund in Georgia

We know that climate change, environmental pollution and destruction of biodiversity affect the most vulnerable groups in a disproportionate manner, including women, girls, the elderly, and the poor. Moreover, women have a higher incidence and higher degree of poverty than men and it is on the rise. This is why we prioritise the intersection of gender equality and environmental justice in our work. We believe in a data-driven approach to engagement and undertook a substantial research project assessing and analysing the impact of environmental damage on the daily life of women and the role they play in the protection of the environment. We published a handbook for feminist activists demonstrating the ways these two vital issues overlap, including how diminishing resources increases domestic labour and how female empowerment can help address specific needs within the community. The handbook, available for

free download on our website, offers suggestions for creating effective campaigns.

In addition to these publications, our granting in this area supports organisations with the dual aim of advancing women’s rights and ensuring environmental justice. Some of the projects we support include a study of the gender aspects of eco-migration; the creation of a “Sunday Club” to raise awareness about environmental health and safety for rural women; the introduction of energy-efficient appliances to single mothers; a campaign to reduce the chemical toxicity in greenhouses; and an initiative to replace outhouses with biologically clean septic toilets. Our commitment continues with our ongoing project to build an eco-friendly Feminist Residency that will create a safe space providing equal care to humans and nature and introducing the concept of healing justice in a feminist movement to Georgia.



WE INVEST IN HOLISTIC SECURITY

Feminist activists face particular threats to their safety, both online and off, and are especially vulnerable to violence and burnout. To respond to these needs, we support a holistic security approach that integrates physical and digital security with self-care and collective care for marginalised and under-resourced groups. We work from a healing and wellbeing perspective and believe self-care is a strategy to strengthen the movement which can include, for example, psycho-social support groups or wellness workshops with innovative models and methodologies.

Collective Healing as a Method to Facilitate Access to Funding

Women's Fund Armenia

The rise of anti-gender movements has put an inordinate amount of stress on activists, especially those who experience multiple discriminations, making them prone to burnout and other mental health-related challenges. In response, we have reshaped our grantmaking process with a focus on healing, self-care and collective care as a strategy to strengthen and empower women's/feminist organisations and initiatives.

Our engagement involves supporting key partners, many of whom are small, frontline organisations without the ability to advocate for themselves. Through workshops and gatherings on self and collective care, these activists are developing their self-esteem and self-confidence and generating new ideas and projects. We believe investing in collective care is a core value of our feminist philanthropy, in parallel with other principles such as transparency, outreach, and flexibility. Indeed, the challenges we



are facing are structural in nature, and it is more important than ever to engage in creative and healing projects that address underlying causes while simultaneously developing the resilience of women and girls.

In order to be as responsive as possible, we have put into place ongoing needs assessments to ensure access to funding as well as other types of support, including psycho-social support for individuals and marginalised groups; wellbeing workshops and healing circles; and networking opportunities/conferences to discuss the importance of collective care, as well as women's rights and feminism.

WE INVEST IN LEARNING AND EVALUATION

We understand that in order to grow and develop to best serve our varied constituencies, we need to continually develop our internal monitoring and evaluation methodologies. This allows us to comprehend the multiple levels of change that result from our funding model and assess the best qualitative and quantitative impact of our work.

Community of Practice on Monitoring and Evaluation

Slovak-Czech Women's Fund (Slovakia/Czech Republic)

Established in 2004, we are the only local and independent women's fund in Slovakia and Czech Republic. Our goal is a world where women can be sure that their abilities, values, and dreams matter, a world in which they can live their lives in health, safety and according to their own definitions. In addition to grantmaking and fundraising, we aim to cultivate and revive local and national philanthropy, boosting the social engagement of individuals and corporations. We provide a safe space for women's rights organisations in both countries to meet, strategise and prepare common actions.

We believe the creation and implementation of monitoring, evaluation and learning processes are fundamentally related to responsible resource management, reporting, planning, communications, and building partnerships and credibility in a local environment. Our engagement in the Prospera Community of Practice on Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (CoP MEL), a 2018 meeting with over 60 women's

funds' representatives and experts on data collection, monitoring, evaluation, learning, reporting and planning, allowed us to improve our understanding, confidence and skills in this area. In addition, through discussions and exchanges, we were able to learn new techniques to strategise and resolve common challenges and difficulties; facilitate innovation and experimentation; and build relationships with other women's funds.

As a result of our participation in CoP MEL, we increased the efficiency of our internal procedures, using data analysis software to build a more accountable governance system and better impact assessment. In addition, we have strengthened our external communications processes and, inspired by other feminist funds, decided to start a long-term collaboration with media advisors in order to build partnerships with local and national media. This will ultimately lead to better data sharing overall and more effective communication about our work and its impact.

3. RESEARCH & ADVOCACY



WE PROMOTE POLICY AND CULTURAL CHANGE

Strong, autonomous feminist movements are the main drivers of policy change for women's rights, given their ability to articulate needs, shift public opinion, and demand institutional reform. We support advocacy efforts at all levels ranging from local to pan-European.

Yet advancing legal and policy changes, while necessary, is insufficient. Indeed, social norms must evolve as well in order to make a meaningful, lasting difference. Funding cultural work and other forms of advocacy, from arts activism to strategic communications, is essential to change hearts and minds, implement and protect policy gains, and transform oppressive practices.

Fund for Art Projects by Women Artists

Bulgarian Fund For Women

The professional arts and culture sector undervalues and underrepresents work created by women artists. In order to increase their visibility and access to financial resources, we established in 2017 the Fund for Art Projects by Women Artists. This project began with an inquiry sent to 10 Bulgarian state galleries. We learned that 91% of the permanent exhibitions and 78% of the solo shows in the Bulgarian National Gallery were created by men.

In response to this stark disparity, we launched in May 2019, an open call titled "Everything Is Just Fine", which invited women artists from all fields of contemporary visual arts to propose projects for new works dealing with "women's topics"—from the place of women in the art system to their role in society, the family, or the workplace. We received 107 project proposals from more than 100 individuals and collectives and



supported nine artworks for a total amount of €15 350. The artworks were shown at three exhibitions launched on the same day in the capital city of Sofia. More than 100 media publications and interviews highlighted the exhibitions. This exposure led to one participating artist receiving several awards, including the LUCA Film Award for Gender Diversity and the Golden Horseman Award, and another was invited to collaborate in new projects across the globe, resulting in an international solo exhibition.

The second edition of the Fund for Art Projects by Women Artists was launched in July 2022, under the theme “State of Emergency.” It invites artists to reflect on the most pressing topics and the most painful issues of today—after two years of isolation, at a time of economic of crisis and war when a record numbers of people are being displaced and after outright attacks on women’s autonomy and reproductive rights, the need to act and make our voices heard is once again on the agenda.





Most Significant Change Story Technique

Ecumenical Women's Initiative (Croatia and Western Balkans)

In order to empower women and foster both individual and societal change in private and public life, we support women-led grassroots initiatives around peacebuilding and interreligious dialogue. We have recently adopted a new method in our grantee accompaniment, the Most Significant Change Story Technique. This technique gives women who have lived through conflict and hardship the opportunity to find their voice and let it be heard; to share their own stories and be acknowledged; and to find connections and face the future with new determination.

Recent stories documented by EWI include young Roma girls trying to combat the culture of early marriage recounting their difficulties and their desire to take their futures into their own hands. Another story came from a woman whose life had been changed by participation in a workshop which brought together Serbian and Bosniak women from a divided post-war community, where they were able to listen to one another, share their experiences of war, and discover they had much more in common than they ever thought. This Most Significant Change story led to the creation

of a short, animated film in which the Serbian woman describes her experience meeting Bosniak women from “the other side” and how this meaningful encounter led them to broadcast a joint message of peace on national radio, raising public visibility around peacebuilding, reconciliation and of peaceful coexistence.

In the past year, as a result of our grant-making, women and girls experienced an overwhelming increase in feelings of empowerment and agency and gained better knowledge and leadership skills. They also felt that discussing issues considered taboo and improving interfaith understanding resulted in more positive attitudes within their communities. The goal of all our activities is to support and empower women and girls as advocates for women's human rights and as facilitators of interfaith and civil dialogue for peace and reconciliation. In the future, we hope these efforts lead to better advocacy at local and national levels, and to funders and donors adopting a culture of philanthropy that invests in women's empowerment.

WE ENGAGE IN RESEARCH

We engage in research both collectively and as individual funds at the national and regional levels in order to build knowledge, analyse contexts, build capacity, and engage and influence European grantmakers.

On The Right Track

Women's Funds Europe / Prospera

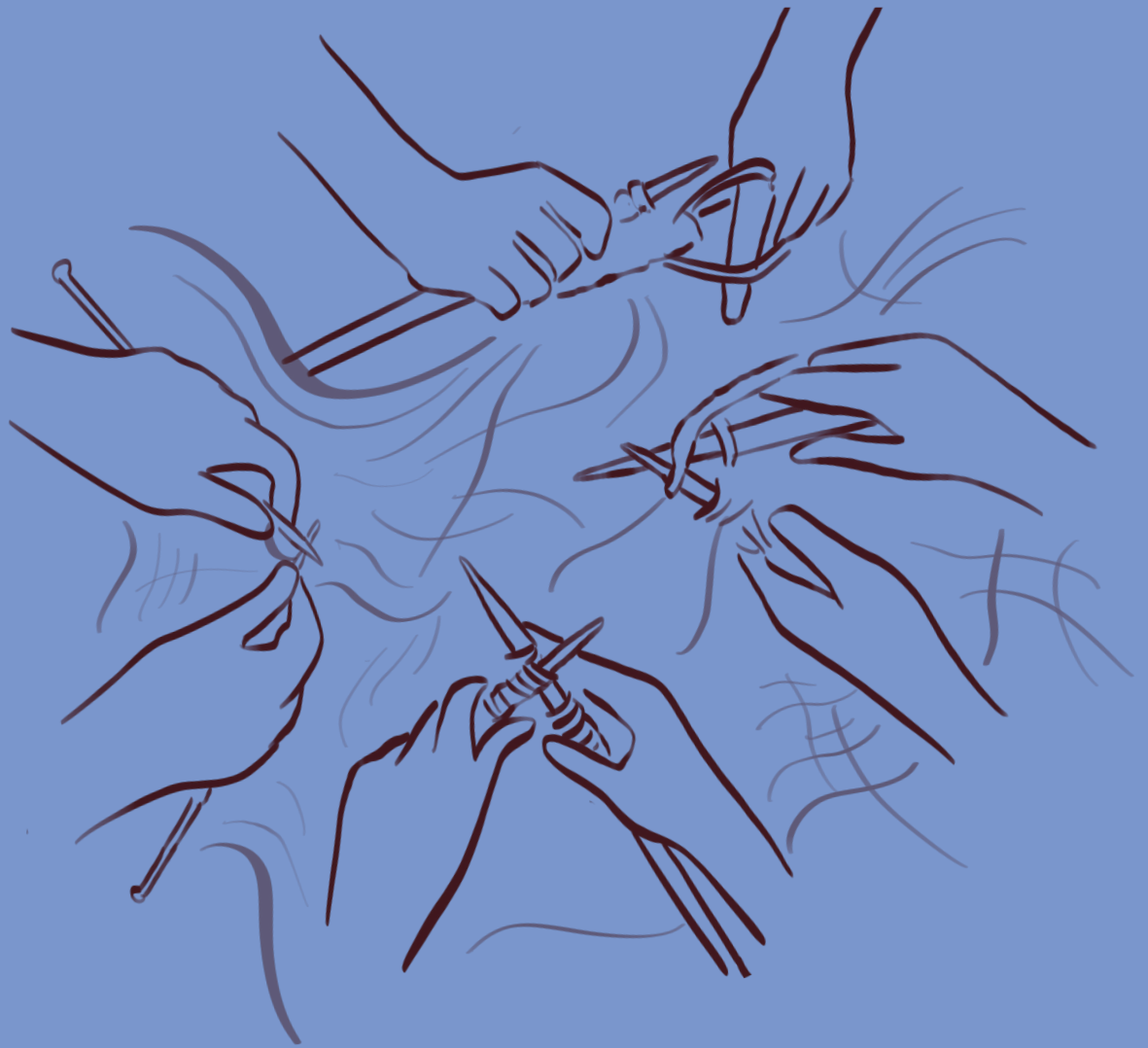
In recent years, conservative and religious groups have gained increased space, strength and influence, which has resulted in threats to the laws that defend the sexual and reproductive rights of women and the LGBTIQ+ community. In response, On the Right Track was launched in 2019 with the participation of 19 women's funds in 23 countries in Europe and Latin America. Its goal is three-part: to counter the rise and strengthening of far-right parties and political and religious fundamentalism; to protect the values of freedom, democracy and diversity; and to foster collaboration among women's funds.

We began with a joint research project which allowed us to put name and face to anti-gender and far-right groups working at both the global and local level. The results demonstrate how far the tentacles of far-right networks reach and identifies methods that activists, movements, and funds are using to defend themselves and

advocate for women's rights in the context of extreme violence.

As a result of this collaboration, women's funds have provided donations to more than 143 organisations across Europe and Latin America. Our grantmaking supports strategies that include identifying and mapping local groups to share knowledge; uniting organisations in the fields of sexual and reproductive rights, migrant women, LGBTIQ+, and human rights; providing grassroots groups with secure digital tools to manage their information and combat cyber violence; training and advising groups in strategic communications; offering and providing feminist legal aid to activists who have been harassed and denounced by anti-gender groups; coordinating a network with feminist journalists who are interested in reporting on these threats; and promoting self-care and collective care by organisations so that their work can be sustained over time.

4. BOLSTERING FEMINIST PHILANTHROPY THROUGH AN INTERSECTIONAL LENS



WE CREATE A CULTURE OF FEMINIST PHILANTHROPY

Women's Funds understand an autonomous, resilient feminist movement is the best way to fight against oppression and marginalisation, transform behaviours and systems, and advance social progress for all. To that end, we mobilise foundations and motivate individuals to support feminist activism and its values. In addition, we devote substantial energy to advocating greater engagement with international networks to encourage prioritisation of gender issues. We regularly participate as experts in philanthropic donor networks such as Philea-Philanthropy Europe Association (formerly European Foundation Centre) in addition to social justice donor networks, such as Ariadne, European Funders for Social Change and Human Rights, and EDGE Funders Alliance.

Fellowship/Grants Programme for Women's Rights Mobilisers

Mediterranean Women's Fund

We believe individual support for the most engaged activists is as important as support for groups and our strategy is to bolster the movement at every level. It is essential, especially in this climate of backlash and repression, that individuals be encouraged to unleash their talents as mobilisers, offering strength, hope, and ideas through their courageous and tenacious actions and their deep faith that change is possible. Supporting these dynamic feminist activists is critical, so that they can continue dedicating their extraordinary energy to the movement.

Our innovative new grants programme for change-makers lauds the immense work that highly invested feminist activists are doing, often at the cost of their health and stability. We award fellowships of up to €6 000 per year for exceptional activists,

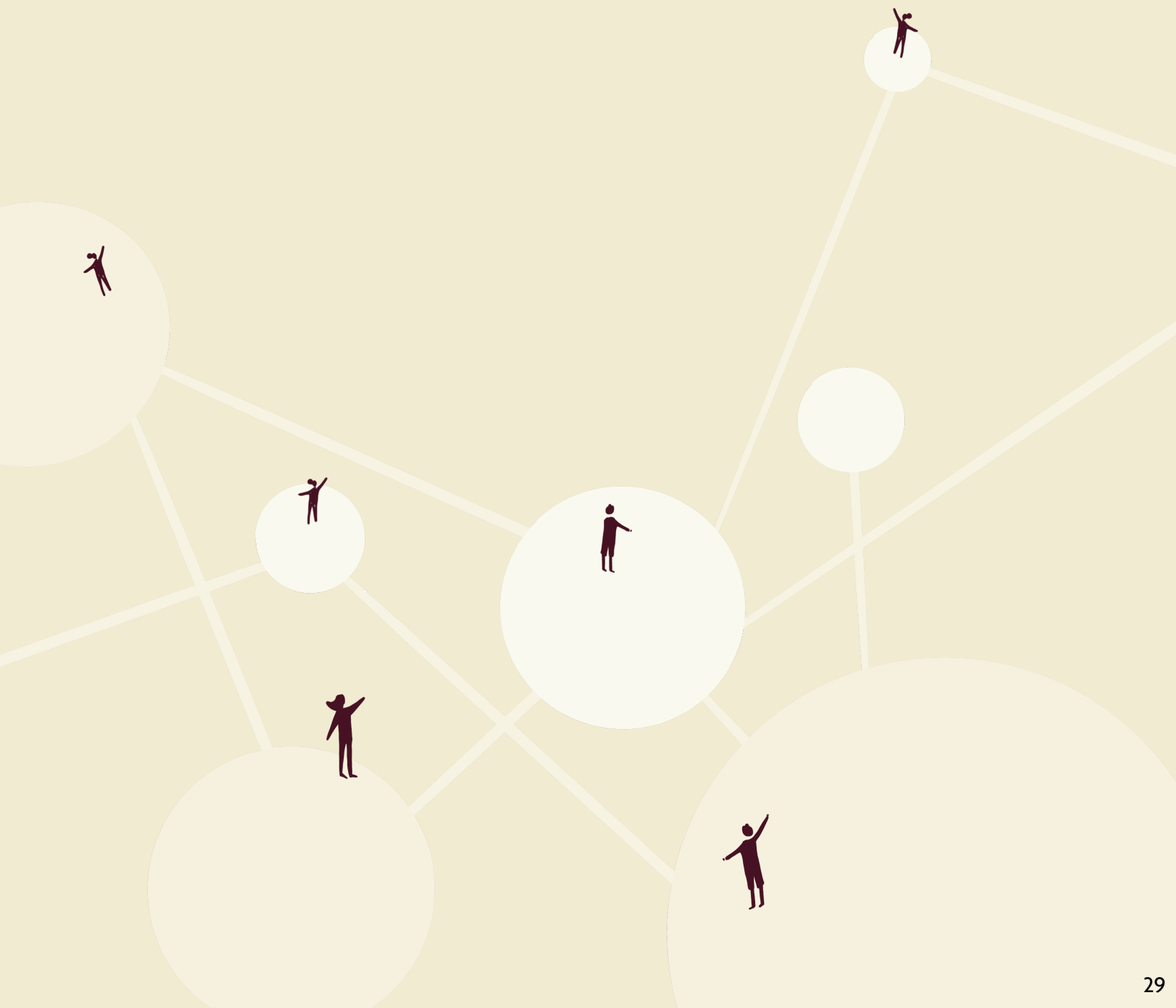
allowing them to develop and consolidate their work. It is extremely important for us to thank these change-makers and give back to them what they give to others, multiplying strength through care.

The idea for this programme came to us in 2018 when we met in Casablanca a young Moroccan woman we had trained and whose immense capacity to mobilise the women of her village with her association was well known. She told us about the extreme difficulty of her work for a miserable salary but also about her strategies of resistance and her ideas for organising her fellow agricultural workers. We understood that the women's movement would lose one of its precious elements if we didn't intervene to support her. We provided her with a grant, renewable every year, which doubles her previous salary allowing her to

dedicate herself to the awareness-raising and mobilisation of women in these very conservative rural areas.

Other activists have used these fellowship grants for their well-being via a range

of activities including therapy sessions, stress management, and holidays so they can rebuild their strength, regain their balance, and continue fighting for the advancement of gender equality.



WE BREAK DOWN FUNDING SILOS

The concept of intersectionality recognises that people have multiple, layered identities, including but not limited to race, gender, sexuality, class, and ability. Oppression is exponentially compounded for those with multiple marginalised identities, and we seek to address the systemic injustice they face. Intersectionality enables communities to build power together, creating the most impact. We encourage funding across movements and collaboration with different women's organisations working on different issues (the environment, LGBTIQ+, antiracism, etc.)

Visibilising Intersectional Work in LBQ Movements

Mama Cash

Around the world, LGBTIQ people are organising and building towards a more inclusive and safe reality for all. Nevertheless, funding to support their work continues to fall behind the reality of the increasingly hostile and violent contexts in which they operate. In partnership with Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, we initiated a multi-year partnership to document the global landscape of LBQ-identified women and non-binary people's organising, highlighting their experiences around resource mobilisation to make a compelling case for increased and effective funding.

To document this landscape, we organised in-person consultations, conducted interviews, and developed surveys. Our research generated data from over 370 LBQ-led groups around the world and over 60 donors. The resulting report, "Vibrant Yet Under-Resourced," shows that there has been tremendous growth

in LBQ organising, with 61% of organisations formed since 2010. We also found that most LBQ-led initiatives are working across social movements, contributing to progress on various pressing social issues, such as women's rights and sexual and reproductive health, underscoring their intersectional approach. Nevertheless, 72% have annual budgets under \$50 000 and 40% have budgets of less than \$5 000.

Funding to support this work remains siloed. For example, of the surveyed donors that provide broader thematic funding intended to be inclusive of LBQ communities, two-thirds indicated that they have not implemented strategies to ensure that their funding actually reaches LBQ-led organisations. In turn, LBQ-led organisations reported that they experience difficulty in accessing funding outside traditional LGBTIQ-focused portfolios—such as funding to advance racial justice, economic justice, youth and children's

rights—although they work in these areas. Overall, our research findings point to an opportunity for donors to adjust funding strategies and practices to more effectively

resource work that is making a powerful contribution towards a world that is inclusive, respectful, and safe for all.



WE LIFT UP THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

We believe that movements with intergenerational and collective leadership are the best model for sustainable activism. We support training the next generation of feminist activists, engaging in transitional processes with organisations that nurture leaders from the most-impacted communities.

Feminist Training in Collective Intelligence

Mediterranean Women's Fund

Since our founding in January 2008, we have been committed to strengthening the women's movement in all countries of the Mediterranean basin. We tackle this challenge from three angles: financial, strategic and educational.

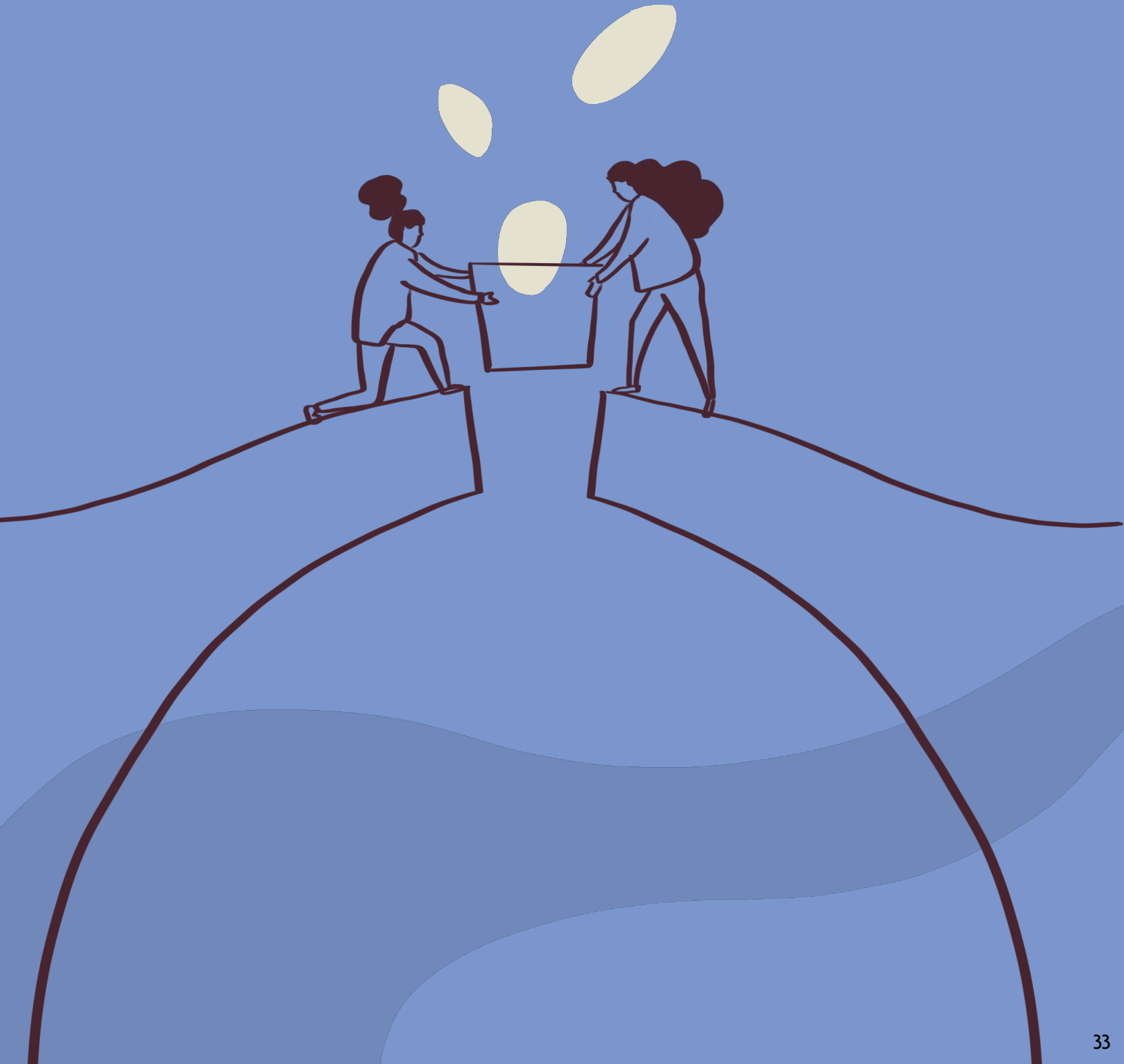
Our innovative flagship educational programme, launched in 2012, is the Feminist Training in Collective Intelligence (FTCI), a 15-day long training session with members of women's groups from four countries: Algeria, France, Morocco, and Tunisia. Its goal is to strengthen the personal and relational capacities of its young participants, aged 18 to 35, equipping them with the tools to move beyond individual or political differences and work together to consolidate the women's movement over the next decade. Since its inception, the programme has trained upwards of 200 young women.

FTCI's approach encompasses three dimensions: individual, intellectual, and societal. Through three interactive sessions, spread out over five days each, participants work

with the training team to: understand their emotions and skills, building their self-confidence; study feminist theory and communication techniques, including conflict management; learn to value their actions and positively acknowledge the actions of other groups; and put their collective intelligence towards building a movement that defends the rights of women without fear. Much of this is accomplished through games, role-playing, and theatre exercises, to make the experience both fun and informative.

By creating a safe space for these young change-makers, we allow them the time to get to know themselves and each other, to strengthen their individual and shared capacities, and to forge life-long bonds that will help them in their collective activism.

5. COLLABORATION & NETWORKING



WE FORGE STRONG RELATIONSHIPS TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE AND BEST PRACTICES

Making connections is a critical part of the strategy of each Women's Fund. We are deeply committed to collaborative processes and evaluation methods to inform our decision-making and improve our work. We facilitate collaboration and networking among our grantees and support networking spaces in the movement. In addition, we carry out a number of collaborative activities including networking, strategy meetings, team-building exercises, convenings and break-out sessions at conferences. By coming together to share and learn, we reinforce our solidarity and mutually empower each other to multiply our impact.

Knocking on EU's Door

WFE/Prospera

In 2016, Women's Funds Europe (WFE) launched "Knocking on EU's Door," an initiative centered on building capacity to engage with and influence European grantmakers. To further these aims, members collectively carried out a number of activities, including networking, strategy meetings, team-building exercises, and break-out sessions at conferences.

To gain a deeper understanding of the European Commission funding process, WFE commissioned a research study, "Knocking on EU's door: An exploration of EU funding for gender equality" (March 2019). The report examined two key questions: how much money is available and who benefits from it, and how can women's funds and grassroots organisations increase their share of this funding in the future? The

resulting research provided many timely and crucial elements allowing Women's Funds to collaborate, advocate, and engage in fundraising activities strategically and effectively.

Following publication of the report, WFE has held extensive discussions with the main EU institutions, including the European Commission, European Parliament and European Council, on key policy areas, funding for women's empowerment and the advancement of women's rights. Engagement is currently taking place at the highest level with the special advisers to the European Commissioner for Equality and International Partnerships, the Chair and Members of the FEMM Committee of the European Parliament and relevant pan-European and global agencies, including

the European Institute of Gender Equality and UN Women, to shape funding priorities for the next seven years.

The “Knocking on EU’s Door” initiative culminated in a communications campaign to provide compelling information about

how and why Women’s Funds operate and the vital role CSOs play in promoting and advancing women’s rights and gender equality in Europe and beyond.



RECOMMENDATIONS

To maximise impactful results with grassroots CSOs across Europe while bolstering a culture of feminist philanthropy, engage with Women's Funds because they are best able to:

1. Support organisations led by those most-impacted as they are the experts in the field.
2. Connect with grassroots organisations that may not have access to other sources of funding.
3. Forge strong relationships with partners to enhance collaboration and networking and lift up the next generation of leaders.
4. Balance flexible long-term core funding with emergency funds to boost sustainability and manage crisis situations.
5. Break down funding silos to increase access and promote intersectionality.
6. Pilot creative learning and evaluation methods to better assess, reflect and communicate positive outcomes.
7. Invest in holistic security and collective and individual care to protect activists and avoid burnout.
8. Engage in quantitative and qualitative research to enable both policy and social change.

ABOUT PROSPERA-INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF WOMEN'S FUNDS

Prospera brings together 44 autonomous and independent Women's Funds, organised into regional clusters, which are led by and for women, girls, trans, intersex, and gender non-binary people in all their diversity. Our core values are feminist and rooted in justice, equality, respect, and accountability; these values are expressed through an intersectional approach towards issues and constituencies, mutual empowerment, solidarity, collaboration, and trust.

We provide grants to organisations and activist initiatives led by women, girls, trans, intersex, and gender non-binary people in 178 countries working at local, national, regional, and global levels. We support efforts that address key gender equality issues identified as critical areas of concern by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, including: environment, power, bodily autonomy, economic resilience, violence, education, health, media, technology, and armed conflict, among others.

For more information:

info@prospera-inwf.org

prospera_europe_ext@framalistes.org