

Reflections on the Generation Equality Forum:

Future Opportunities for Feminist Movements and Funders

HIGHLIGHTS FOR FEMINIST MOVEMENTS & FEMINIST GENERATION CONSORTIUM GRANTEES

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 forums were intended as a robust exercise in multi-stakeholder engagement for accelerating progress towards gender equality. While significant gains were realized as a result of the GEF process, they were also deeply marred by challenges related to accessibility and inclusivity, among others.



Photo provided by Urgent Action Fund Africa

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) - came together and 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 for the implementation of those commitments.

Consortium members **awarded USD 1 million in advocacy and alliance-building grants** to 131 organizations - including 101 that interacted with a global process for the first time and 36 organizations working with structurally excluded groups. Consortium members also **provided accompaniment support and technical assistance** to prepare grantee partners to engage meaningfully with the GEF. This support included introductory information on the UN and the Beijing process, guidance on how to strategically engage with various UN spaces, introductions to relevant UN, government, and donor representatives, as well as advocacy support and solidarity.

A snapshot of the work that the Feminist Generation Consortium supported includes:

- [Blind Women Association of Nepal](#) produced a policy review document assessing the implementation of the BPFA in Nepal from the standpoint of girls/women with disabilities. The document is currently in use for national-level advocacy.
- The South African government made 12 commitments at the GEF. [Black Womxn Caucus](#), a broad-based feminist social movement in South Africa, has started hosting community assemblies where they share the State's commitments with communities.
- [Public Association Women's Organization Alga](#), Kyrgyzstan, was a co-lead on the Feminist Action for Climate Justice Action Coalition, and participated in all stages of development of the blueprint and action areas. They were a featured speaker at both GEF forums, raising issues identified within the Action Coalition as well as the aspirations and hopes of rural women that they work with. They became a commitment-maker as part of the Action Coalition, and are now part of the [Gender and Environment Data Alliance](#).
- Following the GEF, the [SDGs Kenya Forum](#), a coalition of over 350 civil society organizations across the country, is running a Campaign TIMIZA (Towards and Beyond Commitments) that aims to create awareness about the government's commitments on gender-based violence and female genital mutilation.

Throughout the process, the Surge Fund also **created space for strengthening alliances and the formation of new coalitions** of grassroots feminist organizations.

In late 2021, the Feminist Generation Consortium undertook a reflection and learning process focused on the GEF process and the work of the Consortium. *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.



Looking Ahead: Opportunities for Feminist Movements

The GEF process has given rise to a number of opportunities for feminist movements to take action to strengthen their movements and advance gender equality. Some of these include:

Post-GEF Implementation & Accountability

- There is still **time for governments and other stakeholders to make commitments**. Feminist movements can continue raising awareness about the GEF process, advocating for new commitments to be made, and holding stakeholders accountable.
- Build a movement of GEF accountability from the ground up by **informing communities about the GEF commitments and mobilizing them to collectively hold commitment-makers accountable**. In addition to watching the official monitoring and reporting process, feminist movements could **devise independent, creative accountability mechanisms** that suit their contexts and capacities - for example, community report cards, shadow reports, and press conferences.
- Drawing on lessons learned from the GEF process, call for **civil society leadership and participation to be prioritized in the design and execution of GEF implementation and accountability efforts**, particularly the leadership of structurally marginalized groups, while avoiding extractive practices.

Advocacy for Improved Funding

- Seize the opportunity created by narrative shifts and commitments to gender equality during the GEF process to make bold asks and demands, including for:
 - **Increased and better quality resources** to grassroots and feminist movements, including for resources to flow to women's funds, at the national, regional, and international levels—and transparency regarding the flow of resources;
 - **Accountability for the security and protection** of women, girls, and gender non-conforming human rights defenders;
 - **Greater investments in gender equality, particularly in the context of broader budgeting policies** such as military spending and corporate subsidies, among others.

Shared Action and Learning

- The collective commitments emerging from the GEF process - 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](#) - can be important spaces for learning, exchanging ideas, and driving change. They also hold potential for **developing innovative actions and ways of working that may disrupt existing status quos.**

Next Steps

Moving forward, we hope that you will:

- **Continue to work with Feminist Generation Consortium members to help decolonize and democratize UN and other multilateral processes**, and reimagine ways these structures could practically make a difference in the lives of diverse women, girls, gender non-conforming, trans, and queer communities worldwide.
- Let Feminist Generation Consortium members know what you need as you plan ahead for Beijing@30 **so that together we can be part of setting the agenda** rather than responding or reacting.
- **Lift up and echo the post-GEF advocacy of feminist movements**, organizations, activists, coalitions, and funders.



Photo provided by Global Girl Media

For related recommendations, please see the Consortium's Highlights for Feminist Funders. To read the full field brief, see: Reflections on the Generation Equality Forum: Future Opportunities for Feminist Movements and Funders.