When the world turned upside down, women’s organizations and feminist movements were there. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, feminist movements have met crisis with courage—forging ahead with new resolve as decades of progress in gender equality are at risk of being rolled back.

With your support, the Equality Fund climbed higher. We have deepened our feminist grantmaking practices, providing COVID-19 responsive grants, and launching our first global grantmaking stream. Through it all, the bravery and ingenuity of our partners and the steadfast solidarity of our supporters have propelled us forward.

Feminist Funding, Rooted in Radical Trust

For too long, solutions have been made in faraway boardrooms while dismissing and devaluing the wisdom of movements and communities. Our Principles for Feminist Funding guide what we fund: collective action and feminist movements led by women, girls, youth and non-binary people who live with injustice every day—and hold the local knowledge and tools needed to build meaningful change. Equally, they guide how we fund: providing flexible, core, multi-year funding that offers these leaders space and trust to create change, according to their own visions and their communities’ needs. We complement this funding with support that builds critical skills, connections, and shared learning to reinforce a collective ecosystem of change.
COVID-19 RESPONSE GRANTS

Meeting Crisis with Courage

When the COVID-19 pandemic ushered in an unprecedented global health crisis, the Equality Fund took action. We launched a Response Fund appeal in May 2020, raising over $210,000 for existing grantee partners. The fund was an extension of our deep commitment to providing core, flexible funding to women’s rights organizations and feminist movements, ensuring that essential work could continue while responding to immediate needs. In total, 18 partners received an average of $12,000 CAD for a period of nine months.

Urgent challenges facing our grantee partners:

- Loss of income in women-led industries, resulting in food scarcity and a lack of basic health supplies
- Stigmatization of COVID-19 and a lack of information or misinformation in rural communities
- Difficulty documenting violence against women, girls, and non-binary people due to travel restrictions and government-mandated stay-at-home orders
- Challenges shifting to remote work due to a lack of equipment (e.g. laptops, modems, smartphones) and tech training for staff
- Increased instances of violence against girls and young women who were out of school

Association Mallienne pour la Promotion de la Jeune Fille et de la Femme (AMPJF)

In Mali, AMPJF uses the power of soccer and community connection to create safe spaces where girls and young women gain access to coaching, training, and peer connections to step into their roles as leaders. Since the onset of COVID-19, it has transformed its work to meet urgent community needs, producing and distributing over 20,000 bottles of hand soap to the community. AMPJF has also launched educational campaigns that are saving lives. Translated in multiple local languages, with messages adapted for children, these campaigns are reducing the impact of COVID-19 across the community, paving the way for soccer’s return.

And Soppeku (Senegal)

Long before the COVID-19 pandemic, sex workers in Senegal have faced constant threats, including violence, stigma, and discrimination. Through its renowned peer support model, And Soppeku trains members to deliver essential services to fellow workers, including legal advice, health information and other types of support. During the pandemic, this work has multiplied and intensified, and the organization has jumped into action once more: conducting community outreach to sex workers regarding transmission and prevention of COVID-19, distributing food and hygiene kits, recruiting new staff, and purchasing office equipment to continue its essential work online.
National Indigenous Disabled Women’s Association Nepal - NIDWAN (Nepal)

Founded in the aftermath of the country’s 2015 earthquake, NIDWAN advocates for the full social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental rights of women living with disabilities in Nepal. Its work has quickly emerged as a model of innovation and intersectionality by bridging the disability justice and Indigenous women’s rights movements. Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, NIDWAN pivoted its work, hosting essential and accessible spaces for knowledge exchange and awareness-raising—with sign language interpretation and materials in Indigenous languages to ensure women and their communities had access to critical information about prevention and care. The team also distributed medicine to community workers and women’s human rights defenders while collecting and sharing information on violence against women during COVID—ensuring the “shadow pandemic” of violence does not remain invisible.

As the second wave of COVID-19 swept a region that still lacks equitable access to vaccines, its impact struck close to home. With so many of NIDWAN’s community affected by the health crisis—as well as massive flooding, which has added compounding layers to the disaster—staff have had no option but to shift and reprioritize efforts to meet the most urgent needs. This highlights the fact that for many women’s rights organizations and feminist movements, the pandemic is far from over, with no pause in climate-related and other emergencies facing the communities they serve. As a valued partner, NIDWAN will be able to rely on our sustained support to continue advancing their critical mission as these latest crises evolve.

Resource Centre for Women and Girls - RCWG (Kenya)

With innovative mentoring camps, peer-networking opportunities, and training programs, RCWG is elevating the leadership of adolescent girls and young women in rural Kenya. By investing directly in girls’ leadership—and power—RCWG is helping to end violence against women and girls, promote sexual and reproductive health and rights, and advance socio-economic resilience. Over the last year, RCWG has also served as a COVID-19 action center, equipping staff with laptops, cell phones, and modems to preserve critical outreach and communication with girls. It provides essential care packages, including food, soap, and menstrual hygiene items, ensuring that girls and women have the supplies they need to survive. This is especially important at a time of crisis when their needs are often the first to be sidelined and ignored.
18 COVID response grants

30 New grantee partners through our new Catalyze funding stream

980+ applications

367 eligible for future cycles

50 shortlisted

Areas of Focus

- Women's political participation
- Racial justice
- LBTIQ rights
- Feminist leadership capacity
- Indigenous women's rights
- Violence against women
- Sexual and reproductive health rights
- Economic justice
- Environmental rights
- Girls/Young women's leadership and rights
- Women, peace, and security
- Labour rights

42 New grantee partners through our partnership with African Women’s Development Fund
CATALYZE: MEET OUR NEWEST GRANTEE PARTNERS

Earlier this year, we provided grants through our first global feminist funding stream: Catalyze. We invited a wide array of women’s rights and feminist organizations actively working to address the gendered impacts of COVID-19 to apply. The response was immense—yielding over 980 applications from organizations around the world.

Working in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East, these 72 fearles feminist organizations are forging lasting change globally. Together, they are calling out gender inequality wherever they see it and tearing up old rulebooks along the way. Their fierce leadership is advancing anti-racist, anti-colonial, and intersectional agendas, responding to rights crackdowns, addressing violence at multiple levels, and promoting economic justice.

Asociación Movimiento Feminista por la Paz Ruta Pacifica de las Mujeres (Colombia)
For nearly three decades, this powerful association has led a feminist peace movement across Colombia, uniting hundreds of organizations in every corner of the country in collective action for lasting peace. Many of these organizations are now directly engaged in the implementation of the country’s landmark peace agreement between FARC-EP and the national government. Through it all, the social movement serves as a model for the unique power of women as inclusive peacebuilders—advancing the resolution of armed conflict through feminism, pacifism, and full participation of women at every level of peace processes and political leadership. They are also fostering the next generation of feminist peacebuilders, strengthening the movement’s social base and advancing feminist leadership especially among young women and girls.

Women’s Rights Action Movement (Solomon Islands)
Founded in 2011, Women’s Rights Action Movement is a brave and bold organization in the Solomon Islands that advances the rights of girls and women. Its influential work includes three focus areas: women in leadership, women’s economic empowerment, and eliminating violence against women and girls. With a strong commitment to building shared power, WRAM partners with sister organizations to advocate for change with a collective voice from the grassroots to the national parliament. This dynamic collaboration has contributed massively to transformational policy change at the provincial and national levels—leading, for example, to 7 out of 9 of the country’s provinces introducing special measures to advance women’s political participation. Their powerful advocacy efforts also paved the way for the country’s first-ever legislation on domestic violence. In addition, WRAM hosts national and provincial forums that bring together women and girls across generations to advocate for legislative change. Today WRAM’s influence is rapidly reaching beyond its own borders, helping to grow and strengthen intergenerational feminist networks across the Pacific region.
Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (Global)

An increasingly globalized labour market is rife with exploitation and violence, especially among migrant and marginalized women. The Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW) shines as a global model to push back on this violence by building the collective power of women workers. Today, their groundbreaking work unites more than 80 non-governmental organizations across Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and North America. Member organizations include migrant rights organizations, anti-trafficking organizations, self-organized groups of migrant workers, domestic workers, survivors of trafficking and sex workers, human rights and women’s rights organizations and direct service providers. With members working from the local level to the global stage, GAATW promotes and defends the human rights of all migrants, creating a wave of change around the world. It also calls for safety standards for migrant workers in the process of migration—both in the formal and informal work sectors.

Sarajevo Open Centre (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Sarajevo Open Centre has emerged as a fierce, independent, feminist civil society organization focused on the human rights of LGBTIQ people and women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They support movement-building among LGBTIQ people and women and advocate at the national, European, and international levels for legislation and policies that promote and protect their rights—including the right to self-determination, bodily awareness, integrity, and autonomy. Their innovative public campaigns, conferences, and advocacy include a focus on reporting and reducing violence and hate crimes across the region. SOC also connects LGBTIQ people to affirmative counselling and other essential services, working to ensure that all LGBTIQ people can “live a fulfilled life of dignity”.

Through it all, you were there.

In any year, women’s rights organizations and feminist movements face immense peril and pushback. This year—amid a global pandemic—their work faced unimaginable obstacles. And yet, women’s rights organizations and feminist movements continue to rise.

As a supporter of the Equality Fund, you were there through it. We are deeply inspired by your commitment, and so thankful for your continued trust and partnership.

Onwards. Together.