The Task Ahead

How can women’s movements become more financially sustainable?

Insights from the Four Days
of the Resource Mobilization Hub
12th AWID International Forum
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This session and presentation capture the main points made by participants at the Resource Mobilization Hub throughout the four days of the Forum, with particular focus on what AWID should consider in moving forward.
Recapturing Resource Mobilization Discussions: The Current Moment

- Funding sectors traditionally supporting women’s organizations: a mixed picture
- Private sector: opportunities?
- Emerging economies: opportunities!
- Individual philanthropy

In the four days we came to the following conclusions and developed these further questions to unpack:

- A mixed picture, with some bilateral agencies reducing funding. What do traditionally supportive donors/champions need to help leverage more funds and convince other donors? How can women’s organizations help them?
- How do we engage with the private sector, corporate donors and the “investing in women” trend? By accessing their funding? By advocating for change in priorities? What would we do if we had more money?
- Emerging economies: INGOs are proactive in cultivating donors in BRIC countries. We’re not even competing with INGOs if we’re not even present in those countries: we need to invest in expansion strategies proactively.
- We need to looking at different fundraising models accessing funding from a larger community of donors and not just a few people of wealth.
- How can we shift to a perspective of unlimited resources and argue our case for a bigger overall pie?

- Us vs. them. We must keep in mind that people have multiple identities and in their professional lives may move back and forth between donor and activist roles/spaces.

- Must shift the perspective from fundraising as individual organizations for individual projects toward resource mobilization collectively for movements. As we mobilize resources for movements, we can then look to see who is best positioned to do what work within the movement and within donor communities.

- We must break down philanthropy and social justice as “boutique industries,” where we don’t need to collaborate.

- Look at creative models of communicating our work well so that it is understood. How can we communicate without instrumentalizing?
Big Question

How can women’s movements become more financially sustainable?

- What does AWID and the movement need to take further?
- What must we do collectively and individually to move forward?
- What are the tasks ahead?
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1. Find out the total amount of money going to women's rights organizing.
2. Move beyond just tracking money to also track requests for money (i.e. demonstrates needs).
3. Raise donor awareness about the conditions /needs of women's organizations.

- The AWID data represents a sample. How can we get at more data on funding going to women's rights organizing? How can we better differentiate between funding for “women and girls” versus funding for women’s rights? Donors have the responsibility of keeping track of the kinds of requests they receive and these help make the case that there is a huge need for funding.

- How can donor allies convince other donors to respond to a donor survey and track their funding?
- We must celebrate the fact that gender budget lines have been defended and in some cases increased in spite of budget cuts. We must also ask what is the quality of the resources available and look beyond the quantity of money to see what the impact of funding has been.
- How can we ensure that the AWID research is accessible and widely distributed?
- How can we monitor private sector companies that talk about women and girls but don’t invest in women’s organizations?
- We must recognize and celebrate the champions (i.e. the Dutch) and build leadership by thanking them publically. We should publically expose those who are doing a lot and those who doing little.
- Need to innovate in communications, invest in dialogue with companies and individual funders. We should be open and willing to talk to anyone with an interest.
- Marketing is not all bad – there are lot of tools that we can use.
- Offer donor trips so that donors can have the experience of seeing how their funding is going to women’s groups.
We need to be able to respond much quicker to events as they happen, as INGOs do. For example, the Komen Foundation cutting funding to Planned Parenthood mobilized ordinary women to give. How can we harness that anger for greater funding?

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10. Decrease competition between UN agencies and women's groups.

11. How do we avoid reproducing/ benefitting from economic inequalities?

12. Use anger as a resource for marketing & mobilizing in a rapid fashion.

13. Impact assessments and legitimacy of organizations: ensure organizations are close to those in movements.
- How can we ensure that intermediaries are effectively trickling down money? Especially when this funding comes to coalitions who may be located in capital cities and funding does not reach the rest of the movement.

- There is a need to show impact but also legitimacy: how close are women’s organizations with their constituencies? Where are the actual people related to movements?

- Can we develop innovation prizes? Can there be an AWID version of Publish What You Fund?

- If we want to mobilize resources, we need to link up and not compete with other social justice movements in order to achieve long-term, sustainable change.

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14. Ensure funding being channeled through intermediaries is distributed widely across movements (i.e. not just capital city organizations).

15. Encourage a women’s rights “publish what you fund” towards funding transparency.

16. Need to collaborate with other social movements to achieve lasting social change.
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17. Creating a culture where all staff is confident and skilled in asking for money.
18. “Mainstream” financial sustainability across all areas of work.
19. Establish capacity-building strategies at staff, organization and movement levels.
20. Integrate fundraising, communications and programming together.

- We must shift the culture of organizations so that everyone is confident and skilled in asking for money, from the board to program staff. We may need to invest money in building this capacity.

- We must work strategy by strategy. We must develop capacity building and communications strategies at the level of individual organizations and for staff as well as for movements. We should seek to integrate programming and fundraising activities and mainstream financial sustainability across all aspects of organizations and movements.
- How can we support illiterate women to access funding?
- Women must break the taboo around talking about and asking for money. We must demystify financing and how it works.
- Ensure that we are using all of our contacts, professional and private, to mobilize resources. We must be careful not to discourage people that could have the potential to contribute, even if we have good reasons to be skeptical.
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25. Fundraising can be radical feminist activism in itself if it is seen as part of movements’ work.

26. How can we connect struggles for resources for individual women (i.e. land) to resources for women’s organizations?

- Fundraising in and of itself can be radical feminist activism, when it becomes part of something that gets done as part of movement building.

- Assets: we must think bigger! If we’re advocating that women have access to land, why not ownership of land for women’s human rights organizations?

- What can we learn from how others (i.e. UNICEF, Nike) have positioned women and girls in their successful campaigns?

- The connection between resources and what is fueling our movements. What is our agenda and vision and what are the resources to get us there?

- We can only show impact by working together and can only redistribute wealth once it’s been concentrated. What financial sustainability models exist already that we can learn from? These may come from outside the movement (i.e. Avaaz).
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AWID and the Where is the Money for Women’s Rights? team are grateful for everyone’s participation and commitment to collective thinking and advocacy for better resource mobilization for women’s organizing.

We are committed to take into consideration all of the discussions and questions posed at the Forum as we plan future strategies and activities.