

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



awid

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About us

The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) is a global, feminist, membership, movement-support organization.

For over 40 years, AWID has been a part of an incredible ecosystem of feminist movements working to achieve gender justice and women's human rights worldwide.





**From our
Co-Executive
Directors**



Dearest community of fabulous feminists,

For us at AWID, 2023 was the first year of our new Strategic Plan, “Fierce Feminisms: Together We Rise”, which speaks to the unapologetic drive needed to change the world, and the plurality of feminisms and movements in our ecosystem. Our main areas of work - challenging anti-rights forces, building feminist economies, and resourcing feminist movements - remain as relevant as ever. We keep our pulse on the latest developments and uphold our mandate to build knowledge and mobilize action in service of feminist movements, such as defending trans rights at the United Nations, demystifying gender impact investing and amplifying voices of domestic workers.

Of course, all year we’ve been laying the groundwork for the 15th International AWID Forum, which takes place in Bangkok, Thailand, 2-5 December 2024. It has been a participatory process from the start, and we take this opportunity to thank AWID members, partners and hundreds of feminist activists from a diversity of movements for your time, wisdom and generosity in co-shaping the AWID Forum together.

Feminist solidarity is our response to situations of crisis. To say that the world is on fire is an understatement. In the course of 2023, the volatile situation in Sudan has escalated greatly. The unspeakable genocide in Gaza, in the context of ongoing colonization and occupation of Palestine, continues as we write these lines. Climate crises, militarization, and extractivism all persist as threats to people and the planet. Building stronger movements and people power is a vision to which we contribute daily, through AWID membership, teach-ins, resourcing advocacy and more.

In May 2023, the World Health Organization declared the end of the COVID-19 global emergency. We are not, however, going “back to normal”. We have learned many important lessons about accessibility and disability justice, and are committed to continue realizing them.

July 2023 was the hottest recorded month for global average temperature. While an important reminder of the crisis we face, climate justice cannot be reduced to just numbers, it must be a comprehensive agenda for social and gender justice, encompassing all aspects of our planet and all living beings inhabiting it. Climate gradually becomes an integral part of our work across all areas. From centering climate in feminist economies to advocating for resourcing feminist movements - an urgent task, given the chronic underfunding of feminist, indigenous and Global South movements who are on the frontlines of climate crisis - we are finding solutions.

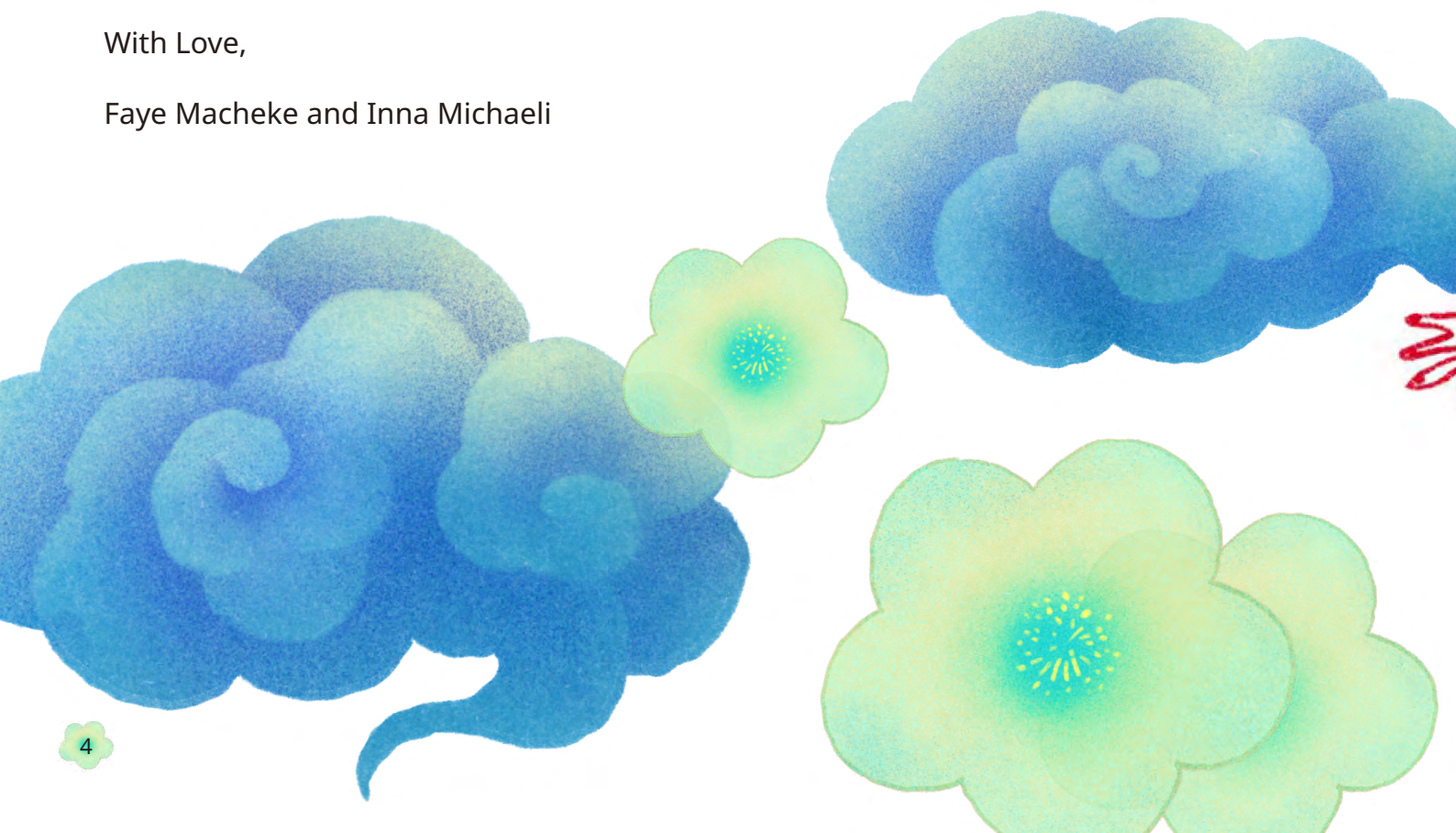
Finally, 2023 was a crucial year for the entry of artificial intelligence in our lives. As we examine big tech and digital capitalism with a feminist lens, and take note of the political challenges of new forms of surveillance, we celebrate the powerful feminist organizing to “[take back the tech](#)” and to democratize digital landscapes in the service of liberatory agendas. We foresee new challenges ahead of us, and we rely on each other’s knowledge and expertise.

We give our heartfelt gratitude to the learnings, encounters, moments of joy and grief, of inspiration and connection that we shared last year with all of you — fantastic team and committed Board, feminist movements in all our force, AWID members and partner organizations around the world, trusted funding partners, and feminist allies in complex institutions.

We live to fight another day, and that’s a lot.

With Love,

Faye Macheke and Inna Michaeli






Art: María José Mesías
2023 Feminist Calendar

Highlights

Our new Strategic Plan, *Fierce Feminisms: Together We Rise 2023-2027*, is not only an opportunity for AWID to pivot and be responsive, but also a time to enact brave actions, foster space for collective care, and respond to emerging crises faced by feminist movements globally.

In the first year of this strategic period, we:



Began deep planning for the 15th **AWID International Forum** taking place in Bangkok, Thailand, 2-5 December, 2024. With this global gathering of over 3,500 feminists and allies, we aim to build greater collective power, solidarity and the resilience we need to continue changing the world.

Continued our **solidarity with feminists across borders**. In October 2023, we called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza as we recognize Palestine as a feminist issue central to struggles for justice, decolonization and liberation. We co-organized a series of Political Solidarity and Feminist Teach-Ins with Purposeful, Regional Coalition of Women Human Rights Defenders in the Middle East and North Africa (WHRD-MENA), and Palestinian Feminist Collective.

Seeded the groundwork for a new and updated ***Where Is The Money (WITM) for Feminist Organizing?*** survey available in six languages; and began revamping the ***Who Can Fund Me*** database.

Embarked on a new research **project that uncovers anti-rights actors** and trends in the Southwest Asia and Northern Africa (SWANA) region.



Changed the narrative built around [Gender Impact Investing \(GII\)](#) as a solution to gender inequality by producing a deeply researched report and sharing it in strategic spaces where funding and investment are discussed.

Conducted a **series of eight regional sharing circles** as intimate spaces for exchanges on local and regional realities and strategies to advance feminist climate justice.

Attended, organized and intervened in general and satellite meetings at the United Nations' Binding Treaty on Transnational Corporations and Human Rights as a member of **Feminists For A Binding Treaty (F4BT)**.

Continued to demystify the United Nations spaces for feminists around the world at the [Human Rights Council \(HRC\)](#) and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

Held the **Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women (SR VAW)** to **account** for advancing discriminatory policies against trans people and collected over 1,700 signatures for the public statement: ["There is no place for anti-trans narratives in the UN."](#)

Launched our [first ever Feminist Calendar](#), which was the most popular download of the year with over 1,000 downloads across English, Spanish and French.

Portal to Feminist Power at CSW67

Keeping in mind this year's CSW theme, "Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls," AWID challenged the corporate capture of our rights and systems by publishing an extensive article on [Why Feminists Reject Big Tech](#) and a review of the growing presence of anti-rights actors.

Our [Portal to Feminist Power](#) linked New York, Bangalore, and Nairobi, and co-created a feminist alternative vision to technology. The hybrid portal provided an immersive, intimate experience. Designed with a full-body view and cutting-edge technology, feminists connecting in each location shared that they felt like they were physically in a room together.

Feminist portals opened an opportunity to decentralize from New York, enabling labour rights activists in Bangalore and Nairobi to co-create sessions such as the [Feminists Fight Back! Strategizing with Intersectional Movement Organizers](#). The session saw participation from domestic and garment workers unions, raising issues around feminist organizing in oppressive political climates.

All sessions can be found on [AWID's Youtube channel](#).



Activists in front of AWID's CSW portal in Bangalore, India, in March 2023.

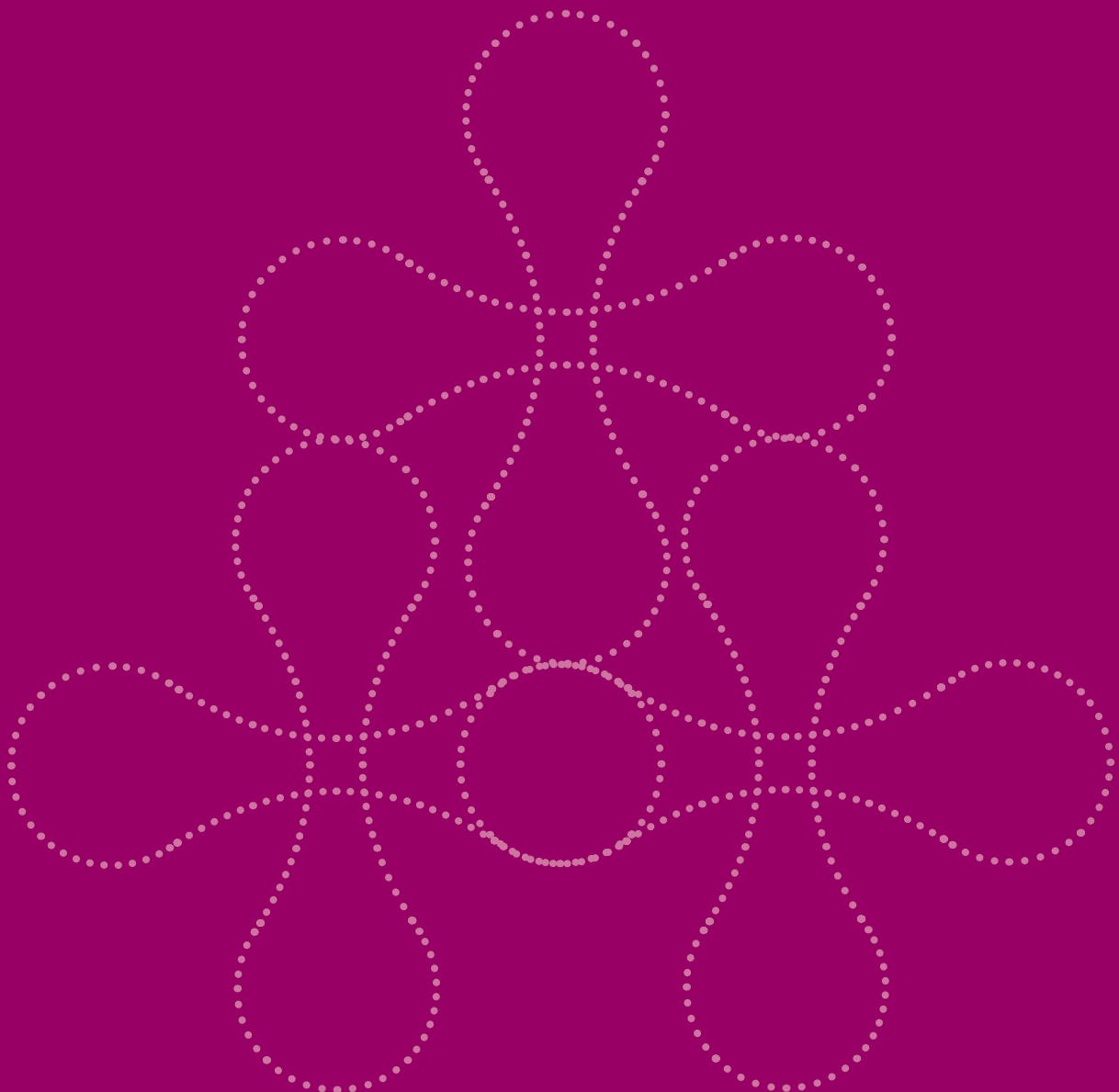


It was such a lovely experience for us to be co-creating art and resistance with you in New York, and virtually. We are so grateful to you for letting us explore possibilities with the portal at CSW, and for supporting us so gently and flexibly through the entire process, and in bringing our collective ideas to life. Truly, the journey has been filled with such joy!

A participant from New York,
Portal to Feminist Power at CSW67

Gather

**Feminist movements weave
closer inter-connections, thereby
strengthening collective power
and solidarity**



My Body Is Mine

I am a 51-year-old Paraguayan with three wonderful children and two grandkids. I got into sex work at 21 and stayed in that corner for 17 years. I am a feminist, a human rights defender and a sex worker, but I did not always think of myself like that.

In 2001, the Urban Police was created in Paraguay. They terrorized us and took our money. The press chased us and revealed the faces of our *compañeras*. This was the beginning of human rights violations against me and my colleagues. I felt powerless and angry.

In 2004, a fellow activist invited me to a convening in Argentina. Going there was like coming out of the closet. I met leaders from all over Latin America and the Caribbean. I came back recharged. Together with my colleagues, we founded a women sex workers' association.

Our association is managed and led by sex workers. We are active in nine regions of Paraguay, and we provide gynecological care, free condoms and lubricants. We still have a long way to go, but we have served over 3,400 sex workers.

When you feed your family, even the dog eats, until they find out what you do. Our families are part of the society that stigmatizes and discriminates against us. When they find out that you are a sex worker, you are no longer their favorite aunt or daughter.

As we recruited more *compañeras*, we began to clash with some feminists who asked us: *Why are you prostitutes?*

They would chant: *My body is mine!* And we would ask: *If your body is yours then who owns my body?*

Some *compañeras* didn't want to be called feminists. They asked: *What does it mean to be a feminist?*

With the help of AWID, we conducted a series of feminist talks that enabled us to see that when one seeks to transform patriarchal conditions, one is a feminist.

A deep realization set in: *All of us sex workers, who run and lead the organization, have always been feminists.*

We began to say: *Of course, my body is mine! I decide and I decide to be a sex worker.*

**Based on an interview with a sex worker and human rights activist, Paraguay.*

Art: Nafisa Ferdous,
2023 Feminist Calendar



Our members fuel our work.

When we nurture and strengthen AWID membership, we prioritize meaningful connections, expand and diversify our networks of solidarity and mutual support.

In the past year, the [AWID Community](#), an online social networking platform, has served as a reliable go-to platform for over 1,200 AWID Community members. The Street Team, a self-formed group from within the Community, promotes engagement and curates content while continually focusing on safety and inclusion on the platform. In 2023, when the Ugandan Parliament passed the Anti-Homosexuality Bill, the Street Team reached out to Ugandan LGBTQI+ members to offer support, and help build resources.



As of December 2023, AWID has 5,986 members (**498 institutions** and **5488 individuals**). The year saw a doubling of our institutional members and a 10% increase in our individual membership. **60% of** our members are based in the **Global South** with young feminists making up over half of our membership.





The more popular AWID member **mixers and teach-ins** covered the following issues: Digital Security and Rights, Trans-exclusionary Narratives, Labor Rights and Climate Justice.

“At the age of 18, I invested my one year’s savings to attend the AWID Forum in Brazil. There, I began my journey as an activist. I had rich experiences and started connecting with women from my country that I did not know. Once back, we kept in touch and set up a program that is ongoing focused on the process of well-being aimed at women in an Afro-centered methodology. The focus is to support women in a conscious, body positive and healthy way.”

AWID’s Theory of Change (ToC) discussion participant

We believe feminist energies must be safeguarded.

The 15th AWID International Forum sits at the heart of our strategic outcome of Gather.

Evolving from a national conference of 800 attendees to a large international hybrid gathering, the AWID Forum has the power to not only facilitate processes to influence thinking and set agendas for feminist movements, but it has served as a balm, a restorative space for many since its first iteration in 1983. And as vibrant as our feminist energies are, we do not believe in taking them for granted. With that in mind the [15th AWID International Forum’s theme is *Rising Together: Connect, Heal, Thrive.*](#)

At the Forum, there is so much dancing, so much laughing, all the practical stuff, but also the spiritual stuff. Why is that important? Because we are human beings. Strategies and systems are the tools of machine-making but before the work we do, we are the people we are. We live in bodies that break, grieve, feel joy and laugh.

OluTimehin Kukoyi, Nigeria

In keeping with the AWID Forum's tradition of rotating regions', the 15th gathering will be in Asia. We visited many countries in the region, consulted feminist movements, and conducted detailed assessments of logistics, accessibility, safety, visas and more. Selecting Bangkok as the site was based on logistical ease for travel (including visa requirements) and accommodation for over 3500 participants, and to meet our ambition of hosting the most accessible AWID Forum to date.

From June to December of 2023, AWID brought together committees that informed the design, planning and risk assessment of the 2024 Forum.

January - April

The year started with the continuation of finding potential Forum locations in Asia. The AWID team met with diverse feminists, movements and organizations in each location to better understand regional realities and value of hosting the Forum.

May

We announced that the 15th AWID Forum would take place in Bangkok, Thailand at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre.

June

Called for the first Forum Dreaming session where 87 AWID members helped shape the thematic planning and priorities.

August

The Accessibility Committee was established. We brought together four AWID staff and eight activists representing diverse movements, focused on a range of issues including disability justice, harm reduction, living with HIV, and trans rights.

November

Launched a Call For Activities and held our second Forum Dreaming session where members gathered to discuss possible Forum activities.

Our team also conducted a site visit and planned the layout. The Thailand Forum Committee met in-person for the first time, and the Accessibility Committee audited the venue and the surrounding hotels.

December

We were excited and humbled to receive over 1,700 applications in English, Spanish, French, Arabic and Thai.

We work in coalitions to further feminist demands in multilateral spaces.

It has always been clear to us at AWID that our chances of making an impact increase through collaborations and coalitions. As part of these coalitions, we build knowledge through feminist analyses and propositions to the issues being discussed; find commonalities, and forge paths towards collective action.

Feminists For A Binding Treaty (F4BT)

The United Nations Binding Treaty on Transnational Corporations and Human Rights, now in its ninth year of negotiations, is the only global multilateral space where movements can hold transnational corporations accountable. Yet drafting a treaty is a long process filled with technical legal language, often inaccessible to many feminist organizations, and worsened by increased corporate lobbying of governments.

AWID co-founded **Feminists for A Binding Treaty (F4BT)** to further strengthen feminist organizations' positions in this crucial space, ensure the presence of the feminist language; and to place women and gender-diverse people at the center of the treaty drafting process.

June

At the Binding Treaty Indaba in Johannesburg, AWID held an in-person strategy meeting of the F4BT members to rise with coordinated strength in October 2023 in Geneva.



**Five Reasons
the Binding
Treaty Needs
To Be Feminist**

October

Our role in organizing and facilitating an initial F4BT members' meeting ensured that the feminists present in Geneva were on the same page for the week's strategy.

We attended and intervened in the general sessions, and organized various side events for F4BT members.

We developed a number of joint communications including a pre-session blog published on the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre website and included in their weekly newsletter with 16,500 subscribers.

Since October, five more organizations joined the coalition taking the membership to just under 40.

Care Manifesto

It has been a well-documented social fact that 'care' is integral to any economy. Yet mainstream conversations on care work still overlook the participation of care and domestic workers. According to domestic rights activists, this exclusion is a consequence of race and class barriers, and it undermines the integrity, and legal and social protections of care workers across the world. In the context of widespread co-option of the language of "care economy" by funders in multilateral spaces, AWID sees the importance of feminists recognizing domestic work as work.

May

In collaboration with International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF), the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW), Egna Legna and International Network for Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-net), AWID organized two exchanges with domestic workers to shape narratives on care, and collectively imagine anti-racist care economies. Participants included domestic workers living in India, Trinidad and Tobago, Lebanon, Hong Kong, Brazil, Guatemala, South Africa, and Bangladesh.

July

Positioning domestic and care workers as the experts, AWID organized a hybrid roundtable discussion with International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) at the International Association for Feminist Economics (IAFFE) Conference in Cape Town, South Africa.

October

We developed the Care Manifesto, in collaboration with IDWF. The Manifesto is a call to feminist and social movements to rethink the economy with care at its center.

The
Care Manifesto



Observatory on the Universality of Rights (OURs)

The Observatory on the Universality of Rights (OURs) is a working group set up in 2015 to analyze, monitor, share information and disrupt anti-rights agendas that threaten international and regional human rights systems. AWID is a convening member of this coalition.

In 2023, we organized three “fault-line” conversations to candidly discuss some of the main areas of divergence in feminist movements. Additionally, our team also conducted an in-person strategy meeting for the OURs members in Naivasha, Kenya in November to prepare for the Commission on the Status of Women in 2024.

Count Me In! (CMI!) 2.0 Consortium

CMI! supports movements to be resilient and leverage their power to create change from local to global, and from global to local. To build and sustain movements, CMI! employs the following strategies:

1. Diverting funding (core and emergency) to women’s rights organizations and women human rights defenders from big donors.
2. Supporting women’s rights organizations to become stronger, more resourced and coordinated at advocating for their rights. We also help them connect to other movements and build alliances.
3. Leading lobby and advocacy for donors to provide more and better funding for women-led organizations; and for political and societal actors to push for social, legal and policy change to reach gender equality.



Disrupt

**Feminist movements effectively
challenge, disrupt and transform
systems of international
governance and global economy**

Art Is Our Home

I work at the intersection of art and social justice; I believe our experiences make us feminist. As someone who is queer and trans, existence itself becomes resistance.

People often say: “These queer and trans issues are a foreign imposition”, but I think it’s colonialism that has made us invisible in history, right? I paint because I want to tell my story and my community’s stories. Painting becomes a medium for me to make evident that queer and trans people have always existed. For trans people, in a world that denies us everything, art becomes our home, our way of telling our own stories.

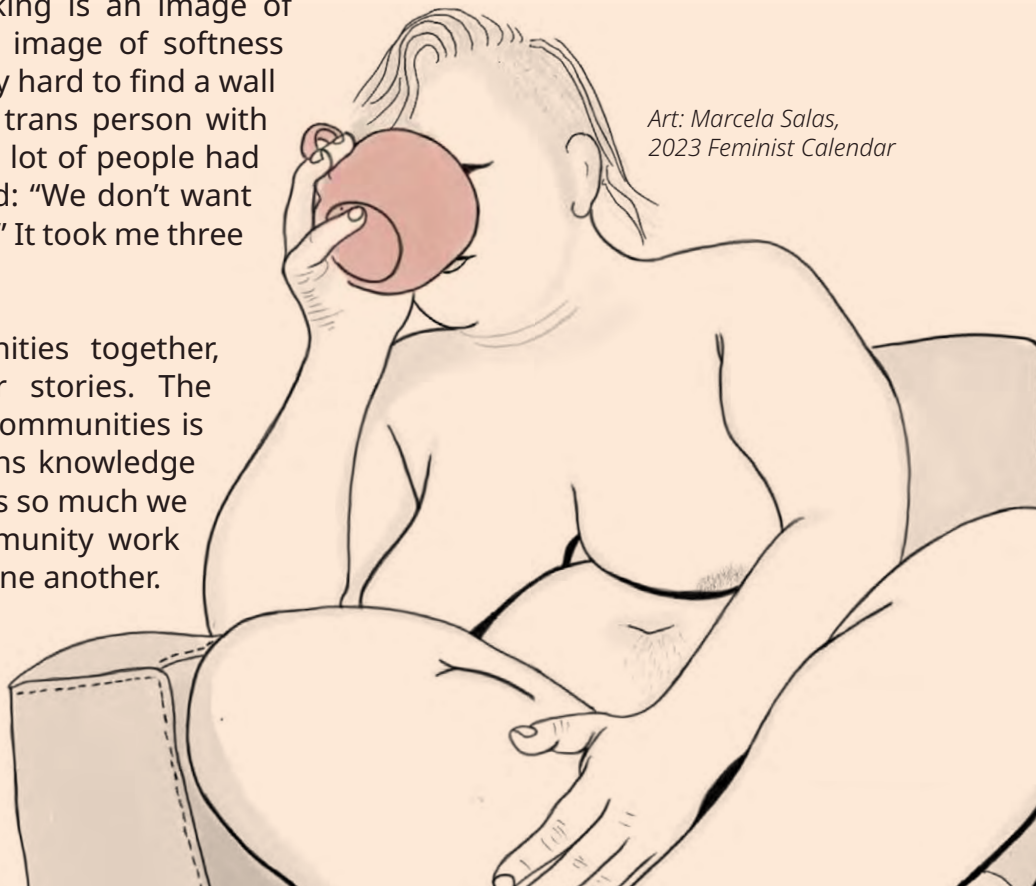
I grew up in Gujarat, India, which was a very conservative place. It wasn’t easy, but the artist and queer communities really helped me feel safe. I met AWID in a meeting where we talked about mental health, and then I was invited to be part of a core team around resourcing movements in South Asia. I was very excited. The issue of resourcing and movements has been a huge problem for us because of the FCRA laws¹ in India. Our country is run by a fascist government that is incredibly Islamophobic and queerphobic. They have been blocking funding, which has caused a lot of problems especially for grassroots communities.

Resourcing is one problem but there is also violence– external and even inter-community violence. For me the goal is to have safe spaces, like shelters, and access to mental health services for my community.

The mural that I am making is an image of trans men in the city, an image of softness and masculinity. It was very hard to find a wall because the image has a trans person with visible surgery scars and a lot of people had problems with it. They said: “We don’t want transgenders on our walls.” It took me three months to find a wall.

I wish to bring communities together, and be able to tell our stories. The knowledge of grassroots communities is so important, and our trans knowledge has always existed. There is so much we can learn from inter-community work and find ways to support one another.

**Based on an interview with a queer artist and activist, India.*



Art: Marcela Salas,
2023 Feminist Calendar

1. In India, the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) regulates access to foreign funds and prohibits their receipt for any activities purportedly “detrimental to the national interest”.

We build knowledge to challenge oppressive systems.

An important way that AWID shows up for feminist movements is through building knowledge and disrupting set ways of knowing. Our work on resourcing has changed how feminist movements understand and relate to the funding ecosystem. Feminist organizations, multilateral institutions and universities use [Rights At Risk](#) resources as educational and training materials. Through a participatory and collaborative approach, we challenge entrenched ideas of where knowledge and expertise sit.

We push back against co-opted feminist language & false solutions.

Gender Impact Investing (GII) is now trending as a solution to gender inequality. Public and private institutions marketing GII equate it with promotion of gender equality and with increased resources for women and girls. So we dedicated a year to researching and building knowledge around GII.

Our detailed report, [Gender Impact Investment](#) and the Rise of False Solutions: An Analysis of Feminist Movements co-authored by Sanam Amin and Diyana Yahaya, revealed that there are no clear parameters or standards around GII's so-called "gender-based factors" or "gender analysis." In addition, the research uncovered how financing for GII is often conflated with funding feminist agendas and gender equality. Most importantly, while GII's proponents use and have co-opted feminist language, GII continues to privilege private capital and economic elites.

As AWID, we challenge such "false solutions" for gender inequality. The report calls for feminist movements to better understand GII. Since its publication, AWID has received a number of invitations to present the report in strategic spaces where funding and investments are discussed.



**[Gender Impact Investment
and the Rise of False Solutions:
An Analysis of Feminist Movements](#)**

We produce solid data and build bold analyses to fight injustice.

“Where is the Money For Feminist Organizing?” in South Asia

Spread across eight countries with vastly different geographies, languages, religions and histories, South Asian feminist movements have been among the most diverse in the world. AWID collaborated closely with local partners to map the regional and sub-regional context and current state of resourcing. It was revealed that while women's organizations might be working diligently on the ground in their respective countries, there was a need for a regional coming together to co-create knowledge and share evidence of what works.

In November 2023, 11 feminist activists based in South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) gathered to co-create a common vision for developing the feminist resourcing agenda in the region.

The feminists represented the following movements: LGBTQI+ movements, Dalit and Adivasi groups, sex workers, disability justice feminists, workers' rights groups, feminists affected by drug policies and others. For many, it was the first time they had taken part in such a convening, and one where there were simultaneous and whisper interpretations happening across four languages (Bangla, English, Hindi and Sinhala). They formed the Core Advisory Group that AWID will work with over three years to strategize on influencing the resourcing ecosystem in the region.

In collaboration with Global Voices 2023, we published an article, [“Funding for LGBTQ+ movements in South Asia”](#), highlighting the region's unique set of challenges, the movements' demands, and the lack of intersectional funding.



WITM 3.0: Where Is The Money For Feminist Organizing, a Global Survey

For over 20 years, AWID has been at the forefront of analyzing trends, tracking resourcing for women's rights and feminist movements, and holding funders accountable while making a case for more and better money.

In 2023, we began updating our learning in this area with a newly designed Where Is The Money For Feminist Organizing (WITM) Global Survey.

AWID consulted key allies, members and partners to listen to their priorities and knowledge needs, and tested the survey tool in five pilot sessions in English, Spanish, French, and Arabic. We intentionally selected participants who work with grassroots organizations rather than groups already familiar with resourcing advocacy, since this will be the target audience for the WITM 3.0 survey.

Who Can Fund Me? Database (WCFM)

Developed over a decade ago, the WCFM database that lists funders from all sectors committed to resourcing feminist organizing has been a place for organizers to search for funding. As of 2023, we have begun revising and updating the WCFM database, turning it into a standalone comprehensive and user-friendly search tool.

SWANA Anti-Rights Research

It has been evident that some 'anti-rights champions' in the Human Rights Council and other global spaces are from the SWANA (South West Asia and North Africa) region. Following our regional partners' confirmation of a knowledge gap on anti-rights trends in SWANA, we worked on a collaborative research project that enables us to understand the role that states from SWANA play in anti-rights trends. The objectives of this research are to fill the regional gap and co-build, with feminist movements from the region, an understanding of who the "opposition" is, what their strategies and discourses are, and the impact they are having.

"A lot of the time, as feminist organizers, we are not coming from a finance background and it's often surveys like this that prompt us and stimulate that creative imagination on how we should also be looking at our own financing and resourcing".

Participant from the WITM 3.0 Pilot Session

Member Mixer 06: Climate Justice

awid
MEMBERS



**9 November 2023
9:00 UTC**

Our role in multilateral spaces is not a responsibility we take lightly.

In May 2023, we held the current Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women (SR VAW) to account for advancing discriminatory policies against trans people and misapplying established human rights principles and frameworks. This public statement, [“There is no place for anti-trans narratives in the UN”](#), was signed by more than 1,700 organizations and individuals.

At the 53rd Human Rights Council (HRC) held from 19 June to 14 July 2023, we:

Delivered a joint [statement](#) with our partners in Geneva to respond to the growing chasms between the Global North and Global South states at HRC.

Co-organized a panel discussion on the escalating gender backlash where we supported feminists from Syria as well as trans activists to be considered legitimate by the UN Working Group.

Supported the organization of the Women Human Rights Defenders Advocacy week.

Engaged the UN Special Procedures to reflect on priority issues raised by feminist organizations and to open doors to activists from marginalized communities.

Coordinated and delivered the joint statement, [“Voices of Feminists, Women’s Rights, LGBTIQ+ and Trans-led Movements Must be at the Center of the Special Procedures Mechanism”](#), at the Annual Civil Society Meeting with Special Procedures, as well as a joint statement on [“Feminists Demand States and the UN Uphold the Right to Bodily Autonomy for All.”](#)

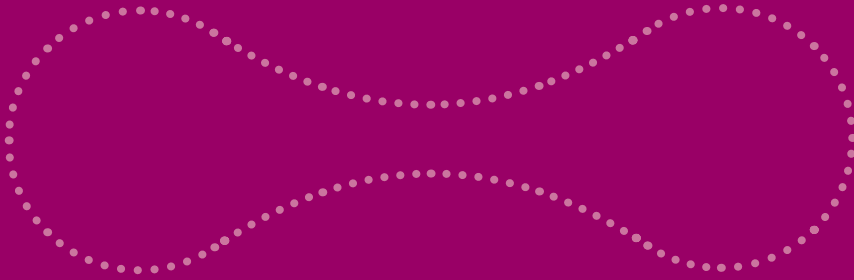


Our influencing and advocacy efforts align with our practice of supporting movements to access and demystify UN spaces by sharing procedural information and critical feminist analysis of UN processes. At the Asia Pacific Trans Human Rights Defender (HRDs) Workshop, we provided an input session on the HRC and Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The session focused on the engagement of trans and gender diverse activists in UN spaces, covering the opportunities and challenges within CSW and HRC.

In recent years, anti-rights actors have also gained increased influence *inside* the UN. Their tactics -to name a few- include training of delegates, distortion of human rights frameworks, watering down human rights agreements, infiltrating non-governmental organization (NGO) committees and youth spaces, and lobbying to place anti-rights actors in key positions. In these times, AWID's role as a disruptor has high stakes.

Art: Nafisa Ferdous
2023 Feminist Calendar





Seed

**Feminist visions of a just
world and sustainable life
are realized in practice**



Despite The Cold Shoulder

I am a person who uses drugs. This identity is a part of me because of the way the world prohibits, stigmatizes and criminalizes drug use. I've been working in harm reduction for most of my adult life. My interest in the way women are particularly affected by drug prohibition started in the late 1980's.

But the harm reduction and HIV conferences I attended felt hopeless. There would be an energy that peaked at conferences but would die off right after. Also, the harm reduction arena was incredibly male-dominated then. We wanted to bring in gendered focus in harm reduction programming and to provide a safe haven for women working in the field and for women who use drugs. This is how our network was born.

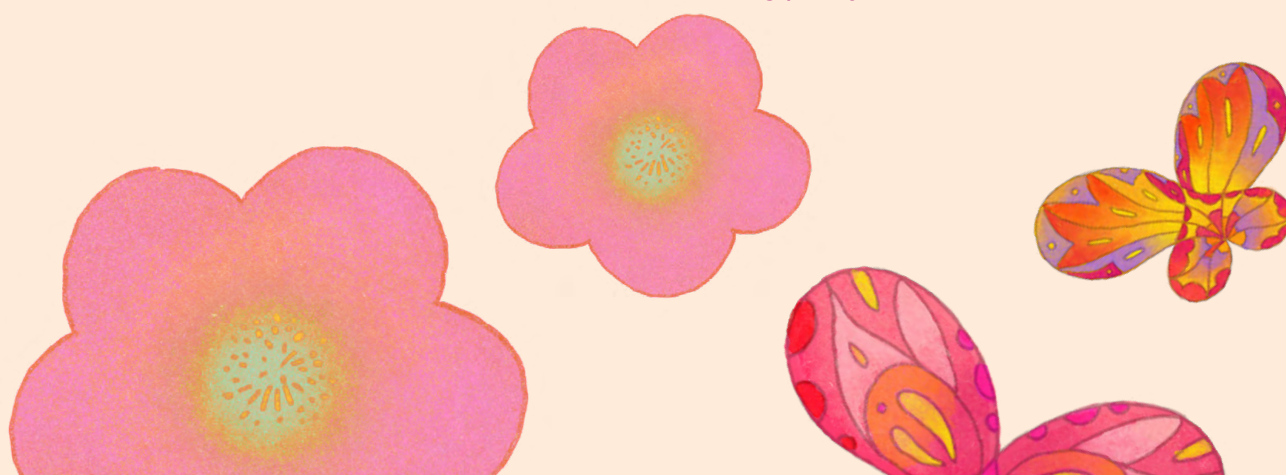
We worked many years without funding, and it took a long time to get our foot in the door. We got the cold shoulder, not only from the HIV movement and the funding community, but also from feminist movements. Recently, we prepared a shadow report on women who use drugs with our national partner.

At CEDAW (the United Nations' Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women), there is usually a 10 minute opportunity for all representatives to share their reports. There was one consortium of feminist organizations from the same country as our national partner, and they held a ferocious campaign for criminalization. Our representative had fallen sick, and when asked if this feminist consortium could share our presentation, they refused. This didn't happen 20 years ago, it happened last year at the 2022 CEDAW.

That's why we were so happy when we came across the work AWID has been doing with women using drugs organizations in Barcelona and Eastern Europe, and more recently the thematic online teach-ins. It's really pioneering work, and it is unique to find a feminist organization who makes overtures to our movement appropriately, instead of treating us like the hot potato that nobody wants to touch.

There are a lot of myths around women who use drugs: such as we lack agency, or that we are setting ourselves up to be vulnerable or be victims. This is so contrary to principles of feminist movements! There are many complex reasons why women use drugs. I wish social movements started celebrating the feminists among us. Feminism is the social movement for social justice, and you can't achieve that without being as inclusive as possible, or you become your own worst enemy.

** Based on an interview with a harm reduction and drug policy consultant and writer, Australia*



We champion feminist communities of practice.



Feminists have been building economic alternatives to exploitative capitalist systems for ages. These alternatives exist in the here and now, and they are the pillars of the just, fairer and more sustainable worlds we need and deserve. [The Feminist Economies We Love](#) project highlights feminist cooperatives.

On Cooperative Day in July, AWID organized a learning exchange for over 50 participants, who heard from the experiences of the Usha Cooperative in India, Metzineres in Spain, the Cooperativa de Ahorro in Colombia, and Oktobar based in Serbia.

We continued celebrating and connecting with communities of practice from June to October through a series of eight regional sharing circles as intimate spaces for exchanges on local and regional realities and strategies to advance feminist climate justice. The sharing circles specifically targeted different regions within Africa, Asia, Pacific, Small Island States, the Caribbean and Latin America, where we either had partners or where communities were most at risk from the impacts of the climate crisis. The sharing circles were also a great opportunity to build and nurture relationships between feminist climate justice within and across regions, especially as part of our broader climate justice journey towards and beyond the AWID Forum of 2024.

We de-center. We shift social norms and power.

Feminist Foreign Policy

What does it mean for a foreign policy to be feminist? As more countries show an interest to adopt feminist approaches to their foreign policy and development, a vibrant space has opened up for conversations on international power structures, colonial legacies, neo-colonial economies, and imperialism.

In February, AWID's Co-EDs co-authored a briefing paper- [Global South Civil Society Lens: Towards Germany's Feminist International Cooperation](#) - commissioned by the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy (CFFP) following the launch of Germany's Feminist Development Policy strategy. The paper offered critical feminist insights into German funding that was informed by interviews AWID conducted with feminists from Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Kosovo, and Ukraine. The paper became an important addition in centering feminist voices from the Global South in foreign policy.

Feminist Crisis Response

Although AWID is not an urgent response or a humanitarian agency, for the first time, we are experimenting with a feminist crisis response strategy. We are actively engaging with Feminist Action for Afghanistan (FAA), and members and partners in Uganda, Sudan, Ukraine, and Syria. AWID's expertise in advocacy, resourcing, and funding is useful and needed in this context, given that in times of crisis, funds are often diverted away from feminist, women's rights, and LGBTQI+ groups.

One way that AWID supports feminist movements is by diverting resources and connecting funders with groups that they would otherwise not have access to. In June, we were invited to apply for a grant from a small private foundation looking to support grassroots feminist activism. We were able to connect the funder with a journalists' network in the SWANA region, who received core support.



We communicate creatively.

In a time when information is easily generated and as easily forgotten, AWID strives to create content that is impactful and memorable across all its initiatives.

Following AWID's comedic skit, Blue Pebbles, around the #BlockBlackRock campaign against corporate capture of the UN, we received feedback from members that the concept of "corporate capture" needs to be more widely understood. So in anticipation of COP28, AWID developed a series of five short, ironic and comedic videos to provide different examples of corporate capture entitled ["Feminists Laughing in the Face of Corporate Capture: A Feminist Perspective."](#) The series features five feminist comedians from Indonesia, Brazil, Cameroon and Kenya. Over 1,500 unique users have visited the series on our website with positive feedback.

Through fun and pleasure there were many exchanges within activism, pleasure is part of learning. Entertainment is a right. It is part of the empowerment strategy and confidence to build other relationships.

AWID's Theory of Change (ToC) discussion participant

Read our stories on pleasure, joy, resistance and love co-created with Global Voices:

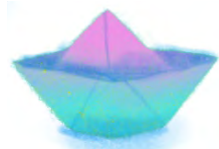
[Celebrating Feminist Joy](#)



[Transcending boundaries: Celebrating embodiment, pleasure, and resistance](#)



[Snapshots of an LGBTQ+ immigrant and refugee community in Brazil](#)



Organisational Sustainability & Resilience

**AWID is a thriving and learning
organization delivering high-quality,
cutting-edge and impactful work**

The Lubunya Mindset

Sadly, in the last 10 years, everything has changed in Turkey. The ruling party has been in power since 2002 and they are becoming more Islamic-fascists every day. They create enemies as scapegoats for the country's problems. First, it was the Kurdish people, then the Gezi protests, and now LGBTQI+ communities are portrayed as perverts who are not living according to Islamic and familial values.

After general elections this year, everybody woke up and realized these politicians don't have the capacity to overcome an authoritarian and fascist regime. Who has the capacity? We do! Women's & LGBTQI+ organizations, grassroots organizations, people at the local level. In Turkish slang, LGBTQI+ people are called Lubunya, and we say: "They cannot overcome the Lubunya mindset, because we work creatively."

As a social movement, we have become a little detached from grassroots organizing, because funders have pushed us into a place of writing strategy plans and theories of change that don't apply to our contexts. These tools are for democratic spaces and we don't have democracy right now. We are overburdened with activities the funders are requesting us to do. We became professionals and with the language we use now, we cannot change or influence anything because in Turkey we don't speak Arabic, French or English, we mostly speak Turkish and Kurdish in our communities.

This is part of the analysis that the women's movement, CSOs, NGOs and LGBTQI+ organizations have made so far, and we are trying to change our tools, content and discourses in a creative manner so they are relevant for everybody. We are connecting on a grassroots and neighborhood level.

In the end, our solidarity is what keeps us alive and hopeful about the future. Maybe, they will shut down all the LGBTQI+ organizations and punish everyone who speaks out, but they cannot overcome our solidarity. It's not that easy. These political parties are not the drivers of change, we are the drivers of change.

** Based on an interview with an activist and advocacy specialist, Turkey.*

Art: Sophia Andreazza,
2023 Feminist Calendar



We celebrate and challenge our own efforts.

In January 2023, all AWID staff gathered in Naivasha, Kenya, for the first all-staff meeting since COVID lockdown. It was a moment of joy, healing and (re)connection for our staff based across the world, many of whom had yet to meet in-person.

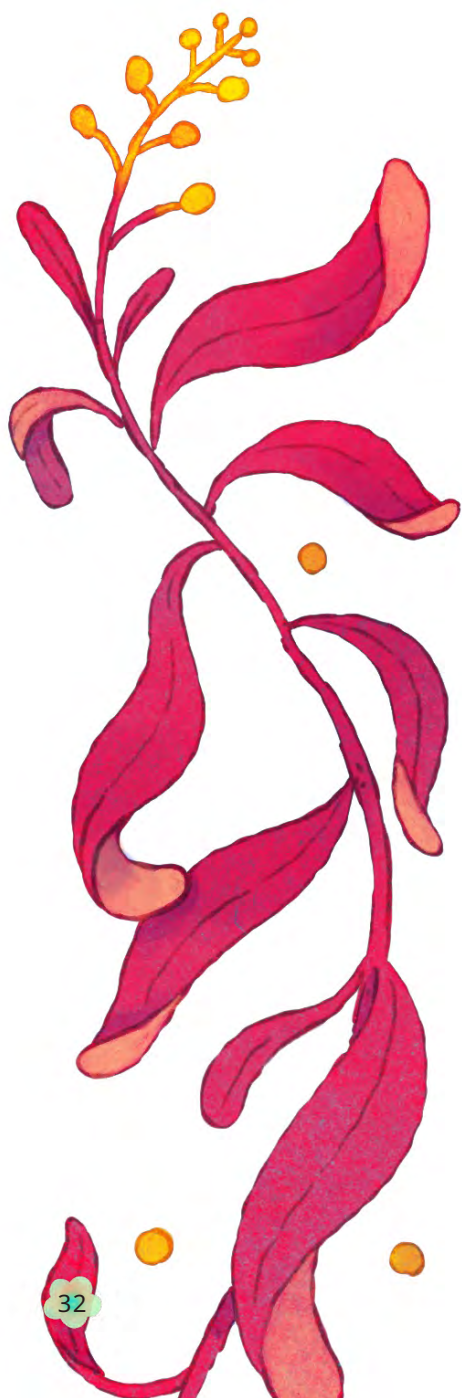
Because of our diverse team and the work we do globally, we commit to language justice as an approach that aims to share power and practice inclusion. We make concerted efforts in hosting spaces where feminists can communicate authentically both inside and outside of AWID. Our Board meetings, interviews with prospective consultants and virtual convenings are all spaces where we offer simultaneous interpretations and captioning in as many different languages as possible, and according to audience needs.

In addition to language justice, AWID is committed to making accessibility a part of our operations and programming. Our CSW67 portals were an example of putting in practice what we mean when we say ‘accessibility,’ but we realize that a focus on accessibility must also take into account the practicalities of travel that for many become barriers to participation such as visa requirements, travel routes, and COVID protocols to name a few.

With each convening, AWID learns more about what ‘feminist logistics’ looks like and how to improve the way we provide logistical support. These include making arriving earlier to allow for a ‘rest day’ as part of AWID’s travel policy; or providing resources when needed for care-assistants to accompany a participant on their journey. For the AWID Forum 2024, we have a dedicated team that has studied and explored various modalities of making this global ‘room of our own’ as accessible as possible.

To further understand and assess the depth and breadth of these and other efforts, AWID has begun to design a Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) framework that champions our Strategic Plan and Theory of Change and celebrates the reflective and action-oriented culture at AWID, and in the feminist movements we work with overall.

A significant part of our organizational sustainability is supported by our funders, and AWID continues to create and nurture a trusted relationship with them. Our funders share their take on the funding ecosystem, provide honest and critical feedback, and also ask us for advice, input, and our feminist analysis.



As a fully virtual organization, digital security is the spine that upholds all of AWID's systems. We acknowledge the risks associated with data management and concerns regarding the safety of individuals, partners, constituents, information providers, human rights advocates and activists, in general. To address these concerns, our IT team consistently explores diverse configurations and tools to enhance digital security.

Additionally, risk monitoring is an integral part of AWID's operational procedures and we hold a risk register which we formally update and present to the Board twice a year. Areas of risk include governance, digital security and systems, financial matters, legal and compliance issues, strategic and external factors, operational challenges (both programmatic and related to personnel), reputational risks, and climate and ecological concerns.

Most importantly, AWID is proud to consistently learn from and serve as a resource on organizational operations, sustainability and resilience for other feminist movements.

The Alliance for Feminist Movements (AFM) is a multi-stakeholder partnership to increase and improve quality of resources and political support for feminist movements, organizations and funds.

Since its inception, AWID has hosted the secretariat of the Alliance, providing it with the necessary political 'home' and stability that it needs. The hosting role that AWID plays is in line with our contribution to the feminist ecosystem as new initiatives are given the operational support to grow. In 2023, we helped staff the Alliance's team of three comprising two co-directors and a communications lead, while also acting as the Alliance's fiscal host.

The Sex Work Donor Collaborative (SWDC) is a network of funders that have come together to increase the amount and quality of funding to support sex workers' rights. This is achieved through strategic coordination of grant-making, research, and advocacy in partnership with sex worker-led organizations and networks. AWID is proud to provide an operational home to SWDC.





We are the ones we have been waiting for.

In a time when we are experiencing a resurgence in right-wing and fascist governments across the globe, ongoing wars and genocide, increased militarization, exploitative economies and a climate crisis, our experiences in 2023 have further strengthened our belief and practice in supporting global feminist movements.

Feminist fires need to be fed, especially in difficult times when there is no lack of external challenges. It's these fires, burning ablaze everywhere, that light our ways and keep us warm, but we cannot disregard the exhausting effects of political violence and repression directed against many of our struggles, movements and communities.

In 2024, we look forward to the long-awaited stoking of the fire that is the AWID Forum. We can't wait to meet you all in-person and online. We are hearing from you the need to connect and recharge, to rest and heal, to be challenged and inspired, to share good food, and to laugh and dance together. Few things in this world are as powerful and transformative as feminists from all parts of the world coming together, and we truly hold our breath for this moment, because we know the magic that we can create together.

See you there!





Art: María José Mesías
2023 Feminist Calendar





All Staff Meeting, Naivasha, January 2023

Financials

avid

CONTRIBUTIONS**USD\$****DONORS**

Disability Rights Advocacy Fund	109,265
Ford Foundation	730,715
Foundation for a Just Society	881,009
Open Society Foundations	355,877
Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs via the Count Me In! consortium	1,036,010
Oak Foundation	173,255
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)	1,072,277
Wellspring Philanthropic Fund	404,781

OTHER REVENUE

Contributed Services	189,674
Investment income	744,432
Membership	1,916
Other Revenue	700
(Discount) Amortization of discounts on long-term receivables	(527,031)

TOTAL INCOME**5,172,880****EXPENSES****USD\$****INITIATIVES**

Advancing Universal Rights & Justice (AURJ)	773,193
Building Feminist Economies (BFE)	715,606
Forum	333,320
Membership & Constituency Engagement (MCE)	901,411
Resourcing Feminist Movements (RFM)	813,223
SEED	130,914
Organizational Sustainability & Resilience (OS&R)	559,003
Management, Governance and General Fundraising	427,019
	116,153

HOSTED PARTNERS

The Alliance for Feminist Movements	412,922
Sex Work Donor Collaborative	29,782

OTHER EXPENSES

Foreign Exchange (gain) loss	(9,474)
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TOTAL EXPENSES**5,203,072**