

Stories of Change AWID Forums

Executive
Summary



awid

AWID Forums are global convenings of feminist, women's rights and social justice leaders and advocates from a wide array of social movements. To review why AWID Forums matter, we asked activists from around the world and collated their stories, impressions and memories.

The AWID Forums contribute to strengthen feminist movements in the world – coming together energizes, mingling creates new colours. Coming together rejuvenates and creates joy.

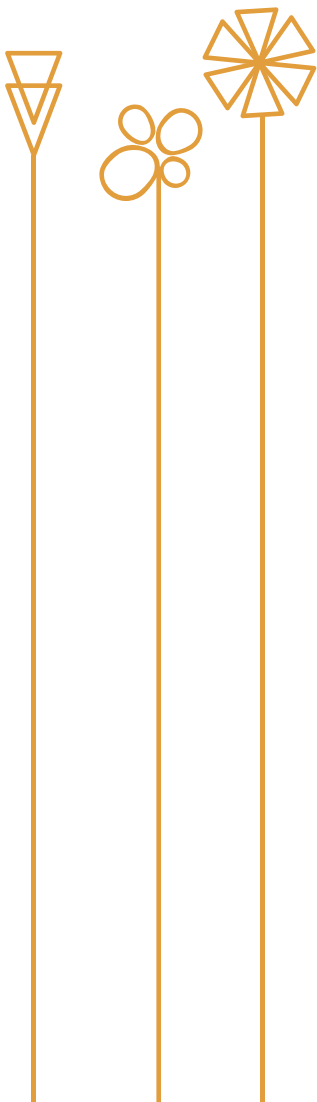
The Forums are global 'rooms of our own' where we can speak without fear. Spaces of freedom and protection at the same time. Agoras where the world's diversities become visible. Viewpoints that provide a panoramic vista of feminist movements, and megaphones that amplify our voices.

What do the Forums bring?

In short, the experience of a better world for a few days and in a single location.

Because feminist struggles are global and local at the same time, because the global perspective exposes the root causes of injustices and because the AWID Forums break the entrenched North-South hierarchies, the Forums bring a sense of being a movement and the strength resulting from it, along with a perspective of what that movement looks like.

At AWID Forums, where marginalized agendas take centerstage, we build solidarity and there is often a seismic collapse of prejudice. This is due to the gathering of a wide range of diversities, the myriad of pieces of the world and the emergence of an awareness of 'otherness' in one welcoming space.



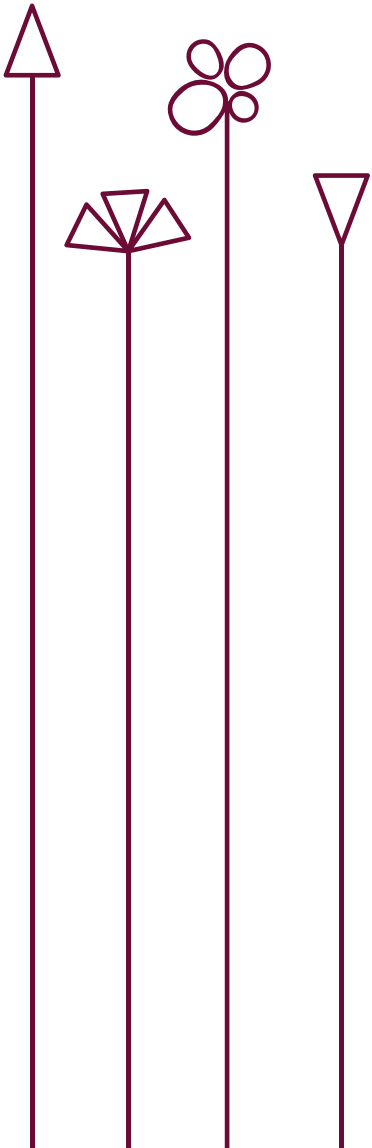
Being in a loving space is conducive to acquiring knowledge. This is why at the Forums one may learn about practical issues as well as how to question the meaning of life.

The Forums have been spaces – labs – from which thousand of feminist initiatives have been created. A workshop, a chat, a meeting have sown seeds that months or years later germinated in different corners of the world.

All this is possible because the Forums are safe, protected and freeing spaces at the same time. Spaces in which our diversities bring us together instead of separating us. But also because they are fun, bold spaces where the unexpected comes out to play. None of this is casual – behind each Forum there are large teams of people spending more than a year exploring how to include, build with, diversify and integrate that myriad of perspectives, an alchemy that results in what many of our interviewees called “the Forums’ magic”.

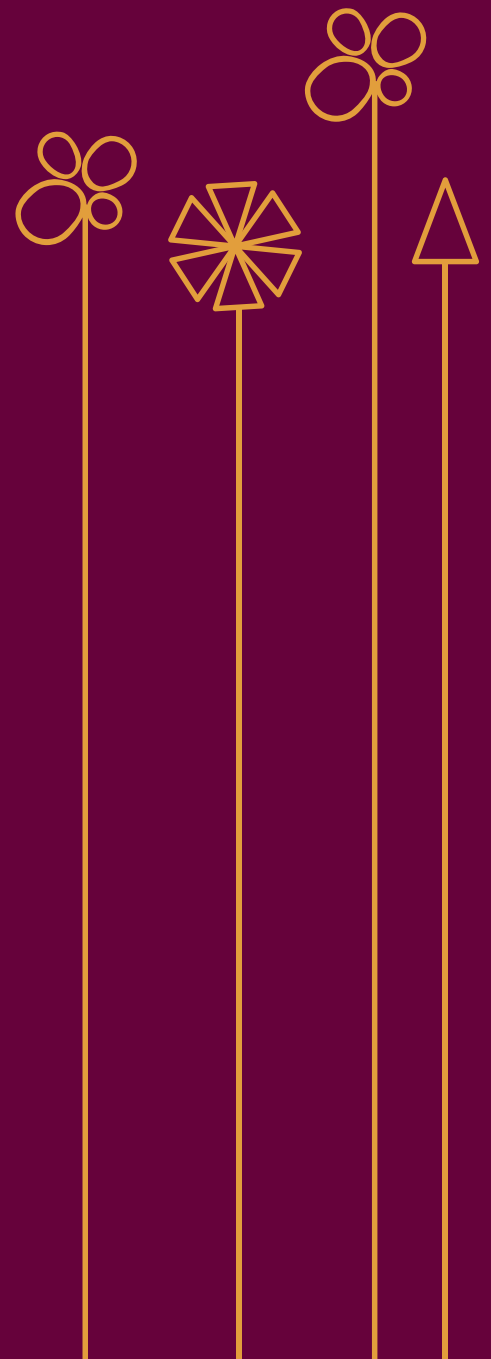
The Forums have limitations, like all initiatives do. Even in areas where huge efforts have been made, like interpretation or accessibility, there is still a way to go. Our interviewees have also been self-critical in how all of us, as part of the feminist movement, need to be bolder and leave hegemonic thinking (and practices) behind including in how we build and participate in the Forums.

And, of course, the Forums have a future that takes the shape of inclusive hybrid formats to honour our feminist movements and the planet. But what they will never lose are the doses of magic, encouragement and joy that they bring to so many who fight for justice across the world. ✨



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