

Reflections on the Generation Equality Forum:

Future Opportunities for Feminist Movements and Funders

HIGHLIGHTS FOR FEMINIST FUNDERS

Generation Equality Forum

Organized on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the landmark [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action \(BPFA\)](#), the [Generation Equality Forum \(GEF\)](#) comprised two forums, held in Mexico in March 2021 and in France in June 2021, which convened civil society, governments, multilateral institutions, and the private sector, to make bold commitments towards a common agenda and undertake an ambitious effort over the coming five years to accelerate progress towards gender equality.

With its focus on gender equality and its multi-stakeholder process, the GEF offered an entry point for progressive feminist movements to use the occasion as an opportunity for catalytic change in the lives of women, girls, and gender non-conforming communities.

The GEF resulted in [USD 40 billion dollars in pledges made - the single largest resource mobilization for gender equality to date](#). These pledges are game changing for efforts to advance gender equality and human rights. Still, questions remain about how much will be directed towards grassroots and feminist groups and organizations; [preliminary analysis by AWID](#) highlights that only USD 2 billion or 5 percent has been specifically pledged towards feminist and women's rights organizations. Moreover, while significant gains were realized as a result of the GEF forums, they were also deeply marred by challenges related to accessibility and inclusivity, among others.



Feminist Generation Consortium

In 2020, three feminist funds - [Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights](#) (UAF), [Urgent Action Fund Africa](#) (UAF-Africa), and [Women's Fund Asia](#) (WFA) - formed the Feminist Generation Consortium. With financial support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Consortium implemented the Surge Fund, a project led by UAF-Africa that sought to support the activism of women, girls, and gender non-conforming communities to influence their governments and other stakeholders to make transformative commitments at the GEF, and to hold them accountable to these commitments following the forums.

Over 2020-2021, despite the many challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Consortium provided 131 advocacy and alliance-building grants to women's rights and gender non-conforming groups, organized convenings, provided one-on-one accompaniment support, and established [a call](#) to "center the full participation, power and perspectives of intersectional feminist activists in the Generation Equality Forum and beyond."



Photo provided by Global Girl Media

Opportunities & Recommendations for Feminist Funders

In late 2021, the Feminist Generation Consortium undertook a reflection and learning process focused on the GEF process and the work of the Consortium. The field brief, ***Reflections on the Generation Equality Forum: Future Opportunities for Feminist Movements and Funders***, chronicles the important victories and disappointing missteps that came to define the GEF process. It also documents the Consortium's collaborative efforts and the challenges faced during this process.

With work underway to implement GEF outcomes, the field brief also highlights **key opportunities and recommendations to guide the work of feminist movements, feminist funders and philanthropy more broadly** over the next half-decade and beyond. Some of the key opportunities and recommendations for feminist funders include (for a complete list, please see the field brief):

Post-GEF Implementation & Accountability

- Support feminist movements as they continue to **raise awareness** about the GEF process, **advocate for additional commitments** to be made, and **hold stakeholders accountable**.
- Call for **civil society leadership and participation to be prioritized in the design and execution of GEF implementation and accountability efforts**.
- Monitor whose **voices are meaningfully included in GEF follow-up and accountability processes**, as well as the security of activists and groups engaging with these processes.
- Develop a longer-term grantmaking strategy that supports a key group of organizations and coalitions engaging with GEF follow-up and accountability, with a focus on intersectionality, cross-movement building, and centering structurally marginalized groups.

Advocacy for Improved Funding

- **Build on the momentum of key narrative shifts around gender equality and investment that took place at GEF to make bold asks for increased and better quality resources** to flow to grassroots and feminist movements, including for resources to flow to women's funds.
- Leverage the power of their platforms and voice to improve funding, support feminist movement advocacy post-GEF and leading up to Beijing@30.
- Advocate for institutional and bilateral donors to continuously increase the amount and quality of long-term and flexible funding given to feminist groups and movements, including from GEF financial commitments.

Shared Action and Learning

- The collective commitments emerging from the GEF process include: the [Global Alliance for Sustainable Feminist Movements](#), the [2X Collaborative](#), the Action Nexus of Feminist Collective Action for a Just and Healthy Planet, and the [Global Alliance for Care](#). Each of these can be important spaces for learning, exchanging ideas, and driving change in the field of gender equality. **Feminist funders have the opportunity to support these partnerships and alliances** through financial and non-financial means.
- Continue to share relevant experiences and learning such as those related to providing accompaniment support and technical assistance in relation to global advocacy; and experiences of utilizing feminist and justice-centered approaches to adapt grantmaking and other programming to emergency situations.
- Support the post-GEF advocacy of movement partners (such as [Prospera](#), [AWID](#), [Count Me In!](#) and others).

Flexible Funding & More-Than-Money Support

- Provide – and advocate for – abundant and flexible funding that enables feminist groups to engage in GEF-related advocacy while providing fair wages and benefits to staff and covering other critical costs and collective care needs.
- Support the **institutional strengthening and capacity-building** of grassroots feminist groups, including opportunities to engage with GEF follow-up and accountability through training and accompaniment, as needed, as well as support grantees' **technical expertise** to analyze budgeting, funding, and expenditure by governments and other funders.
- **Facilitate connections** across movements, coalitions – including Action Coalitions – and regions through workshops and convenings, and provide non-financial support to the **partnerships and alliances formed through collective commitments**.

Finally, together with broader feminist movements, feminist funders can **encourage and influence UN Women to strengthen their leadership over GEF processes** to benefit civil society leadership and participation and access of grassroots and feminist movements. **And each of us, feminist movements and funders, can start planning ahead for Beijing@30** so that we are proactively part of setting the agenda.



Photo provided by Urgent Action Fund Africa

To read the full field brief, see: *Reflections on the Generation Equality Forum: Future Opportunities for Feminist Movements and Funders*. Please also see highlights for Feminist Movements and Institutional Donors.