

awid

An illustration of a hand holding a flashlight and another hand holding a magnifying glass. The flashlight is teal and the magnifying glass is also teal. The hand holding the flashlight is at the top right, and the hand holding the magnifying glass is at the bottom right. The flashlight beam is shining on the text.

WHERE is the MONEY?

**An Evidence-Driven Call
to Resource Feminist
Organizing**



LET'S ACT NOW!



Table of Contents

Credits	4
Acronyms and Abbreviations	5
Executive Summary	6
Introduction: Shifting Ground for Resourcing Feminist Organizing	16
Methodology	23
Survey Sample	24
Piloting, Accessibility, and Outreach	24
Scope and Limitations	25
Representation and Comparability	25
Key Findings	27
How Big are Feminist Budgets?	28
Beyond Budget Size: What Funding Enables	33
Behind the Numbers: What Shapes Budget Size?	35
Regional Disparities	35
Level of Organizing	38
Registration Status	41
Thematic Focus Areas	42
Who is Resourcing Feminist Organizing?	44
Feminists Resourcing Themselves	45
Key Funding Sources	48
Quality of Funding	58
Core Funding	59
Multi-Year Funding	61
Savings and Reserves	62
Persistent Systemic Barriers	66
Feminists, Funders, and Allies: LET’S ACT NOW!	69
A Story of Transformation and Urgency	70
The Evidence Demands Collective Action	72

Credits

The Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID) is a global, feminist, membership, movement-support organization. We support feminist, women’s rights, and gender justice movements to thrive, challenge systems of oppression, and create feminist alternatives. Visit www.awid.org to learn more.

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AWID warmly thanks all those who contributed to developing the survey—in particular, our research and data consultants, Constanza Argentieri and Natalia Debandi. AWID members and activists generously advised and piloted the survey to ensure its relevance, accessibility, and grounding in lived feminist realities. Thank you!

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To learn more about AWID’s *Where is the Money?* research, see www.awid.org/witm.



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AWID	Association for Women's Rights in Development
BFF	Black Feminist Fund
CBN	Christian Broadcasting Network
CEECCNA	Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central and North Asia
CSO	Civil society organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EU	European Union
FSOF	Support Fund for Feminist Organizations
GPP	Global Philanthropy Project
HNWI	High-net-worth individuals
HRFN	Human Rights Funders Network
INGO	International non-governmental organization
ITF	International Trans Fund
LBTQI+	Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and others
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SWANA	Southwest Asia/Middle East and North Africa
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFA	Women's Fund Asia

Executive Summary

Feminists are changing the world.

Our collective power, wisdom, and commitment have no boundaries—but our bank accounts do. Here's what you need to know about the current state of resourcing for feminist organizing.

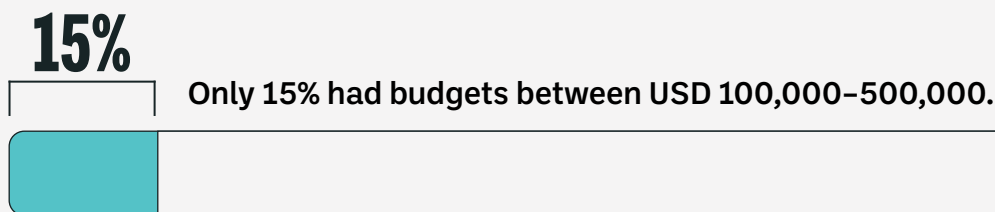
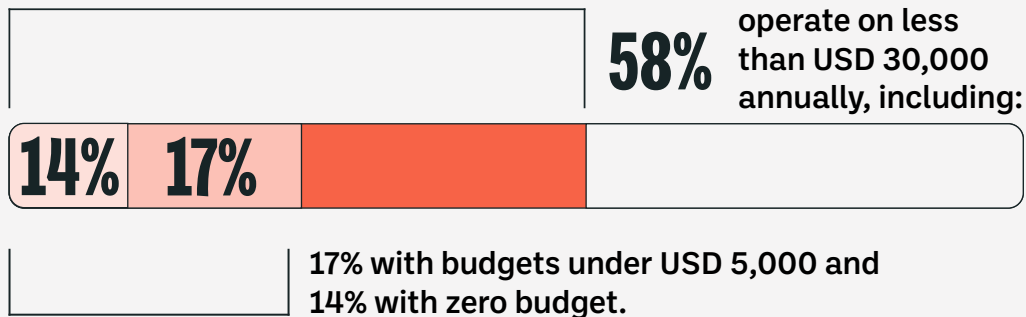
Data snapshots are based on the responses of 1,174 feminist, women's rights, LGBTQI+, and allied organizations (hereafter referred to as “feminist and women's rights organizations”) from 128 countries to the *Where is the Money for Feminist Organizing?* survey. These snapshots reflect experiences from 2021–2023, analyzed in the context of defunding trends unfolding in 2024–2025.



Annual Budgets: A Persistent Glass Ceiling and Funding Inequalities

In 2023, the median annual budget for feminist and women's rights organizations was just USD 22,000.¹ Our findings show no real growth in annual budgets in over a decade, pointing to a persistent budgetary glass ceiling that organizations are struggling to break through.

Annual Budget Size

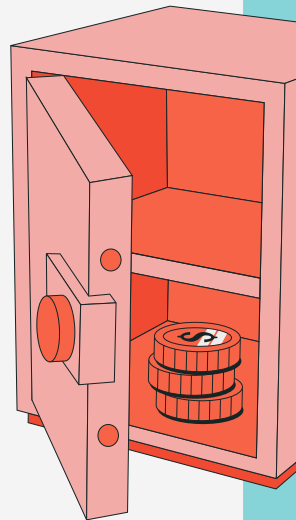


This data shows that the funding landscape of feminist organizing is diverse—and marked by inequality.

Funding for just three global anti-rights actors was twice that of all 1,174 surveyed feminist and women's rights organizations combined in 2023.²

¹ In AWID's previous *Where is the Money?* research, conducted in 2011 and covering 2010, the median annual budget of over 740 women's organizations was USD 20,000. See Angelika Arutyunova and Cindy Clark, *Watering the Leaves, Starving the Roots* (Toronto: AWID, 2013), https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/WTL_Starving_Roots.pdf.

² For more information and sources, see the section *How Big Are Feminist Budgets?* of the full report.



Funding disparities were especially severe for:

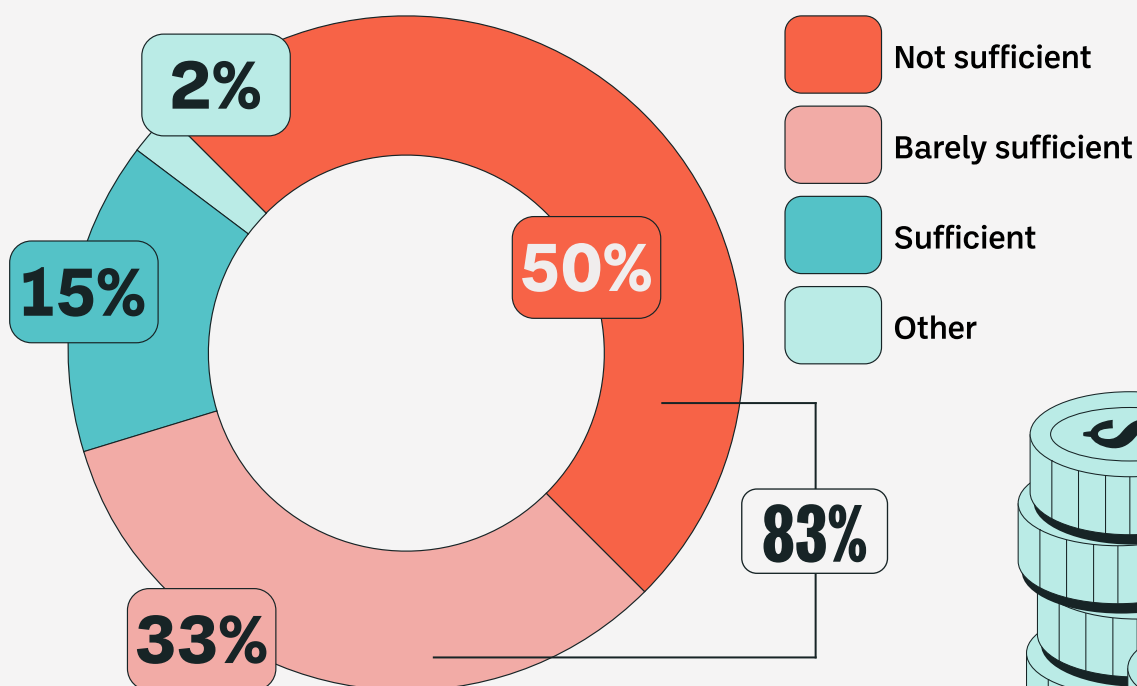
- Feminist and women's rights organizations based in Global Majority countries;
- Unregistered groups;
- Organizations operating at the local or national level;
- Groups led by and accountable to communities facing multiple, intersecting forms of oppression, such as those focused on caste equity, harm reduction, and resisting the war on drugs.

These patterns reflect structural inequalities in how feminist organizing is resourced, often reinforcing global power imbalances and exclusion.

Budget-Impact Gap: Aspirations vs. Realities

Beyond budget size, does funding match the needs and ambitions of feminist and women's rights organizations? For most, the answer is no.

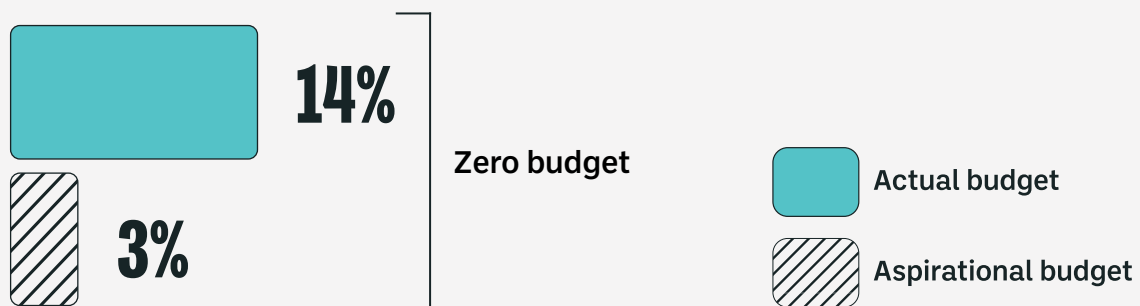
- Only 15% say their budgets are sufficient.
- 83% report their budgets are insufficient to *fully* realize their strategic goals (50% insufficient, 33% barely sufficient).



Aspirational budgets also far exceed current funding. For instance, 28% aspire to USD 100,000–500,000, but only 15% have attained this.



On the lower end, while 14% operate with zero budget, only 3% wish to remain there.



Our findings challenge the myth that feminist and women’s rights organizations prefer to stay small. The feminist ecosystem is capable of absorbing larger, sustained funding.³

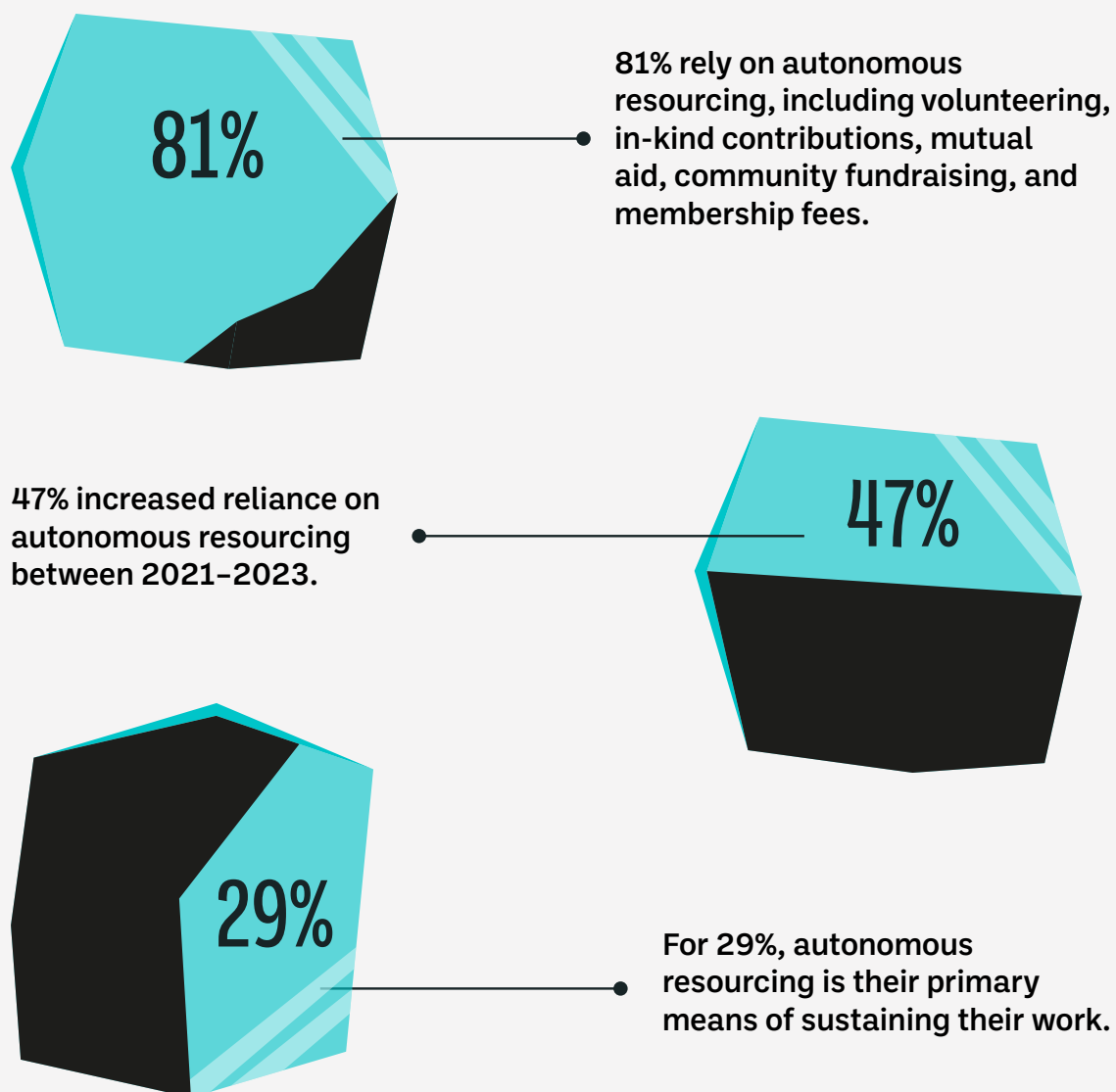
Who is Resourcing Feminist Organizing?

Resourcing for feminist and women’s rights organizations comes from diverse sources, including women’s and feminist funds, philanthropic funders, bilateral and multilateral donors, and self-generated resources.

³ For more information and sources on feminist movements’ absorptive capacity, see the *Introduction* and *Beyond Budget Size: What Funding Enables* section of the full report.

Feminists Resourcing Themselves

For the first time, AWID's *Where is the Money?* survey spotlights feminist movements' own contributions as a vital and undervalued part of sustaining feminist work. In fact, feminist organizing is not powered by grants alone: most rely on self-generated, autonomous resources—both financial and non-financial—outside institutional funding streams.



For many marginalized communities, autonomous resourcing is not only a choice but often a necessity—the only viable option given limited access to capital, wealth, or income-generating opportunities.

Key Funding Sources

While 71% receive some form of external funding, most rely on a mix of sources, with no single type of funder contributing more than 30% of total budgets on average.

- 55% identify women's and feminist funds as a key source of funding—more than any other type of funder. Among these, 41% say this source accounts for 50% or more of their annual budgets.⁴
- International non-governmental organizations and philanthropic foundations are key funders for 36% and 32% respectively—this figure is notably higher among organizations with larger budgets.
- Individual donors are key sources of funding for 24% of respondents.
- Bilateral and multilateral donors are key funders for 19% and 18% of respondents, respectively.
- National and local governments or bodies are key sources of funding for 16% of feminist and women's rights organizations.
- Private sector funding remains marginal, cited by only 10%.

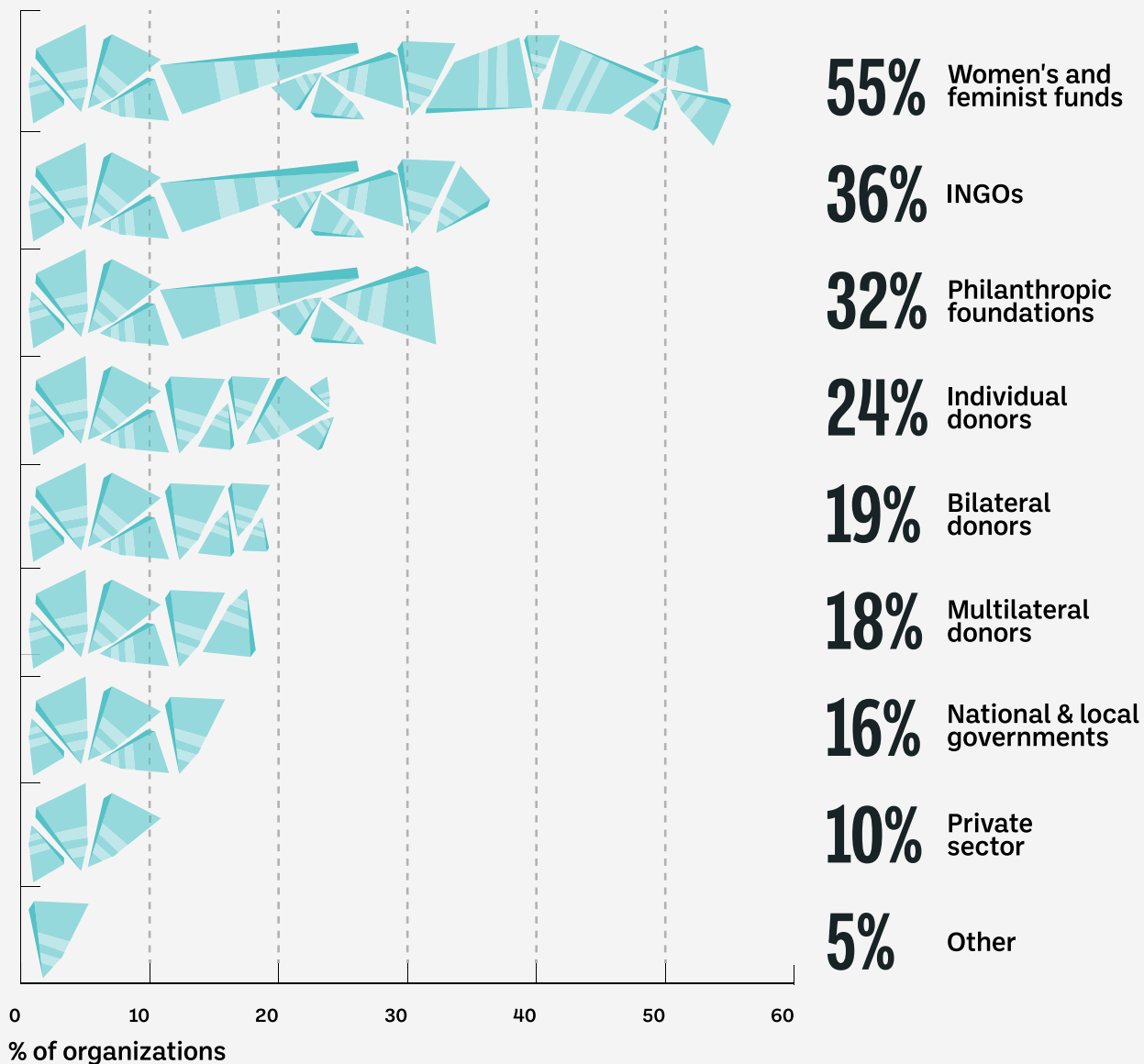
Women's and feminist funds are now a major source of support—not only widely accessible across the diversity of feminist movements, but often substantial relative to recipients' budgets. This marks a significant shift from 2010, when women's and feminist funds comprised only about 5% of organizations' total budgets.⁵



⁴ The survey asked: "What were your group, organization and/or movement's key sources of funding between 2021 and 2023? Key sources refer to the largest donations you received in terms of funding amount." Respondents also estimated what percentage each source represented within their budgets.

⁵ Arutyunova and Clark, *Watering the Leaves, Starving the Roots*, page 84.

Key Funding Sources for Feminist and Women's Rights Organizations



Ongoing cuts in bilateral, multilateral, and philanthropic funding in 2024–2025 are drastically shrinking an already limited funding landscape.

Quality of Funding: Still Falling Short

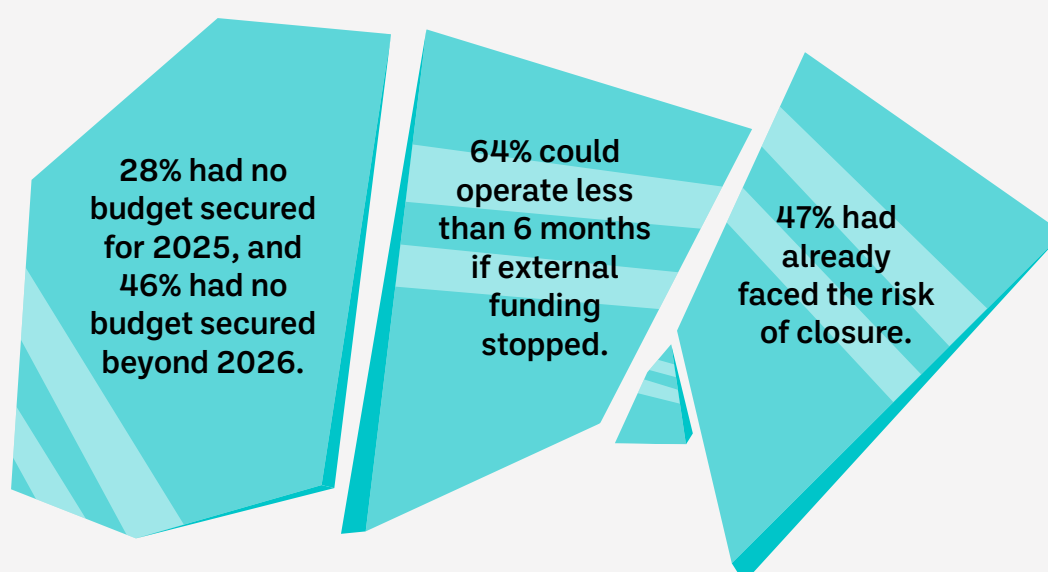
Core funding—critical to enabling sustainable, strategic feminist organizing—remains limited:

- 71% of feminist and women’s rights organizations receive some core funding.
 - Core funding covers only 30% of budgets on average.
 - Overall, 62% receive less than 20% of their total budget as core funding.
- 29% still receive no core funding at all—a concerning figure, though improved from 2010, when 50% had never received any.⁶

Most funding is still short-term, project-tied, and restrictive



Financial precarity is widespread



⁶ Arutyunova and Clark, *Watering the Leaves, Starving the Roots*.

Reserves and savings are not “extras”; they are essential to the stability and sustainability of feminist movements, as illustrated by the devastating impacts of recent defunding trends.

Persistent Systemic Barriers

Funder practices continue to limit access and compromise the autonomy of feminist organizing:



Feminists, Funders, and Allies:

LET'S ACT NOW!

The state of resourcing is getting worse. Since the *Where is the Money?* survey, carried out between May–August 2024, the financial stability and even survival of feminist and women's rights organizations has come under threat. This is undoubtedly the right moment to engage with fundamental questions that many feminist activists, resourcing advocates, and allied funders are asking already:

1. How do we resource feminist organizing for rights and justice in an era of authoritarian resurgence, economic collapse, and ecological crisis?
2. How do we move beyond North-to-South paradigms and activate alternative resourcing modes that are decolonial, autonomous, and self-sustaining?
3. What would it take to build a feminist resourcing infrastructure—grantmaking, but also savings, reserves, communal land and spaces, knowledge, and time—owned and governed by feminists themselves?

How we answer these questions—and whose voices, experiences, and needs shape that response—will determine much of the future of feminist organizing.

Download and share this Executive Summary:
www.awid.org/witm

INTRODUCTION

Shifting Ground for Resourcing Feminist Organizing



This report shines a light on the resourcing realities of feminist and women's rights organizations at a time of political and financial upheaval. What lies ahead is uncertain, but one thing is clear: feminists are not bystanders. We are shaping the future of resourcing on our own terms.

Since AWID's *Watering the Leaves, Starving the Roots* report in 2013, the feminist funding landscape has changed beyond recognition.⁷ New philanthropic actors, initiatives, and hundreds of millions in new funding initiatives have emerged, including the Netherlands's SDG 5 Fund, Canada's Equality Fund, France's Support Fund for Feminist Organizations (FSOF), and the United Nations-European Union (UN-EU) Spotlight Initiative.⁸ Global philanthropic collaboratives, such as Gender Funders Co-Lab and pooled funds (e.g., Co-impact), along with contributions from high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs)—most notably MacKenzie Scott's historic USD 19 billion no-strings-attached in global giving—have further reshaped the funding landscape.⁹

These shifts have both catalyzed and been fueled by the growth of a powerful feminist funding infrastructure, particularly women's and feminist funds, that model trust-based, participatory grantmaking. Constituency-led and Global Majority-led funds—including Leading from the South, the Red Umbrella Fund, the International Trans Fund (ITF), the Black Feminist Fund (BFF), the Numun Fund, the Pacific Women's Fund, and the Dalan Fund—are directing resources to movements long excluded from funding. Initiatives such as the Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action and the First Response Fund are bringing climate and humanitarian funding into feminist, gender justice, and LGBTQI+ spaces.¹⁰

We celebrate our wins, yet we also recognize that they have not translated into adequate, sustained, or equally distributed resources for feminists in all their diversity. And now, resources for feminist movements face deep cuts.

⁷ Angelika Arutyunova and Cindy Clark, *Watering the Leaves, Starving the Roots* (Toronto: AWID, 2013), https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/WTL_Starving_Roots.pdf.

⁸ The SDG 5 Fund allocated nearly EUR 500 million for the 2021–2025 period. See Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "International Women's Day: What Is the Netherlands Doing to Improve the Position of Women Worldwide?," Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Blog), March 8, 2024, <https://www.government.nl/latest/weblogs/the-work-of-the-ministry-of-foreign-affairs/2024/womens-day-what-does-the-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-do>; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Policy Framework: Strengthening Civil Society – Power of Voices Partnerships 2021–2025* (The Hague: Government of the Netherlands, 2019), <https://www.government.nl/documents/policy-notes/2019/11/28/policy-framework-strengthening-civil-society>. The Canadian government launched the Equality Fund in 2018, allocating CAD 300 million to this initiative. See Global Affairs Canada, "The Equality Fund: Transforming the Way We Support Women's Organizations and Movements Working to Advance Women's Rights and Gender Equality," Canada.ca, last modified June 21, 2019, <https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2019/06/global-affairs-canada---the-equality-fund-transforming-the-way-we-support-womens-organizations-and-movements-working-to-advance-womens-rights-and-g.html>. Since 2019, the FSOF has had a combined commitment of EUR 370 million–EUR 120 million for 2020–2022 and EUR 250 million for 2023–2027—of which approximately EUR 134 million has been disbursed to date. See Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (France), "The Support Fund for Feminist Organizations (FSOF): An Emblematic Tool of France's Feminist Diplomacy," *Diplomatie.gouv.fr*, last modified October 2023, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-for-eign-policy/feminist-diplomacy/the-support-fund-for-feminist-organizations-fsof-an-emblematic-tool-of-france-s/>. The UN-EU Spotlight Initiative has deployed EUR 500 million. See European External Action Service, "EU Invests EUR 500 Million in New 'Spotlight Initiative' to End Violence against Women," *Eeas.europa.eu*, September 21, 2017, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/32549_en.

⁹ Center for Effective Philanthropy, *Breaking the Mold: The Transformative Effect of MacKenzie Scott's Big Gifts* (Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2025), <https://cep.org/report-backpacks/breaking-the-mold-the-transformative-effect-of-mackenzie-scotts-big-gifts/?section=intro#intro>.

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This report underscores the persistent gap between the current state of funding and the prevailing realities of feminist movements.

Since 2024, major bilateral donors—including the US, Sweden, the Netherlands, the UK, Germany, and France—have slashed development aid, devastating thousands of life-saving, gender-focused programs.¹¹ Tens of billions of dollars in foreign aid and philanthropic funding may disappear in the coming years. While estimates vary, the latest data from the Human Rights Funders Network (HRFN) suggests that projected cuts in Official Development Assistance (ODA) from 12 major donor countries could reach roughly USD 64 billion annually by 2026.¹² The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) forecasts a 9–17% drop in ODA in 2025, following a 9% drop in 2024, with the poorest countries hit hardest.¹³

Meanwhile, some of the major private philanthropic foundations, such as the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, are closing and others, including the Sigrid Rausing Trust and Open Society Foundations, are scaling back support for women’s rights.¹⁴ Many funders are retreating in the face of

rising conservatism, regressive policies, and threats of federal investigations, leading to increased risk aversion and political censorship. The starkest example is the systemic defunding of organizations that express solidarity with the Palestinian people and take action to stop the genocide.¹⁵

While a few funders are stepping up with courage and solidarity to establish emergency support, launch new initiatives, and defend their freedom to operate—and these efforts matter—they are not enough to counter the backlash-driven defunding now sweeping across our movements.¹⁶

¹¹ See Human Rights Funders Network (HRFN), *Funding at a Crossroads: Foreign Aid Cuts and Implications for Global Human Rights* (HRFN, 2025), page 9, <https://www.hrfn.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Funding-at-a-Crossroads-HRFN-Sept-2025.pdf>; Donor Tracker, “Budget Cuts Tracker,” Donortracker.org, <https://donortracker.org/publications/budget-cuts-tracker>; OECD, *Cuts in Official Development Assistance: OECD Projections for 2025 and the Near Term* (Paris: OECD, 2025), https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2025/06/cuts-in-official-development-assistance_e161f0c5/full-report.html.

¹² By comparison, ODA levels in 2023 reached a record high of USD 223 billion. For more information, see HRFN, *Funding at a Crossroads*.

¹³ OECD, *Cuts in Official Development Assistance*.

¹⁴ Alliance for Feminist Movements, *Global Projected Losses to Women’s Rights* (Alliance for Feminist Movements, 2025), <https://www.allianceforfeministmovements.org/reports/#globalloss>.

¹⁵ Soheir Asaad and Rebecca Vilkomerson, *Repression, Retrenchment, and Resilience: Philanthropy and Support for Palestinian Liberation after a Year of Genocide* (Funding Freedom, 2025), <https://www.fundingpalestinianfreedom.org/resources>.

¹⁶ Among the more positive developments is GPP’s “Fund Our Futures Campaign,” which secured USD 182 million in new funding for the global LGBTQI+ movement. See GPP, “Fund Our Futures Campaign,” [Globalphilanthropyproject.org](https://globalphilanthropyproject.org), accessed August 8, 2025, <https://globalphilanthropyproject.org/fundourfuturescampaign/>. Also noteworthy is the “2025 Funding Database” by ImpactMapper, which documents 150 grant opportunities, many of which were launched in direct response to international and US aid cuts. See ImpactMapper, “2025 Funding Database,” [Impactmapper.com](https://www.impactmapper.com/mapping-funding-data), <https://www.impactmapper.com/mapping-funding-data>. See also Alex Daniels, “100-Plus Foundations Stand United as White House Goes on the Attack,” *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, September 17, 2025, <https://www.philanthropy.com/article/100-plus-foundations-stand-united-as-white-house-goes-on-the-attack>.

This report underscores the persistent gap between the current state of funding and the prevailing realities of feminist movements. While, in absolute terms, more funding has reached more organizations over the past decade, it has never matched the scale or urgency of their needs.

For example, in 2023, the UN Trust Fund awarded just 1% of nearly USD 1.5 billion in requests, while Mama Cash funded under 2% of proposals, despite strong alignment.¹⁷ The gap is now deepened by escalating political backlash, unprecedented funding cuts and attacks on gender justice.

Our findings point to a persistent budgetary glass ceiling. Over the last decade, median annual budgets of feminist organizations have not grown, and most organizations cannot access the larger, longer-term grants they need to scale their work and fully achieve their strategic objectives. While feminist and women's funds are leading the way to improve the quality of funding, traditional funding institutions are yet to adapt their modalities to make resources more accessible, efficient, and impactful to feminists, especially in Global Majority countries.¹⁸

Meanwhile, anti-rights actors face no funding shortfall. Vast sums are flowing into political agendas that threaten our rights, our lives, and the very notions of equality and democracy. Public money is being redirected, but not toward justice. Military spending reached a record USD 2.4 trillion in 2023—ten times the total ODA.¹⁹ Wealth is extracted and hoarded: 36 corporations are responsible for half of global climate emissions, tech giants profit from disinformation and hate, and billionaire wealth grew by USD 2 trillion in 2024, even as poverty levels stagnate and inequality grows.²⁰ War economies, extractivism, and unfair trade and investment agreements, this is where the money actually is.

Over the last decade, median annual budgets of feminist organizations have not grown, and most organizations cannot access the larger, longer-term grants they need to scale their work and fully achieve their strategic objectives.

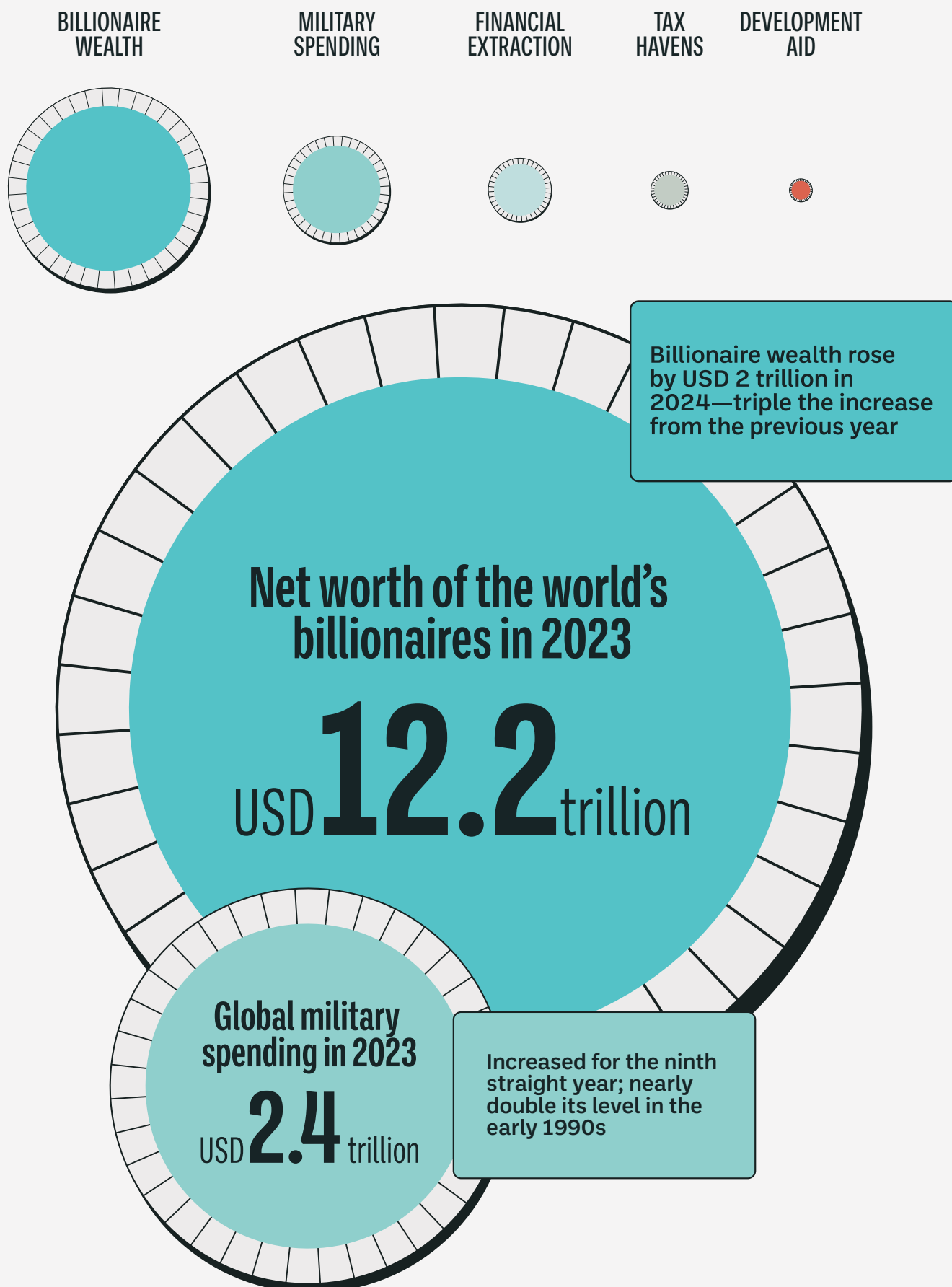
¹⁷ UN Women, "In Focus: 27th Grant Giving Cycle (2023)," [unf.unwomen.org](https://unf.unwomen.org/en/in-focus-27th-grant-giving-cycle-2023), accessed August 8, 2025, <https://unf.unwomen.org/en/in-focus-27th-grant-giving-cycle-2023>; Mama Cash, "Our 2023 Grantmaking Window," [mamacash.org](https://www.mamacash.org/resources/our-2023-grantmaking-window), accessed August 8, 2025, <https://www.mamacash.org/resources/our-2023-grantmaking-window>.

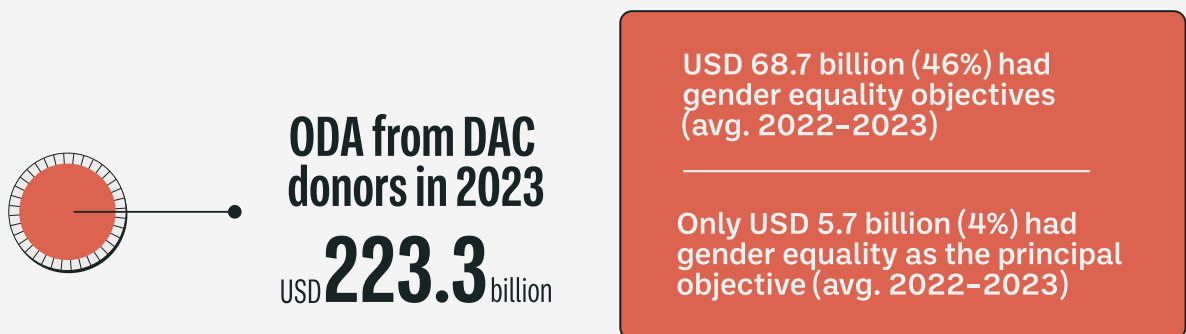
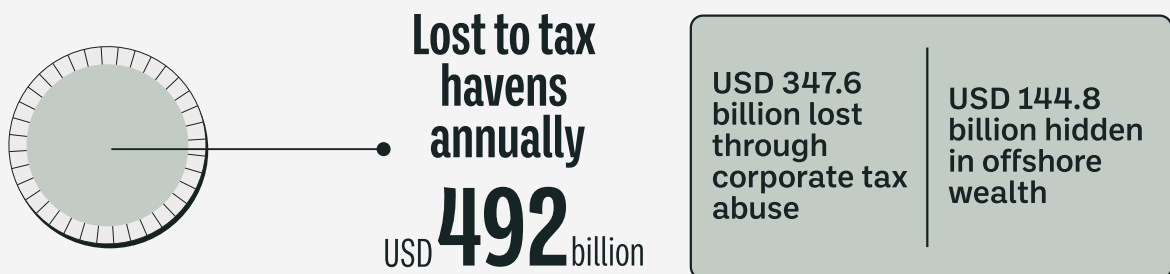
¹⁸ See E. Lever, K. Miller, and K. Staszewska, *Moving More Money to the Drivers of Change: How Bilateral and Multilateral Funders Can Resource Feminist Movements* (AWID, Mama Cash, and the Count Me In! Consortium, 2020), https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/MovingMoreMoney_FINALFINAL.pdf.

¹⁹ Nan Tian, Diego Lopes da Silva, Xiao Liang, and Lorenzo Scarazzato, "Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2023," SIPRI Fact Sheet, April 2024, https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/2404_fs_milex_2023.pdf.

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FIGURE 1. Following the Big Money





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The knowledge in this report is intended in service to our feminist power.

The good news is that feminist and social justice movements have never relied solely on institutional funding, instead sustaining themselves through mutual aid, collective power, and care. This is how those historically excluded from institutional aid and philanthropy have survived and transformed the world: from Indigenous and Global Majority-led philanthropy, to community-generated funds and mutual aid networks, to initiatives such as Harambee-Ubuntu, which reimagines a locally driven resource infrastructure for pan-African feminisms.²¹

Still, we do not give up on public and philanthropic funds, claiming them as resources for the public good. We continue to challenge the colonial legacies and power imbalances embedded in aid and philanthropy, while asserting economic justice and reparations as pillars of a feminist resourcing vision.

To truly safeguard our movements, feminists must access external funding without becoming dependent on it. This requires building a foundation of self-led resourcing models that can sustain long-term feminist visions and meet basic needs. In this, we must acknowledge our own contributions of time, money, energy, and expertise as our greatest resource.

This moment calls for bold, coordinated action. Emergency responses are not enough to confront deep-rooted inequality, precarity, and systemic exclusion. Let us radically rethink how funding is conceived, structured, and delivered, while pushing back against the cuts.

AWID calls on funders—public and private—to recognize the urgency of this moment, recommit, and invest abundantly in feminist organizing as a public good and essential infrastructure for care, justice, and liberation.

To fellow feminists, activists, and allies: it is time to reimagine how we sustain our movements, reclaim our autonomy, and build a new feminist resourcing ecosystem rooted in justice, sustainability, and self-determination. The knowledge in this report is intended in service to our feminist power.

²¹ For Indigenous and Global Majority-led philanthropy, see, for example, EPIC-Africa, *Challenging the Myths: New Data Reveals the Power of African Individual Giving* (Epic-Africa, 2024), <https://epic-africa.org/report/challenging-the-myths-new-data-reveals-the-power-of-african-individual-giving-epic-africa-report-2024/>. Feminists in Palestine are showing a clear example of community-generated funds and mutual aid. According to Funding Freedom, over 30,000 GoFundMe campaigns have raised more than USD 190 million for people in the region since the Israeli invasion of Palestine began. See Asaad and Vilkomerson, *Repression, Retrenchment, and Resilience*, page 14. For other examples, see Rochelle Jones, “Autonomous Resourcing: The Engine Room of Feminist Work Amid a Global Pandemic,” Awid.org, April 28, 2020, <https://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/autonomous-resourcing-engine-room-feminist-work-amid-global-pandemic>. For Harambee-Ubuntu, see TrustAfrica, “Harambee-Ubuntu: Pan-African and Feminist Philanthropies,” TrustAfrica.org, accessed August 8, 2025, <https://trustafrica.org/project/harambeubuntu-pan-african-and-feminist-philanthropies/>.

Methodology



This report analyzes data from 1,174 feminist and women's rights organizations across 128 countries; the largest sample AWID has collected to date.

This report draws on quantitative and qualitative research into the financial realities of feminist, women's rights, gender justice, LGBTQI+, and allied movements—collectively referred to as “feminist and women's rights organizations” hereafter—that promote the rights of women, girls, trans, and gender-diverse people. The data covers the fiscal years 2021–2023.

AWID's *Where is the Money for Feminist Organizing?* survey was the primary research tool, a method AWID has used and refined since 2005. The survey, administered via the KoboToolbox platform, was open from May–August 2024 and featured 47 multiple-choice and open-ended questions.²² It followed strict confidentiality and privacy protocols to ensure respondents' safety and anonymity.²³

Survey Sample

This report analyzes data from 1,174 feminist and women's rights organizations across 128 countries; the largest sample AWID has collected to date.²⁴ The vast majority of respondents are based in the Global Majority.

In regions with relatively small survey samples, we drew on additional data sources. In particular, in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and certain European subregions, we relied on Dalan Fund data to report the annual budget sizes of feminist and women's rights organizations.

More than half of the respondents (52%) are relatively new organizations, established between 2010–2020, with a notable surge between 2015–2020 (33% of the sample emerged during this five-year period). Only 13% were founded before 2000.²⁵ The vast majority (80%) work at the national and/or local levels, and the same proportion are formally registered.

Piloting, Accessibility, and Outreach

The survey was co-created and piloted in close collaboration with AWID members and movement partners. Between December 2023 and February 2024, AWID conducted five pilot sessions in multiple languages to test the content and accessibility for respondents with a diverse range of hearing, movement, visual, and cognitive abilities.

²² KoboToolbox is a data collection tool that adheres to robust security and privacy standards and is widely used in humanitarian and rights-based contexts.

²³ See AWID's privacy policy here: <https://www.awid.org/privacy-policy>.

²⁴ These figures reflect the total number of valid responses after thorough data cleaning to exclude duplicate or ineligible entries, including responses from funders or individuals, in accordance with AWID's defined eligibility criteria, ensuring the dataset's integrity.

²⁵ The remaining 19% were established between 2000–2009, and 16% between 2021–2023.

To advance language justice and reach diverse communities, AWID circulated the survey in six official languages—Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish—with 44% of respondents completing the survey in a language other than English. To further expand linguistic reach, for the first time, translations were also made available in eight additional Asian languages—Bangla, Nepali, Hindi, Sinhala, Tamil, Bahasa Indonesian, Vietnamese, and Thai—in partnership with Women’s Fund Asia (WFA).

AWID conducted targeted outreach to engage specific groups and regions, including online sessions with organizations focused on caste equity, sex worker rights, and trans rights. Some of these sessions were co-organized with WFA and ITF.

Scope and Limitations

AWID’s research is one of the most comprehensive global efforts focused on feminist movements and resourcing realities. However, the findings do not claim to represent the full breadth of feminist and gender justice organizing globally, which remains vast, diverse, and constantly evolving.

Some groups are likely underrepresented in the sample, including: (1) unregistered or informal groups operating without external funding, due to either exclusion or choice, that may not have found the survey’s focus relevant to how they resource their work; (2) organizations that choose to remain under the radar and avoid visibility due to security concerns, oppressive environments, or other reasons; and, (3) groups disconnected from national, regional, or global networks, those operating in languages not covered by the survey, or those without internet access.

While all self-reporting surveys carry limitations, the anonymity of this research—combined with the fact that AWID is not a funder—minimized incentives for misreporting.

AWID’s research is one of the most comprehensive global efforts focused on feminist movements and resourcing realities.

Representation and Comparability

Unless otherwise specified, all data presented in this report reflects the survey sample; all references to “feminist and women’s rights organizations” pertain specifically to those who participated in the survey and should be understood within these limitations.

For deeper, contextual, and nuanced studies of how feminist and women's rights organizations navigate resourcing within specific movements or geographies, we invite you to explore the powerful work by other actors who have taken up and adapted the *Where is the Money?* research methodology over the years.²⁶

Finally, while comparisons between this data (2021-2023) and the previous survey (2010) can highlight broad patterns and emerging trends, such should be interpreted with caution given differences in sample composition, inflation, and currency fluctuations.²⁷



²⁶ This includes, among others, work carried out by FRIDA | The Young Feminist Fund (2016); the Kosovo Women's Network and seven other women's rights organizations in the Western Balkans (2020); the Black Feminist Fund (2023); and, most recently, the Dalan Fund (2025).

²⁷ A total of 71% of respondents to the latest *Where is the Money?* survey reported not having participated in the surveys carried out in 2008 or 2011, 10% confirmed participation, and 19% were uncertain ("don't know").



Key Findings

How Big are Feminist Budgets?

Feminist budgets remain overwhelmingly small—not necessarily by choice, but more due to the harsh realities around resource mobilization and inaccessibility of funding.²⁸

In 2023, the median annual budget for feminist and women’s rights organizations was just USD 22,000. In 2010, the median annual budget of over 740 women’s organizations was USD 20,000.²⁹ This shows that budgets are not growing, pointing to a **persistent budgetary glass ceiling**—one that feminist and women’s rights organizations are struggling to break through.



Why **median** and not **mean** (average)? The median number separates the higher half of a set from the lower half. A median budget of USD 22,000 means that half of survey respondents’ budgets are higher and half are lower than this figure. This report uses the median value because the mean (average) value can be skewed by a small number of very large budgets.

²⁸ Data suggests that choice is not, in fact, the main reason organizations have zero or low budgets. See section *Beyond Budget Size: What Funding Enables*.

²⁹ Arutyunova and Clark, *Watering the Leaves, Starving the Roots*, page 16. Adjusted for global inflation, USD 20,000 in 2010 was approximately equivalent to USD 28,000–35,000 in 2023. This range reflects low to high global inflation scenarios using various global Consumer Price Index (CPI) estimates. Values are indicative and intended for general comparison only; a precise adjustment would require more detailed analysis. Our World in Data, “Consumer Price Index (2010 = 100),” Ourworldindata.org, accessed September 25, 2025, <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/consumer-price-index>.

The Budgetary Glass Ceiling: A Barrier to Feminist Impact

Over decades, feminist movements have advocated for more and better funding, with significant wins. This report shows, however, that limited funding consistently prevents feminist and women's rights organizations from fully realizing their goals and aspirations.

Imagine a budgetary glass ceiling, intangible and invisible but hard as glass, constraining how much these movements can grow financially. This is not due to a lack of ideas, effort, or vision, but instead reflects deeper, structural power imbalances: patriarchal systems that shape who holds resources and who does not. The budgetary ceiling exists to contain the growing power of feminist movements by restricting their access to money and decision-making spaces. This is how structural oppression manifests in funding.

**There are no simple answers.
We invite you to reflect with us:**

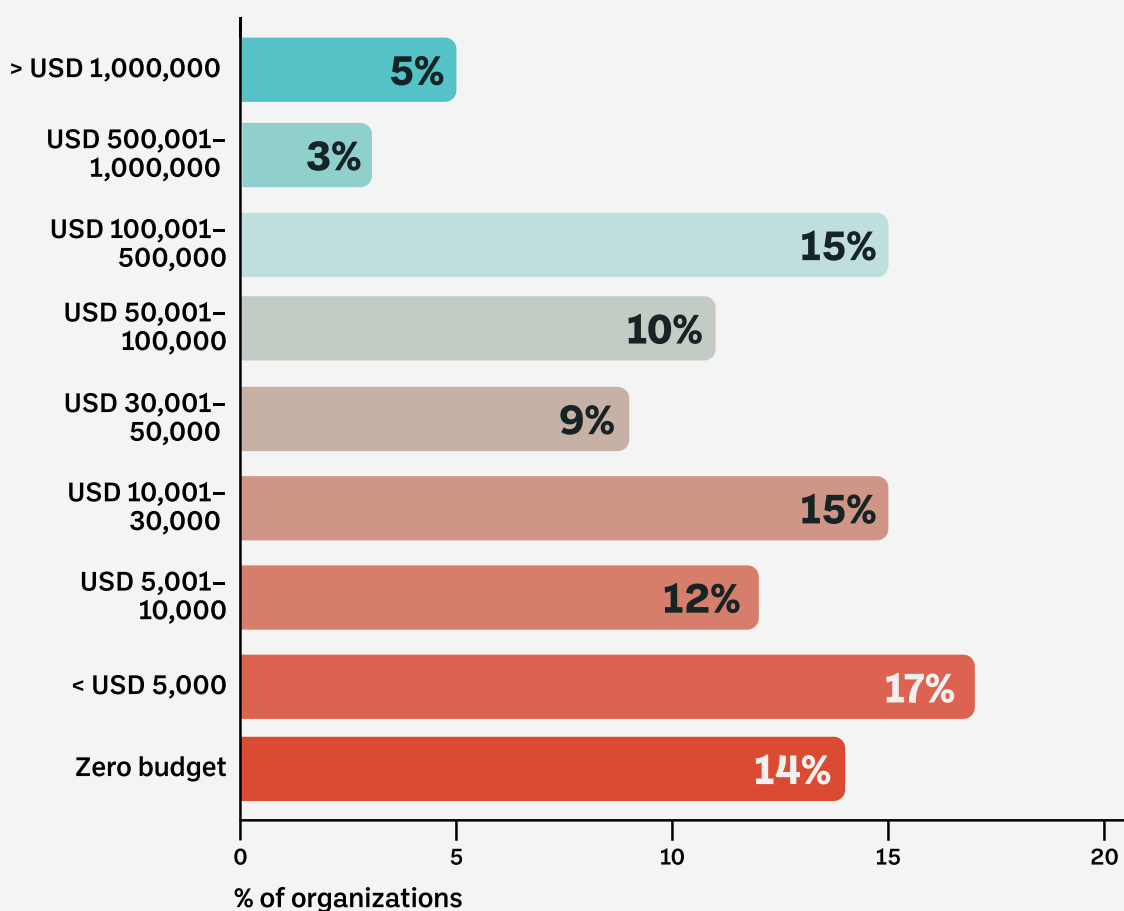
➔ **For those in feminist movements:** does this budgetary glass ceiling feel real to you? How does it reflect your lived experience?

➔ **For those in funding institutions:** why do you think this ceiling persists? What role might your institution play in reinforcing—or breaking—it?

Beyond median budgets, a closer look at respondents' actual budgets reveals a more nuanced picture.³⁰ During the 2021-2023 period, 58% had an annual budget of less than USD 30,000. At the higher end of the spectrum, 15% had annual budgets between USD 100,000-500,000 and 5% had budgets exceeding USD 1 million.

FIGURE 2. Annual Budget, Average 2021-2023

Answers to question: "What was the annual budget for your group, organization and/or movement in each of the following years in USD?" Respondents were asked to select a range.



³⁰ As budget variations between 2021-2023 were neither significant nor consistent across groups of different sizes, this report simplifies the analysis by referring to either the average over these three years or only the 2023 data.

On the lower end, 31% operated on a budget of USD 5,000 or less; among them, 14% had zero budget, as they were either unable to access external funding or intentionally opted out of institutional funding models altogether.³¹ In fact, this number is likely even higher, assuming that feminist and women's rights organizations operating with no or near-zero budgets may not have responded to the survey in big numbers (see [Methodology](#)).

It is also possible to get a sense of the scale of funding for feminist and women's rights organizing by comparing it to the income of major organizations working to undermine human rights, gender justice, LGBTQI+ rights, reproductive justice, and democratic values, as demonstrated by the Global Philanthropy Project (GPP).³²

Consider the following data (Figure 3): the combined 2023 income³³ of three global anti-rights organizations—the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), Focus on the Family, and the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF)—surpassed USD 500 million, more than twice the total funding received by all 1,174 feminist and women's rights organizations in this sample.³⁴

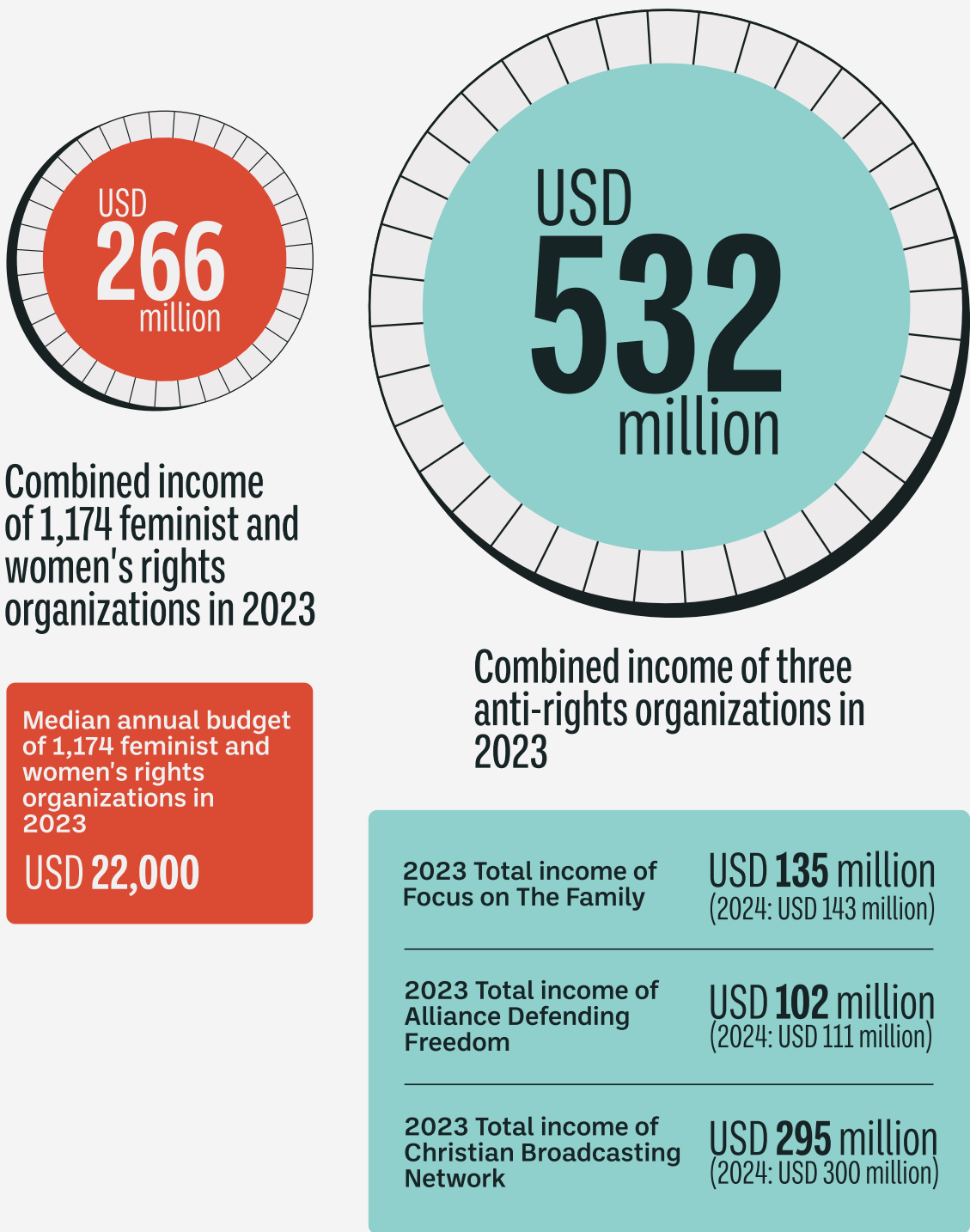
³¹ When saying a group has “zero budget,” this does not mean no work is being done. There is often significant labour, time, services, or in-kind support involved, but such is not calculated or recognized within conventional fiscal frameworks. A zero budget does not reflect the scale, value, or impact of a group's activity.

³² According to GPP, the Alliance Defending Freedom, Focus on the Family, and the Christian Broadcast Network had a combined income of over USD 1 billion in 2021–2022, which was more than the combined income of 8,000 grantees across the global LGBTI movement during that same period. See GPP, 2021–2022 *Global Resources Report: Government & Philanthropic Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Communities* (GPP, 2024), https://globalresourcesreport.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/GRR_2021-2022_WEB-Spread-Colour_EN.pdf.

³³ In the survey, we asked respondents about their “income” and “budget”; these are the terms used throughout this report for consistency and accessibility. In this context, “income” refers to the total income received by an organization, more precisely referred to as “revenue.” When comparing feminist organizations with anti-rights actors, we use “income” for the former and draw on reported “revenue” figures for the latter (e.g., for organizations such as the Christian Broadcasting Network).

³⁴ CBN describes itself as a “global ministry committed to preparing the nations of the world for the coming of Jesus Christ through mass media communication.” See Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), “The Christian Broadcasting Network: A Global Nonprofit Ministry,” CBN.com, accessed August 8, 2025, <https://cbn.com/person/cbn>. Focus on the Family is an evangelical Protestant organization based in Colorado, United States, which describes itself as “a global Christian ministry dedicated to helping families thrive.” See Focus on the Family, “About Focus on the Family,” Focusonthefamily.com, accessed August 8, 2025, <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/about/>. For more information on the Alliance Defending Freedom, see The Observatory on the Universality of Rights, *Rights at Risk: A Primer* (Toronto: AWID, 2022), page 2, https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/rights_at_risk_primer_2021%20%281%29.pdf.

FIGURE 3. Funding Flows: Feminist Movements vs. Anti-Rights Actors



SOURCES

- Revenue records for CBN retrieved from ProPublica, “Nonprofit Explorer: Christian Broadcasting Network,” Propublica.org, accessed August 8, 2025, <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/540678752>.
- Revenue records for Focus on the Family retrieved from Focus on the Family, 2024 Annual Report (Colorado Springs, CO: Focus on the Family, 2025), <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/2024-annual-report.pdf>.
- Revenue records for ADF retrieved from ProPublica, “Network Explorer: Alliance Defending Freedom,” Propublica.org, accessed September 15, 2025, <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/541660459>; Alliance Defending Freedom, Annual Report (Alliance Defending Freedom, 2024), https://adflegal.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/annual-report-2024_general_final4_250408_secure.pdf.

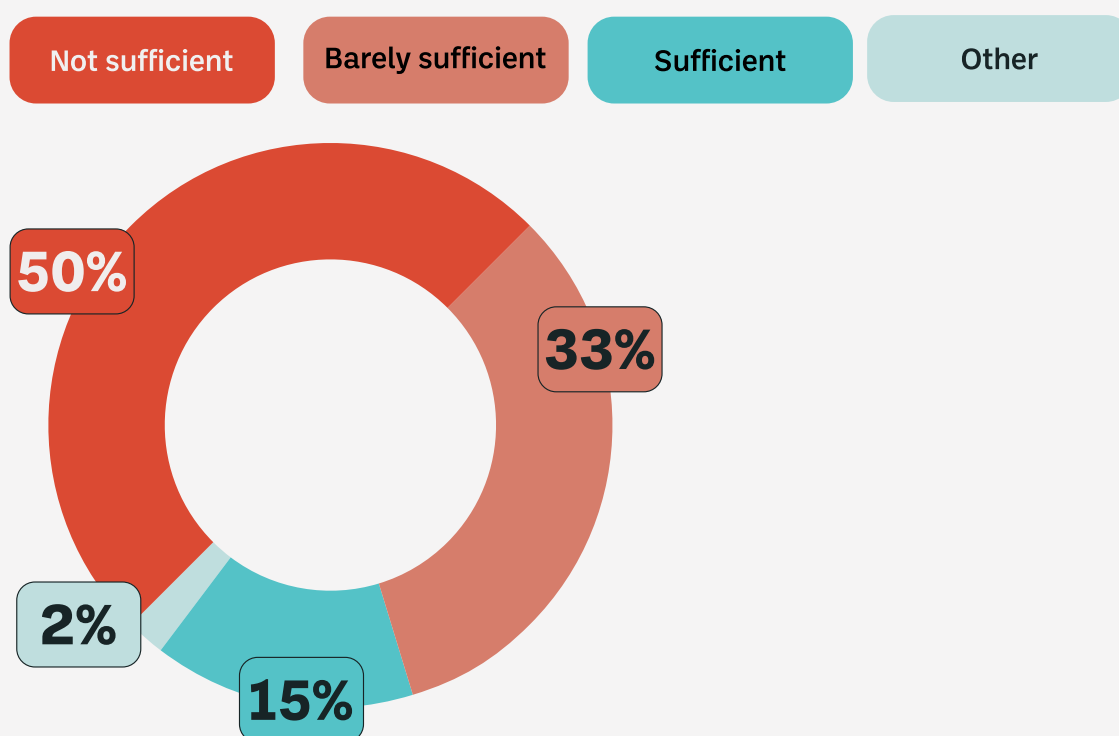
Beyond Budget Size: What Funding Enables

The universe of feminist movements is vast and diverse, encompassing organizations of all sizes, structures, and scopes. But beyond budget size, a more critical question remains: does the funding they receive enable these movements to do the work they need and want to do?

This data shows that, for most feminist and women's rights organizations, the answer is no. Only 15% of respondents reported having sufficient budgets. In contrast, 83% said limited external funding restricts their ability to fully realize their strategic goals: 50% deemed their budgets insufficient and 33% barely sufficient.

FIGURE 4. Perceived Income Sufficiency

Answers to question: "Between 2021 and 2023, was your group, organization and/or movement's income sufficient to realize your strategic goals?"

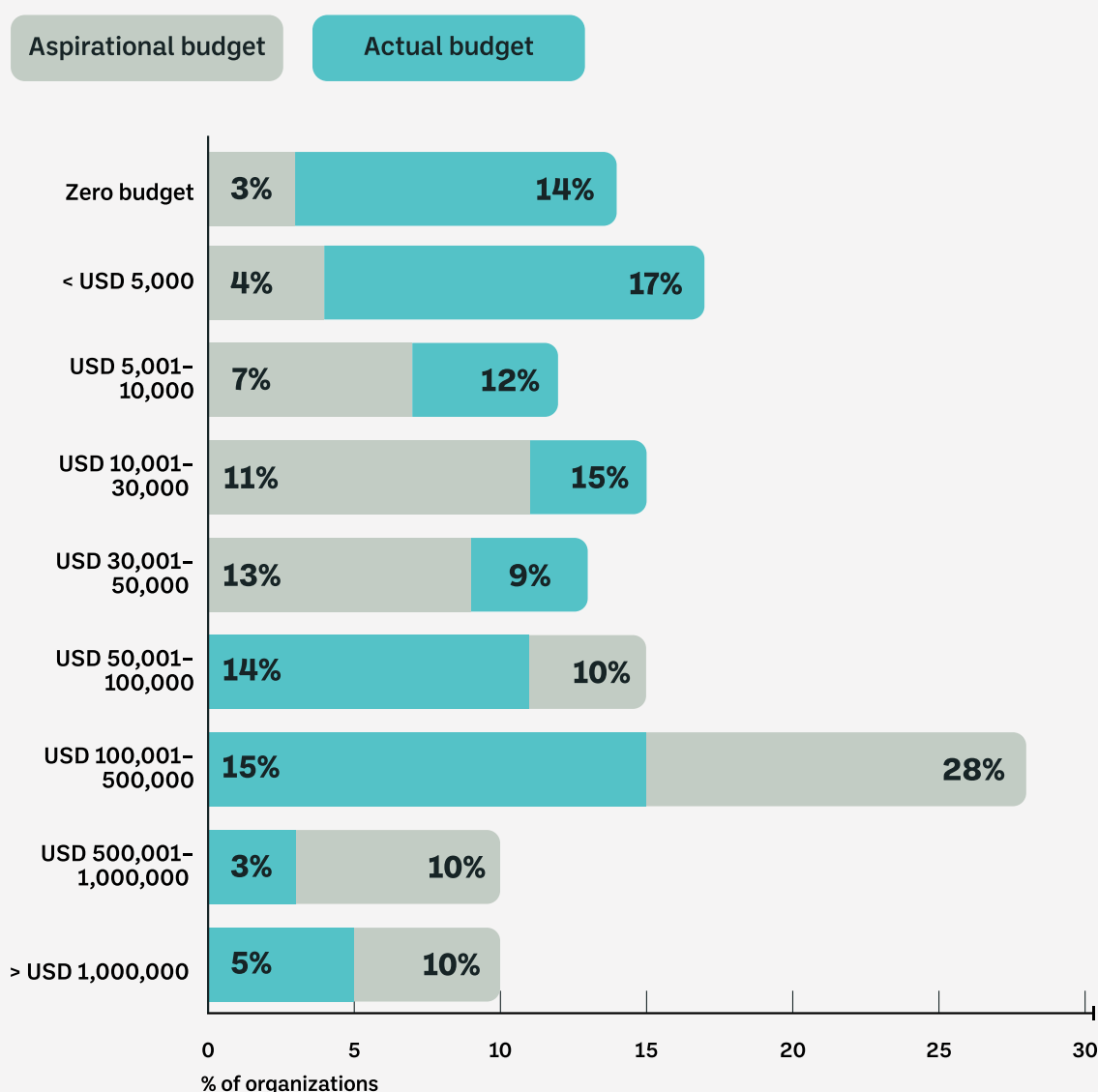


There is also a clear gap between current and aspirational funding levels. For instance, while only 15% have budgets between USD 100,000–500,000, nearly twice as many (28%) aspire to this range. Similarly, just 5% currently exceed the USD 1 million mark, while 10% aim to achieve it. The share of organizations aiming for USD 500,000–1,000,000 (10%) is more than three times those currently in that range (3%). Conversely, while 14% operate with zero budget, only 3% wish to remain in that category.

This data dispels the myth that feminist organizations “prefer” to stay small—feminists, in fact, dream big. Other research challenges the notion that they are unable to manage or absorb larger pots of funding (see [Introduction](#)). As the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) points out, some ideas about feminist movements are based on “colonial prejudicial narratives which ignore the track record of the movements driving equitable change.”³⁵

FIGURE 5. Actual vs. Aspirational Budgets

Answers to question: “How much would your aspirational budget be (in USD amount)?” Respondents were asked to select a range.



³⁵ Emilie Tant and Ján Michalko, “Why Donors Must Finance Feminist Movements,” Expert Comment (Blog), August 29, 2024, <https://odi.org/en/insights/why-donors-must-finance-feminist-movements/>.

In fact, Shake the Table, an initiative to bridge philanthropy, governments, and movements, proposed USD 1.5 billion per year from philanthropic foundations as a minimum baseline to support feminist organizing. Alongside Prospera International Network of Women's Funds, Shake the Table highlighted that women's and feminist funds could, on average, deploy up to ten times their current levels of funding.³⁶

There is no doubt that most feminist and women's rights organizations are ready to increase their budgets and capacities—what funders might call “scaling their impact”—but they need trust-based, flexible, and sustained resourcing.

Behind the Numbers: What Shapes Budget Size?

Regional Disparities

There is considerable variation in the size of feminist and women's rights organizations' budgets across regions. Organizations in the Global Majority continue to be significantly underfunded compared to their counterparts in the Global North. The data highlights that the resourcing of feminist movements replicates, rather than reverses, inequalities along neo-colonial lines.³⁷

In Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and Southwest Asia/Middle East and North Africa (SWANA), median annual budgets range from USD 22,000–27,000 (2023) (see Figure 6 for full data). In Asia and the Pacific, the median annual budget is USD 40,000. Respondents in Western Europe and North America report significantly larger budgets, with a median of USD 81,000.

According to the Dalan Fund, the average organizational budget in Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central and North Asia (CEECCNA) in 2023 ranges from USD 11,000–30,000 excluding Ukraine and from USD 50,000–100,000 including Ukraine, reflecting regional inequalities and the “boom-bust” funding response after Russia's full-scale invasion.³⁸

Organizations in the Global Majority continue to be significantly underfunded compared to their counterparts in the Global North.

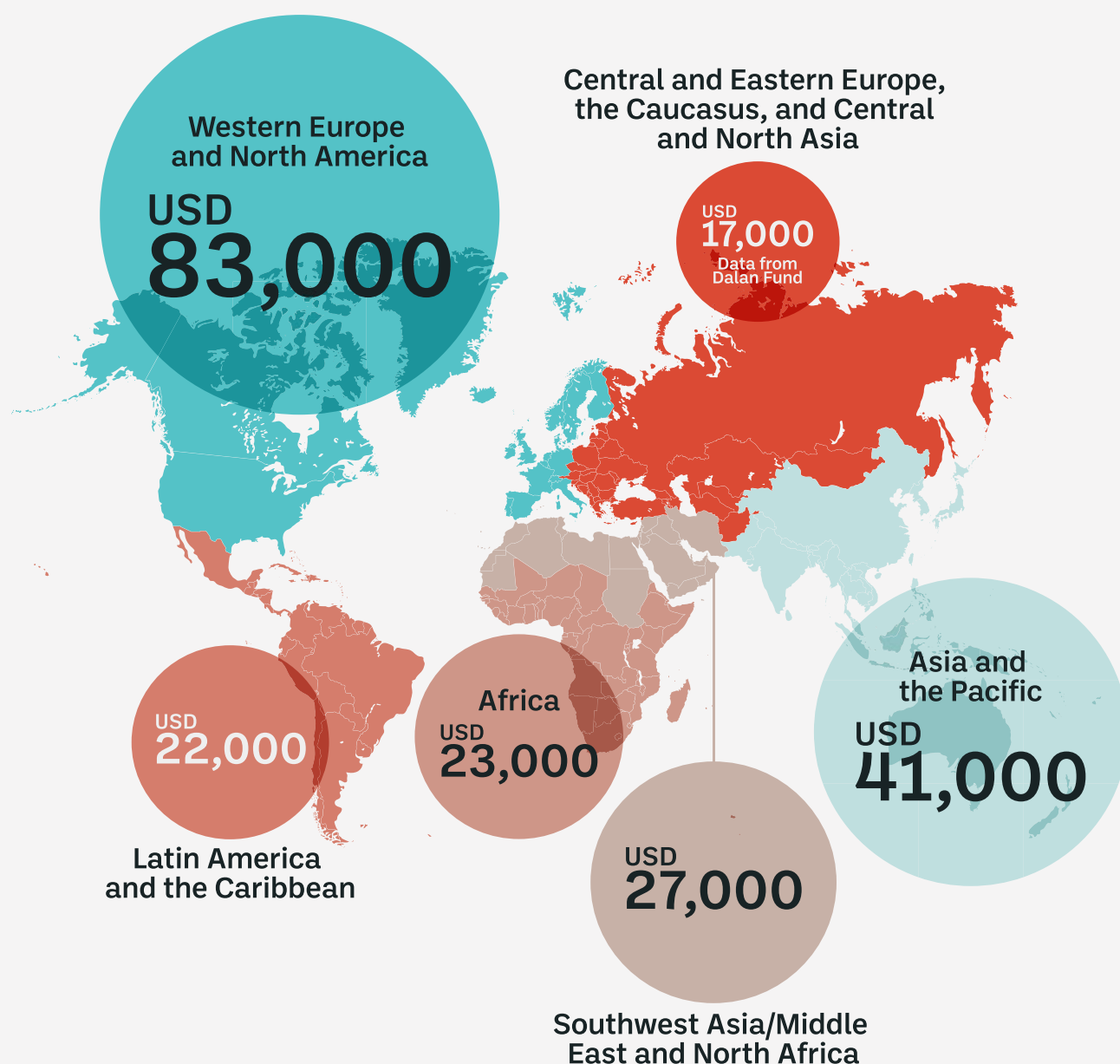
³⁶ Pamela Shifman, Swatee Deepak, Tynesha McHarris, Anna Quinn, Nidhi Sahni, Deborah Bielak, Stephanie Kater, and Jasmine Reliford, *Lighting the Way: A Report for Philanthropy on the Power and Promise of Feminist Movements* (Boston and New York: The Bridgespan Group and Shake the Table, 2022), <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/621d77330c0c3a41cd938983/t/627544cb0a940730e4ddc8b0/1651852517481/Lighting+the+Way+-+A+Report++for+Philanthropy+on+the+Power+and+Promise+of+Feminist+Movements.pdf>. See also Lever, Miller, and Staszewska, *Moving More Money to the Drivers of Change*.

³⁷ See Mamello Sejake and Cate Nyambura, “We Cannot Achieve Equality in Our Generation Without Decolonising Funding,” *Resurj.org*, April 28, 2024, <https://resurj.org/reflection/we-cannot-achieve-equality-in-our-generation-without-decolonising-funding/>.

³⁸ As the largest democratic country in the CEECCNA regions, Ukraine has historically received the most funding, with grant sizes increasing dramatically after Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, before beginning to decline again after 2023. For more on the financial realities of intersectional movements in these regions, see the latest report: Dalan Fund, *Growing Against All Odds: Mapping Funding for Intersectional Organizing in the CEECCNA Regions* (Dalan Fund, 2025), <https://dalan.fund/whats-new/where-is-the-money-for-movements-in-central-eastern-europe-caucasus-and-central-and-north-asia-ceeccna>.

The Dalan Fund estimated the median organizational budget in the CEECCNA regions in 2023 stood at around USD 17,000.³⁹

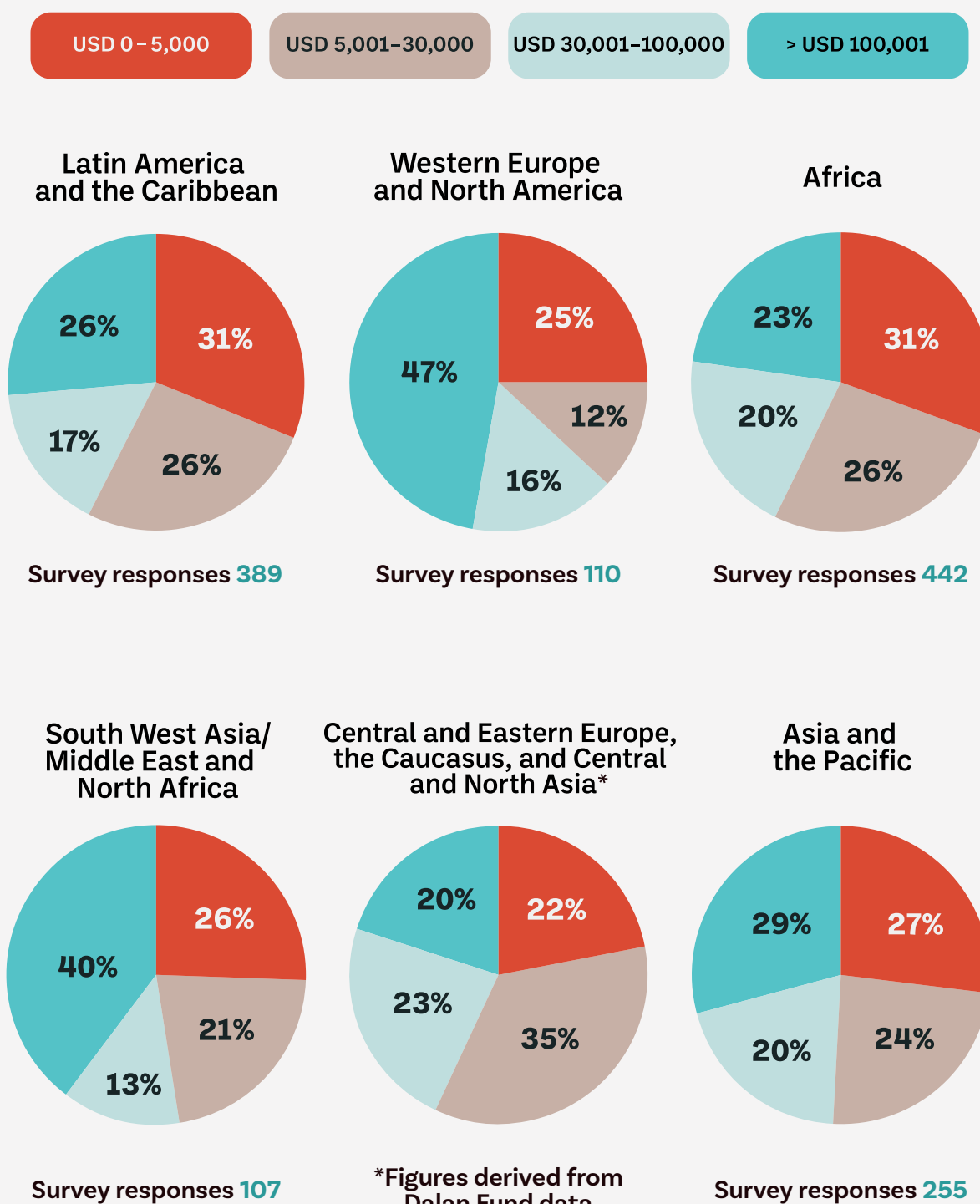
FIGURE 6. Median Budgets by Regions, 2023



³⁹ Median budget figures for CEECCNA are based on: Dalan Fund, Demand Data Analysis — Snapshot of 321 Applications Received for the First Open Call for Proposals in 2024 (unpublished).

FIGURE 7. Annual Budget Size by Region, Average 2021-2023

Answers to question: “What was the annual budget for your group, organization and/or movement in each of the following years in USD?” Respondents were asked to select a range. Responses disaggregated by region. As respondents could choose multiple options and some organizations work in more than one region, the sum of responses does not equal the total sample size.

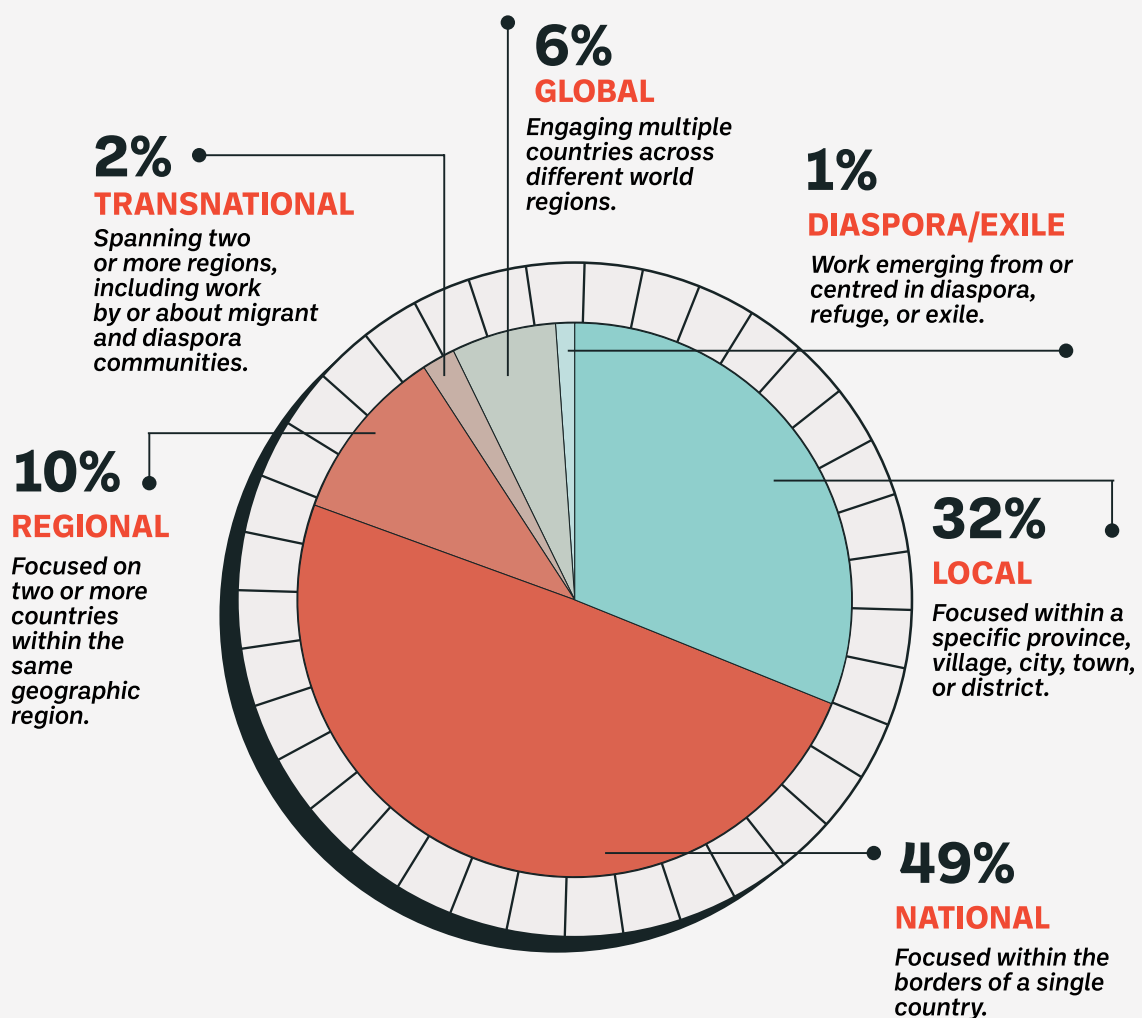


Level of Organizing

The level at which feminist and women's rights organizations operate—whether local, national, regional, global, in the diaspora, or in exile—significantly affects their funding.

FIGURE 8. Level of Organizing

Answers to question: “What is the geographical scope of your work?” Respondents were asked to pick the wider scope applicable to them.



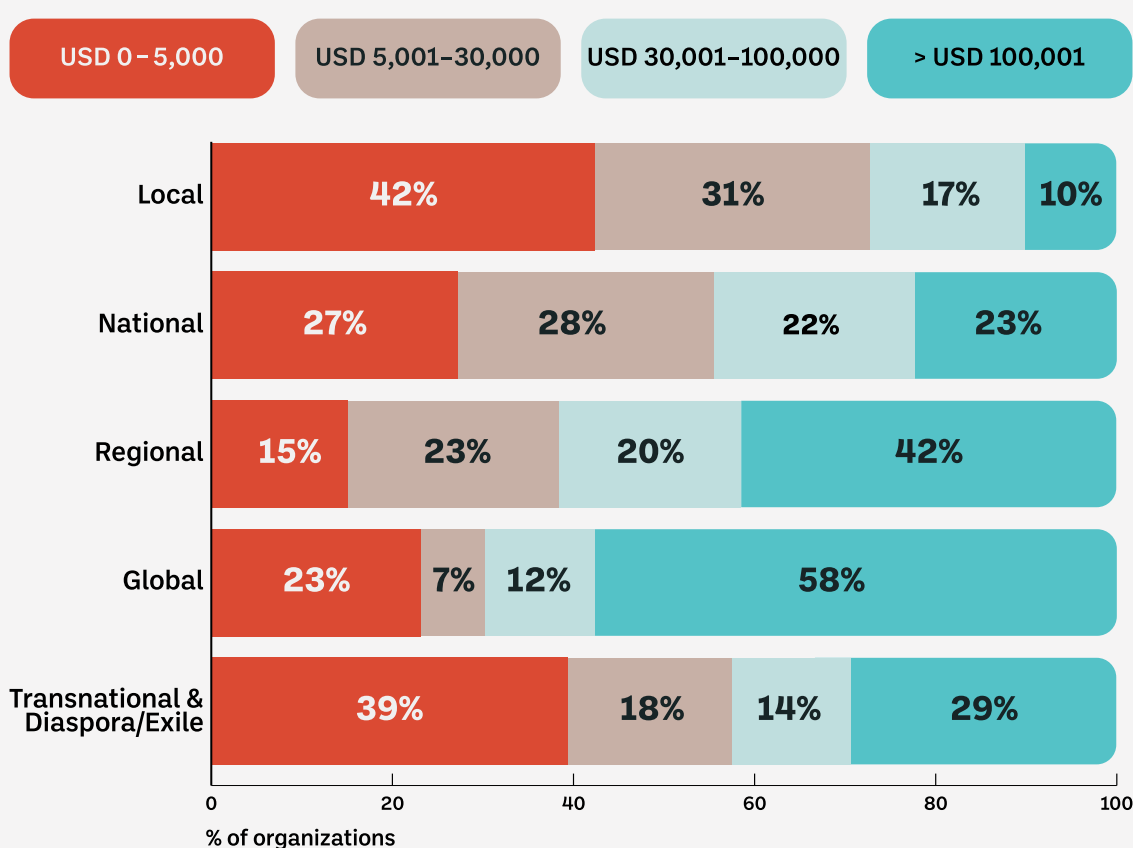
SOURCES

→ Due to the low number of responses in the Transnational (28) and Diaspora/Exile (15) categories, data for these categories should be interpreted with caution. The two categories were combined in some figures for analysis.

Organizations operating globally are far more likely to secure larger budgets: over half (58%) reported annual budgets over USD 100,000 and 25% exceeded USD 1 million, compared to just 5% of all surveyed groups. In contrast, only 23% of national-level organizations have budgets over USD 100,000, only 3% of which exceed USD 1 million. At the local level, 73% of organizations operate on annual budgets of USD 30,000 or less, and only 10% receive over USD 100,000.

FIGURE 9. Budget Size by Level of Organizing

Answers to question: “What was the annual budget for your group, organization and/or movement in each of the following years in USD?” Respondents were asked to select a range. Responses disaggregated by level of organizing.



As previously noted (see section [Beyond Budget Size: What Funding Enables](#)), funding size alone does not tell the full story—it matters what that funding enables. Although 83% of feminist and women’s rights organizations report having budgets insufficient to fully meet their strategic goals, this varies by organizing level.

While the majority of global (65%) and regional (75%) organizations report insufficient resources, they are still more likely to have sufficient income—28% and 22%, respectively—compared to just 15% across the total sample. The situation is most acute for local and national groups: 83% and 87%, respectively, report their funding to be insufficient. This highlights a clear gap between grassroots, global, and regional organizations.

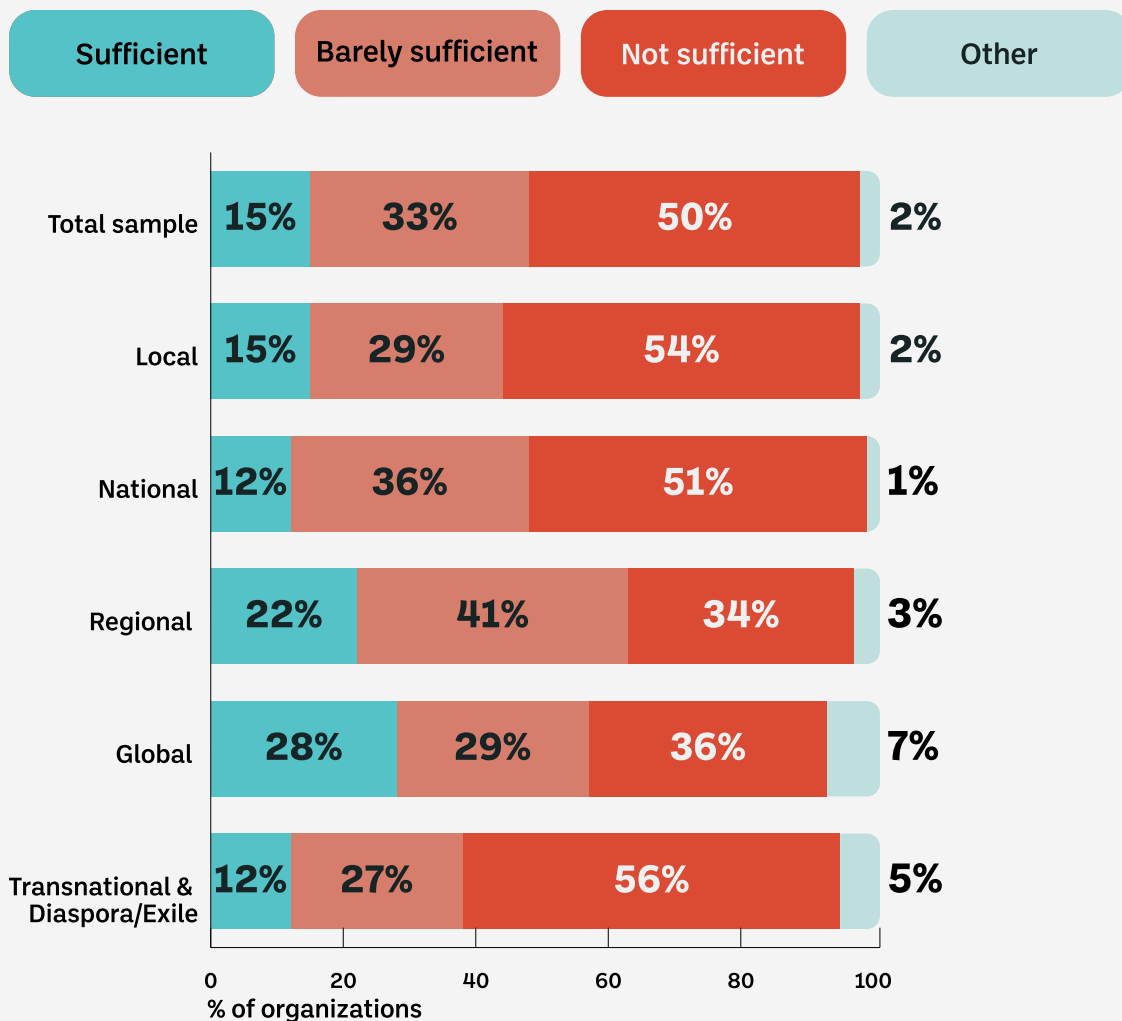
Several factors contribute to this gap. While grassroots groups clearly require more resources, they encounter significant structural barriers. Local and national organizations struggle to meet eligibility criteria for larger grants and are frequently excluded from global spaces where networking and relationship-building occur.

Having said so, organizing level does not determine organizational size. Simply put, there are very large national organizations and small global networks, each with distinct roles and budgetary needs shaped by their respective context and nature of work.

A vision for more equitable resource distribution within the feminist ecosystem must therefore consider budgets not just in comparison to one another, but, more importantly, in relation to what each organization needs to carry out its plans and achieve its objectives.

FIGURE 10. Perceived Income Sufficiency by Level of Organizing

Answers to question: “Between 2021 and 2023, was your group, organization and/or movement’s income sufficient to realize your strategic goals?” Responses disaggregated by level of organizing.



Registration Status

A significant majority (80%) of feminist and women's organizations in our sample are registered, while 17% are not. Of the remaining 3% who selected "other," some are in the process of registering, others remain unregistered due to hostile political contexts and/or strategic choice, and some operate under the umbrella of other registered entities. Organizations are significantly more likely to be unregistered at the local level (25%) compared to national (14%), regional (14%), and global or other levels (17%).

Most funders require proof of registration, with the exception of many women's and feminist funds and some intermediary funds, who are more likely to support unregistered groups. As a result, unregistered groups are often excluded from major funding opportunities, keeping their budgets small. Fifty-seven percent operate on less than USD 5,000 annually, compared to 31% of the overall sample. Among unregistered groups, 31% operate with zero budget, versus 14% in the total sample.

In many contexts, registration is not only costly and bureaucratic, it also increases the risk of state surveillance and persecution. As civic space shrinks under rising authoritarianism, registration becomes increasingly difficult or even impossible. In recent years, more governments—including Georgia (2024), Kyrgyzstan (2024), Nicaragua (2021), and Hungary (2017)—have imposed "foreign agent" laws and other restrictions on civil society. These frameworks stigmatize organizations and severely limit access to international funding. Some groups—especially those providing sensitive services—dissolve and regroup as informal collectives to avoid punitive restrictions, state surveillance, and criminalization, including when providing sensitive services.⁴⁰

Some unregistered groups deliberately choose not to pursue institutional funding as a political stance. Nonetheless, the call for more accessible funding is one of the most frequent messages to funders. As respondents put it:

“
*Registration should
not be a barrier.
NGO is not the only
form of activism.*
”

“
*Fund grassroots
feminist work—
whether registered
or unregistered.*
”

⁴⁰ See International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, *Foreign Influence Registration Laws and Civil Society: An Analysis and Responses* (International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, 2024; updated 2025), https://www.icnl.org/wp-content/uploads/foreign-influence-report_Jan_2025_update.pdf; CIVICUS, *People Power Under Attack: A Report Based on Data from the CIVICUS Monitor* (CIVICUS, 2024), pages 59–61, <https://civicusmonitor.contentfiles.net/media/documents/Global-Findings2024.EN.pdf>.

The paradox is stark: feminist organizing in contexts where registration is hardest is often the most impactful—and the most in need of support. Research from the ODI, for example, shows that women’s movements are driving democratic governance and inclusion, particularly in contexts of closing civic space and rising authoritarianism.⁴¹

This is why funding mechanisms that reach unregistered, grassroots groups are not only necessary, they are strategic. Women’s and feminist funds have largely adapted their practices to support activists where they are, especially in politically hostile environments. Many institutional funders, however, have yet to do the same.

This raises an important question: how many of these funding restrictions are truly mandated by law and how many are self-imposed through internal policies or by-laws? Understanding the origins of these limitations is critical to designing effective advocacy strategies and expanding access to funding for the movements most in need.

Thematic Focus Areas

Our data reveals stark budget inequalities across the feminist organizing spectrum. For example, 60% of groups working on caste equity operate on annual budgets below USD 10,000—nearly 20 percentage points higher than the total sample (42%).⁴² They also make up the largest share of zero-budget groups (21% vs. 14% of the global sample). Groups focused on harm reduction and resisting the war on drugs face similar disparities: 56% report budgets under USD 10,000, 18% of which have zero budget.⁴³ For 2023, these groups have a median annual budget of USD 7,500, roughly one-third of the global sample median of USD 22,000.

These disparities are not unique. They reflect long-standing, structural patterns of underfunding, particularly for groups led by and accountable to communities facing multiple, intersecting forms of marginalization.

While this report spotlights caste equity and harm reduction organizing, broader research confirms similar gaps. For example, BFF found that, in 2018, only 5% of human rights funding reached Black women, girls, and trans people, with just 0.1–0.35% of global foundation giving directed to them.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Tant and Michalko, “Why Donors Must Finance Feminist Movements.”

⁴² It should be noted that the sample of those working on caste equity was relatively small, with 50 responses (4.3% of the global sample).

⁴³ For a definition of “harm reduction,” see Harm Reduction International, “What is Harm Reduction?” Hri.global, accessed September 15, 2025, <https://hri.global/what-is-harm-reduction/>. Repressive drug policies are still rarely recognized as a feminist issue, by both feminist movements and funders. For more information, see Fenya Fischler and Inna Michaeli, *Feminist Movements and Women Resisting the War on Drugs: Documentation of an AWID Learning, Movement-Support and Engagement Process 2018–2019* (Toronto: AWID, 2019), <https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/WUD%20report%20-%20English%20-%20Finalsmall.pdf>.

⁴⁴ Black Feminist Fund, *Where Is the Money for Black Feminist Movements?* (BFF, 2023), <https://www.fundblackfeminists.org/where-is-the-money-for-black-feminist-movements>.

Between 2016–2020, only 0.6% of global giving benefited Indigenous Peoples, with Indigenous organizations receiving just 0.3%.⁴⁵

This data reveals not only issue-based neglect but also a structural failure to fund constituency-led organizing, especially by those working across multiple, interconnected issues. In addition to the groups mentioned above, this includes women with disabilities and others organizing at the intersections of race, caste, class, gender identity, sexuality, migration, and more. Even when their work aligns with donor priorities, many of these groups remain underfunded or entirely excluded from a big part of institutional funding.

Quality resourcing must go beyond siloed portfolios or token inclusion, instead supporting feminist movements to work across the full spectrum of the constituencies they represent and the justice agendas they fight for. The intersectional nature of feminist work is explored further in the box below.

Our Struggles are Interconnected, Yet Funding Remains Siloed

Most respondents identified seven to eight interconnected issues as central to their work, and 30% named more than ten. This confirms that feminist and women's rights organizations work across a broad spectrum of interlinked themes tied to multidimensional identities and constituencies, spanning gender, sexuality, reproductive health, economic and climate justice, racial justice, caste equity, drug policy reform, and more.

In short, feminist organizing is intersectional and deeply embedded within broader social justice movements, yet funding rarely reflects this reality. Single-issue portfolios and siloed opportunities remain the norm. Research by HRFN on intersectionality in human rights funding found that most grants still address only one issue and target one population, despite widespread recognition that identities and struggles are interconnected.⁴⁶



⁴⁵ International Funders for Indigenous People, *Funding Trend Analysis on Indigenous Peoples Philanthropy* (International Funders for Indigenous Peoples, 2024), <https://internationalfunders.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Funding-Trend-Analysis-on-Indigenous-Peoples-Philanthropy-compressed.pdf>; Black Feminist Fund, *Where Is the Money for Black Feminist Movements?*

⁴⁶ Human Rights Funders Network, *Funding for Intersectional Organizing: A Call to Action for Human Rights Philanthropy* (HRFN, 2022), <https://www.hrfn.org/resources/ahr-intersectionality-report-2022/>.

Beyond siloization, funding priorities are often externally shaped. Funders may pressure organizations to “specialize” in a specific issue—undermining their organically intersectional approach—or push them to align with “trending” themes. In some cases, groups are compelled to reframe their work to fit donor language or expectations (see section [Autonomy and Political Censorship](#)).

To truly support feminist movements, it is critical to recognize how funding modalities shape what receives resources and what is left behind.

Who is Resourcing Feminist Organizing?

Money for feminist and women’s rights organizations flows from a diverse range of sources, including women’s and feminist funds, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), philanthropic foundations, bilateral and multilateral donors, HNWLs, and other individual donors.

Feminist movements are not only recipients of funding, they are also their own most powerful resource.

A majority of respondents (71%) receive some form of external funding to support their work.⁴⁷ to support their work. Most rely on a mix of sources, with no single type of funder contributing, on average, more than 30% of respondents’ total budgets. This reflects the creative and resourceful ways feminists weave together diverse funding streams to sustain their work. At the same time, it highlights how little funding they often receive from each source, forcing them to juggle multiple funders and the associated administrative burdens.

But feminist organizing is not fueled by grants and money alone; resourcing goes beyond funding. For the first time, AWID’s *Where is the Money?* survey shines a spotlight on the vital role of self-generated, autonomous resources—both

financial and non-financial—that feminist and women’s rights organizations generate themselves, outside of institutional funding structures.

So, in reflecting on *who* is resourcing feminist organizing, it is important to start with what is real but consistently undervalued: feminist movements are not only recipients of funding, they are also their own most powerful resource.

⁴⁷ For the purpose of the survey, AWID defined “external funding” as grants and other forms of funding from philanthropic foundations, national and local governments, bilateral and multilateral donors, the private sector, and individual donors. It excludes resources that groups, organizations, and/or movements generate autonomously, such as membership fees, voluntary staff, member, and supporter contributions, community fundraisers, venue hires, or sale of services.

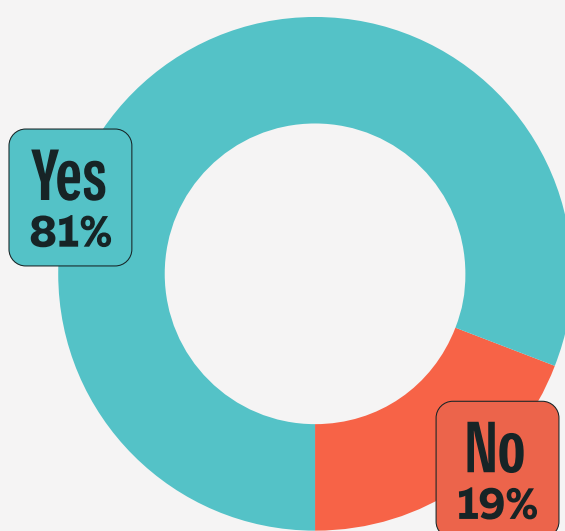
Feminists Resourcing Themselves

Feminist and women's rights organizations do not just rely on institutional funding; feminist-led social change is powered by passion, time, political commitment, knowledge, relationships, community, solidarity, and collective care. These resources are self-generated and autonomous, often overlooked and invisibilized in funding analysis, and rarely reflected in actual budgets. Yet, they are the backbone of feminist organizing and must be seen, valued, and accounted for.

“
Mutual aid is like oxygen—part of our ecosystem but not visible.
AWID Member
”

FIGURE 11. Autonomous Resourcing

Answers to question: “Between 2021 and 2023, did your group, organization and/or movement rely on any [form] of autonomous resourcing to generate income and fund your work?”



Our data shows:

- 81% of respondents rely on some form of resourcing autonomous from institutional funding streams.
- For 29%, these self-generated resources are primary to sustaining their work.
- Between 2021–2023, nearly half of all organizations—47%—reported increasing reliance on autonomous resourcing.⁴⁸

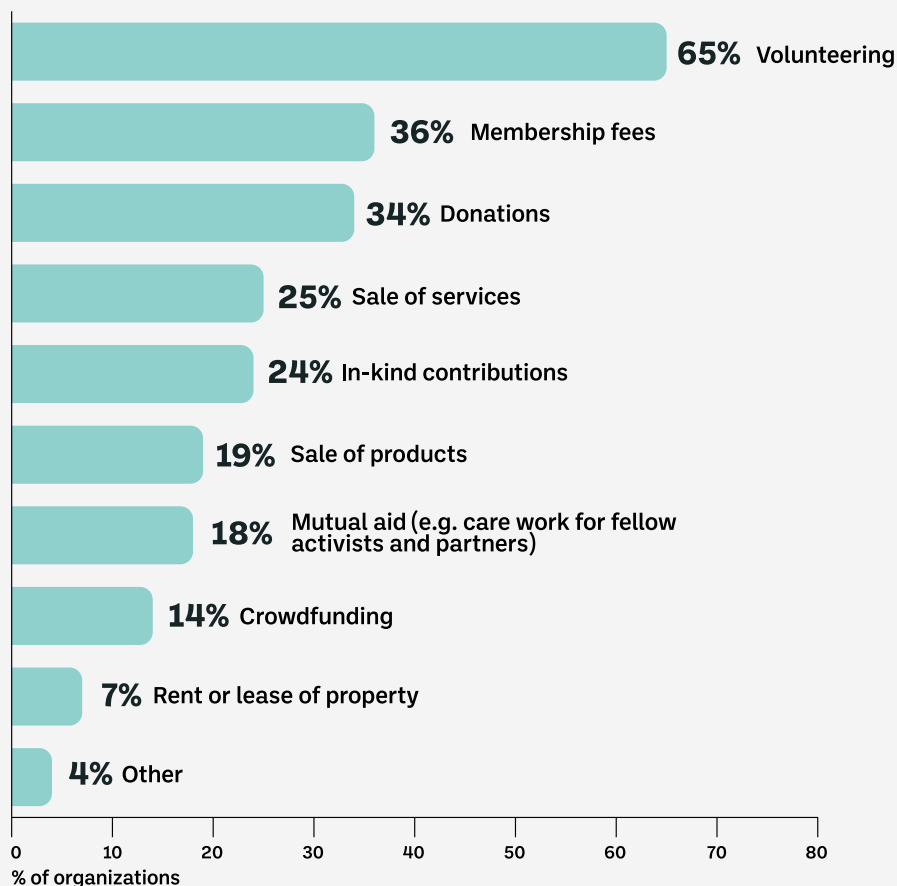
⁴⁸ Based on our survey data, nearly all organizations without external funding reported very low or no budgets and indicated greater reliance on volunteer labour and membership fees, suggesting that self-generated resources are indeed their primary means of sustaining work.

This data sheds light on the experiences of the vast ecosystem of local, grassroots, and community-based organizations that have long relied on self-generated resources as a primary way of sustaining their work. In fact, many would argue that this is what resourcing feminist activism truly looks like: autonomous, decolonial, relational, and rooted in solidarity, reciprocity, sovereignty, and collective care.⁴⁹ For example, research by EPIC-Africa highlights everyday manifestations of individual giving—also referred to as “personal source contributions”—of time, money, labour, expertise, goods, or assets as a primary funding source for civil society organizations across the African continent.⁵⁰

From volunteering and mutual aid to in-kind contributions and membership fees, feminist movements are generating their own resources.⁵¹

FIGURE 12. Sources of Autonomous Resourcing

Answers to question: “Between 2021 and 2023, did your group, organization and/or movement rely on any of the following forms of autonomous resourcing to generate income and fund your work?”



⁴⁹ Halima Mahomed, *Philanthropic Privilege and Constituency Agency: Ideologically Rethinking the Role of Institutional Philanthropy* (TrustAfrica, 2023), <https://trustafrica.org/publication/philanthropic-privilege-and-constituency-agency/>.

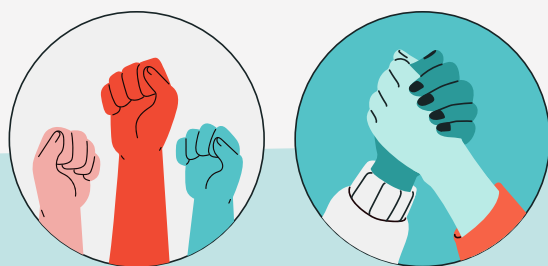
⁵⁰ EPIC-Africa, *Challenging the Myths*.

⁵¹ Volunteering is a vital resource for feminist movements and a powerful way of organizing—not everyone fighting for rights and gender justice wishes to be embedded in formal NGOs or paid structures. However, while invaluable, high reliance on volunteer labour can also signal a lack of sufficient core funding for salaries and sustainable infrastructure.

For many marginalized communities, autonomous resourcing is not only a choice but often a necessity—the only viable option given limited access to capital, wealth, or income-generating opportunities.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in autonomous resourcing, both within feminist movements and among funders. This reflects two converging realities: a deepening political commitment among feminists to reduce dependence on external funding and an urgent need for self-sufficiency in the face of a global funding crisis. However, the shift towards self-sustainability is neither quick nor easy, especially given today's context of funding scarcity, shrinking civic space, and entrenched economic inequalities.

Feminist power to self-resource must never be used as a rationale for defunding feminist movements or justification for shifting the burden onto feminists to simply “fund themselves.” Strengthening feminist movements requires both funders showing up with long-term, flexible, and unrestricted support and the continued growth of feminists’ own power and capacity to resource themselves.



What is Autonomous Resourcing?

AWID understands autonomous resourcing as the financial, human, and material resources that movements self-generate outside the institutional funding landscape to power the liberatory aims of their organizing. Examples of this include:

- **Ollas populares** (community kitchens) in Argentina, sustained through food donations from neighbours and local markets.
- The **Usha Cooperative** in India, a bank founded and run by sex workers in Kolkata.
- The **Feminist Republik Healing Farm** in Kenya, built to serve as a rejuvenation centre for Women Human Rights Defenders while challenging the narrative of women's ownership of land and infrastructure across Africa.⁵²

⁵² Angelina De Los Santos, “Common Pots: Argentinian Women Lead Fight Against Food Insecurity in Slums,” *openDemocracy*, April 3, 2024, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/women-argentina-food-crisis-hunger-soup-kitchens-cook-common-pots-milei/?source=in-article-related-story>; Tenzin Dolker, “What We Can Learn from Feminists Who Fund Themselves,” *AWID.org*, January 15, 2019, <https://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/what-we-can-learn-feminists-who-fund-themselves>; Urgent Action Fund Africa, “Fostering Cultures of Care,” *UAF-africa.org*, accessed August 8, 2025, <https://www.uaf-africa.org/fostering-cultures-of-care/>.

Practices of autonomous resourcing are rooted in feminists' passion for justice, wisdom, expertise, relationships, solidarity, creativity, and collective care.

Whether functioning as a movement's primary strategy or part of a broader resourcing portfolio, autonomous resourcing is distinct in three important ways:

1. It involves no expectations or requirements from institutional funders.
2. It supports freedom to self-determine and organize.
3. It is, in itself, an act of movement-building, ideally sustaining long-term relationships and commitments.

Autonomous resourcing knows no boundaries, stretching into realms of individual giving and wealth creation while offering a powerful provocation: what would it mean to build feminist futures beyond the limits of donor funding?

We invite you to reflect with us:

- **For those in feminist movements**, what does autonomous resourcing mean to you? Does it reflect your lived experience of sustaining feminist organizing? In what ways have you built or relied on resources outside institutional funding?
- **For those in funding institutions**, what role might your institution play in supporting feminist movements to reduce dependence on external funding? How can funders help create the conditions for movements to build and control their own wealth, infrastructure, and resourcing agendas?
- Visit **Our Resource**, AWID's living library and exchange space on autonomous resourcing—a hub for sharing ideas, tools, and strategies to fund and build feminist movements: our-resource.com.

Key Funding Sources⁵³

Women's and Feminist Funds

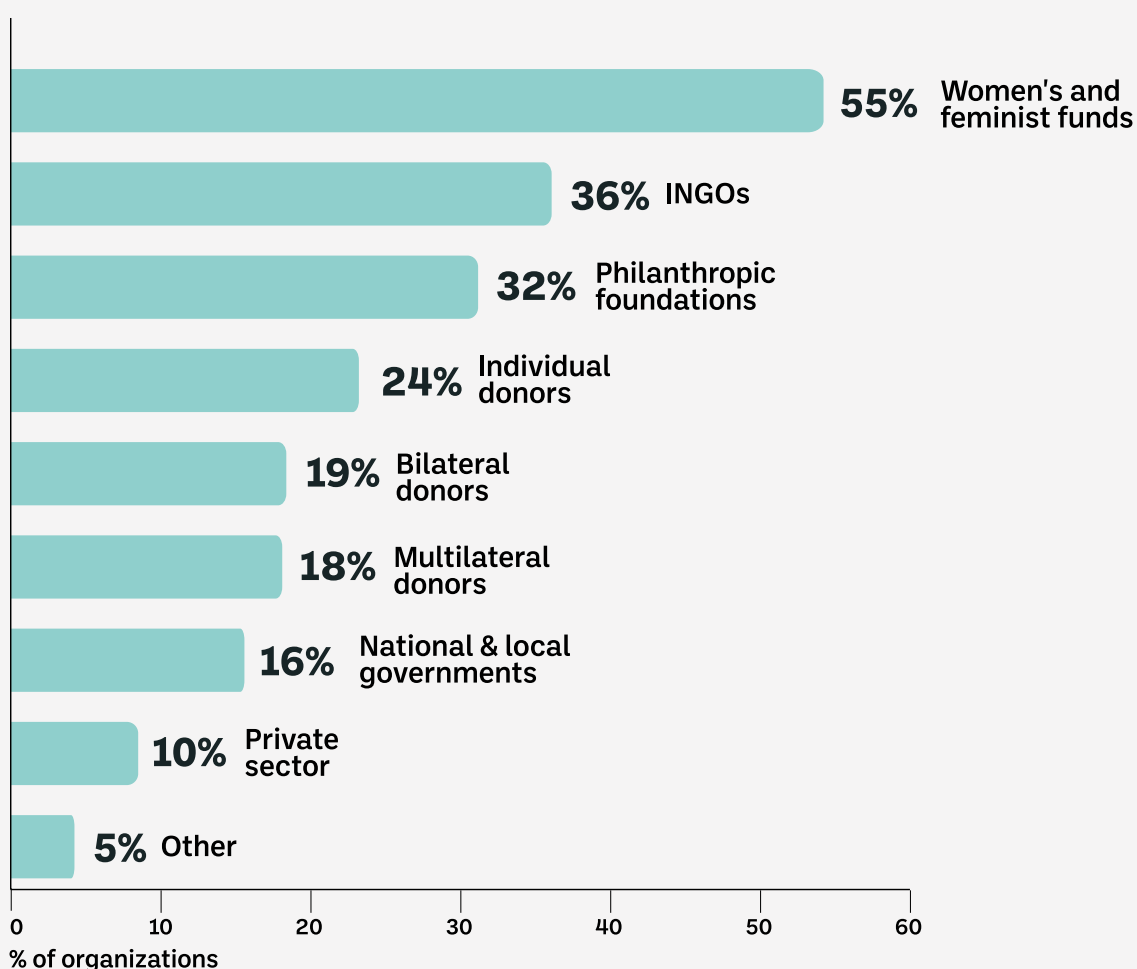
Women's and feminist funds are vital actors in resourcing feminist organizing, channeling resources from bilateral donors, philanthropic foundations, HNWIs, and other sources to feminist and women's rights organizations.

⁵³ The survey included a question on the key sources of external funding: "What were your group, organization, and/or movement's key sources of funding between 2021 and 2023? Key sources refer to the largest donations you received in terms of funding amount." Respondents were then asked to estimate the percentage of each source in their budget. The information in this section is based on responses to these questions.

Due to their mission alignment, strong relationships with local movements, and flexible funding models, women's and feminist funds consistently reach groups often overlooked by other donors, particularly those historically marginalized, unregistered, and underfunded.⁵⁴ They fill critical gaps left by funders with limited outreach, rigid compliance requirements, or lack of proximity to grassroots organizing.⁵⁵ This does not mean that these funds are immune to bias, but that their feminist values set higher standards for learning, unlearning, and accountability to movements.

FIGURE 13. Key Sources of Funding

Answers to question: "What were your group, organization, and/or movement's key sources of external funding between 2021 and 2023? Key sources refer to the largest donations you received in terms of funding amount." Note that numbers do not add up to 100%, as respondents were able to select multiple options.



⁵⁴ For more info, see Kika F.B., Martha Tukahirwa, and Sofia Karakaidou, *Feminist Funding in Practice: Prospera INWF's 5 Year Trends, 2016–2020* (Prospera International Network of Women's Funds, 2022), https://trends.prospera-inwf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/PROSPERA_Informe_July12.pdf.

⁵⁵ For more on obstacles to institutional donors, see Lever, Miller, and Staszewska, *Moving More Money to the Drivers of Change*.

A staggering 55% of all respondents identified women's and feminist funds as key sources of funding—nearly 20 percentage points higher than the next most-cited funder type, INGOs, at 36%. The importance of women's and feminist funds across all regions and budget sizes highlights their broad accessibility and consistent presence in the ecosystem.

Among those receiving funding from women's and feminist funds, 41% said this funding comprised 50% or more of their annual budgets. Across all respondents receiving external funding, contributions from these funds accounted for 23% of total budgets on average.

This marks a significant shift from 2010, when women's and feminist funds comprised only about 5% of organizations' total budgets, a figure that had remained consistent in earlier surveys.⁵⁶ Women's and feminist funds are now a major source of support—not only widely accessible across the diversity of feminist movements, but often substantial relative to recipients' budgets.

Additionally, 40% of feminist and women's rights organizations received new funding from women's and feminist funds between 2021–2023. Notably, 29% of respondents reported receiving funding from women's and feminist funds specifically focused on countering the growing influence of anti-rights actors and anti-gender movements—one of the most urgent obstacles to gender justice and women's rights today.



The Growth of Women's and Feminist Fund Infrastructure

Over the past decade, women's and feminist funds have grown rapidly. Between 2016–2020, members of the Prospera International Network of Women's Funds collectively tripled their revenue.⁵⁷ New community and movement-led funds have also emerged, including the International Trans Fund (ITF), the Numun Fund, the Black Feminist Fund, and, more recently, the Dalan Fund, established in 2023 to support feminist and gender justice organizing across the CEECCNA regions.⁵⁸

Yet the current funding crisis is threatening both the growth and very survival of women's and feminist funds. According to the latest data from Prospera, 78% of funds in the network have already been affected by funding cuts, amounting to USD 65.3 million in confirmed losses. An average 30% budget cut is projected across the network in 2026.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Arutyunova and Clark, *Watering the Leaves, Starving the Roots*, page 84.

⁵⁷ Prospera International Network of Women's Funds, "Funding Crisis: Impact & Response by Women's and Feminist Funds," Prospera-inwf.org, April 2025, <https://prospera-inwf.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Prospera-The-Quiet-Crisis-report.pdf>.

⁵⁸ Prospera International Network of Women's Funds, "Funding Crisis."

⁵⁹ Prospera International Network of Women's Funds, "Funding Crisis."

At a time when many large donors increasingly rely on feminist funds to reach grassroots organizing, these financial losses expose and deepen the existing precarity of feminist movements. Without sustained and accountable investment, the promise of resourcing feminist organizing through women's and feminist funds risks becoming yet another fragile link in an already unstable ecosystem.

International Non-Governmental Organizations

INGOs were identified as a key source of funding by 36% of feminist and women's rights organizations. This figure was notably higher among groups with annual budgets between USD 500,000–1,000,00, rising to 55%. This marks a significant shift in the funding landscape since 2010, when only about 7% of respondents named INGOs as a primary funding source.⁶⁰ Regionally, groups in Southwest Asia/Middle East and North Africa (42%), Asia and the Pacific (39%), and Africa (37%) most frequently cited INGOs as key funders. For the majority (64%) of all respondents, INGOs provided up to 30% of budgets.

INGOs play a complex role in the feminist funding ecosystem, often acting as intermediaries channeling resources from bilateral and multilateral donors who fund larger organizations. This stems from not only operational constraints but also INGOs' historical role in shaping international development agendas, often by engaging local organizations as “implementers” of top-down agendas.

While still common, these models have come under pressure, prompting many INGOs to “decentralize,” work through local and international offices, and adopt more equitable funding approaches that respect feminist movements' expertise and agency in setting their priorities and designing programs. INGOs can play a valuable role in channeling funds to small and medium-sized feminist groups.⁶¹

However, a disproportionate share of resources continues to go to large, Global North-based INGOs rather than directly to grassroots actors, reinforcing neo-colonial dynamics and distorting funding flows.⁶² This raises concerns around inequality, accountability, and power imbalances between INGOs and local feminist movements.

⁶⁰ Arutyunova and Clark, *Watering the Leaves, Starving the Roots*, page 17.

⁶¹ See Lever, Miller, and Staszewska, *Moving More Money to the Drivers of Change*.

⁶² OECD, *Development Finance for Gender Equality 2024* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2024), page 56, <https://doi.org/10.1787/e340aafb-en>.

Access to philanthropic funding is closely tied to organizational size: the larger the budget, the more likely a group will receive philanthropic support.

Philanthropic Foundations

A total of 32% of respondents identified philanthropic foundations as a key source of funding.⁶³ Access to philanthropic funding is closely tied to organizational size: the larger the budget, the more likely a group will receive philanthropic support. For example, 71% of feminist and women's rights organizations with budgets over USD 1 million reported receiving such funding. In most cases, philanthropic contributions account for up to 30% of annual budgets.

While no single comprehensive database tracks the full scope of philanthropic giving, OECD data from 2021–2022 shows that women's rights and feminist organizations received just USD 223 million, 1.8% of all philanthropic giving tracked in that period.⁶⁴ Data from the HRFN concurs: while a quarter of human rights foundations' giving supports women and girls, the absolute amount (USD 1.2 billion) remains modest relative to global needs, with over half (50.8%) going to groups based in the Global North.⁶⁵

One of the main feminist critiques of philanthropy is its discretion and lack of transparency. Private foundations, for example, can shift priorities or close programs without consulting affected communities, often driven by personal preferences or fleeting “trends.” Despite holding vast endowments, many spend only a small fraction annually, limiting scale and sustainability while retaining control over agendas. Rigid, often self-imposed eligibility and compliance requirements further restrict access to resources.⁶⁶

On a more encouraging note, much of the philanthropic support for grassroots feminist organizing flows through women's and feminist funds. Private foundations have become a major source for these funds, increasing their contributions by almost 40% between 2018–2020.⁶⁷ According to Prospera, funds from philanthropic foundations account for 36% of their members' budgets—though a large share comes from Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, which plans to close by 2028.⁶⁸

⁶³ For the purpose of the survey, this definition includes both public foundations, which raise funds from various sources, and private foundations, typically backed by private wealth.

⁶⁴ OECD, *How philanthropic foundations support gender equality and women's empowerment* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1787/3fbec947-en>.

⁶⁵ HRFN, “Women and Girls, 2020,” [Humanrightsfunding.org](https://humanrightsfunding.org/populations/women/), accessed August 20, 2025, <https://humanrightsfunding.org/populations/women/>.

⁶⁶ See Zaineb Mohammed, “Leaning into Abundance: What If Philanthropy's Potential Wasn't Limited by Manufactured Scarcity?” *CEP Blog* (Blog), May 6, 2025, <https://cep.org/blog/leaning-into-abundance-what-if-philanthropys-potential-wasnt-limited-by-manufactured-scarcity/>.

⁶⁷ AWID's own calculations based on Prospera International Network of Women's Funds, *Feminist Funding in Practice*, page 27.

⁶⁸ Prospera International Network of Women's Funds, *Feminist Funding in Practice*; Alliance for Feminist Movements, *Global Projected Losses to Women's Rights*.

Current financial uncertainty and global anti-rights backlash are evident in philanthropy. While some foundations take a principled position for rights and justice, many are shrinking, closing their programs, or self-censoring.⁶⁹ In response to recent US executive orders and perceived legal threats, several foundations have removed racial justice language from their communications.⁷⁰

In some cases, such as with Palestine solidarity, grantees have been silenced or penalized.⁷¹ We are witnessing escalating and systemic attacks on philanthropic foundations and other non-profits, even invoking accusations of supporting terrorism, threatening the independence and legitimacy of the entire sector.⁷²

In this context, it is important to remember that philanthropic foundations are not homogenous, and many are facing, or are about to face, uncertainty about their future direction. This is not a done deal, but another terrain of critical struggle for rights and justice organizing.

Resourcing justice demands that foundations use all their resources—grants, endowments, and power—in alignment with their mission.⁷³ As political stakes rise, philanthropy faces a choice: retreat into caution or act with courage and solidarity.

Resourcing justice demands that foundations use all their resources—grants, endowments, and power—in alignment with their mission. As political stakes rise, philanthropy faces a choice: retreat into caution or act with courage and solidarity.

Individual Donors

Social change often begins with individuals rallying around shared values, and the feminist funding ecosystem is no exception. People from all walks of life and income levels give to causes close to their hearts. Despite common assumptions, this generosity is not limited to the super wealthy. In fact, everyday people's giving fuels much of civil society organizing for social change.⁷⁴ According to EPIC-Africa, 65% of African civil society organizations (CSOs) receive individual donations, with 53% identifying these as their top source of funding.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ GPP, "Fund Our Futures Campaign"; ImpactMapper, "2025 Funding Database."

⁷⁰ See National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, "Hiding in Plain Sight: Are Foundation Website Changes Masking Their Values, or Pulling off Their Masks?," Ncrp.org, July 14, 2025, <https://ncrp.org/2025/07/hiding-in-plain-sight-are-foundation-website-changes-masking-their-values-or-pulling-off-their-masks/>; Lori Villarosa, Ben Francisco Maulbeck, and Gihan Perera, "Racial Justice Programs Under Fire: Foundations Are Running Scared When They Should Double Down," *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, February 6, 2024, https://www.philanthropy.com/article/racial-justice-programs-under-fire-foundations-are-running-scared-when-they-should-double-down?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

⁷¹ See Asaad and Vilkomerson, *Repression, Retrenchment, and Resilience*.

⁷² Alex Daniels, "Philanthropy Leaders Decry Trump's Order to Investigate Liberal Groups," *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, September 26, 2025, https://www.philanthropy.com/article/philanthropy-leaders-decry-trumps-order-to-investigate-liberal-groups?utm_campaign=14121095-Newsletter%20%E2%80%93%20Philanthropy%20Today&utm_medium=email&hsenc=p2ANqtz-87XfJ5hGLAmtOV_Yp2xq18ps1UXe9aqBqSQp_UZvM_0GvVXfEvB7RQHEeM4wneF3Agx-10AC4JP_arf3M505CrCMylWVw&hsmi=382455151&utm_content=382455151&utm_source=hs_email&sra=true.

⁷³ See Cristiana Baik, "In This Time of Crisis, Social Justice Philanthropy Must Change Its Tune," *Nonprofit Quarterly*, April 16, 2025, <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/in-this-time-of-crisis-social-justice-philanthropy-must-change-its-tune/>.

⁷⁴ See Mahomed, *Philanthropic Privilege and Constituency Agency*.

⁷⁵ EPIC-Africa, *Challenging the Myths*.

In our research, individual donors refer to “wealthy private individuals who contribute financial or in-kind support to feminist and women’s rights organizations.” They were cited as a key funding source by 24% of respondents.

Certainly, “wealthy” is a highly relative category that takes on different meanings in different socio-economic and cultural contexts. Our aim here is to add a nuance to distinguish these donors from other forms of individual giving, particularly autonomous resourcing such as membership fees or contributions from activists themselves (see section [Feminists Resourcing Themselves](#)).

Migrant and diaspora communities are also a powerful resourcing force, including not only remittances, which already far exceed the volume of international aid, but also direct investment in local initiatives.⁷⁶ In 2023, for example, outraged by philanthropy’s apathy toward the war in Sudan, the Black Feminists in Philanthropy Network—a group of over 160 Black women-led philanthropic professionals—mobilized over USD 1.2 million in diaspora-led support for Sudanese feminist-led humanitarian efforts.⁷⁷

At the other end of the spectrum, interest in support from HNWI has increased, especially after MacKenzie Scott’s unprecedented, unrestricted USD 19 billion in donations to over 2,000 nonprofits, including feminist and gender justice organizations (AWID among them).⁷⁸

With an estimated USD 84 trillion expected to transfer between generations in the US alone over the next two decades, many feminists are curious about how to tap into this wealth to support their urgent needs.⁷⁹ Beyond the US, some feminists are also exploring how to engage with HNWI from the Global Majority as a potential source of support.⁸⁰

However, access to HNWI remains extremely limited and is further restricted by gatekeepers, such as donor advisory and consulting firms, making it difficult for most feminist organizations to build initial connections, meaningful communication, and relationships with HNWI. To change this, we need new infrastructure focused on building long-term trust, shared language, and aligned values.

⁷⁶ See Rohini Manyam Seshasayee, “Philanthropy Must Learn from Remittances,” *Impact Entrepreneur*, December 19, 2024, <https://impactentrepreneur.com/philanthropy-must-learn-from-remittances/>; McBride Nkhalamba, “Diaspora Philanthropy: Turning Migrants into Philanthropists,” *Alliance*, March 11, 2016, <https://www.alliancemagazine.org/feature/270738/>; Shannon Miller, “The Future of Philanthropy Is in the Global South,” *Emerging Gifts*, December 19, 2024, <https://emerginggifts.com/the-future-of-philanthropy-is-in-the-global-south/>. In 2023, global remittances reached USD 818 billion, approximately four times the total OECD ODA. See Oscar Monterroso and Diego Vilán, “Global Remittances Cycle,” *FEDS Notes*, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, February 27, 2025, <https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/global-remittances-cycle-20250227.html>.

⁷⁷ Vanessa Thomas, “Building a Base of Black Feminist Power in Philanthropy,” *Alliance*, March 8, 2024, <https://www.alliancemagazine.org/blog/building-a-base-of-black-feminist-power-in-philanthropy/>.

⁷⁸ Center for Effective Philanthropy, *Breaking the Mold*.

⁷⁹ Talmon Joseph Smith and Karl Russell, “The Greatest Wealth Transfer in History Is Here, With Familiar (Rich) Winners,” *New York Times*, May 14, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/14/business/economy/wealth-generations.html>.

⁸⁰ Stephanie Beasley, “Philanthropist Tsitsi Masiyiwa Wants African Women to Start Giving Big,” *Devex*, January 10, 2023, <https://www.devex.com/news/philanthropist-tsitsi-masiyiwa-wants-african-women-to-start-giving-big-104492>.

Bilateral and Multilateral Donors

Bilateral and multilateral institutions were identified as key sources of funding by 19% and 18% of respondents, respectively. Bilateral institutions refer to governmental development agencies such as the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Multilateral institutions include UN bodies and affiliated international development agencies, such as the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.

Similar to philanthropic foundations, feminist and women's rights organizations with larger budgets are more likely to receive support from bilateral and multilateral donors. For instance, 24% of respondents with budgets between USD 50,000–100,000 reported receiving bilateral funding, compared to 55% of those with budgets over USD 1 million. This highlights the challenges small and medium-sized groups face in accessing these resources directly, despite their critical role in driving change. Feminist research and advocacy have identified concrete strategies that bilateral and multilateral donors can adopt to move more and better money to diverse feminist and women's rights organizations directly.⁸¹

This is particularly urgent now. With ODA facing steep cuts, funding from bilateral and multilateral sources is expected to decline significantly over the next few years (see [Introduction](#)). This dramatic reduction in public funding is expected to create a significant gap across the entire feminist funding ecosystem, severely impacting both feminist and women's rights organizations and the funds supporting them.

National and Local Governments

A total of 16% of respondents identified national or local governments as key sources of funding. This category includes grants, project-based funding, and institutional subsidies provided by different levels of state institutions—from national ministries to local or municipal authorities.

While this is a relatively modest share overall, it suggests that in some contexts, public institutions can play a significant role in resourcing feminist organizing. Such funding is often the result of sustained advocacy by local feminist and women's rights organizations.

This dramatic reduction in public funding is expected to create a significant gap across the entire feminist funding ecosystem, severely impacting both feminist and women's rights organizations and the funds supporting them.

⁸¹ Lever, Miller, and Staszewska, *Moving More Money to the Drivers of Change*.

For many feminist and women's rights organizations—especially those working in repressive or authoritarian environments—state institutions are not allies, but are instead sources of surveillance, repression, or active opposition.

Regionally, availability and access to funding from national or local governments is highly uneven. The largest share is reported in Western Europe and North America, where 42% of organizations receive funding from national or local governments—nearly three times the global average. This is followed by Eastern, Southeast, and Central Europe, with 22%. In all other subregions, the proportion is much lower, ranging between 13–15%, broadly in line with the global average.

These figures must be understood within the broader political context of complex relations among civil society and the state. For many feminist and women's rights organizations—especially those working in repressive or authoritarian environments—state institutions are not allies, but are instead sources of surveillance, repression, or active opposition. In such contexts, cooperation with state institutions may not only be unfeasible, it may actually pose direct risks to organizations' safety and autonomy. This tension is further discussed in the section *Registration Status*.

The current moment is marked by tight austerity measures, shrinking civic space, and resurgent conservative backlash, leading to the further erosion of state support for gender

justice across all regions of the world. A case in point: under President Milei's government in Argentina, the dismantling of institutions such as the Ministry of Women, Gender, and Diversity has stripped funding, oversight, and coordination from gender equality policy, weakened local authorities' ability to sustain or expand gender-focused programs, and severely limited essential support for relevant groups.⁸²

Private Sector

Only 10% of respondents identified the private sector, including corporate foundations (defined in the survey as the social responsibility arm of private companies, typically multinational corporations), as their key source of funding. Regionally, this figure is lowest in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean (10% and 11%, respectively), and slightly higher in other regions (ranging from 14–19%).

Since the mid-2010s, initiatives promoting private sector engagement in “women's empowerment,” such as the Win-Win Coalition launched in 2015, have

⁸² CELS et al. to Annalena Baerbock, “Letter to the German Foreign Affairs Office,” June 2024, <https://www.cels.org.ar/web/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Letter-to-the-German-Foreign-Affairs-Office--20240520-1-2.pdf>; Martina Jauregui, “Government shuts what remained of Women, Genders, and Diversity Ministry,” *Buenos Aires Herald*, March 21, 2024, <https://buenosairesherald.com/politics/government-shuts-what-remained-of-women-genders-diversity-ministry>; Juan Pablo Kavanagh, “Gender policies in the Javier Milei era: Also under the chainsaw,” *Buenos Aires Times*, February 10, 2024, <https://www.batimes.com.ar/news/argentina/gender-policies-in-the-javier-milei-also-under-the-chainsaw.phtml>.

proliferated.⁸³ Data by the Bridgespan consultancy firm highlights an 87% increase in average giving by the largest global corporate donors between 2019–2023, framing philanthropy as a “lever for competitive advantage”—a tool to build brand trust, generate market value, and shape societal and environmental outcomes.⁸⁴

These developments sparked expectations that the private sector would become a significant funder and ally in advancing gender equality. However, AWID’s data suggests this promise has not materialized. Despite the growing (and controversial) presence of corporate actors in multi-stakeholder policy spaces and increased influence in global governance, the “promise of the private sector” has not translated into significant funding for feminist and gender justice movements.⁸⁵

Whether those actively pursuing corporate funding are seeing success remains to be studied. In AWID’s observation, the political debate about the pros and cons of corporate funding far outweighs its actual financial contribution to feminist movements to date.

While no funding is free of contradictions, corporate actors—unlike public institutions—are fundamentally profit-driven. Corporate social responsibility initiatives are often criticized as pinkwashing or public relations stunts designed to obscure harmful practices. RepRisk’s 2023 analysis shows that around one in three public companies linked to greenwashing were also associated with social washing—misleading claims about their social impact, including on labour, human rights, or diversity.⁸⁶

Some feminist groups have both rejected and resisted engaging with corporate actors due to their roles in human rights violations, environmental destruction, and deepening economic inequality. A prominent example is the feminist-led #BlockBlackRock campaign, which successfully challenged a proposed UN Women partnership with the investment giant, citing BlackRock’s devastating impact on women’s rights, climate justice, and inequality.⁸⁷

Feminist movements will once again face critical political choices: what are the risks, contradictions, and potential consequences of engaging with corporate funding?

⁸³ See UN Women, *Private Sector Engagement Strategy 2023–2025* (UN Women, 2023), page 11, https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/un-women_private_sector_engagement_strategy_2023-2025_0.pdf.

⁸⁴ The Bridgespan Group, *High-Impact Approaches to Corporate Giving* (The Bridgespan Group, 2025), <https://www.bridgespan.org/getmedia/37c620a8-f7b9-45f9-9923-342583af7f51/high-impact-corporate-giving.pdf>.

⁸⁵ See Kasia Staszewska, “From US \$40 Billion to US \$2 Billion: Unpacking the Real Numbers Behind Generation Equality Funding Pledges,” AWID.org, November 11, 2021, <https://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/us-40-billion-us-2-billion-un-packing-real-numbers-behind-generation-equality>.

⁸⁶ RepRisk, *On the Rise: Navigating the Wave of Greenwashing and Social Washing* (RepRisk, 2023), <https://www.reprisk.com/insights/reports/on-the-rise-navigating-the-wave-of-greenwashing-and-social-washing>. See also Rachel Moussié, *Challenging Corporate Power: Struggles for Women’s Rights, Economic and Gender Justice* (Toronto: AWID, 2016), https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/ccp_fullreport_eng.pdf.

⁸⁷ AWID, “Bigger than BlackRock: Challenging UN Corporate Partnerships,” AWID.org, May 30, 2023, <https://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/bigger-blackrock-challenging-un-corporate-partnerships>. For examples of corporate practices that conflict with feminist social and economic justice goals, see AWID, “Feminists Demand End of UN Women’s Partnership with BlackRock, Inc.,” AWID.org, August 6, 2022, <https://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/feminists-demand-end-un-womens-partnership-blackrock-inc>.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that the private sector is not monolithic, as it includes substantially different entities—from small cooperatives to fossil fuel giants and Big Tech. This survey focused more narrowly on corporate foundations linked to large multinational corporations.

Amid declining bilateral and philanthropic funding, there is a renewed push for “innovative financing mechanisms,” including expanded engagement with the private sector and its corporate giving to help “close the gap.”⁸⁸ As these conversations gain momentum, feminist movements will once again face critical political choices: what are the risks, contradictions, and potential consequences of engaging with corporate funding?

Quality of Funding

Resourcing feminist movements should be a political act of solidarity—a commitment to challenge systemic power and advance collective liberation. Feminist advocacy has helped shift funding practices. Still, this data shows that progress remains uneven and more is needed to build true partnerships rooted in solidarity and improve the quality of funding.

Practices That Feminists Love!

As part of this research, we asked feminist and women’s rights organizations: “In your experience, what are some of the practices funders have used to share their power with your group, organization, and/or movement?”

The responses highlight emerging funding practices that help shift power and improve the quality and accessibility of funding.

- 48% of respondents cited simplified funding application processes, and 37% cited simplified reporting processes.
- 36%, 32%, and 29% reported access to flexible, core, and multi-year funding, respectively.
- 32% experienced open and transparent communication with funders.



⁸⁸ See Qi Liu and Alma Agustí Strid, “Innovative Financing Series: Private Finance Mobilization,” *Donor Tracker* (Blog), July 24, 2025, <https://www.donortracker.org/publications/innovative-financing-series-private-finance-mobilization-2025>.

- 22% worked with funders who aligned with and trusted their political values and missions.
- 19% engaged with funders in meaningful consultations to co-set agendas and priorities.
- 17% were involved in participatory grant decision-making processes.

Core Funding

There is plenty of evidence that core funding is a powerful tool for feminist and women's rights organizations, enabling long-term planning, strategic innovation, and financial resilience. Core funding also allows organizations to expand their reach, support underserved communities, invest in staff, and adapt quickly to changing needs—all while reducing administrative burdens. Core funding can also foster trust and collaboration between funders and grantees, though attention to power dynamics remains essential.⁸⁹

“
We know how to
do our work, we
do it well but we
need the money.
Core money.
Respondent, Poland

”

This data shows that, while there has been some improvement over the past decades, access to core funding remains a challenge. In 2023, 29% of respondents reported receiving no core funding, while 71% had access to some form of it. On average, core funding comprised 30% of feminist organization budgets, meaning most rely on it for only a third of their income. For 23% of respondents, core funding represented more than half of their budget, while another 30% received less than 20%. In total, 62% of organizations had either no core funding or less than 20%, highlighting the ongoing dominance of restricted, project-based funding.

A respondent shared that, in their context, core, multi-year funding tends to be directed to organizations perceived as “lower risk,” leaving those working in high-risk or politically sensitive contexts—where burnout and precarity are highest—to survive on unstable, restricted funding. This systemic contradiction in funding logic assumes that the risks faced by grassroots organizers are compensated by impact metrics rather than care, sustainability, or trust. In practice, this logic often reproduces the exploitation of community-based organizers, especially those in volatile or under-resourced settings, leading to overwork and lack of long-term sustainability.

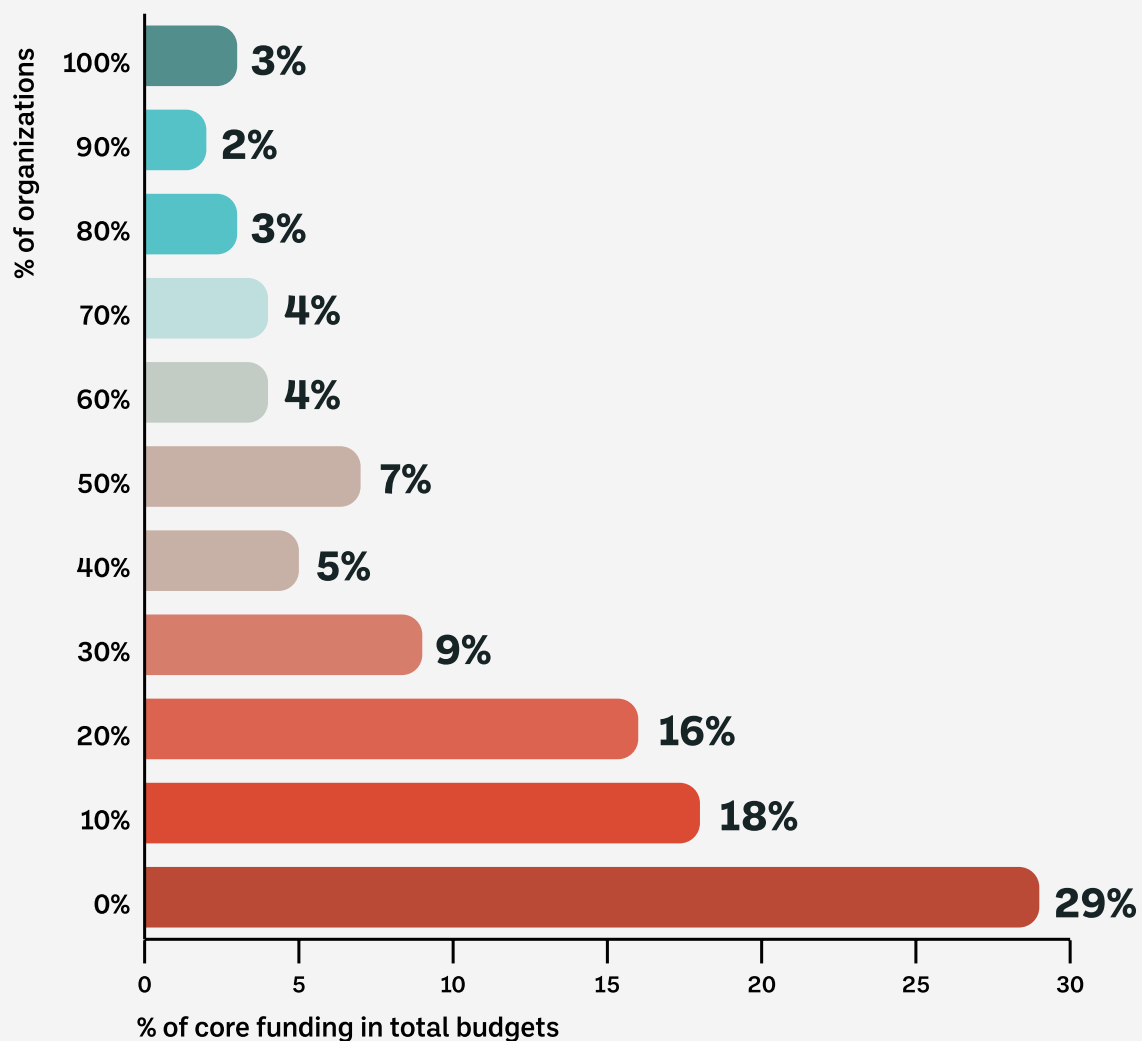
⁸⁹ See Silvia Guizzardi, “What Evidence Is There on the Impact of Core Funding?” Oakfnd.org, October 30, 2024, <https://oakfnd.org/what-evidence-is-there-on-the-impact-of-core-funding/>; Center for Effective Philanthropy, “Research Shows MacKenzie Scott’s Large, Unrestricted Gifts Create Sustained Impact for Nonprofits and Communities,” Cep.org, February 18, 2025, <https://cep.org/news/press-releases/research-shows-mackenzie-scotts-large-unrestricted-gifts-create-sustained-impact-for-nonprofits-and-communities/>.

Despite these challenges, the data reflects progress compared to 2010, when half of all respondents reported never having received core support.

This positive shift is largely due to increased investment from women's and feminist funds, which are more likely to offer flexible, high-quality funding than other donors.

FIGURE 14. Percentage of Core Funding in Total Budgets, 2023

Answers to question: "For the years 2021, 2022 and 2023, indicate the percentage of each type of external funding—including core funding—that your group, organization and/or movement received."



Multi-Year Funding

The duration of funding is critical for feminist and women's rights organizations. Short-term grants often force groups to constantly fundraise, pulling focus from their core transformative work. In contrast, long-term, multi-year funding provides the space to innovate, build resilience, and adapt to new opportunities, increasing impact. Research shows that even unrestricted support needs to last at least five years for the full benefits of strategic planning to take hold.⁹⁰

The lack of long-term funding remains a major challenge, however, as a staggering 72% of respondents reported that their average grant duration was no more than 18 months, with 37% receiving funding that lasted just 6–12 months. Only 12% reported grants lasting two–three years, and just 4% had funding that extended beyond three years. Positive examples of multi-year funding include the BFF's Sustain Fund and Mama Cash's Resilience Fund, which offer core, flexible support for up to eight and ten years, respectively.⁹¹

“

Multi-year flexible funding is key to the sustainability and resilience of civil society and feminist movement(s) in the face of anti-democratic threats and actors.

Respondent,
undisclosed country

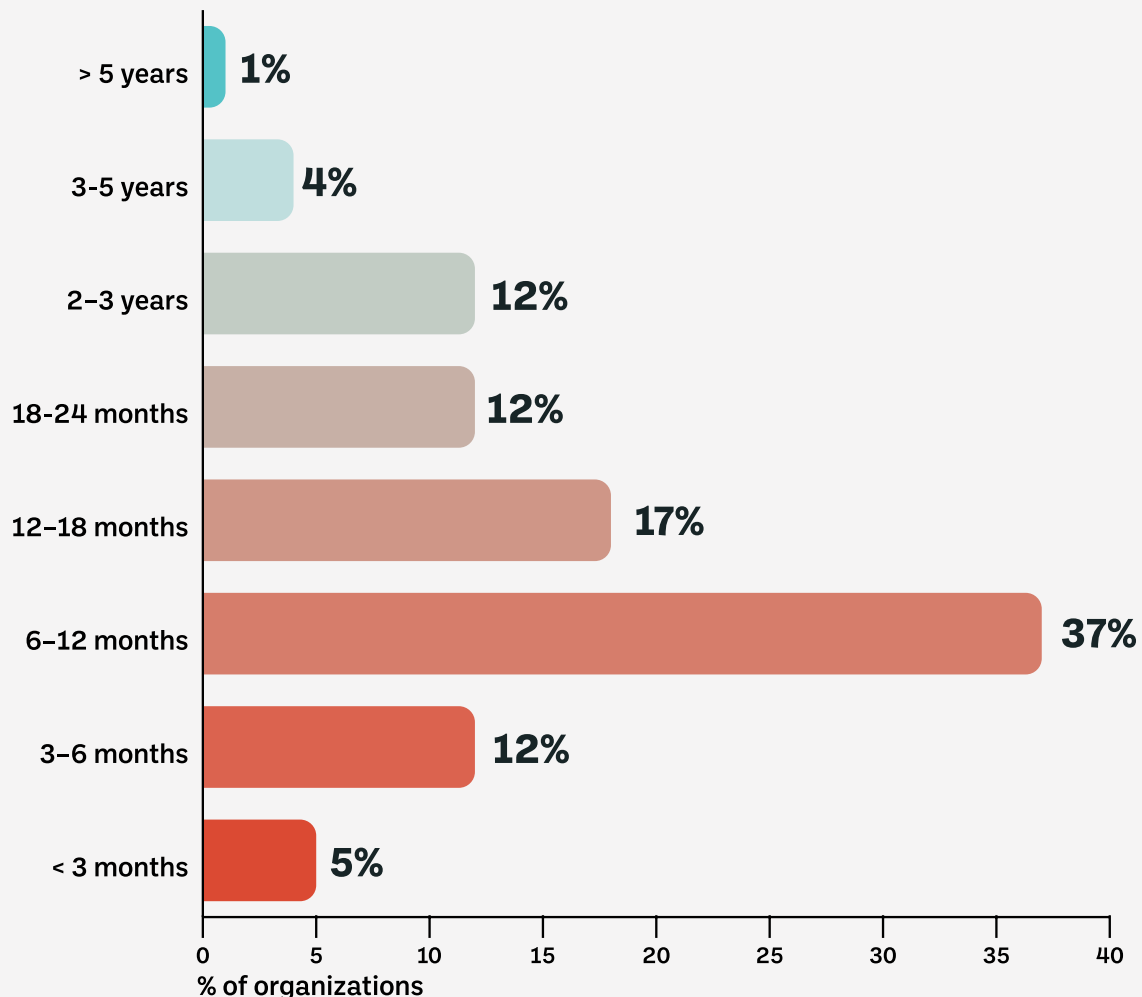
”

⁹⁰ Silvia Guizzardi, “What Evidence Is There on the Impact of Core Funding?”

⁹¹ Black Feminist Fund, “Grantmaking FAQs,” Blackfeministfund.org, accessed August 8, 2025, <https://blackfeministfund.org/grantmaking/grantmaking-faqs/>; Mama Cash, “Resilience Fund,” Mamacash.org, accessed August 8, 2025, <https://www.mamacash.org/funds/resilience-fund/>.

FIGURE 15. Average Grant Duration

Answers to question: “Between 2021 and 2023, what was the average duration of grants your group, organization and/or movements received?”



Savings and Reserves

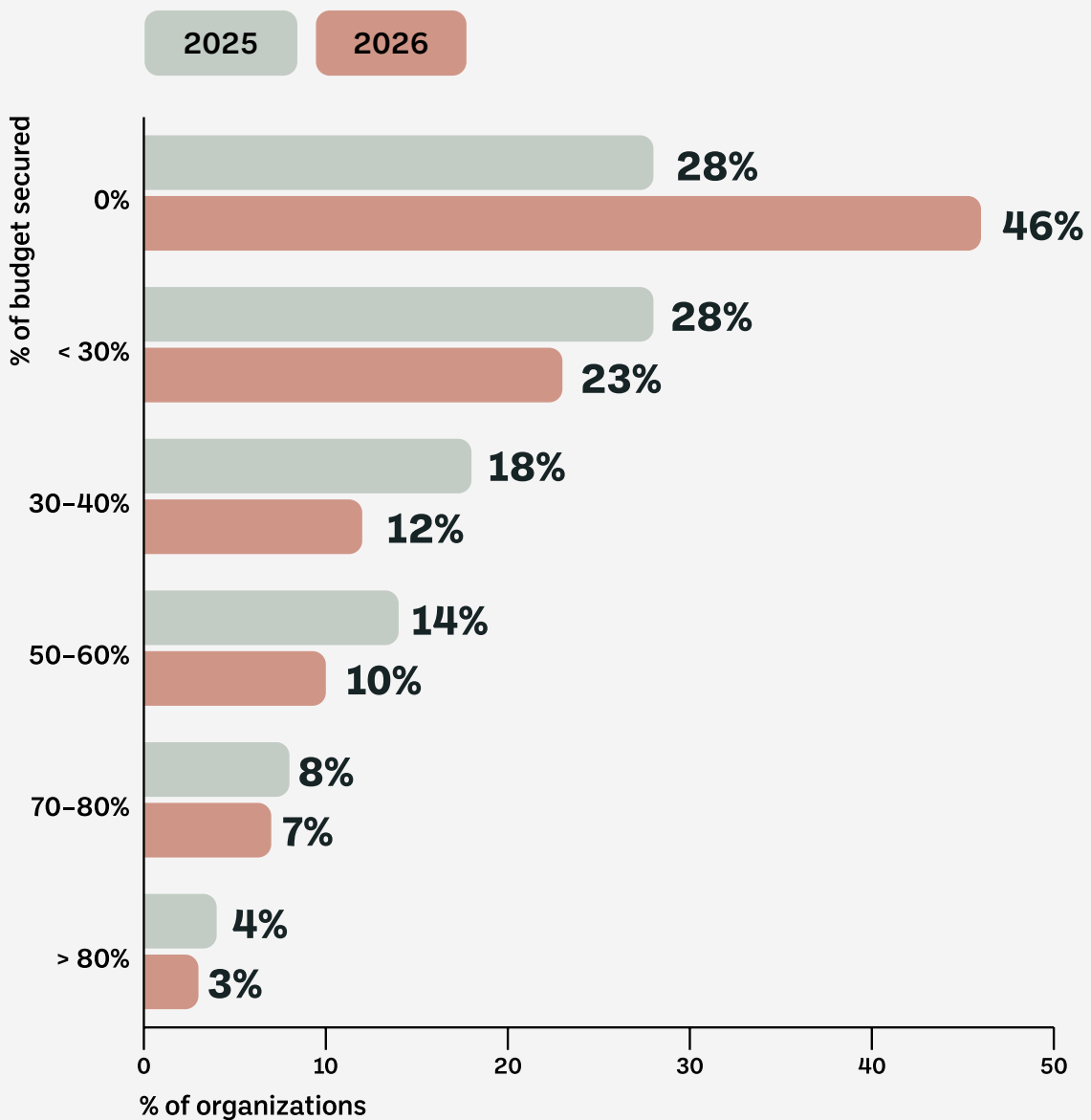
While core funding is the preferred type of support, it can come with limitations, for example, prohibitions on building reserves, savings, or investment in infrastructure such as property or land.

Reserves and savings are not “extras”; they are essential to the stability, resilience, and long-term sustainability of feminist movements and must be recognized and funded as core components of quality funding. Yet in practice, most feminist and women’s rights organizations do not have any savings or reserves.

This research shows that, by 2025, 28% of respondents reported having no savings and 46% had no savings projected beyond 2026. As of 2024, 64% of respondents said they could operate for less than six months if external funding stopped immediately, only 6% could operate over 24 months, and nearly half (47%) had already been in jeopardy of closing due to insecure funding.

FIGURE 16. Percentage of Budget Secured for 2025 and 2026

Answers to question: “In percentage, how much of your group, organization and/or movement’s budget has been secured for the following years?”





Generating Wealth for Sustainability

More research—through a feminist and economic justice lens—is needed into the different mechanisms of wealth generation apart from institutional and traditional sources of funding and their limitations. Money generated in alternative ways opens new possibilities in terms of sustainability, as it can be used for savings, reserves (see above), or income-generating activities (bound by the limitations of an organization’s registration status).

Such alternative forms include, among others:

- **Investing:** the purchase of assets such as stocks or bonds has become a topic of conversation in recent years, as organizations received major unrestricted gifts, most notably from MacKenzie Scott, and, for the first time, had the luxury of having substantial funds to invest.⁹² In the meantime, the topic of gender impact investing has also attracted attention, prompting AWID to research what it means for feminist movements.⁹³
- **Endowment:** a fund established with a large sum of money to support a particular organization or initiative over time.
- **Land and property purchases:** while potentially categorized as a form of investment, such purchases should not be reduced to real estate dealings. “Land back” is a powerful anti-colonial and Indigenous Peoples’ demand, and purchases of land and property, particularly by those historically displaced and excluded from land ownership, including women, Indigenous, Afrodescendant, and Black communities, can be seen as a form of restorative justice and reparations.⁹⁴

Questions of wealth accumulation, exploitation, and inequality are loaded—and rightly so. Constructive conversations about the real challenges of engaging with inherently exploitative and unequal financial markets are not a nuisance; they are an ethical and political imperative to navigating contradictions with integrity and avoiding replicating inequalities. These conversations are a cornerstone of envisioning the future of feminist resourcing.

⁹² See Center for Effective Philanthropy, “Research Shows MacKenzie Scott’s Large, Unrestricted Gifts Create Sustained Impact for Nonprofits and Communities”; and Equality Fund, “An Introduction to the Equality Fund’s Intersectional Investment Guidelines,” Equalityfund.ca, accessed August 8, 2025, <https://equalityfund.ca/investment/an-introduction-to-the-equality-funds-intersectional-investment-guidelines>.

⁹³ Sanam Amin and Diyana Yahaya, *Gender Impact Investing & The Rise of False Solutions: An Analysis for Feminist Movements* (Toronto: AWID, 2023), <https://www.awid.org/report-gender-impact-investing>.

⁹⁴ See Dolar Vasani and Kieron Crawley, *Ripple Effects of Property Purchase Grants on LGBTQIA Communities* (Dreilinden and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, 2023), <https://en.dreilinden.org/the-ripple-effects-of-property-purchase-grants-on-lgbtqia-communities-assignment-report-january-2023-copy>; Urgent Action Fund Africa, “Fostering Cultures of Care.”

FIGURE 17. Months Groups can Operate Using only Savings

Answers to question: “If your external funding were to end immediately, how many months could your group, organization and/or movement operate using only savings and reserves?”

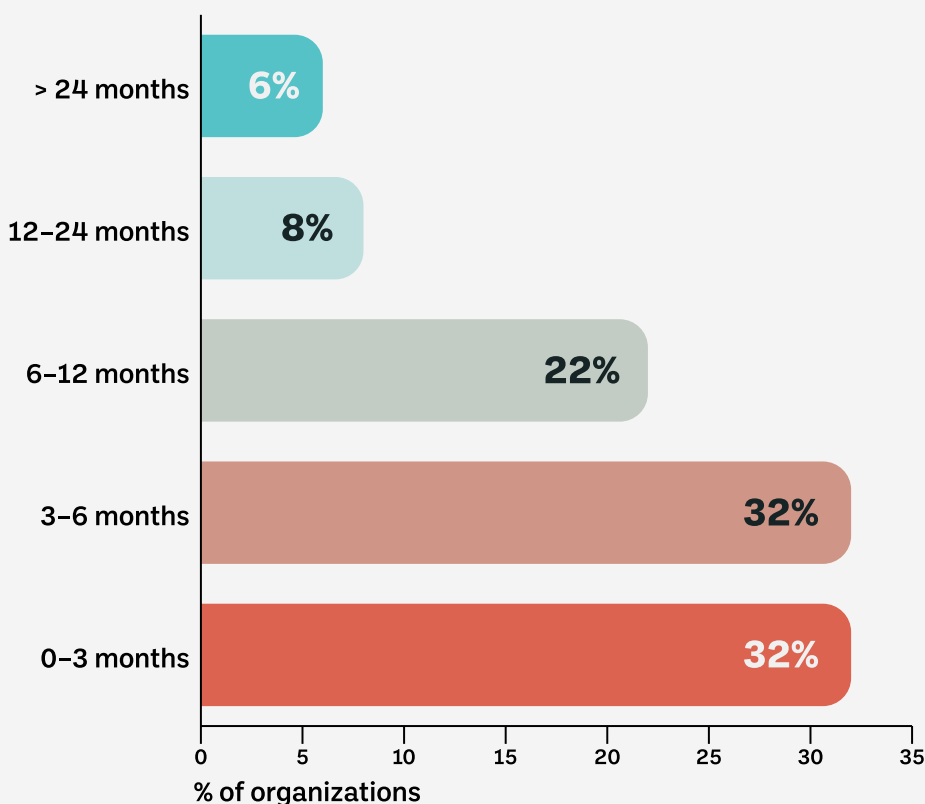
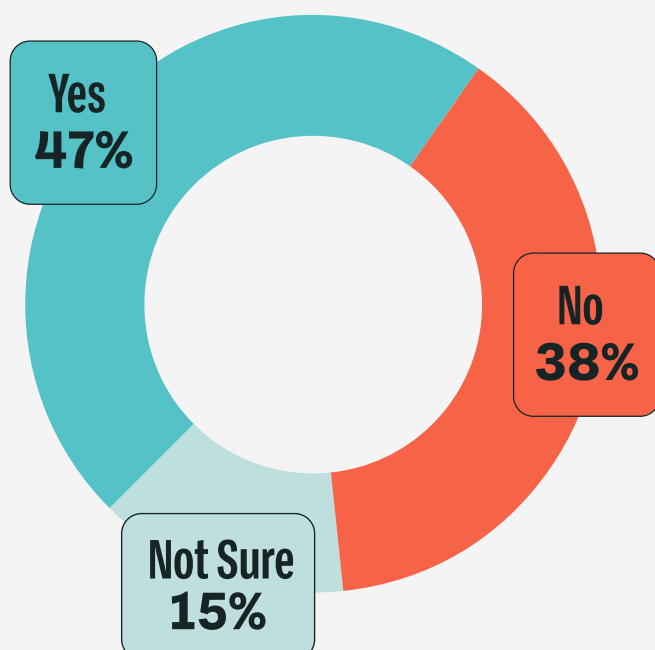


FIGURE 18. Risk of Closing due to Insecure Funding

Answers to question: “Has your group, organization and/or movement ever been in jeopardy of closing due to insecure funding?”



Persistent Systemic Barriers

For decades, feminist movements have been calling on funders to decolonize funding systems, shift power, and trust them to define their own priorities. Instead, as this research confirms, feminists continue to encounter political pressures, misaligned or restrictive donor priorities, and heavy administrative demands.

“
Stop giving us
already designed
projects for us
to implement.
Respondent, Uganda

”

Autonomy and Political Censorship

While funder practices vary, a challenge persists: feminist movements still lack sufficient influence in shaping funding agendas and priorities, which remain largely driven by donors themselves. The vast majority (86%) believe there is very little funding available for the movements, themes, and regions they serve. Additionally, 58% of feminist and women’s rights organizations feel pressured to align with funders’ political strategies, including avoiding certain regions or agendas.

This is more than a perception. Overall, 63% reported having changed their priorities to be eligible for or to increase their chances of receiving funding: 44% said they sometimes do, 11% said frequently, and 5% said always. This undermines autonomy, political independence, and long-term impact. The trend spans all regions and issues. Organizations with larger annual budgets experience this pressure more acutely, while those operating with less external funding tend to have greater autonomy—though often at the cost of financial stability and sustainability.

These pressures are intensifying as authoritarianism and conservatism rise in many parts of the world. Funding cuts, actual or as a threat, disproportionately affect organizations advancing democracy, sexual and reproductive rights and justice, migrant rights, trans rights, and Palestinian rights and liberation.⁹⁵ Feminist and women’s rights organizations face mounting pressure to adopt more conservative positions, self-censor, or risk losing their resources. This creates a chilling effect, curbs free expression, and silences dissent within movements and the philanthropic sector itself.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ See Sara Herschander, “Nonprofits Are Taking a Stance on Gaza — and Paying the Price,” *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, June 18, 2024, <https://www.philanthropy.com/article/nonprofits-are-taking-a-stance-on-gaza-and-paying-the-price>; Shafi Musaddique, “‘Fundors Silently Defunding’: How US Nonprofit Lost a Quarter of a Million After Pro-Palestine Post — and Rebuilt Itself,” *Alliance* (Blog), July 10, 2025, <https://www.alliancemagazine.org/blog/funders-silently-defunding-how-us-nonprofit-lost-a-quarter-of-a-million-after-pro-palestine-post-and-rebuilt-itself/>; series of reports by Funding Freedom, available at <https://www.fundingpalestinianfreedom.org/resources>.

⁹⁶ See National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, “Hiding in Plain Sight”; Villarosa, Maulbeck, and Perera, “Racial Justice Programs Under Fire.”

Administrative Burdens

A total of 86% of feminist and women's rights organizations reported that funding processes are "complex, inaccessible, and unrealistic," while 80% experience monitoring and evaluation requirements as overly technical and disconnected from the realities of feminist organizing.

Organizations working with marginalized groups—such as Indigenous communities or trans people—face specific challenges in reporting impact through numbers. Many communities do not track exact figures (e.g., number of families or villages reached), and there is often deep mistrust in sharing detailed data (such as population size or location) with funders, especially those based in the Global North. This concern is not just a form of political resistance—it is also a survival strategy in contexts where state surveillance or extractive agendas pose real threats.

Increasingly burdensome reporting and compliance requirements are also being used—particularly by far-right and authoritarian governments—as a tactic to restrict civil society, creating a double burden on organizations (from both funders and government). Under the guise of transparency or accountability, these administrative demands can overwhelm feminist and grassroots organizations, diverting time and energy from activism, advocacy, and service delivery. This form of bureaucratic control functions as a tool of repression, weakening the capacity of civil society to challenge power and advance social justice.⁹⁷

“

We work tirelessly for thousands of women, making a real difference. We need non bureaucratic funds to help organizations like ours better structure, improve, and expand their efforts.

Respondent, Brazil

”

⁹⁷ See International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, *Foreign Influence Registration Laws and Civil Society*.

Transparency and Accountability

A total of 76% of feminist and women's rights organizations reported a lack of transparency around funder priorities, assessment criteria, and who receives funding in the end, and 65% said they often do not meet funders' legal, regulatory, and administrative requirements to be eligible for funding. This last point is particularly relevant for unregistered groups: many funders only resource those with official registration status, as outlined in section *Registration Status*.

Feminists are not only demanding more and better resourcing, they also want a say in how funding decisions are made, including where money comes from and goes to. This means challenging traditional power dynamics in philanthropy and aid, and pushing for funding practices that are transparent, accountable, and shaped by the priorities of feminist movements.

“

The time and effort we put into proposals... Not receiving a reason for rejections is difficult because we don't want to apply again if we have no chance of getting funds.

Respondent, SWANA region

”

“

Include us in funding decisions—don't decide for us.

Respondent,
undisclosed country

”



**Feminists, Funders,
and Allies:
LET'S ACT NOW!**



Feminists are extremely resourceful, far beyond money, but we need to face the reality: our achievements don't suffice to counter a tsunami of extremely well-funded and politically connected forces of anti-rights sweeping the globe.

A Story of Transformation and Urgency

This report tells a story of the difficult funding landscape that feminists continue to transform, pointing to the urgent actions required in the current moment. The words “crisis” and “funding cuts” barely convey what persistent under-resourcing, budgetary ceiling, and massive defunding of gender justice mean for activists on the front lines, communities left without life-saving services, and societies increasingly overtaken by anti-rights, misogyny, racism, homophobia, and transphobia.

Is resourcing feminist and social change harder today than in previous years? Yes, without a doubt. And yet, tireless and visionary feminist advocates are challenging the prevailing logics of the funding system, shifting its modalities, and building transformative resourcing models—from women’s and feminist funds to autonomous resourcing rooted in community care, solidarity, and interdependence. Many groups once considered “unfundable,” including unregistered collectives, those operating in conflict zones, and small, deeply local actors, now have access to funding pathways that simply did not exist when AWID rang the alarm over a decade ago.⁹⁸ Feminists should take credit where it is due.

There is no doubt that the current political and financial backlash, which targets the very ability to organize for social change in safe and resourced ways, is a response to the way feminist, LBTQI+, and other liberation movements, in all their diversity and intersectionality, have changed the world. These movements have become a threat to patriarchy, heteronormativity, white supremacy, capitalism, and ableism, embodying ways of living—in our bodies, communities, and societies—that are incompatible with anti-rights agendas.

Feminists are extremely resourceful, far beyond money, but we need to face the reality: our achievements don't suffice to counter a tsunami of extremely well-funded and politically connected forces of anti-rights sweeping the globe. With half of feminist and women’s rights organizations operating under a budgetary glass ceiling of just USD 22,000, a massive influx of quality funding is needed to reverse this tide.

⁹⁸ Arutyunova and Clark, *Watering the Leaves, Starving the Roots*.

The state of resourcing is getting worse. In the months since the collection of this data, the financial stability and even survival of many feminist, women's rights, and LGBTQI+ organizations has come under threat; as the figures mentioned in the *Introduction* demonstrate, the resourcing available for feminist organizing is drastically reducing.

This is undoubtedly a turning point for feminist resourcing and the moment to engage with fundamental questions that many feminist activists, resourcing advocates, and allied funders are asking already:

- 1. How do we resource feminist organizing for rights and justice in an era of authoritarian resurgence, economic collapse, and ecological crisis?**

- 2. How do we move beyond North-to-South paradigms and activate alternative resourcing modes that are decolonial, autonomous, and self-sustaining?**

- 3. What would it take to build a feminist resourcing infrastructure—grantmaking, but also savings, reserves, communal land and spaces, knowledge, and time—owned and governed by feminists themselves?**

How we answer these questions—and whose voices, experiences, and needs shape that response—will determine much of the future of feminist organizing. Feminists are not answering these questions only in theory, albeit spaces for collective thinking and reflection are invaluable. They are also addressing them through daily practices, whether developing new fundraising strategies, creating autonomous resourcing models, or engaging in advocacy with funders. In all of this, feminists hold space for the complexity, unpredictability, and messiness of this time, without losing sight of the futures for which we all are fighting for.

The Evidence Demands Collective Action

This is not the time for business as usual. The evidence calls on us to come together in shared urgency, commitment, and community to defend our hard-won gains and transform how feminist movements are being resourced.

Feminists are already doing what they have always done: organizing, imagining, and surviving. These actions build on what has enabled enabled feminists to transform the landscape so far and what is emerging now in response to funding cuts.

For Feminist and Women's Rights Organizations

- **Create more spaces to reimagine how we sustain our movements** for the long haul—centring solidarity, cross-movement collaboration, and addressing power inequalities among ourselves.⁹⁹
- **Claim public and philanthropic funds** as resources for feminist organizing now and into the future. Build bold relationships with allies committed to shifting more and better funding to feminist movements.
- **Adopt and use language in your work that redefines resourcing** beyond money. Time, labour, expertise, care, and relationships are essential feminist resources.
- **Explore and document learnings from autonomous resourcing models** that reduce dependence and reflect feminist values—community-led, self-determined, and interdependent.
- **Use and share available tools** developed to support feminist fundraising in this crisis, such as:
 - [AWID's "Who Can Fund Me? Database";](#)
 - [Impact Mapper's "2025 Funding Database";](#)
 - [Justice Funds' Getting the Money We Need / A 101 Guide on Fundraising for Small Grassroots Organizations.](#)

AWID is committed to continuing to create collective spaces for reflection, exchange, and co-creation around these practices.

⁹⁹ See Inna Michaeli, "The Funding Crisis Targets Our Super-Power: The Power of Feminist Solidarity," *Alliance Magazine*, April 2025, <https://www.alliancemagazine.org/blog/the-funding-crisis-targets-our-super-power-the-power-of-feminist-solidarity/>.

For Funders and Allies in Funding Institutions

The recommendations below begin with the acute needs in the current funding crisis and continue with the long-standing feminist demands that have been voiced for years and enabled the positive shifts tracked in this report's findings. Though the latter are well known to feminist advocates and funders, these demands remain at the avant-garde of the funding world, rather than the norm. It is time to change that.

→ **Resource sustainability** by helping feminist movements build reserves, launch cooperatives, purchase land or property, and create self-led and autonomous resourcing models to ensure long-term autonomy, vision, and adaptation.

→ **Step in where defunding has harmed the most**, not to “fill a gap” but to invest in liberation. Prioritize those most violently targeted by anti-rights attacks, including Black and Indigenous women, trans and gender-diverse people, migrants, sex workers, informal workers, and those defending reproductive justice and Palestinian liberation, among others.

→ **Use your access and power** to make introductions, open doors, and help feminists connect with new funders, including “unlikely suspects.” In a gatekeeping context, a simple introduction can be an act of resistance.

→ **Adapt funding modalities to support feminist organizing under threat.** Ensure access for those working in hostile contexts and invest in the safety, care infrastructure, and holistic well-being of feminist activists and organizations.

→ **Go beyond “gender portfolios,”** recognizing and funding feminist leadership in climate, democracy, health, and humanitarian response, and direct resources their way.

→ **Engage in political education** with movements and influence your institution and other funders to ask hard questions. Learn what reparations mean for philanthropy and why feminist work is central to climate justice and democracy.

→ **Fund feminist organizing as a public good** essential to justice, democracy, and the survival of the planet.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ See e.g., *The Observatory on the Universality of Rights, Feminist on the Frontline: How Can Funders Make and Impact?*, January 2025, <https://www.oursplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/OURs-funders-brief.pdf>.

- **Prioritize core, flexible, multi-year grants** that allow movements to plan, grow, and adapt.
- **Resource the full spectrum** of feminist and women's rights work, from grassroots to global, across issues, identities, and geographies, directly and through feminist, women's, and community-led funds.
- **Reach historically excluded groups**—unregistered, marginalized, informal, or deeply local—including through women's and feminist funds and community-led intermediaries.
- **Adapt your processes and funding modalities**, simplify applications and reporting, ensure accessibility for applicants with diverse abilities and those in hostile and conflict contexts, and invest in safety and care infrastructure.
- **Trust movements** to define their priorities and choose their focus without donor-imposed cons.
- **Continue to resource women's and feminist funds** and constituency-led funds as vital infrastructure in the funding ecosystem.



For Everyone, Including You!

Whether you are in feminist and women's rights organizations, civil society, governance institutions, or philanthropy, this moment calls for collective courage. It is the time to build and strengthen genuine feminist and social justice alliances across borders and sectors.

Let us find and fight for each other.



WHERE is the MONEY?

An Evidence-Driven Call
to Resource Feminist Organizing

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