

FundHer Brief 2008

Money Watch for Women's Rights Movements and Organizations



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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	7
Introduction and background	9
Section 1: organizational profiles	11
Section 2: the funding landscape for women's rights organizations	17
Section 3: movement dynamics and resource mobilization experiences	27
Final thoughts: what's next?	33
Thematic sections:	
And what about... funding for HIV/AIDS and women's rights?	34
And what about... women, climate change and funding?	36
And what about... women, new aid modalities and development policies?	38
And what about... money, women, pleasure and sexual and reproductive rights?	40
And what about... funding to combat violence against women?	42

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Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Global Fund for Women

Hivos

Irish Aid – Department of Foreign Affairs

Levi Strauss Foundation

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Oxfam Novib

Sigrid Rausing Trust

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Finally, we thank women's rights advocates and organizations in general, whose amazing work continues to be our inspiration.

Introduction and background

In 2004 AWID launched its Strategic Initiative *Where is the Money for Women's Rights* (WITM) to gain knowledge of the funding trends for women's rights work and to better understand how to expand the resource base for feminist movements and women's rights organizations. Since then, we have continued to produce and disseminate key information and analyses regarding funding trends, organized a number of regional strategy meetings with feminist activists from around the world, and done advocacy work to influence the policies and practices of donors in different sectors.

With the publication of the first *Fundher* report in 2006, we started sharing the experiences of hundreds of women's organizations worldwide who responded to AWID's surveys, as well as analyzing the dynamics within various funding sectors. In the second *Fundher* report published in 2007, we deepened the regional analysis of the funding landscape, featured the challenges and opportunities in different funding sectors and started exploring strategies that could promote the financial sustainability of women's movements around the globe.

As a complement to those reports, the present document aims to provide an updated snapshot of key funding trends impacting women's rights organizations. We also try to paint a clearer picture of who these organizations are, their characteristics and the issues they identify as challenges and priorities. Put these two pictures together and they raise important questions for reflection around the kinds of donor support needed to effectively reach and support the broad diversity of women's organizations and movements globally, highlighting the importance of building bridges and learning from collaborative resource mobilization experiences. There have been significant increases in donor commitments to support women's rights in the past two

years. However, the commitments have been primarily in large sums of money, making them inaccessible to the large majority of women's organizations that we see with annual budgets under 50,000 USD. Even with a handful of large organizations eligible for such funding and groups like women's funds able to capture large donations and re-grant to smaller organizations, we must continue to look at opportunities for other women's organizations to find innovative ways of leveraging large resources together, scaling up where they desire and ensuring direct channels of dialogue and support with key donors.

The information gathered here is the result of different stages of data collection and analysis. In May 2008, AWID launched a global survey in English, Spanish, French and Arabic, that was answered by 1035 women's rights organizations from all over the world. Additionally, we carried out 20 interviews both with donors and women's rights activists from different regions and sectors, as well as a literature review.

This *Fundher* brief is divided into 4 sections. Section 1 looks at the organizational profiles of survey respondents: their scope, size, priorities and other core characteristics. The second section presents the funding landscape for these organizations, exploring some of the existing challenges for accessing funds and advances that have been made in recent years. Section 3 shares the self-analysis done by participants in the research on the state of their organizing, in particular related to fundraising, introducing interesting experiences in collaborative resource mobilization. Finally, the section entitled "What's next" summarizes implications of all the above for women's rights organizations and donors. At the end of the document there are 5 thematic overviews of important funding trends and opportunities for organizations working on those issues.

Section 1: Organizational Profiles

Women's organizations and movements are key drivers of social change within families, communities and society as a whole. Their actions have provoked shifts in practices, behaviors, policies and social definitions of certain issues. Women's rights advocates have played a key role in challenging oppressing cultural paradigms, questioning development practices and confronting fundamentalist discourses. They play a crucial role in identifying the systems and structures that prevent more equitable power relations, and hold governments and multi-national corporations accountable for respecting and upholding human rights. Their efforts have persisted in the face of opposing forces, continuing to build strong social and political engagement to ensure their sustained impact over time. Without women's organizations, we would not have the many advances in women's economic rights and empowerment, sexual and reproductive rights and political participation, amongst others.

Yet the iterative nature of this work—often three steps forward, two steps back—means that it often remains unrecognized and undervalued. Today women's organizations and movements around the world continue to struggle to secure funding, both for basic expenses and visionary change agendas.

Making financial resources available for autonomous women's organizations at all levels of work requires reaching both emerging

and well-established groups. So how are they working? Where are they implementing their activities? What are their main areas of focus?

These are the questions we address here, where we analyze the composition, location and working conditions that drive and influence the work of women's organizations.

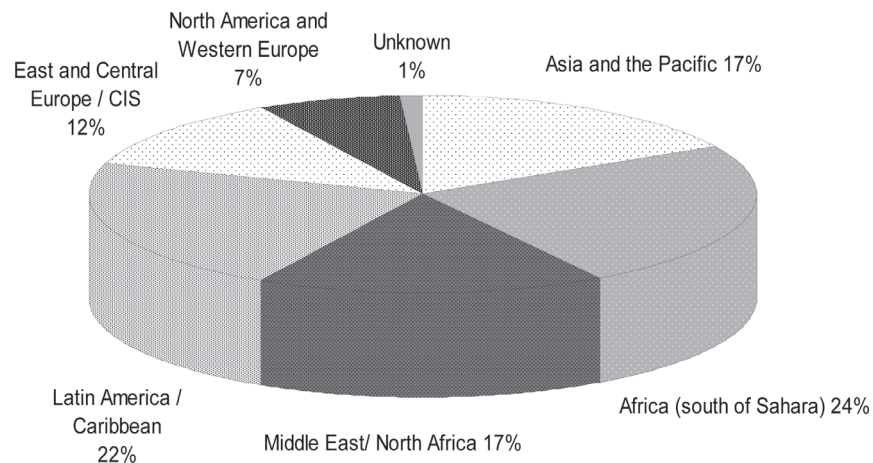
What do women organizations look like?

Over the last few years, AWID has been gathering data about women's rights organizations globally, trying to identify some general characteristics, as well as understand the type of work they do, their reach and their priorities. In general terms, these organizations are small, both in budget size (50% with annual incomes of less than 50,000 USD) and in human resources (25% working without any full time staff).

As shown in Chart 1, the organizations that responded to AWID's 2008 survey are mainly based in Africa (South of the Sahara) and Latin America and the Caribbean, with equal percentages for Asia and the Pacific and the Middle East and North of Africa. A smaller proportion of respondents correspond to women's organizations based in East and Central Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) as well as in North America and Western Europe.

CHART 1

Regional Distribution 2008 (Recoded from country)



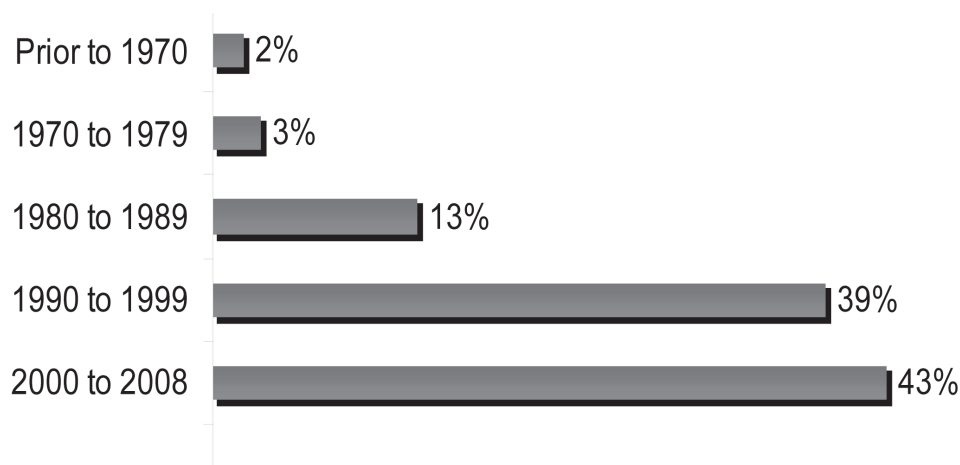
Base = 1032 respondents

Chart 2 shows that a significant number of women's organizations responding to the survey are relatively young. Most of these organizations were founded since 2000, a

high number (39%) were constituted between 1990 and 2000 and a smaller proportion has been around since the 1970's.

CHART 2

Year of Foundation



Base = 1026 respondents

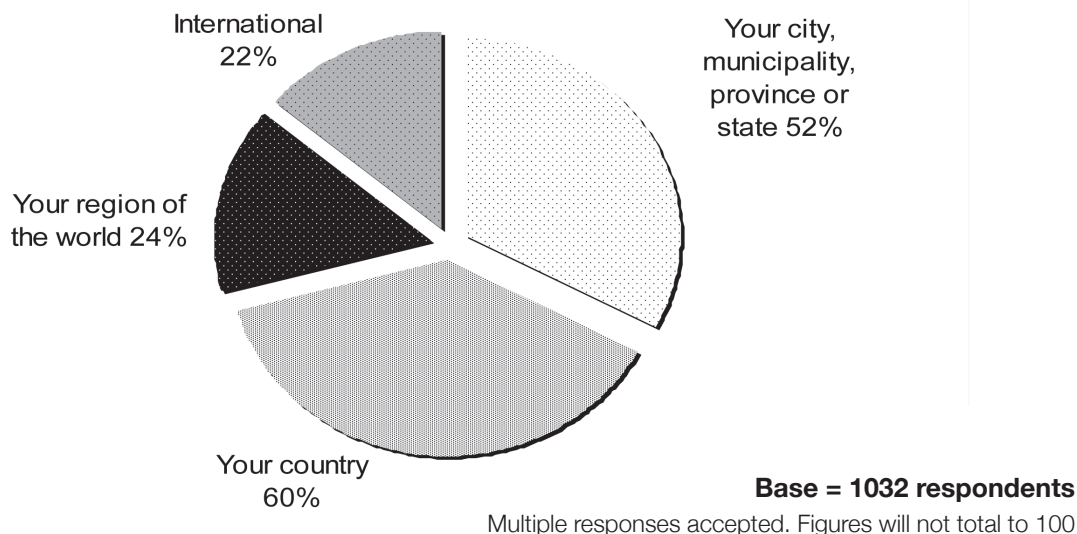
Different organizations, different work

Shaped by external and internal contexts, women's organizations perform at different levels, impacting a wide range of actors, policies, institutions and communities to diverse degrees. Notwithstanding the recent found-

ing of a number of women's groups, their political force and relevant agency expands throughout national and international contexts. As the following survey data shows, a significant 60% of them work within a national scope, while 52% concentrate at a local level, up to 24% act regionally and 22% focus their work internationally.

CHART 3

Geographic scope of your organization's work 2008



In terms of human resources, as many as 25% of the organizations operate without any full time staff, while only 7% have more than 25 workers. Although the larger organizations with more full or part time employees are the ones who also show the largest number of volunteers, the smaller organizations that could benefit from volunteer services function primarily with part time staff. This could be explained by the fact that bigger organizations can more easily do outreach, as well as have systems in place to integrate and manage large numbers of volunteers. When asked how would they describe their staff, many organizations mentioned that they are increasingly specialized, working with clearer communication and

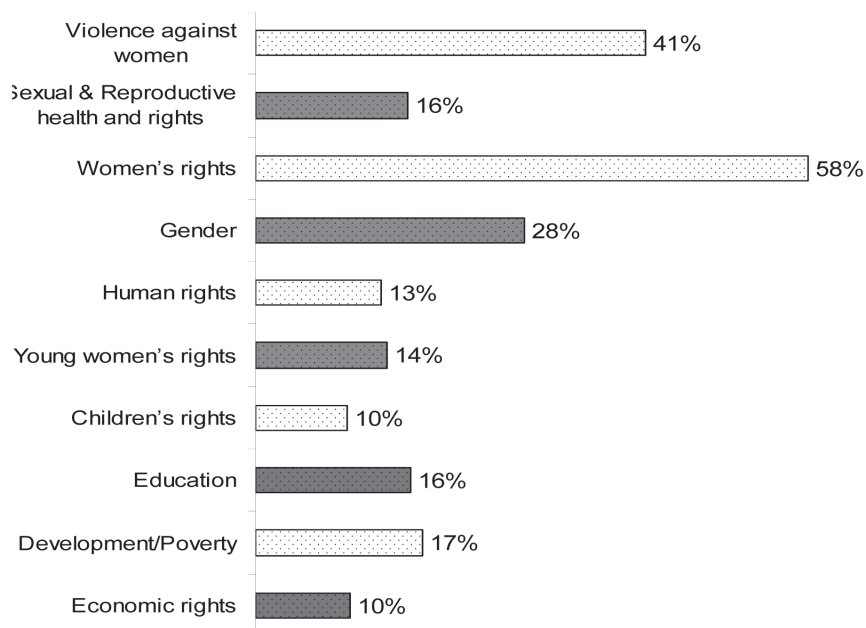
decision-making processes. Still, up to 58% of respondents find themselves working in informal conditions, with a very limited number of paid staff.

According to our 2008 survey results, the top priority issues addressed by women's organizations are women's rights in general (58%), violence against women (41%) and gender (28%). Although the difference between "women's rights" and "gender" in the survey responses is somewhat unclear, these topics likely function as "umbrella" issues for diverse activities related to more specific themes. Also, they allow for a mixture of various approaches and a broad outreach to women in general. Other issues

that continue to be main focuses of work are development and poverty alleviation (17%), sexual and reproductive health and rights (16%) and education (16%).

CHART 4

Top ten priority issues organizations focus on in 2008



Base = 969 respondents

Primary, Secondary and Third Focus for all organizations. Figures will not add up to 100.

Having the necessary capacities and support systems to work on these issues is a challenge that many of these groups face. Despite the specific challenges a given organization might have to overcome, they all share a concern with how to positively influence and mobilize donors to support their work and provide core funding. As shown in Table 1 below, a high percentage of the 862 organizations answering this question (27%)

say they are working on a more comprehensive fundraising strategy, while claim to have a solid and diverse funding base. However, still a significant percentage of women's organizations find themselves wondering about new funding sources that would complement their current fundraising efforts (34%) and almost one forth of the sample (22%) declare having limited start-up funding, while 11% say they have no funding at all.

TABLE 1

Fundraising situation 2008 (more than one answer was accepted, total will not equal 100%)	
No funding yet, but have contacted funders.	11%
Have some limited start-up funding from a small number of donors.	22%
Have done some fundraising but need to find out about other sources of funding.	34%
Working towards a more comprehensive fundraising strategy.	27%
Has a diverse funding base and are expanding fundraising to raising money beyond the usual sources.	16%
None of the above	3%

In terms of other organizational capacities, such as the ability to work-plan and manage finances, the survey shows that these systems vary from largely informal and simple in style to more diversified and specialized. An organization's ability to develop a clear strategic plan and manage finances well, including the development of budgets and financial statements, has a direct impact on its ability to fundraise, especially for larger and multi year grants. Therefore, it seems that the donor landscape, where larger grants come with specific conditionalities, and the

landscape of women's organizations, with a large number of small groups, with basic and often informal organizational capacities in place, might partly explain why raising money for women's rights work remains a challenge.

The next section will explore the funding landscape, trying to understand who is funding the women's movement, what type of funding is available and some challenges and opportunities that organizations face to access those resources.

Section 2:

The Funding Landscape for Women's Rights Organizations

Historical trends and current events such as the “3 F” crises (food, fuels and finances), have resulted in a sense of instability in the international arena, and growing complexity in the landscape of funding for social justice organizations.

Obtaining financial support for initiatives that promote social change and confront the existing power structures has never been easy. Particularly, women's rights organizations face a number of challenges in accessing financial resources, many of which they attribute to donor priorities and practices. There is also recognition of limitations related to the organizational capacities of women's rights organizations themselves.

In addition, the political environment in many contexts where women's rights organizations work not only jeopardizes the accomplishment of their goals but also undermines their access to funding. Patriarchal societies, sexism and authoritarian governments are some of the most common challenges that women's groups indicated they have to overcome in order to mobilize more resources that could support their work.

Trends among funding sectors also impact the availability of resources for women's rights work. Bilateral and multilateral agencies continue to undergo reforms driven by the aid effectiveness agenda, which fosters government to government collaboration. Many groups (including women's organizations) have been working to influence this agenda to ensure that resources are also directly allocated to civil society organiza-

tions in recognition of their role as crucial development actors.

Concerning the landscape among international NGOs (INGOs)¹, in 2007 AWID explored some of the challenges posed by these organizations, where funding and programmatic relationships with women's organizations blurred lines of accountability and decision-making. Some have been working to develop guiding principles to apply in their work with ‘partner’ organizations and others maintain their firm commitments to women's rights work. Large private foundations continue to be difficult sites for influence, but as discussed below, there may be a few windows of opportunity in this sector.

Women's funds are very important sources of financial and general support to women's rights organizations and they are one of the champions in reaching relatively small groups in the Global South and East. They continue to grow stronger and more proactively embrace their role as a strategic resource for women's movements. Additionally, they have been implementing some innovative strategies, both for leveraging more funds and for supporting the organizational development of their grantees.

With regards to individual donors, family foundations and corporate giving, AWID's research has been clear about the challenges women's organizations face for accessing these donations. However we see that particularly in regions where more ‘traditional’ donors are withdrawing, women's organ-

1. International NGOs (INGOs) as defined in this report are grantmaking and campaigning organizations with a substantial funding base in the Global North, from governments and/or individuals, often implementing their own programs in the Global South.

izations are finding ways to tap these and other sources of support.

Given this context, this section tries to answer the following questions: What are the present funding trends for women's rights organizations? Who is supporting these groups? Where are the new opportunities for resource mobilization for women's rights work?

Tracking the funding trends

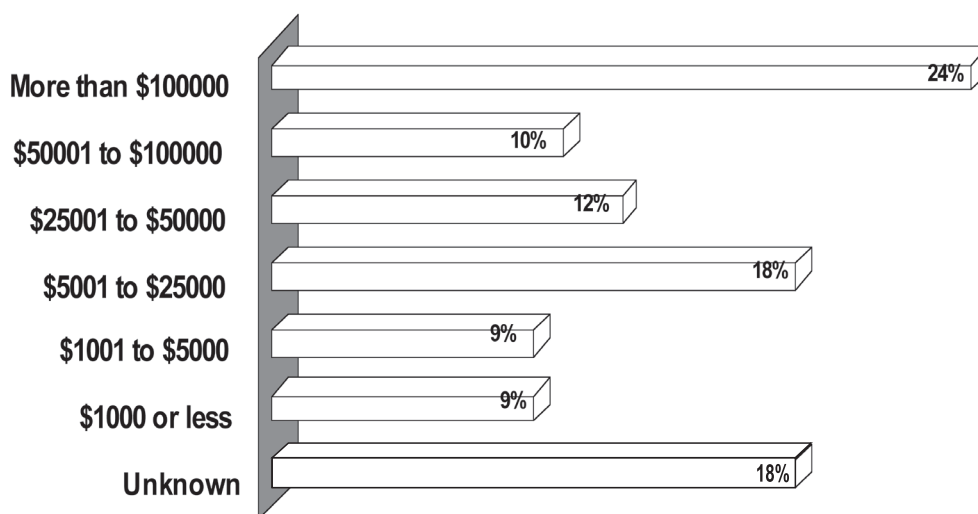
For the more than 1000 women's rights organizations that answered AWID's 2008 survey, getting financial support for the work they do is still a challenge. Nevertheless, the data shows that the overall revenues for the 705 organizations that declared having any type of income in 2007, totaled

USD 114,437,846. Compared to the total revenues presented in AWID's 2nd *Funder* report for 729 organizations in 2005—USD 76,100,529²—we do see some growth in the overall resources reaching women's rights organizations.

In terms of revenue ranges, if we look at the total income respondents reported for 2007, which include grants, membership fees and other income generating activities, it is evident that most of these organizations operate with a relatively small resource base. As shown in chart 5, the concentration of organizations with annual incomes below 50,000 USD is very high, reaching 48% of respondents, which coincides with the data from previous AWID surveys. Among these, the highest representation is in the 5,000-25,000 USD range, with 18%. About one-quarter of the organizations surveyed had annual incomes of over 100,000 USD for 2007 (24%).

CHART 5

Total income in USD 2007



Base = 1017 respondents

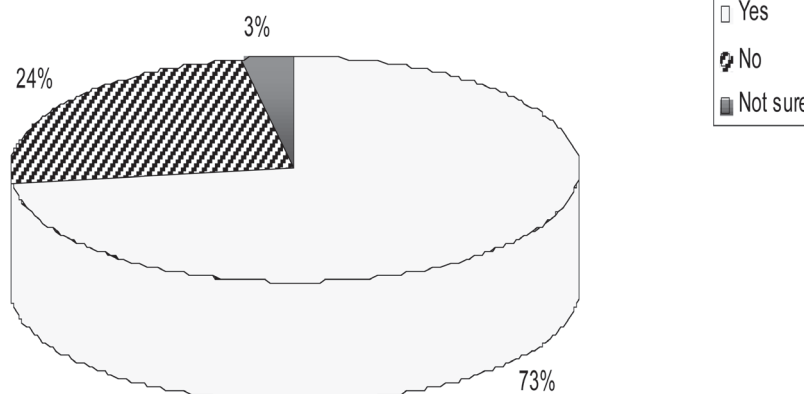
2. Kerr, J (2007), AWID's 2nd *Funder* report: Financial sustainability for women's movements worldwide, p. 20

When observing specifically observing the grants received by organizations in 2007, of 1021 respondents, 73% reported to have

received grants while 24% said they didn't receive any grant for that year, and 3% wasn't sure.

CHART 6

Did your organization receive a grant in 2007?



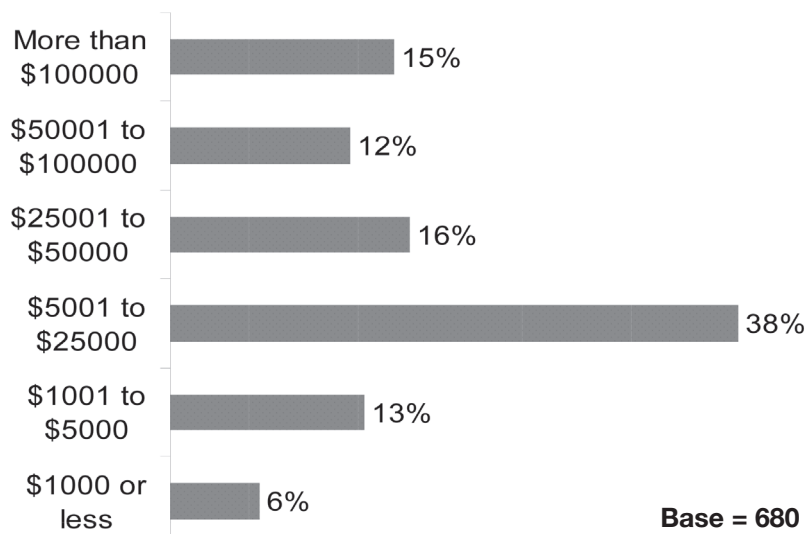
Base = 1021 respondents

Regarding the size of the grants, the distribution of the three largest donations re-

ported by respondents for 2007 (a total of 1441 grants) is as follows:

CHART 7

Organization's largest donation in 2007



Base = 680 respondents

As shown in chart 7, in general terms, grants tend to be small donations, with the highest percentage within the 5,000-25,000 USD

range (38%). If we add up all of the grants of less than 50,000 USD, this equals 73% of the donations, which is very significant when



most of the organizations rely on very few grants per year.

So who is funding the women's organizations surveyed by AWID?

Organizations get their funding from different sectors, namely: bilateral and multilateral agencies, large private foundations, international NGOs, women's funds, corporations, individual donors, faith-based organizations, family foundations and national or local governments. Additionally, some organizations have membership fees and

other income generating activities, such as service fees, product selling, fees for consultancies, etc.

As presented in Table 2 below, when looking at the largest donation received in 2007 by respondents, the main donors in terms of numbers of grants given for that year were the bilateral and multilateral agencies (16%) followed very closely by the women's funds (15%). The international NGOs come in third with 8% of the contributions. Noticeably, almost 25% reported relying on 'other' organizational resources.

TABLE 2

Funding sector	Percent of Grants in 2007
Bi/multilateral agencies	16.1%
Women's Funds	15.0%
INGOs	8.0%
National/local government	5.2%
Family foundations	3.6%
Private foundations	2.4%
Faith-based organization	1.4%
individual giving	1.2%
Corporate philanthropy	0.1%
Other organizational resources	24.9%
Not sure/unknown	22.0%
Total	100.0%

In terms of absolute revenue, the two main income sources for organizations that responded to the 2008 AWID survey were bilateral and multilateral agencies and their own organizational resources. Large private foundations account for a large portion of the resources, but as we saw in Table 2, they account for a very small number of grants, which shows that they are giving large amounts distributed over few contributions. Women's funds on the other hand, gave a broad number of rather small grants, as they account

for a smaller share of the overall resources allocated for women's organizations.

If we examine the regional distribution of those donations (Chart 8), it is clear that private foundations and corporations allocate a high percentage of their contributions in North America and Western Europe, where national governmental monies have a great importance too. It is also interesting to observe that in the survey sample, bilateral and multilateral agencies give around 30% of

TABLE 3

Funding sector	2007 Total funds in USD	2007 Percentage of funds
Bi/multilateral agencies	\$37,215,327	32.5%
Private foundations	\$17,005,774	14.9%
INGOs	\$12,294,070	10.7%
Women's Funds	\$3,920,848	3.4%
Corporate philanthropy	\$91,994	0.1%
individual giving	\$268,395	0.2%
Faith-based organization	\$2,059,602	1.8%
Family foundations	\$3,725,102	3.3%
National/local government	\$7,383,583	6.5%
Other organizational resources	\$30,473,152	26.6%
Total	\$114,437,846	100%

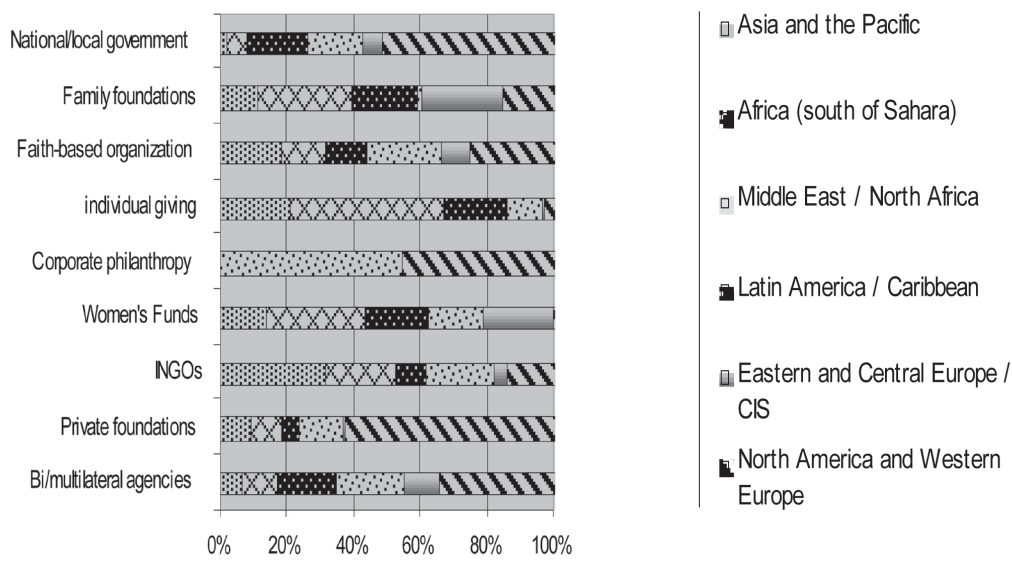
their donations in those regions, also playing an important role in Latin America and the Caribbean and Middle East/North Africa. INGOs on the other hand, seem to grant more funds to organizations in Asia and the Pacific, Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, while women's funds demonstrate a strong focus in the Global South and East

as a whole, giving virtually no contributions in North America and Western Europe. According to survey responses, the distribution of the grants provided by women's funds is almost equal amongst regions, though they are the most important donors for Central and Eastern Europe and CIS, where other donors have a much smaller presence.

CHART 8

Base = 702 respondents

Donation per Sector by Region



What type of funding are organizations receiving?

Regarding the type of grants received by respondents in 2007, 40% were multiyear grants, while 56% were only for a one-year project. Single year donations pose serious challenges to the sustainability of women's rights organizations, as they do not allow for investments in long range planning, and

building and growing for the future. As a consequence, many organizations are still operating in a survival logic and they have difficulties in providing stable jobs and adequate working conditions to women's rights advocates. While some funders have adjusted the conditions of their grantmaking practices to take these realities into account, data shows that more steps need to be taken to match donors' policies with the needs of women's rights organizations.

TABLE 4:

Was the grant your organization received in 2007 a multiyear grant?	
Base = 675 organizations / 1,404 grants	Percent of grants
Yes	40%
No	56%
Not sure	5%

Additionally, it appears that most of the funding accessed by women's rights organizations is for projects and not core funding, which means that in many instances organizations are not able to set their own priorities. Based on a question about how organizations cover overhead expenses, 30% of respondents reported having grants that explicitly cover those expenses (which translates to core funding), while 49% said they needed to pull resources from project funding to cover those costs, and a significant 43% reported using funds from income-generating activities developed and man-

aged by the organization itself. That 30% of organizations receive core support shows some advances in the quality of funding for women's rights groups, probably related to a number of good practices from some progressive donors, including women's funds. Nevertheless, there is a need to further develop donor practices related to granting core funding and multi year funding, as well as improving the conditions and requirements for supporting women's rights organizations, acknowledging the important role they play in advancing social justice.

TABLE 5:

How do organizations pay for salaries and rent?

We have grants that explicitly cover these kinds of costs	30%
We use money from the grants that we receive for specific projects	49%
We have other sources of income, such as membership fees or income-generating activities that we manage on our own	43%

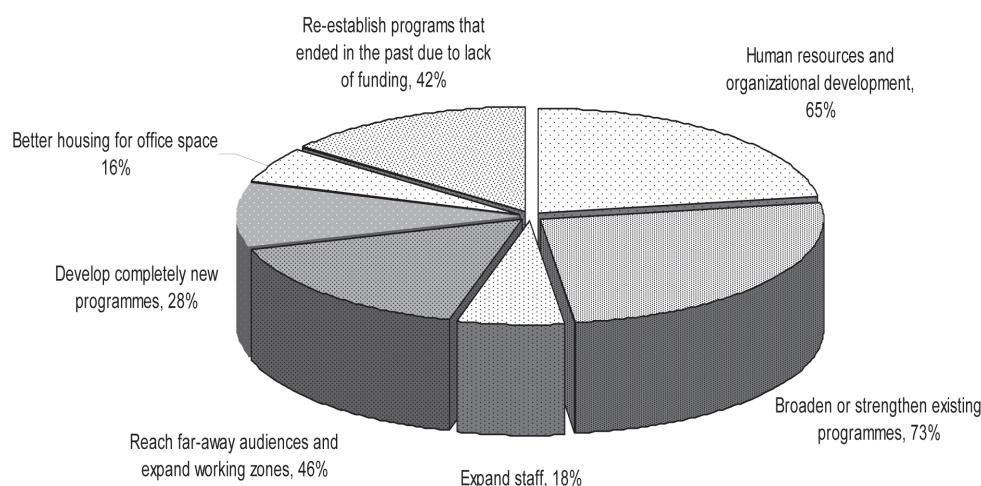
Base = 1032 respondents

Finally, when asked to imagine a scenario of flexible and unlimited funding that would broadly support the work done by their organizations, respondents mentioned that their priorities would include strengthening current programmes (73%) and organizational and human resources development (65%). Other priority areas that organizations would invest in are broadening their outreach (46%) and re-establishing programmes that ended due to lack of funding

(42%). Only 18% of respondents said they would hire more staff and 28% mentioned the possibility of developing completely new programmes. This shows that organizations are actually more interested in advancing the work they currently do, as well as growing and developing their structures and strategies, than embarking on new areas of work. This points to the need for more investments in organizational growth and development.

CHART 9

Top 3 priorities if organization had unlimited and flexible funding in 2008



Base = 926 respondents

Multiple responses accepted. Figure will not total 100.

Windows of opportunity in the funding sectors

Even as many women's organizations continue to face significant challenges to successfully mobilize resources for their work, there are various windows of opportunity in different funding sectors to be leveraged.

Bilateral and multilateral agencies

In the past two years, some bilateral donors have shown a renewed interest

in funding gender equality initiatives and supporting the women's movement. While there is still some criticism on the lack of awareness among bilaterals in terms of monitoring the impact new aid modalities are having on civil society organizations, a number of agencies are significantly escalating their contributions to civil society organizations doing women's rights work. With progressive and innovative gender equality programmes, development agencies from the Danish, Dutch, Irish, Norwegian, Spanish, and Swedish governments, among others, are very important play-



ers opening new funding possibilities for women's organizations.

A special note on the Dutch government "MDG3 Fund: Investing in Equality" is of particular relevance. At the beginning of 2008, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched this special fund, initially of 50 million euros over 3 years, to support the achievement of MDG3 (gender equality and the empowerment of women) through funding non-governmental organizations working on those issues. Not only was this a significant window of opportunity for accessing resources, but the total amount of the Fund was increased in September 2008 by 20 million euros due to the large volume of quality proposals received. This made a total contribution of 70 million euros, roughly USD 100 million. The funds will provide multiyear support for 45 selected organizations, at least 9 of whom will be re-granting a large portion of those funds (roughly 15 million euros) for smaller women's rights organizations.³ Because of this considerable amount, the combined income for women's rights organizations in the coming years will grow substantially.

A question that arises when observing these positive shifts is: how long will the momentum last? It is important that women's movements worldwide develop mechanisms to tackle these funds and to keep the enthusiasm going within the donor community. The above mentioned agencies, as "champions" in investments for gender equality and women's rights initiatives of civil society organizations, should have an important role in promoting continuous growth in the funding available for women's organizations.

Large private foundations

As shown earlier in this section, large private foundations are mostly seen giving big

grants to a small number of well established organizations. While some of the larger players in this sector are often criticized for promoting technical solutions to complex social problems- with little interest in funding from a rights-based perspective- there are interesting developments within recently founded philanthropic institutions that are moving towards supporting initiatives for the advancement of women. Novo Foundation, for instance, has defined the empowerment of women and girls as primary agents of change as a key component of its mission. In 2007 they granted over 32 million USD to over 40 organizations, including women's organizations and a few organizations with grant making functions that will be allocating resources to smaller women's rights groups. There is also a possibility for them to consider direct funding for small organizations, which would open the array of groups that could benefit from their grants.

Moreover, some long-established foundations have implemented interesting shifts in their programmes. At Ford Foundation for example, sexuality and reproductive health have increasingly become priorities and may open funding opportunities for women's organizations working on these issues.

Even when large private foundations will most likely continue to disburse big grants, these monies could be made available to reach smaller organizations through re-granting institutions, such as women's funds. In addition, some foundations are showing increasing openness to negotiating grantmaking priorities with current or possible future grantees—a desirable mechanism for building bridges and shared agendas between foundations and women's rights organizations.

Women's funds

As a significant supporter of women's organizations, women's funds are perma-

3. To see the list of selected projects, please check http://mdg3.nl/docs/Projects_Selected.pdf

nently growing their contributions to a broad range of groups in the Global South and East. Furthermore, they have stepped up to face the challenges posed by limitations in the organizational development of their grantees. Several have established programmes for accompanying their grantees through project cycles, working with them in fine-tuning their proposals and in monitoring and evaluation processes. They have also granted growth funds and leadership funds, both to facilitate organizational development and capacity building.

Given the context, where some big agencies are providing new large funds, the role of women's funds becomes even more relevant as they can re-distribute the available resources for women's rights work. In this sense, there are some successful experiences of collaborative efforts between women's funds to leverage more money in order to broaden the outreach of their grant-making functions, as described in section 3 of this brief.

Therefore, women's funds have emerged as key allies for small women's rights organizations and those looking to raise their

first grant (a significant number of groups, as shown by AWID survey results). Some women's funds have also been reaching out to find common cause with larger, well-established women's organizations who have been interested in clarifying terms of engagement and elements of their shared agendas.

As presented in this section, the funding landscape for the women's movement is a very complex one. Ultimately, we must not only understand the challenges and opportunities of each sector, but the very different dynamics that drive their functioning and decisions. Demands for greater and better quality resources must then recognize these dynamics while also pressing for changes to respond to the realities of women's organizations.

Section 3 explores some of the strategies that are being implemented by organizations for their sustainability, includes an assessment of movement dynamics, particularly as they relate to funding, and examines some possible strategies for leveraging more and better quality resources.

Section 3:

Movement Dynamics and Resource Mobilization Experiences

“We need a radical transformation of how we relate to money. This relationship is affected in many ways by long-standing patriarchal beliefs and our sense of entitlement to funding (‘our causes are just and therefore worthy of resources to support them and turn them into a reality for all people of the world’).”

Lydia Alpízar, AWID Executive Director

In order to influence the political systems and advance women’s rights and gender equality worldwide, women’s organizations have found new ways of organizing and standing together by building alliances, transforming leaderships, questioning internal structures, and re-shaping relationships to money. Many feminist and women’s organizations have taken on the challenge of reinventing themselves in this new century and are committed to strengthening movements and finding innovative solutions for longstanding obstacles. New, more effective strategies are needed to challenge patriarchal relationships to money and power, advance the achievements of women’s rights organizations and limit the backlash to women’s rights fed by market-led development policies⁴. We wanted to explore some of the current dynamics in women’s movements and how they may influence opportunities for resource mobilization.

History has shown that by strengthening collective power, women’s organizations have gained strategic political spaces, have been able to pressure donors and other development actors to shift conventional approaches to key issues of their political agendas,

and have in many cases revised their own power dynamics and structures to ensure that more comprehensive and democratic processes prevail within their organizations. However, there are still many challenges to overcome fragmentation and competition within women’s movements.

The advancement of gender equality and women’s rights requires strong organizations that include participatory and inclusive processes, as well as democratic and accountable organizational practices within their working models. Additionally, to move beyond organizational and issue silos, create effective resource mobilization strategies, position our agendas and assure our long-term sustainability it is important to promote diversity and inclusiveness within women’s movements. Engaging in critical debates about our strengths, weaknesses and approaches can help to address the challenges that threaten our financial sustainability, potentially turning them into new opportunities.

How can we work collectively to democratize access to resources by women’s organizations? How can we strengthen women’s movements worldwide for organizations to successfully negotiate their priorities, approaches and accountability mechanisms with donors?

In this section we explore some of the collective strategies that women’s organizations have implemented to access funding, the main challenges they have faced and how they have worked to overcome them.

4. By market-led development policies we refer to a number of policies lead by international development actors such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and some governments of the global North that implement programs that do not tackle gender disparities or have a rights-based framework, but only see women as instruments of economic growth.



Our strengths and weaknesses

Women's movements have a long history of organizing and mobilizing across regions, sectors and issues. They have incredible strength and capacity to react and effectively organize against the negative impacts of a culture of patriarchy, threats such as war and conflict, authoritarian governments and religious fundamentalisms. However, women's organizations consistently face struggles in adopting strong resource mobilization strategies to secure core and long-term financial support for all. With the average annual budget per organization being USD 35,000 in 2007, according to AWID's 2008 survey, it is evident that a significant number of organizations require appropriate financial resources that would enable them to build the capacities and tools needed to achieve their goals and grow in influence and scale

To learn more about how activists see their movements, we asked respondents to point out the top three strengths they observe. The passion, solidarity, commitment, motivation, perseverance and common ground that women's organizations around the globe share were underlined. Respondents also listed the diversity, dynamism, tolerance, creativity and capacity to work in a multidisciplinary, multigenerational and collaborative manner at different levels as characteristic of their movements. They also highlighted the accomplishments, permanence, increased visibility, great leadership, and strong communication and networking mechanisms developed by women's movements across regions⁵.

Notwithstanding the positive and enthusiastic perception that advocates share regarding the achievements and history of feminist

and women's movements in their regions, very few of them talked about well-funded organizations. Consistent with the findings presented earlier, whenever respondents referred to a strength related to money they did it to highlight their capacity to adapt and survive within a changing financial climate, or to emphasize their readiness to volunteer and sacrifice their time and personal resources to pursue the goals of the organization or group.

When asked about the weaknesses of their movements, a very high number of respondents emphasized the lack of human resources, but mostly mentioned the deficit of core support, project funding, and in general financial resources. As one respondent summarized, the *ability of the movement to work together in terms of raising funds for joint projects*⁶ appears as a major weakness. Along with the external factors that affect the access to resources by women's rights organizations, there are also internal fears and individualistic frames of reference that do not allow for joint resource mobilization strategies to happen. In addition, the tensions that arise from the fact that many organizations compete for funding, can often perpetuate isolation and undermine efforts to work together.

Activists gathered in strategy meetings convened by AWID and its allies in 2007 and 2008 also embarked on sharp self-analysis, acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of their organizations and collectives. As some participants at the meeting "Where is the money for women's rights in Brazil and the Southern Cone" (Brazil, December 2007) stated, there is a problem of visibility among women's rights groups, which undermines their legitimacy in the eyes of the public. They emphasized the need to improve communications skills and to professionalize

5. WITM 2008 survey question 46.

6. Ibid.

their fundraising efforts, and they called for donors to support organizational strengthening. Similarly, participants at the meeting “Resource Mobilization for Women’s Rights Organizations and Movements in the Middle East and North Africa” (Morocco, April 2008) underlined movement diversity, with organizations working on different issues from various approaches, which requires recognition and support from donors, by providing different types of funding that matches the needs of diverse organizations.

If instead of working to secure quality funding for all organizations, the competition for obtaining currently available resources available continues and we limit ourselves to accepting projects just to survive, we will not succeed in advancing women’s rights and gender equality on our own terms. Most of all, we will not succeed in transforming the relationship we have to money that we have inherited from the patriarchal systems where subordination, scarcity, guilt, unequal access to opportunities, and other forms of subjugating women’s access and ownership over financial resources is encouraged.

Mobilizing resources collectively

Throughout four years of researching and participating in meetings with women’s groups and donor allies, AWID has heard different experiences in resource mobilization. Mostly, women’s rights organizations establish individual relationships with donors and have their own fundraising strategies or practices. But there are some interesting cases of collective resource mobilization out there that show how working together has fostered the advancement of the organizations’ missions and goals.

Organizations often collaborate by sharing equipment and other in kind contributions, or even some share human resources for a particular project. There are also many joint experiences in advocacy and campaigning that have proven the advantage of working together, such as the struggles against free trade treaties in Central America, the Women’s Health and Rights Advocacy Partnership (WHRAP) in South Asia and partnerships between Iraqi organizations on conflict resolution and the role of women in democracy, among many others⁷. Other examples refer to the mobilizations around the Beijing Conference in 1995 and the consecutive follow-ups in 2000 and 2005, where groups and movements worked together to reach and influence those key spaces. Another important form of cooperation between women’s rights organizations mentioned by respondents to AWID’s survey is sharing information about donors that are supporting the issues they work on and even in some occasions facilitating linkages with those donors or acting as references when required. Though this is not as frequent as other forms of collaboration, it constitutes a very relevant component that could be further maximized.

When it comes to actual joint initiatives for fundraising and influencing donors, there are fewer examples. Particularly, regional and national networks formed by women’s organizations have mobilized significant resources and built long term relationships with funders. In the resource mobilization strategy meeting for Brazil and the Southern Cone mentioned above, participants talked about experimenting with strategies to collaborate in joint initiatives across organizations from early stages of program conceptualization and fundraising to implementation and evaluation.

Furthermore, around 25% of AWID’s survey sample reported having experiences of joint

7. WITM 2008 survey, question 46



resource mobilization, with good results. Whether sending a one-time funding proposal to a donor agency or building a coalition to raise funds together over a longer period of time, these activities have proven to be beneficial for the women's organizations involved in them. Some of the advantages mentioned by respondents included the confidence donors had in the potential results from a joint project, the possibility of accessing larger amounts of funding, the increased coordination among organizations, and the greater impact and outreach their work had.

There are also challenges that women's organizations face when implementing collaborative strategies around funding. These include the decision on who is going to be the main recipient and administrator of the resources, the creation of adequate decision-making and monitoring mechanisms

as well as conflict resolution guidelines when tensions arise. With regards to those difficulties, respondents felt that there were learnings that would improve the development of these kinds of strategies in the future. Overall, women's organizations stand a greater chance to mobilize and access good quality funding if they unite in their demands and work together to influence local, national and international donors.

Additionally, there are some experiences of collaboration between donors- in order to support a particular sector or issue, or with the aim of leveraging more funds. Women's funds, in particular, have developed some interesting strategies, one of which is featured below as an example of good practice in joint resource mobilization, together with an interesting experience between donors and women's rights organizations⁸.

Latin American Consortium of Women's Funds (CLFM)

Created by seven women's funds in Latin America¹, this regional network has been working for three years to mobilize resources in an innovative way. Together with Hivos, Ford Foundation, Global Fund for Women, Mama Cash and Astraea –among other donors– the Consortium is working on a two year project to support local movements and women's organizations working on sexual diversity and rights, which they identified as a pressing issue in the region. In order to successfully develop a cooperative strategy, the division of labour was done according to their areas of expertise. Hence, different teams within each fund have concentrated on certain areas of the project (fundraising, communication, etc). The Central American Women's Fund, for example, leads the overall supervision and coordination of this initiative and is tasked with raising most of the funds needed (around 1.5 million USD). The Mexican Fund SEMILLAS will carry out the evaluation of the project and Angela Borba Fund from Brazil will perform all the activities related to communication. Additionally, all funds share some tasks, namely: coordinating a local

1. Central American Women's Fund, Angela Borba Fund, Alquimia Fund, Semillas, Fondo Mujer, Fondo Trasandina and Fondo de Mujeres del Sur

8. While the two examples here are from Latin America, we know that there are many other important instances of donors and women's organizations coming together to explore more collaborative and effective resource mobilization strategies in various regions. Over the next year, AWID's Where is the Money for Women's Rights initiative will be collecting more of these stories. We encourage you to send yours to fundher@awid.org

call for proposals to allocate the grants, sharing this information with the other funds, developing capacity building activities and organizing a national gathering with the selected groups.

The benefits for women's funds and organizations, as well as for the donors that have embraced this initiative, are many. Not only are these funds expanding their geographical reach to other areas of Latin America beyond their countries of focus, it is also the first time they are accessing such large amounts of money. Other advantages include the exchange of working experiences across the region and most importantly the democratization of the access to resources for grassroots women's organizations. By coming together, these seven women's funds, along with several progressive donors, have supported around 60 organizations² in 17 different countries.

Diálogos consonantes

In June 2008, several women's rights organizations and feminist networks from Latin America gathered with the Spanish Agency for Development Cooperation (AECID), UNIFEM and the National Women's Institute of Uruguay to analyze the challenges and opportunities for advancing women's rights in the region, and the role of the funding provided by Spanish bilateral aid.

This meeting was the result of a coordinated effort by different organizations in Latin America together with allies in AECID, which shows the impact of the synergies when women's rights advocates come together. The dialogue centered on priority issues, such as sexual and reproductive rights, poverty and inequality, political participation and democracy, as well as better understanding AECID's policies on funding for gender equality initiatives.

Spanish bilateral aid for gender equality has been increasing, rising to 15% of their total ODA. Particularly, the overall funding allocated for Latin America has been 40% of their ODA, which reached to 1.6 billion Euros in 2008. This creates important opportunities for women's rights organizations in general, and especially for Latin American groups, to access more resources from this bilateral agency, which could serve as growth funds to tackle other resources.

The organizations present in this strategic meeting worked together to encourage AECID to commit more support. They suggested the creation of a direct fund for feminist and women's movements in the region, with the following characteristics:

- a multi annual strategic Fund with a catalytic role (not seed grants)
- with a programmatic focus
- that fosters the autonomy of the feminist movement, considering its diversity
- that answers both to urgent actions and to long term commitments
- that has a significant amount to work against fundamentalisms (political and religious) in the region
- that includes representatives of the movement in defining priorities

2. This is an approximate number, since the call for proposals is still open.

These examples illustrate what that when organizations come together, either for raising funds or jointly attempting to influence a donor, positive outcomes can emerge.

Collaborative efforts of different sorts, for advancing a project, promoting a campaign, or mobilizing resources have had important results.

Final thoughts: What's Next?

Women's rights organizations have been working for some time on financial sustainability issues; they have had important impacts on the funding available and, to a certain extent, on donor practices. To ensure a sustainable future, increased resources, together with shifts in the relationship between funders and organizations, are needed.

As presented throughout this brief, there has been growth in resources from some sectors but there is a persistent need to address how those resources can most effectively reach the full diversity of women's organizations (including the high number with budgets under USD 50,000). This context raises questions about the type of funding that is most conducive for strengthening women's rights organizations and movements, as well as around the urgency to overcome the gap between the needs of women's organizations and the funding that is available.

In respect to donors, it is critical that they develop policies and practices that fit the realities of women's rights organizations at different levels. Where possible, funders should invest in organizations rather than 'projects'. There is a need for more multi year core funding, substantial in size, which enables organizations to realize future ambitions and grow in influence and scale. Furthermore,

to be able to more accurately recognize impact, organizations need support to develop or apply evaluation frameworks that are better suited to assessing progress in social change and that fit with how they believe change happens.

With regards to women's rights organizations, shifting the way resource mobilization is perceived is an important component for building bridges with the donor community. Women's organizations have emphasized the importance of autonomy to identify their priorities and determine how funds are spent. Communicating these priorities with a long-term vision and building a relationship of mutual trust and accountability with donor allies is crucial, as is finding ways to negotiate terms of support (especially core vs. project).

Given the current context, it has become increasingly relevant for women's organizations to plan and prepare for different growth scenarios. When the trend is of incremental or even radical growth, they need to be proactive and invest in internal organizational capacities and assets as a cushion to get through difficult times. Managing the kind of growth presented by new windows of opportunity is an important task ahead, as well as is transforming the grantor-grantee relationships into real partnerships.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has increasingly affected women: women account for the majority of new infections and are disproportionately tasked with the care giving of those affected by the disease. While some governments and international organizations have recognized this and have, as a result, begun to implement gender policies, it is clear that increased efforts are needed to fight the feminization of HIV/AIDS and more resources are required for women's rights initiatives.

Women's rights organizations work on HIV and AIDS

The HIV/AIDS epidemic has taken its toll on women and girls at a disproportionate rate to their male counterparts. The "feminization" of the pandemic highlights the need for women's rights organizations to be at the forefront of the fight against HIV/AIDS. In the past years, this issue has become increasingly relevant to the work of women's rights organizations worldwide. Within the context of women's rights, new organizations have been created and existing groups have undertaken initiatives to fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The work of these organizations focuses on service delivery for those affected by the disease, education for prevention, prevention of gender-based violence, capacity building for women and advocacy with policy makers. The approaches to HIV/AIDS vary in each organization or network; however, they are all based within the need to address the structural issues facing women that increase their vulnerability and/or the specific issues related to women's rights, such as Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Health.

Funding trends

On a global level, funding for HIV/AIDS has dramatically increased "from US\$ 260 million in 1996 to almost US\$ 10 billion in 2007". Although these numbers are significant, it is unclear how financial flows are allocated for initiatives that concretely address women and girls in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Additionally, it remains unclear how women's organizations could access those increasingly large resources.

As analyzed in AWID's report *Where is the Money for Women's Rights: Funding to fight HIV and AIDS through the promotion of women's rights. A case study on South Africa* (2008), the key HIV/AIDS funders are still developing their "gender perspectives", which limits the possibility of having special pots of money to specifically address women's rights in the context of the pandemic. Furthermore, according to an international expert on HIV/AIDS and gender equality, while the majority of donors recognize the feminization of HIV/AIDS, there seems to be a trend amongst some conservative donors to fund initiatives that address men's behavior at the expense of funding women's rights initiatives. Funding initiatives that target boys and men is critical in addressing the underlying inequality that creates the disproportionate burden women bear in the context of HIV/AIDS; however, this must not come at the cost of less support to women's rights initiatives that focus specifically on women and girls.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria: a window of opportunity?

A major and expanding donor in the arena of HIV/AIDS funding is the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM). The GFATM provides large amounts of funding to country programmes. However, the procedures to access Global Fund money are complex and time consuming – and, to date, women's organizations on a global scale have not really benefited from the Fund. Traditionally the process is governed by the Country Coordinating Mechanism, who may not have a good understanding of women's issues and HIV. Principal recipients and sub-

recipients of funding must demonstrate a huge capacity to receive, manage and monitor money, therefore excluding many organizations from this powerful role.

However, due to sustained advocacy by civil society, the Global Fund evolved and adopted funding mechanisms that have increased the chance of civil society organizations to access funding. Recently, it was decided that two principle recipients are allowed and it is suggested that one is from civil society. Hopefully we'll see positive developments in this sense, but it is still urgent that more resources are available to fight the advancement of the pandemic and its impact on women's lives.

Looking forward...

Initiatives that support gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment are particularly important and should be vigorously funded. Regardless of their own HIV/AIDS status, women assume the burden of home-based care; care-taking in this context is not only arduous, it severely restricts women's ability to partake in paid labor and often deepens familial and community poverty.¹ In 2001, at the UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS, over 180 countries agreed that gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental to reducing the vulnerability of girls and women to HIV/AIDS and committed to increasing their efforts to challenge gender stereotypes and inequality². Millennium Development Goal 6 calls for reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015 and Millennium Development Goal 3 calls for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. Now is the time for donor countries to make their commitments a reality.

Also, foundations and other donors dedicating significant sums of resources for the fight against HIV and AIDS should be integrating a rights-based perspective and providing direct support to women's rights organizations working in the field.

For more information please see:

- The Global Coalition for Women and AIDS: A UNAIDS initiative, "Keeping the Promise: An Agenda for Action on Women and AIDS", http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2006/20060530_re_keeping%20the%20promise_en.pdf
- The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria: <http://www.theglobalfund.org/EN/>
- UNAIDS. 2006 Report on the global AIDS epidemic. Geneva: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, 2006 (available at www.unaids.org).
- UNIFEM's Web Portal on Gender and HIV/AIDS. Available at: <http://www.genderandaids.org/index.php>
- Siyanda Update: Gender Resources on HIV/AIDS. Available at: http://www.siyanda.org/archive/june02_siyanda.htm

1. UNIFEM, "HIV/AIDS – A Gender Equality and Human Rights Issue," available at http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/hiv_aids/at_a_glance.php

2. Ibid.

Arising primarily from present and past emissions generated within the most advanced economies, climate change is a global phenomenon with significant impacts on the livelihood and well-being of individuals, particularly those from developing nations. The impacts of climate change, however, are not evenly distributed: the poorest countries and most marginalized groups suffer the consequences disproportionately. Moreover, those who are most affected by the impact of climate change often have the least capacity or opportunity to prepare for these impacts or to participate in negotiations on mitigation.¹

Climate change: an issue of interest for women's rights organizations

As women constitute the largest percentage of the world's poor, the disparity in climate change's impact between them and men is marked. Elderly women and children and youth, especially girls, are often the most vulnerable.² Given this, the responses formulated and the funding provided to tackle climate change should be gender-sensitive and consistent with the principles of previous commitments to international human rights and gender equality conventions.³

While some women's organizations and feminist groups have begun work on this issue, there remains much more potential for involvement by the women's movement. The active participation of women's rights advocates is critical during the development of funding criteria and the allocation of resources for climate change initiatives, particularly at local levels.⁴ Women's organizations must also participate in the international discussions on climate change.

Women's organizations should play a major role in articulating the links between gender (in)equality and climate change and in building alliances across various types of organizations.

What's the landscape in the donor community?

There are several key funds that finance climate change initiatives, including the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the largest donor for projects to improve the global environment, the Adaptation Fund, established by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the recently developed World Bank Climate Investment Fund. There are also funds dedicated to disaster relief, however these are typically derived from a humanitarian pot of money (rather than money for climate change).

While climate change is currently a hot button/sexy issue in donor land, the majority of donors do not adequately understand the linkages between climate change and gender equality. As such, donors often fail to effectively incorporate a gender perspective into their financing initiatives. When donors do attempt to incorporate a gender perspective into funding initiatives, the perspective is often severely limited in scope (i.e. women depicted solely as victims of environ-

1. BRIDGE for DFID, "Gender and climate change: Mapping the linkages. A scoping study on knowledge and gaps," March 2008.
2. BRIDGE for DFID, "Gender and climate change: Mapping the linkages. A scoping study on knowledge and gaps," March 2008.
3. BRIDGE for DFID, "Gender and climate change: Mapping the linkages. A scoping study on knowledge and gaps," March 2008.
4. 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women, Interactive Expert panel, "Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men," available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw52/issuespapers/Gender and climate change paper final.pdf>

And what about... Women, climate change and funding?

mental degradation).

In its recent follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action, the General Assembly highlighted the need to “involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels; integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development; and strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impacts of development and environmental policies on women” (A/C.3/62/L.89).⁵

Women’s rights advocates have a strong body of knowledge and expertise that can be used in climate change mitigation, disaster reduction and adaptation strategies. Donors should strengthen women’s leadership capacity and ability to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes around natural resource management and climate change policies and programmes.⁶ Donors should also ensure that a gender perspective is integrated in a real and sustainable way in the day-to-day work of their organization through, for example, the implementation of mandatory guidelines.

The time is now for women’s organizations to get involved in these processes and influence donor agendas and practices. Negotiations on the structure, operations and initiatives of climate change funds are happening now and moving quickly. Women’s rights organizations, with the support of donors (through, for instance, the strengthening of technical and organizational capacity) need to meaningfully participate in these negotiations.

There is some momentum (and money) for advancing the work women’s groups are doing on climate change. Whether through advocacy to influence donors, alliance building with other women’s rights organizations or by linking with an issue based group and delivering a joint message with a gender perspective (i.e. the gender aspect of food security/agriculture, for instance), there are opportunities for women’s groups to have a better chance at accessing funds.

For more information please see:

- “Gender and climate change: Mapping the linkages. A scoping study on knowledge and gaps,” March 2008 at: http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/Climate_Change_DFID_draft.pdf
- Gendercc – women for climate justice: <http://www.gendercc.net/>
- Global Environmental Facility: <http://www.gefweb.org/>
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (division of cooperation and support): http://unfccc.int/cooperation_and_support/items/2664.php

5. Quoted directly from the BRIDGE for DFID paper, “Gender and climate change: Mapping the linkages. A scoping study on knowledge and gaps,” March 2008.

6. 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women, Interactive Expert panel, “Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men,” available at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw52/issuespapers/Gender_and_climate_change_paper_final.pdf

Recent research reveals that a large number of women's rights organizations are struggling to secure funds and to sustain their core activities.¹ Despite globally agreed commitments, gender equality and women's empowerment remain relatively low priorities within national development plans and within donors' agendas.²

In 2005, total Official Development Assistance (ODA) by OECD members was USD 106.8 billion.³ The amount of ODA allocated by sector and screened against the gender equality policy marker totaled USD 29.1 billion per year in 2005-2006.⁴ Of this, USD 9.3 billion focused on gender equality and women's empowerment. Marred by complex allocation and disbursement processes, only a fraction of the amount allocated for gender equality directly reached women's organizations, with the majority of this funding supporting governmental initiatives in partner countries. Nonetheless, bilateral and multilateral agencies remain critical funding sources for women's organizations.

According to AWID, in 2007, women's rights organizations reported that the largest percentage of their grants (16.1%) came from bi/multilaterals, totaling/accounting for 37 million USD⁵. This underscores the current relevance of these agencies to the sustainability of women's rights organizations. Given the important role bilateral and multilateral donors have in funding the women's movement, it is important to analyse the changing landscape of their policies and practices.

The aid effectiveness agenda: challenges and opportunities

On March 2, 2005, over one hundred ministers, heads of development agencies and other senior officials signed the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The most recent international aid agreement between donor and developing countries, the Paris Declaration aims to reform the delivery and management of aid in order to strengthen its impact and effectiveness.

The Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD-DAC) leads the discussions on the Paris Declaration and aid effectiveness more broadly. It is currently the only international forum that regularly examines key bilateral development co-operation systems, offering suggestions for their improvement.⁶

Originating within the OECD-DAC, the aid effectiveness process has been criticized for its relatively closed, political and non-participatory nature. While gaining ground in representation in recent years, women's rights organizations have historically been excluded from the aid and development effectiveness processes and discussions. In a report to the Development Co-operation Forum, Ban Ki Moon, the Secretary General of the United Nations, stated that while the Paris Declaration marked a "step change in articulating benchmarks for progress, the negotiation process did not engage the full range of stakeholders. Participation by developing countries was limited, with civil society organizations and private foundations contributing only marginally...[leaving] the Declaration without the approval of a conventional international multi-stakeholder process."⁷

1. AWID first and second Fundher reports (2006 and 2007), available at: www.awid.org, and "Issues Brief 3: Innovative Funding For Women's Organizations," produced by the DAC Network On Gender Equality (GENDERNET), July 2008, available at http://www.oecd.org/departement/0,3355,en_2649_34541_1_1_1_1_1,00.html
2. Ibid
3. Expert Group on Financing for Gender Equality - the UN Commission on the Status of Women, Oslo, September 2007, page 24, available at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/financing_gender_equality/egm_financing_gender_equality.htm
4. OECD-DAC Secretariat, "Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment," published July 2008, available at <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/crs>
5. WITM survey 2008
6. "INSIDE THE DAC: A Guide to the OECD Development Assistance Committee 2007 – 2008," prepared by the OECD-DAC, available at http://www.oecd.org/about/0,3347,en_2649_33721_1_1_1_1_1,00.html
7. Report of the Secretary General, "Trends and Progress in International Development Cooperation," ECOSOC Substantive Session of 2008, DCF, Document No. E/2008/69: p. 21.

Since the adoption of the Paris Declaration, a number of women's organizations, researchers and development practitioners have raised questions and concerns about the impact the altered/new framework on aid delivery will have on the funding available to women's rights organizations.⁸

If the OECD-DAC is interested in achieving aid and development effectiveness, which requires the attainment of gender equality and women's empowerment, then women's rights organizations must be fully supported and included in the debate.

Women's organizations participation in the aid effectiveness agenda

Developmental NGOs, including women's rights organizations focused on development, have helped to highlight the realities on the ground, making donors' funding more apt and relevant.⁹ Moreover, women's organizations and NGOs working to achieve gender equality have detailed knowledge, rooted in local realities, of the social, political, economic and cultural barriers to gender equality and, as such, can recognize and address the impact of gender inequalities at local, national and international levels.¹⁰

Aid effectiveness without a gender equality perspective will not lead to effective development nor will it reduce poverty or inequalities. In order to obtain a robust gender equality perspective, the capacities, resources and authority of national women's machineries to support and monitor line ministries, other government bodies and parliaments in influencing national development planning and budget allocations must be supported.

Within the Paris Declaration, there are no impact indicators that measure the promotion of women's rights, gender equality or human rights. Given that the OECD-DAC is the space in which the discussions on the Paris Declaration/AE take place, women's rights organizations must be present to push for and subsequently ensure that gender quality and women's empowerment are taken on board. Additionally, as the Paris Declaration is designed to align aid to nationally determined development priorities, it is critical to ensure that a gender equality perspective is included in these national strategies. One way to do this is to support women's rights organizations' full participation at the aid table.

The Paris Declaration structures the delivery and management of aid monies. Without a women's rights perspective included in the aid effectiveness framework, the impetus/political will to fund women's rights work will threaten to evaporate.

For more information please see:

- AWID resources: <http://www.awid.org/eng/About-AWID/AWID-Initiatives/Influencing-Development-Actors-and-Practice-for-Women-s-Rights>
- "Issues brief 3: Innovative funding for women's organizations", DAC Gendernet July 2008: http://www.oecd.org/departement/0,3355,en_2649_34541_1_1_1_1_1,00.html
- WIDE network: <http://www.wide-network.org/>
- <http://www.betteraid.org/>

8. "Issues Brief 3: Innovative Funding For Women's Organizations," produced by the DAC Network On Gender Equality (GENDERNET), July 2008, available at http://www.oecd.org/departement/0,3355,en_2649_34541_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

9. "Issues Brief 3: Innovative Funding For Women's Organizations," produced by the DAC Network On Gender Equality (GENDERNET), July 2008, available at http://www.oecd.org/departement/0,3355,en_2649_34541_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

10. "Implementing the Paris Declaration: a Southern Civil Society Experience," an address by L. Muthoni Wanyeki, FEMNET, Kenya, at a Workshop Sponsored by the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, Ottawa, 25 May 2006.

Without the basic right of all individuals to have power over their own bodies, how is it possible to speak about gender equality? If we simply view sexuality as something negative and dangerous – as opposed to a potentially pleasant and fulfilling experience – how can we transform risk behaviors, harmful practices and false stereotypes into more positive attitudes and frameworks? These are some of the questions that women have raised over the years, and are currently being echoed by some progressive donors who have taken a step toward making sexual rights a reality.

Sexual and reproductive rights as a main issue for women's rights organizations

The gender dimension that underlies sexual relations has long been a theme of discussion and strategic debate for feminists. Over the past decades women's movements have effectively politicized and brought to national and international arenas the need for all men and women to enjoy (if they so choose) a free and safe sexual and reproductive life. However, while in some contexts progressive programs dealing on sexual health and reproductive health (SHRH) are strongly funded, in other countries and regions religious fundamentalisms and/or conservative political visions – such as the “global gag rule”¹ enforced by the USA as a condition for delivering financial aid – have harmfully restrained the available funding sources for organizations working toward the realization of these rights for all women and men. Aside from a global lack of funding for SHRH over the past years, the focus that development actors have advocated for has centered primarily on the promotion of reproductive rights from a medical perspective above others; the sexual dimension, including sexuality and sexual rights as a whole, has been neglected.

Yet, a global consciousness of the different challenges that diverse communities face in order to live a free and safe sexuality keeps growing. Over the past years, global movements centered on sexual rights have strongly criticized the pathway that numerous agencies, organizations and governments have undertaken when “promoting” these rights by approaching sexuality negatively (as dangerous and shameful). The harmful consequences that result from disregarding sexuality as a key aspect of human development, ignoring gender inequality within sexual relations and/or tolerating social group discrimination, constitute major concerns for women's organizations. Additionally, the asymmetrical access (between regions, classes) to quality SHRH services and information is extremely troubling to women's organizations, as well.

How is the issue positioned within the donor community?

NGOs and women's groups have worked tirelessly to ensure that donors and governments view sexual and reproductive health as a human right and not merely as a set of rights for a specific group. Fortunately, this view has been acknowledged by some progressive donors who are supporting innovative and “pleasure” led initiatives that go beyond an identity group policy to examine the connection between sexual rights and the economy, the environment and climate change, health (including reproductive health), the empowerment of women, security (including gender based violence), agriculture, infrastructure, migration and human development.

The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), for example, approaches sexuality as a development dimension, a good example of the changes that are happening in some funders' policies. SIDA is promoting the creation of new basket funds and other funding mechanisms that allow more organizations to access resources for the promotion of sexual rights; women's rights activists and organizations working on this issue can use this development as a potential opportunity to secure more funding. Moreover, SIDA aims to encourage other Northern-based donors to build institutional capacity among Southern-based organizations, in the form of partnerships, rather than simply providing grants. With SIDA shifting to a more positive and comprehensive approach on sexuality, we expect to see other development actors shifting to a rights-based framework on sexuality and allocating more resources for this topic.

1. The “Global Gag Rule” is an executive order by the US government, officially known as the Mexico city Policy that mandates that no US funding can be allocated to foreign NGOs working pro abortion.

Utilizing a rights-based approach, the Ford Foundation provides grants focused on increasing public understanding of the role sexuality and reproductive health play in human fulfillment and development, as well as the relationship of sexuality and reproductive health to equitable social change². In Brazil, for instance, Ford supports research, programs and policy advocacy aimed at strengthening understanding of gender and sexuality issues and how they relate to the larger socioeconomic context among disadvantaged youth. Additionally, Ford invests in initiatives aimed at strengthening and expanding the Brazilian response to HIV/AIDS to better reach and care for those who remain underserved³.

The MacArthur Foundation is another example of a donor who approaches sexual and reproductive health from a holistic perspective. MacArthur utilizes a comprehensive approach to reproductive and sexual health and rights that places women's well-being at the center of population policy and emphasizes the rights of individuals to determine and plan family size.⁴ Providing grants to three countries – Nigeria, Mexico and India – MacArthur focuses its work on reducing maternal mortality and morbidity and advancing young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights. In 2005, MacArthur granted la Asesoría, Capacitación y Asistencia en Salud (in San Cristobal de las Casas, Mexico) \$180,000 over three years in support of developing social outreach strategies for engaging rural indigenous communities in preventing maternal death. More recently, in 2007, MacArthur granted \$150,000 to Marie Stopes Mexico to improve youth sexual and reproductive health and rights in the state of Chiapas.⁵

Another innovative initiative is the Funders Network on Population, Reproductive Health and Rights which seeks to improve communication, foster collaboration, increase resources and enhance the overall effectiveness of grantmakers in this field. They have meetings, working groups, a grant database to track the funds allocated for these issues and an outreach project that seeks to engage other donors. This shows how synergies among funders are very important to position a sector or theme in the donor community and therefore raise the commitments to support the work of civil society organizations.

For more information please see:

- Swedish International Agency for Development (SIDA) concept paper 2008, *Sexuality: A missing dimension in development*. Available at: http://www.gwp.sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=118&a=40003&language=en_US
- *Gender, Sexuality and Sexual Rights: An Overview* (BRIDGE). Available at: <http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/dgb18.htm>
- Working paper 283 *Why the Development Industry Should Get Over its Obsession With Bad Sex and Start to Think About Pleasure* The Institute of Development Studies (IDS Sussex). Available at: <http://www.ids.ac.uk/index.cfm?objectId=C85BDC93-C7BF-399F-52A54AC8D0D6D29E>
- The Pleasure Project: <http://www.thepleasureproject.org>
- *Sexuality and Social Change: Making the Connection* (The Ford Foundation). Available at: <http://www.fordfound.org/fields/sexualityreprohealth/overview>
- Funders Network on Population, Reproductive Health and Rights <http://www.fundersnet.org/default.aspx>

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2. The Ford Foundation, Sexuality and Reproductive Health, available at: <http://www.fordfound.org/fields/sexualityreprohealth/overview>
 3. The Ford Foundation, Sexuality and Reproductive Health, available at: <http://www.fordfound.org/fields/sexualityreprohealth/overview>
 4. The MacArthur Foundation, Population and Reproductive Health, available at http://www.macfound.org/site/c.1kLXJ8MQKrH/b.932753/k.1334/International_Grantmaking_Population_and_Reproductive_Health_Grantmaking_Guidelines.htm
 5. The MacArthur Foundation, grant making initiatives, available at http://www.macfound.org/site/c.1kLXJ8MQKrH/b.1001903/k.B075/International_Grantmaking_Focus_Countries_Mexico_Recent_Grants.htm#prh

Background

Despite the recognition by the international community that violence against women (VAW) is an unacceptable epidemic – occurring at all levels of society and in a variety of contexts – it remains a pervasive crisis, preventing women from fulfilling their full potential, restricting economic growth and undermining sustainable development. While global efforts and political commitments to end all forms of VAW are in place, data has revealed that impunity, a lack of accountability and a gap in implementation of successful strategies continue to preclude eradication. Furthermore, systematic and reliable sex-disaggregated data – vital for a comprehensive understanding of the nature of VAW and necessary for deriving meaningful solutions – is lacking in many countries.¹

However, a number of promising practices to prevent and/or respond to violence against women have been developed. By addressing the underlying social, economic and political inequalities that perpetuate violence, promoting women's full equality and empowerment and ensuring that women's human rights are fulfilled, women's rights organizations, as well as other actors, are making headway.

Funding Trends

Violence against women occurs in many forms and in a variety of contexts, including domestic and intimate partner violence, sexual violence, harmful traditional practices, violence in the context of HIV/AIDs, trafficking in women and girls and violence against women in conflict and post conflict situations. While global campaigns to end VAW are currently in place, funding for comprehensive VAW activities, including support measures for victims of violence, remains insufficient. The lack of resources severely limits the scale and scope of comprehensive activities to change attitudes and laws, build constituencies and accountability and provide shelter and services.²

According to an international VAW advocate interviewed by AWID in the context of the 2008 research process, funding seems to be moving away from service provision toward policy, advocacy and networking work. The merit of this remains contentious: some believe it to be a worrying trend, while others view it as a positive development, balancing a funding landscape that was previously skewed toward service delivery.

Donors also appear to favor funding organizations that do VAW work within a “social service” framework over those that utilize a feminist/women's empowerment/human rights approach. Without the utilization of a feminist perspective, the root cause of VAW, namely systemic, normalized gender inequality, will remain unaddressed to a large extent and donor measures to address the crisis, while useful to a degree, will fall short of sustainable results.

Campaigns and Funding Opportunities

There seems to be some momentum and political will to advance the steps towards the eradication of violence against women. At the 2005 World Summit, world leaders pledged to redouble efforts to eliminate all forms of VAW and, following the release of an in-depth report by the Secretary-General, two General Assembly resolutions were adopted in December 2006 and 2007.³ A resolution on rape and sexual violence was also adopted in December 2007.

In addition to these efforts, some prominent international campaigns and funding initiatives on VAW have emerged:

1. Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women: Violence Against Women, Unmet Needs, Broken Promises,” available at <http://endviolence.un.org/bg.shtml>
2. UNIFEM, http://www.unifem.org/campaigns/vaw/facts_figures.php
3. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon Launches Campaign to End Violence against Women, Press Release 2/25/2008, available at <http://endviolence.un.org/press.shtml>

Say NO to Violence Against Women is a global, Internet-based advocacy effort aimed at ending violence against women. Organized by UNIFEM, the initiative is designed to illuminate the ever-growing movement of individuals demanding that governments make ending violence against women a top priority.⁴ As an expression of public support and a call for action, individuals are encouraged to add their name to a virtual album, available here: <http://www.sayno-toviolence.org>

On February 25, 2008, the **United Nations Secretary General's Campaign to End Violence Against Women** was launched. Running from 2008 to 2015 – to coincide with the target date of the Millennium Development Goals – the campaign will focus on three key areas: global advocacy, UN leadership by example and strengthened efforts and partnerships at the national, regional and international levels.⁵ Emphasis will be placed on securing greater political will and increased resources from governments, international institutions, United Nations entities, the private sector and other donors for policies and programs to tackle the problem.⁶ Find out more about this campaign at <http://endviolence.un.org/press.shtml>

The **UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women**, administered by UNIFEM, is the only global multi-lateral grant-making mechanism exclusively devoted to supporting local, national and regional efforts of government and NGOs to combat gender-based violence.⁷ It has granted more than US\$13 million to 231 innovative and catalytic initiatives in more than 100 countries around the world. Grants are provided to organizations that aim to break new ground, strengthen inter-agency partnerships and mobilize new constituencies in the growing movement to end violence against women. Find out more about the Trust Fund here: http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/violence_against_women/trust_fund.php

Funding schemes from the European Parliament and Council, such as Daphne, represent some of the biggest international funds for VAW in recent years. Daphne aims at supporting organizations that develop measures and actions to prevent or to combat violence against children, young people and women and to protect victims and groups at risk.⁸ Access more information about Daphne at http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/2004_2007/daphne/funding_daphne_en.htm

Women's rights organizations and movements have played a major role in lobbying for international and regional legal systems to be modified to condemn, eradicate and prevent VAW. With specific knowledge of the local realities in their home countries and extensive experience developing and working with promising tools to end VAW, women's rights organizations are key actors in the fight to end this epidemic. Therefore, increments in funding and political will to support these groups are essential for the advancements in the combat against VAW.

For more information, please see:

- UNIFEM Publications "With an End in Sight" available at http://www.unifem.org/resources/item_detail.php?ProductID=14
- UNIFEM Publications "A Life Free of Violence is Our Right" available at http://www.unifem.org/resources/listing_by_section.php?WebSectionID=3
- General UNIFEM publications on Violence against women: http://www.unifem.org/resources/listing_by_section.php?WebSectionID=3
- "UN Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women" available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/v-sg-study.htm>

4. UNIFEM, Say No To Violence Against Women, Campaign Toolkit, available at <http://www.unifem.org/campaigns/vaw/toolkit.php>

5. United Nations Secretary General's Campaign to End Violence Against Women <http://endviolence.un.org/press.shtml>

6. United Nations Secretary General's Campaign to End Violence Against Women <http://endviolence.un.org/press.shtml>

7. UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/violence_against_women/trust_fund.php

8. Information on Daphne is available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/2004_2007/daphne/funding_daphne_en.htm

