

Strategic Compass: 2021-2030


Centering African Women:

Feminist R/Evolution in Action

**URGENT
ACTION
FUND+
AFRICA**

FOR WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS





A NEW DECADE OF FEMINIST ORGANISING LOVING

Feminists in Africa continue to build and evolve our movements in our quest for the world we want. We are imagining possibilities for our movements and for feminist organising. This, in the midst of a new crisis —the novel COVID-19 health crisis, an extension and deepening of the endemic economic, social and political crises of our time.

We mourn the widespread loss and devastation. Some of us postpone the mourning as we step into the 'what is next' mode. We have a deep consciousness that this latest global crisis and its links to earlier and persisting hostilities and struggles offers a moment to shift the foundations of the systems of oppression. We are also aware that those who hold the real economic power in the world see their power under threat and are acting to secure their privilege. We enter the last quarter of 2020 with a sense of urgency for our individual and collective work to end the multiple and intersecting oppressions the majority of us face, particularly the deeply unequal and unfree position of womn on the continent.


Our sense of urgency is also located within a space we had already entered pre-COVID-19— recognising the urgent need for attention paid to our own lives, livelihoods, health, safety, love and joy as feminist and womn's rights activists in addressing womn's human rights in Africa. These urgencies are equally important in this new decade. Urgent Action Fund-Africa has been deepening and evolving our expertise in urgent situations and are well-positioned to offer leadership in this area of expertise both as a part of the feminist and womn's rights movements and, as a fund, separate from but in solidarity with the movements.

This summary of the Urgent Action Fund-Africa Strategic Compass for 2021-2030 shares WHO we are, WHY we exist and WHAT our work will prioritise and be focussed on as our best contribution to feminist movement building and transformative change in Africa. A thread which runs through the Strategic Compass is the question: *what does it mean to be a future-fit, Pan-African feminist fund, passionate about the power of movements to bring transformative change?*

We look forward to collective feminist action with you all in the decade unfolding.

With LOVE and POWER

from all of us at Urgent Action Fund-Africa



FEMINISTS POWERING SOCIETAL CHANGE CELEBRATING

ENTER A FEMINIST FUTURE

In the last few decades, African womn's place, location and position in society has shifted. We have pushed, encouraged, nudged, and even forced society to take us seriously. This has happened in our own households and families, the community, the workplace, education and health systems, and by both state and non-state actors. We are an unstoppable force and have been gathering momentum. We have continued to rise, build space, expand our movements, raise our voices, and strengthen visibility of our work and organising. We have done this work within feminist and womn's spaces and we have worked with other movements to advance womn's leadership in broader struggles of which we are an integral part.

NAVIGATING THE BARRIERS

Amidst the numerous challenges in society, we continue to open space, expand our base, generate hope and inspiration, and co-create the world we want to live in. We also recognise the need to grapple, now more than ever, with the challenges within our movements such as relational weaknesses and gaps, barriers to systemic change, and the politics of money—to resource our organising, work and activism. We are deeply conscious of the terrible impacts (on us all individually and collectively) of the reality that too many of us have simply not taken care of our health and wellbeing as we do our movement building work.

CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION

There is still so much to celebrate. Womn have organised and built change on a wide range of issues: the right to food, water, shelter and housing; spiritual health and healing; saving our planet and transforming governance for accountability, transparency and meaningful participation; creating people-centred economies; winning the right to access and own land; and resisting extractivism, militarism and violence. Older feminists and womn's rights activists are sustaining their work and organising. They carry memory and the power of their relentlessness, determination and experience. Younger feminists are leading with fresh ideas, approaches and wisdom, creating their own spaces and engaging with older feminists from a place of power and clarity of vision. We are all, increasingly, working with new ideas, new language and new technologies as well as with older ones. We recognise, as womn, that we are not all equally impacted by the systems of oppression. We are conscious of these differences and not divided by body type, disability and ability, class, age, geography, sexual orientation, and whether we use sex as something to be sold or for any other purpose.

We are making change. We are everywhere. We are powering ourselves and each other. Together, as a collective and as movements, we are in full flight, moving into and shaping the future. We are taking better care of ourselves and of each other as we do this. This is an important part of our context. We continue to resist and to imagine and dream as we create and co-create the Africa that feminists want.

Our use of **womn** is an act of challenging and replacing traditional ideas of what and who a womn is and can be and the links of womn to a system of patriarchy where womn are, in effect, subject to men or a sub-category of men. Other formulations used by feminists and others include womxn, womyn and wom_n. Womn for us includes lesbian, bisexual womn and transwomn. Further, womn includes those who are non-binariad, identifying with neither gender.



FEMINISTS ORGANISING IN HOSTILE CONTEXTS RESISTING

Womn are still living in and navigating an increasingly violent, volatile, unpredictable, complex and hostile world. Urgent Action Fund-Africa does its work in a globalised world where decisions made in the global North impact in lasting ways on African people and their institutions.

THE CRISIS IN DEMOCRACY: Across the continent, people are faced with the daily impact of governance challenges. Amongst state actors and institutions, there is a lack of political will to ensure policy and practice based on integrity and access to rights. Little attention is given to ensuring that those who have been marginalised, particularly womn, have a voice during and beyond elections. These challenges and the broken boundaries between state and religion, state and corporate power, and the failure to separate powers between arms of government have created a crisis in democracy in Africa.

THE CRISIS OF CAPITALISM: Amongst other concerns, the presence and power of large national and transnational corporations operating in a highly capitalist and globalised economy that excludes the world's poor, mostly womn, is a serious challenge to democracy and social justice. Greed, the pursuit of profit at all costs, and the merging of political and corporate power to influence global, regional, and national social and political realities is dangerous for womn.

FASCISMS AND FUNDAMENTALISMS: The right and far right are highly organised, networked, and resourced with a diverse set of religious fundamentalisms on the rise. There is an undermining and invisibilising of African and alternative spirituality as well as traditional religions and entrenched practices by a wide range of religious groups and institutions. Within this climate, harmful and oppressive traditional cultural norms and practices are promoted and defended alongside growing shifts towards dictatorship, authoritarianism, ultra-nationalism and social control.

MILITARISM, CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE: Violence is endemic and pervasive, finding physical, emotional, sexual and economic expression in the household, community, workplace, and in institutions across the board. Budgets of the police and military institutions continue to increase, despite the deep poverty and inequality that the majority of African people endure. There are currently fifteen African countries involved in war, or in post-war conflict and tension.

HETERONORMATIVITY AND PATRIARCHY: Heteronormativity and patriarchy are deeply embedded in society so that they are still, for the most part, invisibilised. Whilst great strides have been made to advance gender-related equality, there is still too much lip service and too little genuine action to advance not only gender equality but gender freedom and dignity for womn and all genders.

RACIAL AND ETHNIC OPPRESSION: Racism, ethnic oppression and tribalism are still used as tools and weapons to dehumanise and exclude many from participating meaningfully in societal life and to detract from the dignity, equality and freedom of black people and people from less privileged ethnic groups.

THE CLIMATE CATASTROPHE: The exploitation of the environment under capitalism has led to a serious climate crisis which impacts on the livelihoods and lives of African people, disproportionately affecting womn. Climate change is fuelled by extractivism and a refusal/failure to address global warming, energy use, conservation, food safety and biodiversity, pollution and waste management, amongst others. Water and food crises and the impact on health and livelihoods are some of the most immediate and devastating impacts.

WE ARE MAKING CHANGE. WE ARE EVERYWHERE. WE ARE POWERING OURSELVES AND EACH OTHER TOGETHER, AS A COLLECTIVE AND AS MOVEMENTS, WE ARE IN FULL FLIGHT, MOVING INTO AND SHAPING THE FUTURE. WE ARE TAKING BETTER CARE OF OURSELVES AND OF EACH OTHER AS WE DO THIS. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR CONTEXT. WE CONTINUE TO RESIST AND TO IMAGINE AND DREAM AS WE CREATE AND CO-CREATE THE AFRICA THAT FEMINISTS WANT.



A FEMINIST FUND FOR A NEW DECADE OFFERING

WHO WE ARE [IDENTITY]

**An evolving consciousness of our ways of being in the world is
as important as the work itself**

Urgent Action Fund-Africa *is a feminist, Pan-African, rapid response fund committed to transforming power relations through resourcing African feminists and womn human rights defenders and their formations as an act of solidarity.*

We are a part of the ecosystem of feminist and womn's movements in Africa and globally. In character, we are bold and courageous, proactive and responsive, creative and rigorous, curious, alert and agile, imaginative and grounded, consistent and reliable.

As a rapid response fund, we are ready, alert and agile so that we can respond and prioritise the urgent needs of womn in various movements.

Our area of expertise is based on our deep and ever-evolving knowledge, skill and experience in:

- The contexts in which womn human rights defenders live, organise, work and do their activism
- Urgent situations and urgent actions
- Holistic human security
- Feminist Philanthropy
- Movement building

THE WORLD WE WANT [VISION]

We want an Africa and world where transformative justice is a shared goal so that all African womn in all kinds of bodies, realities and identities, are recognised for their full worth and value, live to their fullest potential, are healthy and live in harmony with the earth and with fellow human beings.

This is an Africa and world where women know, access and enjoy their social and economic rights as well as their political and civil rights, and participate fully in society, in the economy and political decision-making.

WHAT REALLY MATTERS TO US [VALUES]

As Pan-African feminists, our values are what we strive to uphold as this is what really matters to us and defines what kind of organisation we are.

RESPECT

We understand and practice respect for all as both the belief in and the demonstration of every person's deep and innate value and right to dignity. This means that we recognise their humanity, hold them with regard and appreciate their realities and viewpoints.

INTEGRITY

Integrity is, for us, living, expressing and demonstrating consistently over time to those we are connected to that we are who we say we are, will do what we say we will, and can be trusted on this. It also means that when we make mistakes and errors, we are able to reflect and develop the insight to see, acknowledge and make amends for this. Integrity also means that we reflect and make real our values both inside and outside of the organisation.

ORGANISING WITH SOUL

Care, love and joy belong in the centre of our activism. They have been removed over the years in a misunderstanding of professionalisation. We have placed them back at the centre of our work and act on the conviction that we have to live—both internally in the organisation and externally in our work—the loving and caring world we want.

OUR WAYS OF WORKING

COLLECTIVITY AND SHARED LEADERSHIP

We share decision making and power because the collective is central to living a full and meaningful life. Change happens through the collective and co-creation as much as it happens on a personal level. Within this shared leadership, we are deeply conscious of our own power as a large, regional institution with the ability to influence donors, and to mobilise and distribute funding.

CROSS MOVEMENT AND INTERSECTIONALITY

We seek out, embrace and welcome all womn committed to creating change for and with womn and for the African continent as a whole. This means that womn of all bodies, identities, sexual orientations, from all geographies, and with a range of dis/abilities are an integral part of who we are and how we move through the world. Further, we work with and across issues and identities as these are all interconnected and expressed as the daily lived realities of womn.

OPENNESS, KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING

We are aware of and celebrate knowledge, learning and wisdom. We bring these values into UAF-Africa. Those who we work with are experts and specialists in their own areas of work. There is much for us to learn from our partners and friends.



POWERING URGENT ACTIONS: THE WORK DOING

WHAT WE DO [MISSION]

Urgent Action Fund–Africa works to support African Womn Human Rights Defenders, particularly in the feminist and womn’s movements, in their actions which enable them to support and sustain themselves, each other and their work before, during and after urgent situations.

WE DO THIS THROUGH

SOLIDARITY AND SUPPORT, working alongside these movements and making Urgent Action and Influence Grants.

AGENDA SETTING AND ADVOCACY to transform the conditions in which these movements do their work.

KNOWLEDGE LEADERSHIP to inform the urgent actions and broader work of these movements to bring change.

FOSTERING CULTURES OF CARE to enhance learning and practice among feminists and AWHRDs as well as inspire a care and healing movement culture.



POWERING URGENT ACTIONS: THE MONEY FUELING

UAF-Africa mobilises funds from a broad base of international and increasingly local donors committed to advancing women's rights and feminist agendas in Africa. Our primary purpose is to provide funding to AWHRDs and their groups, organisations and movements to help them prepare for and navigate urgent situations with actions. This puts them in the position to support and sustain themselves, each other and their work during and after urgent situations.

TYPES OF GRANTS

RAPID RESPONSE + EMERGENCY GRANTS

These grants are intended for unanticipated and urgent actions to respond to a shock or crisis or to take an opportunity.

INFLUENCE, ADVOCACY + ALLIANCE BUILDING GRANTS

These grants are intended for medium term activities, processes and projects linked in some way to decision-making on urgent situations faced by AWHRDs and their organisations.



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UPHOLD AS THIS IS WHAT REALLY
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GRANT MAKING THEMES

We recognise that issues are all inter-related and cross-cutting. Those applying for grants may use one or more categories and themes—whatever best describes their initiative. These themes are simply a guide on possible language to name the issues. It is based on our own grant-making trends analysis.

PEOPLE

PEACE AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Some issues here may include democratisation of society; participation, accountability and transparency in states and corporations; confronting authoritarianism, dictatorship, fundamentalisms and fascisms; defending defenders; co-creating and building peace; promotion and advancement of holistic human security, women's health and wellbeing; addressing violence against women, gender-based violence, militarism, conflict and nuclear threat; advancing women's right to bodily autonomy, integrity, freedom and dignity; sexual and reproductive health and rights; confronting patriarchy and heteronormativity.

POWER

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POWER

Some issues here may include building women's economic independence, self-sufficiency and autonomy; equity and fairness in access to resources; distribution and redistribution of wealth; ethical livelihoods; income security; economic citizenship and participation; addressing the capitalist crises and promoting feminist and people-centred economies; economic justice; challenging extractive economies and industries; eradicating poverty and economic inequalities; access to housing, basic needs, services and resources; division of labour.

PLANET

NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE AND STEWARDSHIP

Some issues here may include environmental and climate justice; access to land, energy, minerals and water; access to assets for livelihoods; food security; confronting environmental exploitation, degradation and the climate crisis and catastrophe.

OUR LEAD PROGRAMME

SOLIDARITY AND SUPPORT (RELATE, RESOURCE, CONNECT)

The Objective of this Programme is to demonstrate solidarity and support to individual feminist-activists and women human rights defenders and their formations in Africa in situations requiring urgent action so that they are able to continue to advance transformation and change.

This work includes **Accompaniment** with partners, **Grant Making** and support for partners to **Link and Learn** from each other.

We will continue to do this work in all five sub-regions of the African continent and pay particular attention to North Africa, the Sahel, Francophone and Lusophone countries, prioritising these in our planning and resourcing.

SUPPORT PROGRAMME

KNOWLEDGE LEADERSHIP (LEARN, DOCUMENT, SHARE!)

The Objective of this Programme is to work with others to build a culture of learning and knowledge production within and external to UAF-Africa for deeper consciousness, consistently theorise and articulate a feminist, Pan-African perspective, and translate this into solidarity and action.

This work includes **Documentation, Information Management, Research and Publications, Learning and Historical Political Initiatives, and Special Projects.**

The work will focus on the African continent at both a regional, sub-regional, national and local level.

HISTORIC POLITICAL INITIATIVE

THE FEMINIST REPUBLIK (CO-CREATING CULTURES OF CARE!)

The Objective of this Historic Political Initiative within the Knowledge Leadership Programme is to advance learning and practice to inspire, mobilise, popularise and co-create a self and collective care and healing culture amongst AWHRDs in feminist and women's movements.

This work includes **Shared Leadership** with diverse feminists from all sub-regions to shape the FR; **Shifts in movement culture** towards embedding self and collective care and healing justice within organising; **Investments in Care and Healing Justice Projects** to escalate and accelerate culture shifts; **Demonstration Partnership Project** to enhance UAF-Africa's direct learning and **Knowledge Production on Feminist Republik** to ensure deep learning, memory and inform influence work.

SUPPORT PROGRAMME: AGENDA SETTING AND ADVOCACY MOBILISE, ORGANISE, INFLUENCE!

The Objective of this Programme is to work with others to set an agenda for, and both directly and indirectly, influence policy and practice on philanthropy and the situation of African Women Human Rights Defenders.

This work includes **coalition building and partnership development, building collective feminist positions, popularisation, mobilisation and media, influencing decision makers, financing advocacy and agenda-setting initiatives, and mobilising commitment for financing of women's rights work and work to defend AWHRDs.**

This work will be mainly done at a regional and sub-regional level with some focus in strategic spaces at the international level.

OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE IS TO PROVIDE FUNDING TO AWHRDs AND THEIR GROUPS, ORGANISATIONS AND MOVEMENTS TO HELP THEM PREPARE FOR AND NAVIGATE URGENT SITUATIONS WITH ACTIONS. THIS PUTS THEM IN THE POSITION TO SUPPORT AND SUSTAIN THEMSELVES, EACH OTHER AND THEIR WORK DURING AND AFTER URGENT SITUATIONS.



POWERING URGENT ACTIONS: THE CHANGE TRANSFORMING

In our work to power urgent actions by African Womn Human Rights Defenders (AWHRDs), we will target the ideas and narratives that perpetuate oppression as well as the systems of oppression and the supporting institutions. Our Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy addresses this in detail. The change we seek, will, importantly, be focused on five key actors:

SOCIETY

Positive conditions in society enable AWHRDs and their groups and organisations to better support and sustain themselves, their work and each other.

MOVEMENTS

Movements act on a shared commitment to strengthen urgent actions and the co-creation of cultures of care amongst themselves.

AWHRDs

AWHRDs are better able to access and use resources to support and sustain themselves, each other and their work during and after urgent situations.

STRATEGIC PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Strategic partners of UAF-Africa are proactively and both separately and collectively ensuring that AWHRDs are better able to support and sustain themselves, each other and their work during and after urgent situations.

DONOR PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Donor partners understand, are committed to and consistently investing in AWHRDs in feminist and womn's rights movements, influencing others in the philanthropic ecosystem to do the same.



BUILDING URGENT ACTION FUND-AFRICA BECOMING

A FUTURE-FIT FEMINIST FUND!

Urgent Action Fund-Africa has been and will continue to evolve and become:

- building on the solid foundation of our last strategic cycle;
- emboldened by the power and love from within the movements;
- inspired by the possibilities of shaping a new, just society; and
- compelled by the deep hostilities and threats to African women's freedom.

We will accelerate and deepen our work on our internal approaches, policies, systems, practices and tools so that we are, increasingly, a fit and future-ready feminist fund, able to contribute in the best possible and most principled ways to movement building in Africa and globally.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOAL

Our goal as an institution is to ensure the organisational mandate can be fulfilled through bold and accountable leadership and effective management by a team of knowledgeable, skilled and experienced feminists. To achieve this, we will strengthen our efforts at ensuring our own health and wellbeing as well as pay attention to developing professionally and personally in an organisational framework that prioritises and invests in these areas of feminist power.



GOVERNANCE ACTORS

Our governance work is deeply connected to FIVE main actors:

OUR BASE

The power of the work we do will be, increasingly, located within the movements we serve. Feminist, women's rights and related movements are the force, vehicle and space for transformative change on the continent and in the world. Much of our power as UAF-Africa lies in the extent to which we are rooted in, knowledgeable about and connected to those within the movements.

THE GOVERNING BODY

The power of the organisation will be seen in the capabilities of the Board to transform the system of leadership and governance of the fund and to bring visionary and courageous leadership. The Board will support the organisation so that there is meaningful and authentic connectedness of our constituency and the organisation and that the organisation is able to deliver consistently on our values and mandate.

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM

The power of the fund can be determined in part by the extent to which there is quality and dynamic coherence and connection in organisational functions. This includes organisational culture, strategic direction, strategic coordination, planning, monitoring and evaluation, oversight and support, resource mobilisation as key areas of separate but connected work.

PROGRAMMES TEAM

The power of the work with partners, coalitions and alliances on our three areas of work — Solidarity and Support, Agenda Setting and Advocacy and Knowledge Leadership — is located within the creativity, knowledge, skill and experience of the programmes team and the ways in which they deepen and expand the intellectual, relational and influence work of Urgent Action Fund-Africa.

OPERATIONS TEAM

Our power is determined through excellence in operational support to the entire organisation coupled with a high standard in and sound practice of compliance with agreed standards in the application of the human, technical and financial resources of the organisation.

INTO THE FUTURE:

CO-CREATING CULTURES OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND CARE

Our collective, organisational energy, attitude and emotional-spiritual space is set to become increasingly people-centred with deep respect for wellness and health and of relational power. The ideas that will then give shape to the work within this are Reflect, Think, Rethink, Review, Create, Recreate, Ground, Sustain and Maintain, Consolidate, Adjust and Adapt. We will also focus on new cycles of thinking, creating and grounding, through and beyond this new decade of feminist organising.



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