

DATA SNAPSHOTS

WHERE is the MONEY?

An Evidence-Driven Call
to Resource Feminist Organizing

awid

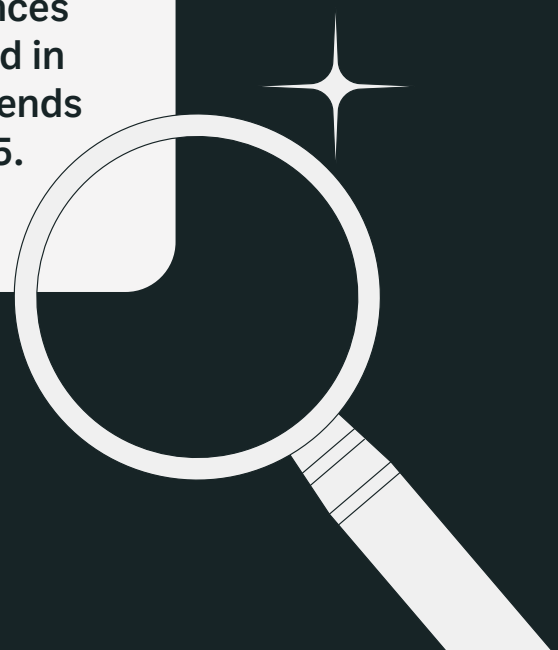
A stylized illustration featuring a teal-colored cube with a white ladder leaning against its right side. The ladder has several rungs. The cube is positioned in the lower half of the frame, and the ladder extends from the bottom edge towards the top. The background is a solid dark navy blue, and the entire composition is framed by a thick orange border.



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.

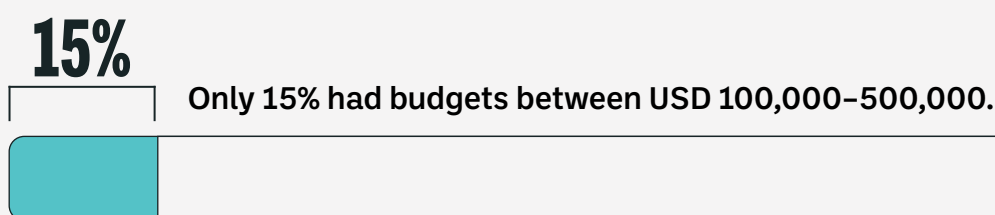
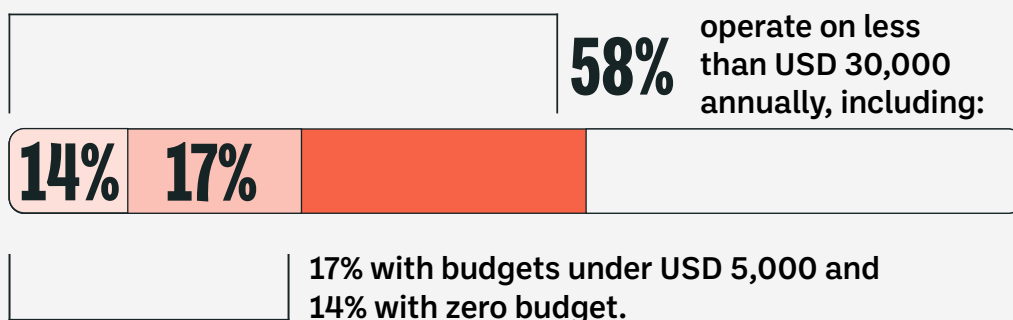
Data snapshots are based on the responses of 1,174 feminist, women's rights, LGBTQI+, and allied organizations (hereafter referred to as “feminist and women's rights organizations”) from 128 countries to the *Where is the Money for Feminist Organizing?* survey. These snapshots reflect experiences from 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?* in the full *Where is the Money?* report (2025), available at www.awid.org/witm.

Funding disparities were especially severe for:

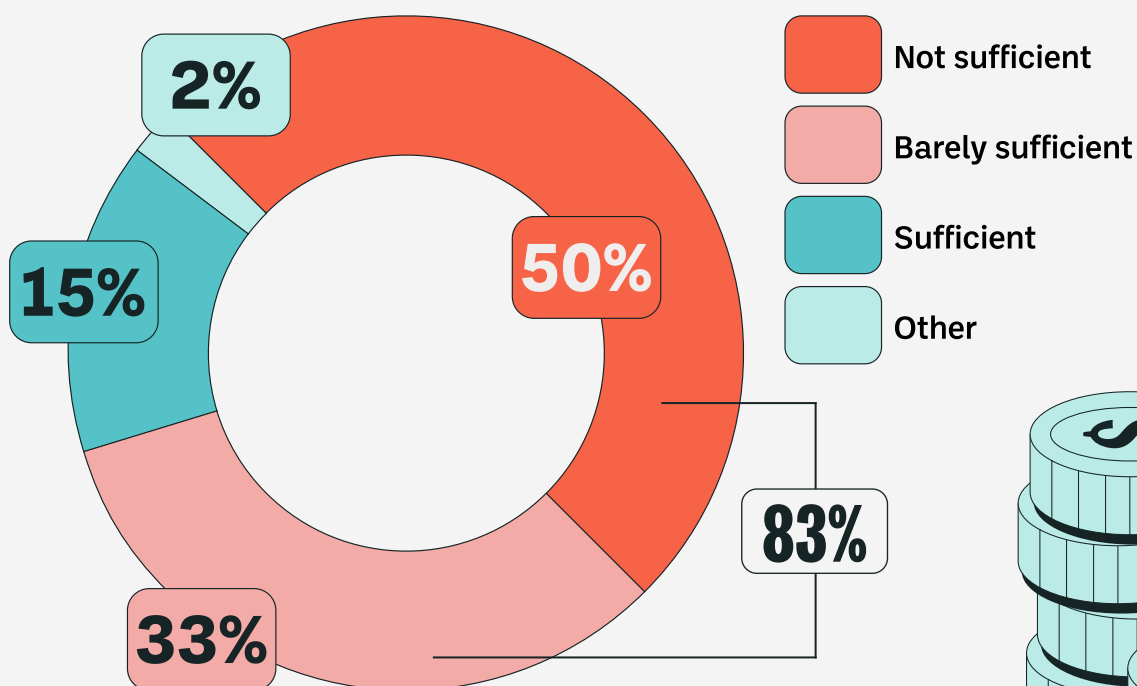
- Feminist and women's rights organizations based in Global Majority countries;
- Unregistered groups;
- Organizations operating at the local or national level;
- Groups led by and accountable to communities facing multiple, intersecting forms of oppression, such as those focused on caste equity, harm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

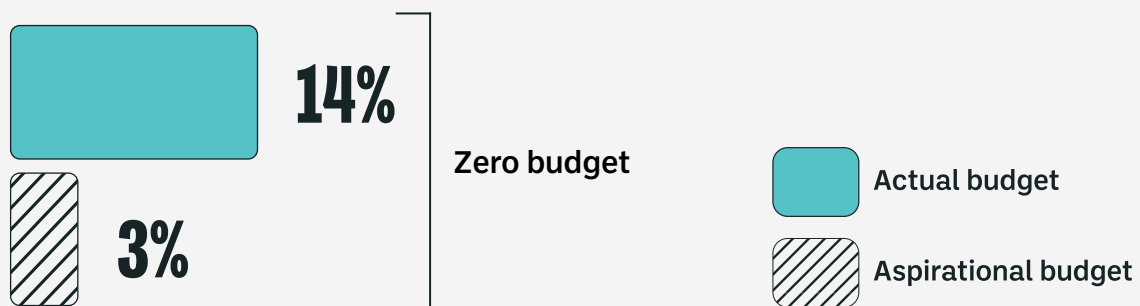
- Only 15% say their budgets are sufficient.
- 83% report their budgets are insufficient to *fully* realize their strategic goals (50% insufficient, 33% barely sufficient).



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

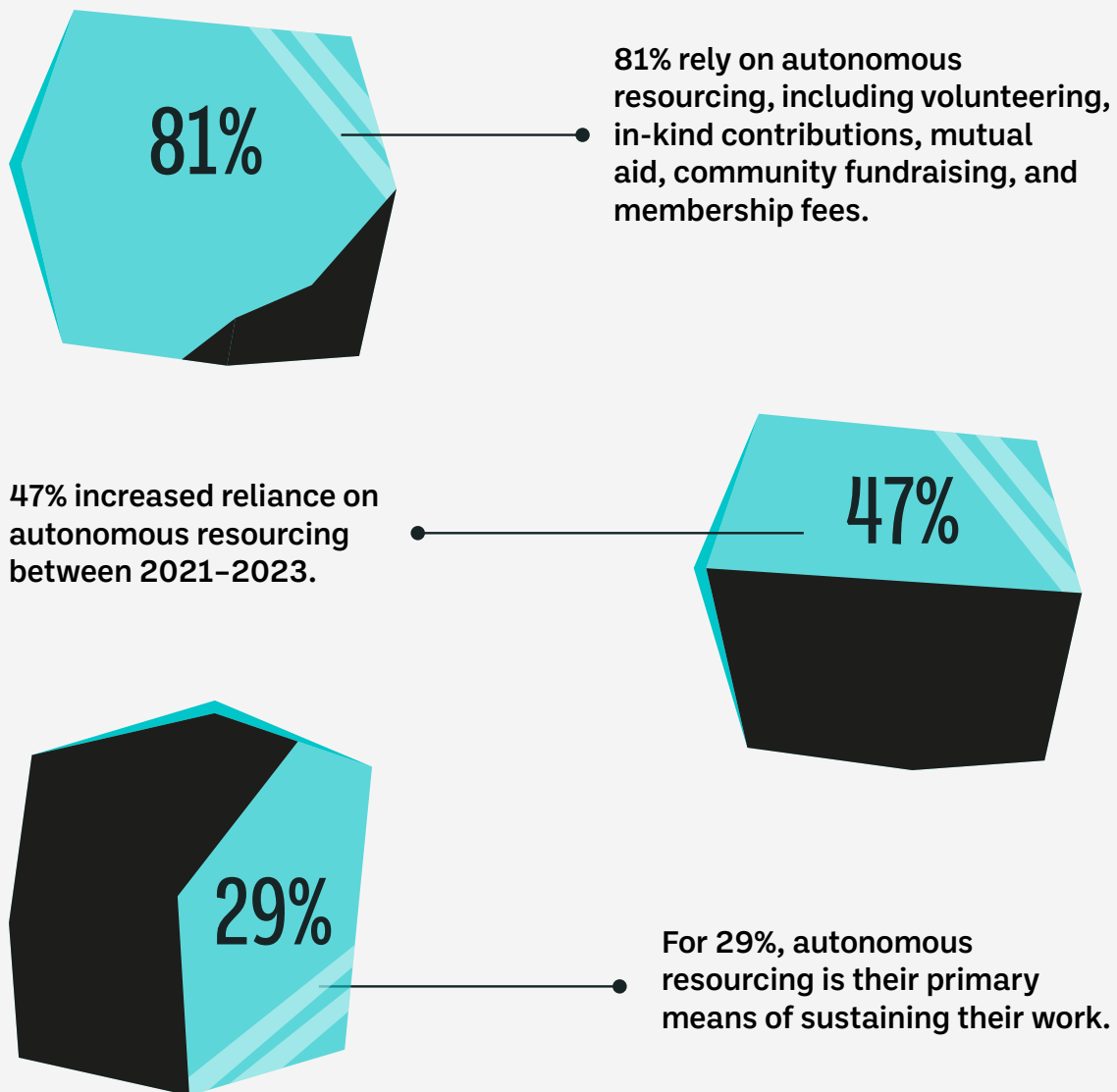
Who is Resourcing Feminist Organizing?

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 in the full *Where is the Money?* report (2025), available at www.awid.org/witm.

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%.

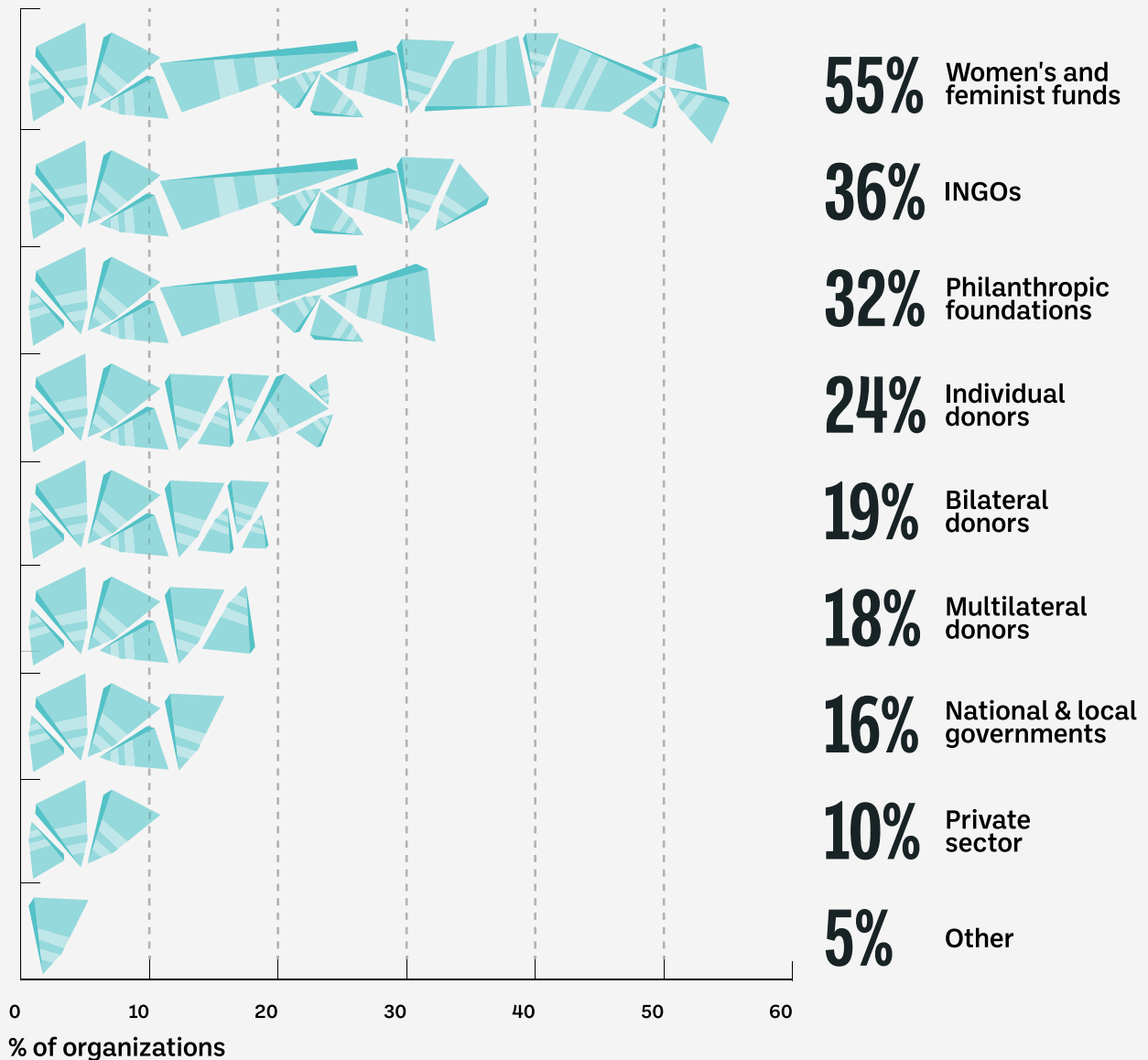
Women's and feminist funds are now a major source of support—not only widely accessible across the diversity of feminist movements, but often substantial relative to recipients' budgets. This marks a significant shift from 2010, when women's and feminist funds comprised only about 5% of organizations'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



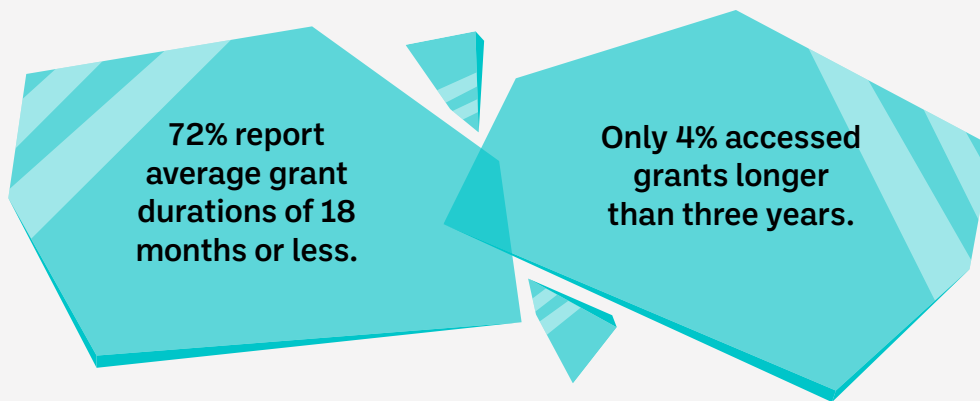
Ongoing cuts in bilateral, multilateral, and philanthropic funding in 2024–2025 are drastically shrinking an already limited funding landscape.

Quality of Funding: Still Falling Short

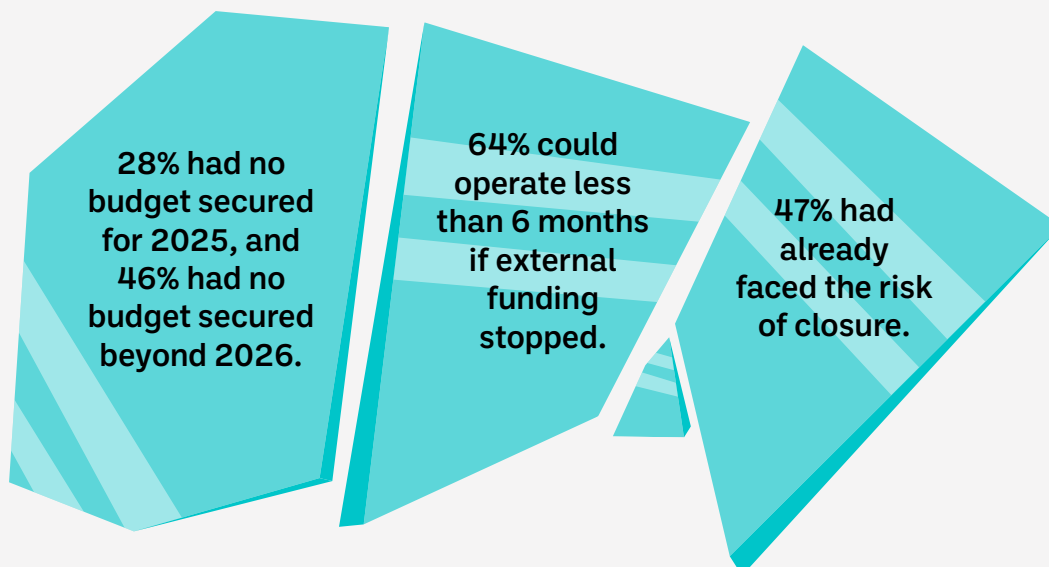
Core funding—critical to enabling sustainable, strategic feminist organizing—remains limited:

- 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.

Read the full report for deeper analysis
and insights at www.awid.org/witm.

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