



Songs in the Future

The AWDF 2021
Annual Report



AFRICAN WOMEN'S
DEVELOPMENT FUND



The Rise of Many Songs:

Introduction to the theme

....to the ones we have been waiting for

Penda told us about women who sang with many drums, whistles and shakers - their choruses fusing into each other. Women who sang into the future. They sang so hard, so tirelessly that onlookers called them too daring and, others, just dreamers. How can you catch a future you do not dream of? How can you tell of a past you do not know?

Penda told us about these women, whom no one taught to sing—that, one by one, the songs had risen in their hearts and chests. Can you teach a mother to mourn or celebrate their child? One by one, when they held hands across tall buildings as teargas filled their eyes, many songs came to their hearts. Songs that were memories from their mothers who lived their lives fighting for governments that should protect them. And for their bodies; no longer warzones.

So, the women sang of Fotso from the West and Nandi from the South, whose gatherings of care were roughly dispersed, and their rainbow wrappers torn because —they were different women. We could not wait, they said. Lest freedom chants rise to burst our hearts and chests. We let them out in fierce shouts—and with drums, claps, and song, we filled the skies. Even when they said we were too much for them. Yes, our oppressors said we were too much! Yet, still, we sang.

Rising even louder, their songs reminisced about Ramatou from the Central and Uwera from the East, who had each petitioned their governments when they got tired of working without equal pay. And how they had danced and sang with fists high as they led marches. Times ago, they had seen change when Habiba led women in the North to keep parades for equal representation in parliament and on trade union boards. They knew it was possible. They knew it was their time. So, they sang of futures where they thrived and flourished in their homes and communities. Rising songs that allowed rest to seep through their entire beings. Songs that healed them.

Penda told us of these women who sang many songs to futures as many as each of them. Women whose sounds captivated at every turn. From one tune to the next and like a burst of flames from many places, their sounds climaxed into loud anthems depicting their many journeys. Journeys filled with hope, yet tiring, nearly paralyzing. Very vibrant and lively journeys, they were, too.

When Penda told us this story, they [Penda] cautioned us to master the lyrics of all of the women's songs. That we should never forget the past if we loved the future. And as the songs rose high into the sky—echoing over the horizon, Penda stood tall with arms towering into the infinite winds. Then, they let out a powerful shout. A charge to us, that those women were us.

Yes, Penda told us. That we are the ones we have been waiting for.....



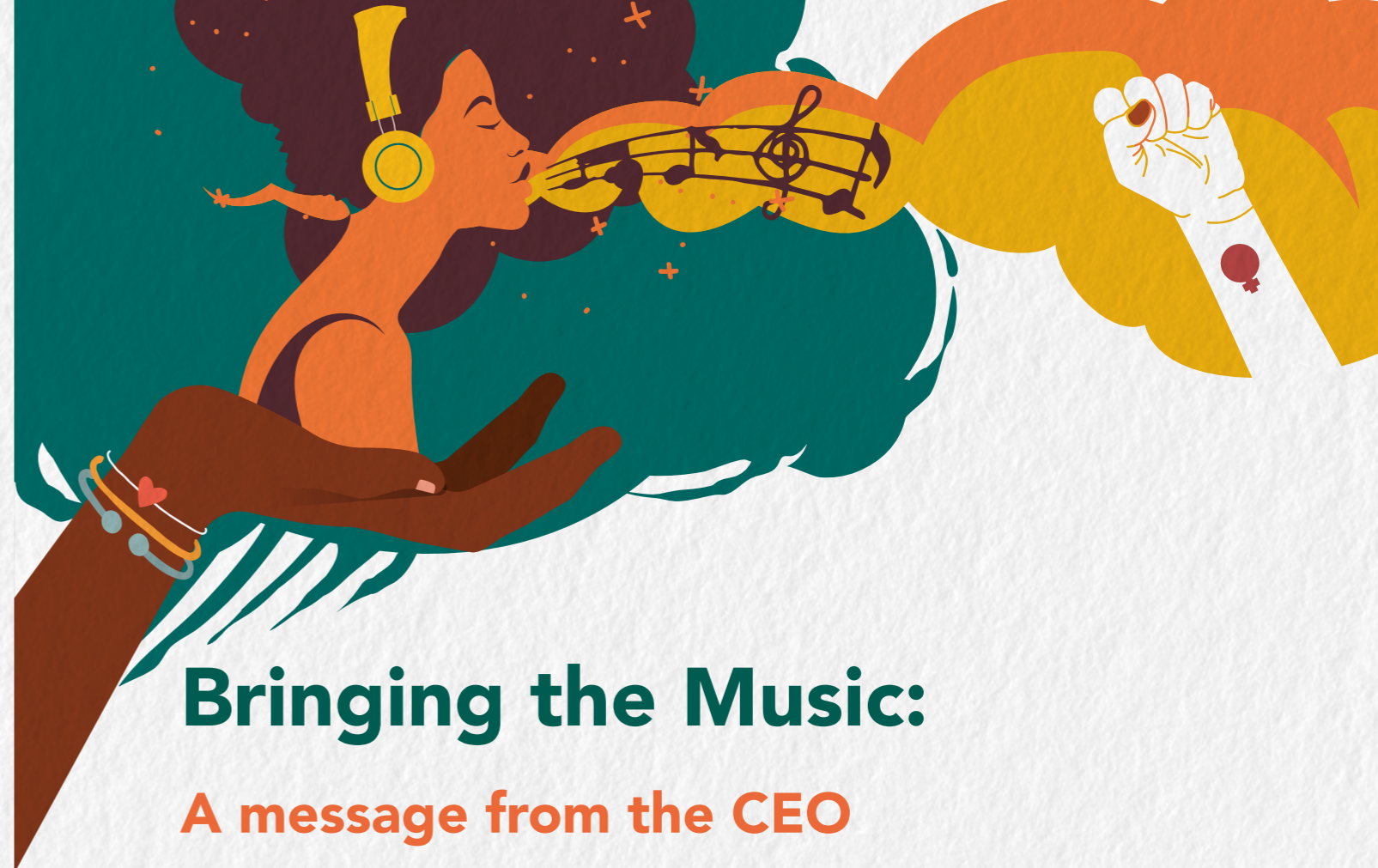
The African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) invites you to reflect on the futures sang by the many African feminist groups and activists we worked with in 2021. This is our annual report in a year where the songs of loss coloured the melodies of many places, yet together we rallied power to fuel each other. We pivoted at each turn, tied together across the continent with invisible threads of our rights to be fully here—daring, flourishing. It is a look back at the solidarity and strength of African women in their fight for freedom as they peered into an uncertain future with courage, dreams and hope.





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Bringing the Music:

A message from the CEO

As 2021 waned, the DJs at AWDF belted out a playlist of beautiful compositions from all around the continent. From afrobeats to amapiano, hiplife to zouk, the music inspired us to journey together, to dance, recuperate, re-invent and connect our steps through the year’s many layers.

African women’s rights and feminist movements were confronted with many manifestations of the patriarchy, old and new, and severe backlash against their work. It was important to action our solidarity and utilise our position in various funder and policy spaces to articulate the morphing scope of the problem and what needed to be done. This work was possible with the courage of the countless voices in the movement that shared their knowledge and truths to enrich our advocacy on the continent and in the diaspora.

2021 also marked the end of AWDF’s 2017-2021 strategic plan, a powerful strategic direction that centred on trends analyses of the futures of women and girls by 2030. This key moment in our strategic visioning was one of the most critical highlights for my first year of journeying with AWDF as CEO. Jointly with the team and the board, we harnessed the many rhythms of this transition, collectively reflecting on what the process of clarifying the strategic direction post-the Futures strategy entailed.

At different points of the year, our musical notes drummed high as we celebrated major achievements. **AWDF is proud to have raised USD \$29.5 million¹** —keeping us on track to reach more African women’s rights organisations and collectives. We expanded our capacity-building opportunities to successfully serve non-AWDF-funded partners, increased access to our initiatives for linguistic minorities in the movement, and were more systematic in transforming knowledge resources and platforms to embody decoloniality.

*//1 This represents funds raised during the year, part of which are deferred to fund future initiatives beyond 2021 and are therefore not reflected in the actual 2021 allocations at the end of this report.//

The silence of remote work, urgency for innovative and flexible resourcing, and the need to connect deeper, and work closely with our partners, propelled us into exploring ways to continue modernising our operational processes. We continued to optimise technology to create more efficient work and service experiences.

There were some hard lessons, however, mainly requiring us to ...

// ... pace ourselves and to make space and time for joy and rest, creativity, and connection. For many activists and women's rights organisations, everything felt like the world was on fire. That pacing is where strength happens. We needed to make the time for alignment and building community. Time to continue reinvigorating in each others' refreshment to not crack before the battle against patriarchy is accomplished. This will cost us time, money, and most importantly, it requires listening to colleagues and partner voices. It is a journey we recommitted to throughout the year and [that turns out to be] one of the hard lessons for the movement, the organisation and myself."

No matter the amount of pivoting life required of us, we arose, determined not to give up on the songs that gave us joy amidst the work. It's how we refreshed our passions as we journeyed and unlearned to learn anew.

We recollect these experiences and lessons in this annual report, which I am pleased to share with you. I hope you will connect with the many songs in the future for AWDF, our partners, and the movement.

With deep gratitude,

Françoise Moudouthe
Chief Executive Officer



The Sounds of Feminist Africa

**In my head,
Feminist Africa sounds like this:
sultry, transformative, ethereal,
revolutionary, unshackled, wild, spiritual,
healing and wise.**

**But like feminism itself, it is a
contradictory sound.
It is vulnerable and loving
but also frustrated and rebellious.**

Minna Salami

[http://kalamu.com/neogriot/
category/neo-griot/page/183/](http://kalamu.com/neogriot/category/neo-griot/page/183/)





The Futures We Made

A 2021 Achievements Showcase

Celebratory songs rise as we look back. We are proud of the strides we made in resourcing women’s rights organisations to deliver on the much-needed work they led across the continent in 2021. We saw more bills passed into laws as women’s rights organisations shifted policy and practice to create enabling environments for women’s rights and the protection of activists amidst the increased backlash.

At the community level, partners negotiated meaningful partnerships with government structures at the community and national levels. They also negotiated meaningful partnerships with government structures at the community and national levels. The campaigns we co-created rallied activist voices and sustained the visibility of major issues affecting African women’s rights on policy and resourcing agendas.

AWDF philanthropic advocacy marked gains in our journey to secure flexible and long-term funding for the work, resulting in increased investments in the initiatives led by African women’s rights organisations and feminist collectives.



In Investment

Almost **ten million dollars** awarded in grants and donations

US \$9,922,219

awarded to

139 organisations in **34** countries.

64 new partners funded, a more than **11%** increase from 2020



In Priorities

139 grants allocated under AWDF’s three core thematic areas



Body and Health Rights

\$4,043,069
[96 grants]



Economic Security and Justice

\$3,875,000
[26 grants]



Leadership, Participation and Peace

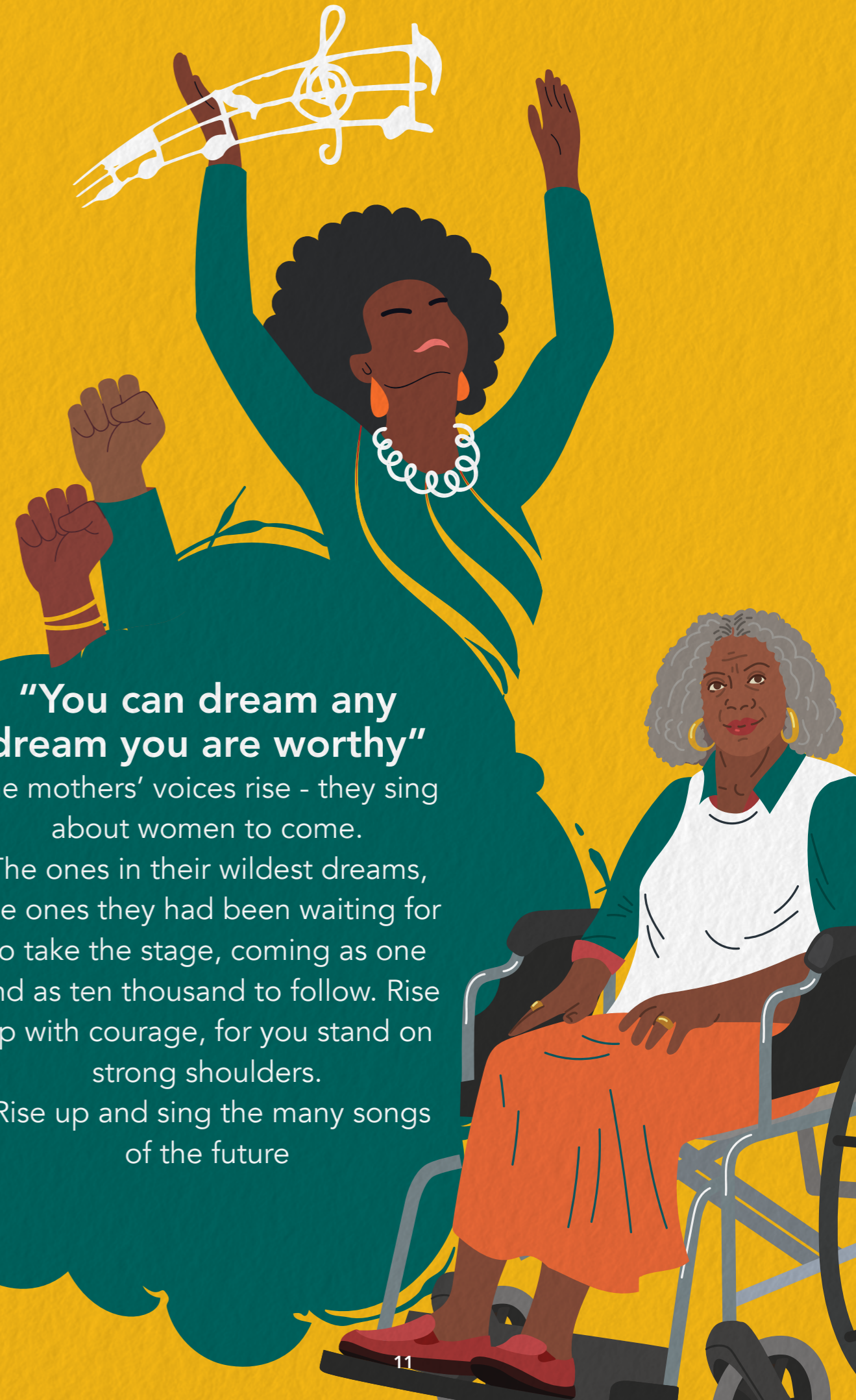
\$2,004,150
[17 grants]

In Reach

In 2021, AWDF allocated grants to organisations in **30 African and 4 Middle Eastern countries**. AWDF support in the Middle East to Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen and Palestine was made possible through the Leading from the South partnership.



"You can dream any dream you are worthy"
the mothers' voices rise - they sing about women to come.
The ones in their wildest dreams, the ones they had been waiting for to take the stage, coming as one and as ten thousand to follow. Rise up with courage, for you stand on strong shoulders.
Rise up and sing the many songs of the future





In Impact

AWDF was intentional about hearing and voicing the changes created by the feminist organisations we supported. In 2021, through the use of outcome harvesting, we reflected on the progress made by AWDF partners towards their goals. We celebrated their achievements in building stronger movements, influencing behaviour change, increasing advocacy, awareness, and visibility of their work, and shifts in practice and policy by governments.



At-a-glance

Stronger movements:

Partners enhanced their institutional capacity to effectively influence social change by demanding accountability, respect, protection, and fulfilment of rights for all women from duty bearers at all levels.

Individual behaviour change:

As a result of sharing knowledge and raising awareness, grantee partners strengthened the capacities of women groups and reached opposing groups to interrogate oppressive laws and structural barriers to inclusive development outcomes.

Increased Visibility:

Grantees' work influenced the media, government agencies, and the public to attract interest in women's rights issues and add their voices to change oppressive narratives.

Shifts in Practice:

Changes in actual implementation that occurred mostly at the local and national level through grantee partners influencing government and government agencies, chiefs and traditional authorities, and others.


Shifts in Policy:

Grantee partners influenced government and government agencies, chiefs and traditional authorities and implementers (courts) to make changes toward women's rights in policy, regulations, laws, and court decisions, in addition to electing and appointing women into leadership positions at both local and national levels.



Looking back to celebrate and dream again

Songs in the Future comes at the end of AWDF's 2017-2021 strategy which was built on a projected analysis of the contextual shifts in Africa and the world by 2030. The **Futures Strategy** pushed us to dream with a sense of what the problems and opportunities looked like for women and gender-diverse people. Across the five years of the Futures Strategy, we rejoice over our combined efforts with activists and women's rights organisations to amplify the critical issues affecting women and gender-diverse people at community, regional and global levels.



Looking back, we are proud to have nearly doubled the total grants awarded, from 78 in 2017 to 136 by 2021. This support enabled massive disruption of patriarchal oppression and the promotion of gender justice across the continent.

For every year during the strategy period, we were intentional in magnifying our advocacy and awareness-raising messages. These are some of the spotlight campaigns we supported and collaborated on to influence the promotion and realisation of women's rights and recognition of African women's leadership in all spheres of life.

2017 - Know Your African Feminists: <http://www.africanfeministforum.com/african-feminists/know-your-african-feminists/>

Featured ascendant African feminist voices of generations past, current, and future—African feminist voices with faces, voices, and biographies representing over five decades of activism in short audio-visual content. The campaign remains a critical tool to preserve our identities and tell our truths in the face of new forms of de-profiling feminists globally.

2018 - The #FacesOfTheFuture Campaign: <https://awdf.org/facesofthefuture-grantee-stories-and-moments-to-highlight-the-women-changing-the-future-of-the-african-continent>

Profiled the methodologies, tools, and networks with which African women's rights organisations are innovatively creating change. It showcased the contribution of women's rights organisations that continue to lend their frontline expertise to transform communities despite being incredibly underfunded.

2019 - The Did You Know Campaign: <https://teyubar.wordpress.com/portfolio/did-you-know-series-campaign-social-for-futures-africa-report-awdf/>

Based on a trend analysis of the futures of African women, the Did You Know Campaign highlighted key challenges and opportunities to accelerate actions and shape a better world for women. It offered critical insights for funders, policymakers, and civil society on where to invest to maximise change for women on the continent.

2021 - The Choose to Challenge Campaign:

Celebrated the successes in the movement as well as a challenge for us to continue speaking up, demanding more, setting aside gender stereotypes, and creating the change that we want to see in the movement.

2021-FOR #LoveandFreedom

The AWDF AfriPride: Challenging trans and queerphobia

In 2021, we saw increased attacks on sexual minorities in Africa. AWDF launched the #LoveandFreedom campaign, in partnership with Square Agency, to highlight the negative impact of institutionalised homophobia and raised awareness with informative messages about diversity, inclusion, and the importance of building societies that do not condone violence against marginalised people. AWDF produced a guide to empower people to combat homophobia.



On that note

An Invitation to the Chorus

...What if we are the ones we have been waiting for?...

The humming of our foremothers sits deeply in our bosom where they carried us, imagining the unimaginable—the WHAT IF. They have been creating songs, setting the stage, past many moons, in firm faith steps towards a dream, each wave feeding into a louder wave. A collective sound of drums, chants, whispers, songs—of our many futures. Each generation of song bringing with it the beauty and wisdom of womanhood. This is how they taught us to dream, with our rainbow flags in hand, into a present that scared, encouraged, and challenged us. Still, we dream of a song—of many songs in the future.



Passion Pages

Starlight stories, voices from the field

What if women and gender-diverse people had access to the services and protections they need to thrive? What if they could freely exercise their leadership to advance their rights and promote gender equality actively? What if we built the pathways to support these dreams? Here are some stories from our partners that are shaking up the status quo in their fight for women’s rights.

Stirring the Evolution in Zimbabwe

“An evolution is better than a revolution, an evolution is more sustainable... [it shifts mindsets and combines approaches to organically inspire change]”

Glanis Changachirere,
Institute for Young Women Development, Zimbabwe

When the Institute for Young Women Development in Zimbabwe (IYWD) determined to work towards achieving a 50/50 quota system for women’s representation in government, it was not naïve about the intense journey ahead. It took a multi-strand strategy optimising data on low women’s representation, skilling and preparing young women leaders to run for office, actively investing in alliance building, nurturing relationships with government institutions, and equipping women to protect themselves from assault through safety and security training amidst the political campaigns. With more women leaders attacked and hospitalised, IYWD stood in solidarity with the affected leaders and utilised the expose strategy through media visibility of the abuse incidents to evoke public disapproval of the acts. They also integrated self-care and wellbeing, using spiritual practices (indigenous and borrowed), including but not limited to prayer, meditation, and indigenous herbal remedies for relief from stress to unite and refresh activists.

While they did not achieve the 50/50 quota, IYWD was proud to have succeeded in contributing to achieving a 30% women representation, including some women taking up leadership positions for the first time. Moreover, IYWD was also applauded by parliamentarians for their efforts towards offering tangible solutions to the government on equal representation through their participation in drafting the quota system bill.

Joy is in the air.

I will dance until Black Women's Joy breaks out on the red carpet, the parliament halls, market strongholds, in birthing rooms, mining joints, in places, queer indeed and spaces untold

I will dance

I will dance until the poems of our mothers, and the frenzies of our stanzas speak, loud, louder, louder, louder

I will dance, I will dance until all the laughter, all the hope, all the tears in this bosom flow

I will dance in the noontime of hesitation, resisting temptation, celebrating reflection

I will dance, rest is mine, joy is mine, my name, my body, my thoughts are mine

I will dance

When Palestinian Women are not Counted in Nablus.

Through the Leading from the South program which is our only programme that supports feminist organisations in the Middle East, AWDF is excited to profile the change led by the Mothers School Society (MSS).

Since 1999, MSS—which is located in Nablus, an Israeli settlement—has worked with Palestinian women to gain marketable skills and improve their health, psychosocial, and community strength necessary to succeed. When MSS received reports that Palestinian women were being excluded from employment opportunities, they conducted a needs assessment to understand the scale of the problem. Following the assessment, MSS set up nine Community Protection Units (CPUs) in different districts to carry out awareness training, advocate for inclusion, and monitor violations. The CPUs provided wide geographic reach in places MSS could not easily reach and ensured that MSS's work was informed by the realities of women in the settlements. MSS had previously established official relationships with the Ministry of Labour but decided to expand its network to reach other agencies like workers' unions to leverage allyships and push for equal opportunities for Palestinian women in the private sector.

The Community Protection Units (CPUs) provided wide geographic reach in places the Mothers' School Society (MSS) could not easily reach and ensured that MSS's work was informed by the realities of women in the settlements.

As a result, 30 working women were assigned to workers' unions, eight of them in administrative positions. MSS also created a phone-based application where women could file workplace complaints and violations, which further made it easier for affected women to report abuse safely and resulted in abusers being exposed.

In the stars, I see your song

May the dark of night not overcome you my sisters

Look up, the stars are glowing for you, each. One woman floated up full soul to whisper—to watch when trees seem tall, winds seem relentless, fires ever brighter—you – you- you – you are the ones they are cheering on. They believe you, I believe you.

Cross-Continent Perspectives on Prioritising Mental Health.

// Mental health is still not a priority [on this continent], and then you pair it with women, who are also [still] not a priority [on this continent]

Angel Yinkore,
Founder, Welcome to Truth - Nigeria

Media coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted mental health challenges exacerbated by the related isolation experiences across the world. While there were more discussions on the subject, African women's meanings and cultural experiences with mental health and emotional wellbeing remained excluded from globalised knowledge. Through videography, research, and photography, four African feminists supported by AWDF—namely Aaliyah O. Ibrahim, Toyin Ajao, Sylvia Nalubega, and Goitse Kwada—unveiled critical perspectives on mental health for African women and gender-diverse people. Outside of medicalised terminologies and meanings, African women from Tunisia, Uganda, Nigeria, Botswana among other countries measured their mental health against their ability to function, to have economic resources to take care of their families, and live in peace - free from violence. In addition, mental illness continues to carry a strong stigma that threatens women's social acceptability, livelihoods, and ultimately, their self-worth.



What will it take to prioritise mental health?

According to this research, charting mental health futures for African women and gender-diverse people will need to include extensive advocacy for indigenous approaches that have worked for women and embody their innovation to self-help. It must support community-oriented awareness programs, increased funding for spaces to talk, and continued activism on interrelated feminist issues.

This was an important gong that must be sounded everywhere. A better picture of mental health in Africa emerges through all we hear, with African women at the forefront of redress.

This movement will require several soloists, spoken word artists and instrumentalists, louder choruses to make it known, to make it true, easy, rightful, and praiseworthy for African women to own, embody their mental health, find rest and refreshment now and in the future.



Legacy Drums

Feminist Leaders in Action

[What if] we decolonised our view of African women's leadership? What if we praised the ambition and dedication of African women to our communities? What if we collaboratively and sensuously nurtured and inspired them to see the vision of liberated African women and gender-diverse people? What if we prioritised supporting frontline institutions to thrive in their mission for a gender-equal world, an expansive-inclusive democratic space that assures equal participation of women? What if?

When we hesitate, we are not overcome. Sometimes we are listening deeply to birth what's needed, and brings back african feminist joy. The tune makers know better. So we step back to let the drums rise as we count what worked.

1. Pausing to reflect and learn collectively with African women leaders and organisations was a critical experience for AWDF in 2021. We strategised on ways to nurture transformative feminist leadership, including young women leaders and strengthening governance systems for an effective and sustained movement. We insisted on centrality, sovereignty, and authenticity.
2. We worked with women leaders to unpack their experiences and aspirations, interrogate invisible hierarchies, explore unconventional methods, and shift organisational cultures and practices towards becoming more soulful and innovative institutions in the movement.
3. Through the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) forum, a part of AWDF leadership and governance strengthening work, we brought together coaches, new and past leaders, and their peers to boost courage, challenge stigma, and share tactics for resource mobilisation, communications, coalition building, governance, leadership transition, safety, and wellbeing.



4. Rest is a form of resistance and liberation practice. Rest is a divine right and one of the keys to our collective freedom and joy. We started a new tradition - rest week. AWDF for the first time closed its offices to allow the team to replenish. In 2021, we also saw more women in leadership across grantee agencies recognise the importance of scheduling regular self-care and rejuvenation as part of their feminine power and rhythm.
5. The footprints of our ancestresses are a vital source of strength and, their legacies, centre notes to the songs that define us. Last year AWDF commemorated the fifth anniversary of the passing of one of our three co-founders — Joana Silochina Foster, who passed away in 2016. A fierce feminist, Joana was a trailblazer who dared to dream of a different future by and for African women. We remembered Joana's indomitable spirit through a [legacy video](#) highlighting her social justice work. Joana was also co-founder of the Gender and Human Rights Documentation Centre, and worked with the United Nations Mission in Liberia as Senior Gender Advisor. A Ghanaian-British activist, lawyer, and true shero, she made African women everywhere realise that they could achieve anything. Read more about Joana [here](#).

Making their melodies: Stories from the leadership coaching academy

**Names have been changed to maintain the privacy of the individuals and organisations involved.*

Fostering a successful transition.

The Sister-to-Sister Group (SSG) is a women's organisation that nurtures the growth and confidence of young women to become leaders in South Africa.

SSG joined the leadership and governance programme in 2017 amidst an internal leadership transition. Supported by coaches, SSG staff and the board created a safe space to reflect on the organisation's history and vision. This clarified their mandate to deliver sexual and reproductive health rights as some members did not initially support components of this work. Sensitive issues like nepotism that reproduced a culture of complacency were also openly discussed.

With the support of coaches, the board membership was reviewed, resulting in the stepping down of some old members and the recruitment of new ones. During our interactive visits with the SSG in 2021, we were proud to hear the organisation report this change. SSG is currently one of the lead advocates for sexual and reproductive health rights on the continent and uses their story to inspire growth and leadership among feminist organisations.



Khanyisile's Story

“I am Khanyisile. I live in an environment that judges by the outer appearance. People in leadership did not look like me. They were mostly of a different gender and race. This made me shy, and I kept my ideas and dreams to myself. The coaching brought out a new Khanyisile in me. Knowing I had a coach gave me a sense of sure support and guidance.”

Khanyisile believes that travelling outside of her country to attend the CEO Forum made her appreciate the importance of representation of women and people of colour in different leadership spaces.

“I met with amazing women who had worked and achieved positions of influence. Women with skin colour like mine; that I cannot get over. I believe in myself a whole lot more now!”

Overcoming stigma to lead

As a woman living with disability, Zawadi had to overcome stigma to lead with strength.

“The programme built my self-esteem and confidence to articulate sensitive issues in our work like the prevention of gender-based violence. I discovered the power within me which I never knew I had and have been able to transfer this power to the women and girls with disabilities that I work with at the grassroots. I also have a deeper sense of belonging with other staff members as a result of this project.”

These stories are only a drop in the ocean of the enormous experiences of African women breaking through barriers to transform their organisations and communities. In 2021, the AWDF Leadership and Governance Programme continued to bring more women and organisations into spaces, with the goal of shifting beliefs to enable them to do what African women do best—LEAD.

As the evening breeze came over us with sweet sounds of nightfall,
textured harmonies sinking deep, we gave gratitude.
We heard the Djembe call, and we knew it was time for the
collective drummers.
Our paths brought us closer, learning in tune - diverse and inclusive.



Daring Rhythms

Donor Advocacy

The orchestra we sought to build is transformative, inclusive, and resourced so that the ensemble is powerful, rhythmic, and relatable for women on the continent.

One of the critical lessons that resounded in 2021 was that grantmaking is a radical and political commitment. Breaking access barriers to place resources in the hands of women's rights organisations and collectives required us to invest in multidimensional resourcing approaches. We are proud of our continued advocacy through participating in South-led partnerships that aim to decolonise funding ecosystems and our organisational journey to interrogate our funding practices.

Breaking Silence

We are proud to have launched the new initiative, KASA! (*speak out*), in opposition to sexual violence. KASA! combines grant-making; advocacy for sustainable socio-cultural, economic, and political laws/ norms; and community leadership in raising awareness. At various levels, AWDF grew our grantee partners' scope, reaching more partners in Ghana, Senegal and Nigeria. Grantee partners brought innovation and thought to combating sexual violence and together we worked to resource the hybrid of responses that they crafted. We will be sharing more on our KASA! journey!

Commitment to South-led Feminist Partnerships

In 2021, anti-women's rights groups continued to exhibit enormous funding support that ensured increased resourcing to undo the gains achieved by women's rights organisations, activists, and the movement. AWDF centred the voices of frontliners that pushed for long-term, flexible, and innovative resourcing to counter this challenge. Our journey to shift the power in the funding ecosystem scaled up as we continued to actively advocate for funding that centres feminist funds, particularly from Africa and the global South.

“In general, [the] systems of oppression that make this work necessary ... compound even within our successes.

The work does not always fit according to preparations or grant cycles. It is not a one-project work; it is an ongoing process and resources deplete,”

ABANTU for Development, AWDF Grantee Partner

We are proud to have continued to push for funders to listen and integrate the emerging issues from frontline movement voices.



An Inclusive Ensemble:

Campaigns

“It is our contention that racism, sexism, and ableism share a eugenic impulse that needs to be uncovered and felled.”

— Moya Bailey, 2019.

#LoveAndFreedomAfrica

The AWDF AfriPride: Challenging trans and queerphobia

In 2021, we saw increased attacks on sexual minorities in Africa, including in Ghana where AWDF is headquartered. AWDF launched the #LoveAndFreedomAfrica campaign, in partnership with Square Agency, to highlight the negative impact of institutionalised homophobia leading to abuse of the rights of members of LGBTQ communities. The campaign provided informative, enlightening, and inspiring messages about diversity, inclusion, and the importance of building societies that do not condone violence against marginalised people. In addition, AWDF produced a [guide](#) to serve as a learning resource for combating homophobia. AWDF leadership made a public show of solidarity to decry hate crimes targeting LGBTQ.

What if radical love could overtake hate?

What if love and freedom could make societies safer for people whose gender expression, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation go beyond cisgender and heterosexual norms? We are not staying silent; we dismantle all biases that all may be free.

We are the ones.

An Inclusion time check on International Women's Day.

As part of the 2021 international women's day celebrations, AWDF staff Malaika Aryee-Boi and Caren Akoto-Adade re-echoed a time check for the movement through the following blog posts: “Not free while any woman is unfree” and “Choosing to Challenge the status quo”. Their call to us is to look inside and challenge our personal politics in relation to the exclusion of African women with disabilities, a deeper look into homophobia on our continent, and a call to challenge our feminism to be anti-homophobic and queer.



Percussions Amplified:

Knowledge Management

“The colonialists taught us that everything outside the formal classroom setting is not valid. Now they take our stories, repackage, and sell them back to us while insisting that we need ten years of experience and a PhD to qualify.” —
Lucky Kobugabe, Raising Voices

The continuous struggle of many African people against colonial dehumanisation has rested on the development of consciousness, systems of understanding, and practices that challenge the prevailing symbolic order. Throughout the year we worked to optimise feminist research methodologies that lend themselves to **African women’s own science, lived experiences, and ways of knowing and sharing.**

Archive, preserve, and connect

For African women, existing is political. **In some parts of the world, the digital gender divide has been shrinking, but data shows it is growing in Africa (UN Women 2021), with only 26% of women regularly accessing the internet compared to 36% of men on the continent.** AWDF continued connecting African women’s narratives to the world through an online archive—AfriRep and the Sauti Centre (a knowledge platform that hosts over 3,000 materials). We revamped AfriRep and the Sauti Centre into hybrid archival spaces that translate knowledge resources into conversations, experiential learning, author brown bags, and other audio-visual knowledge interactions. By the end of 2021, AfriRep registered over **15,000** users accessing materials globally, representing a **6.31%** increase in new users, the majority of whom were from the African continent.

Nurturing capacities to shape narratives

AWDF held the Women’s Writers Workshop in November 2021, providing the space and resources to convene aspiring African women writers and feminist activists, to enhance their skills, to enable them to frame their own narratives about issues that affect African women and are of concern to them. Held virtually on Zoom, over two weeks, the workshop hosted a total of 42 participants from 15 African countries and the diaspora.



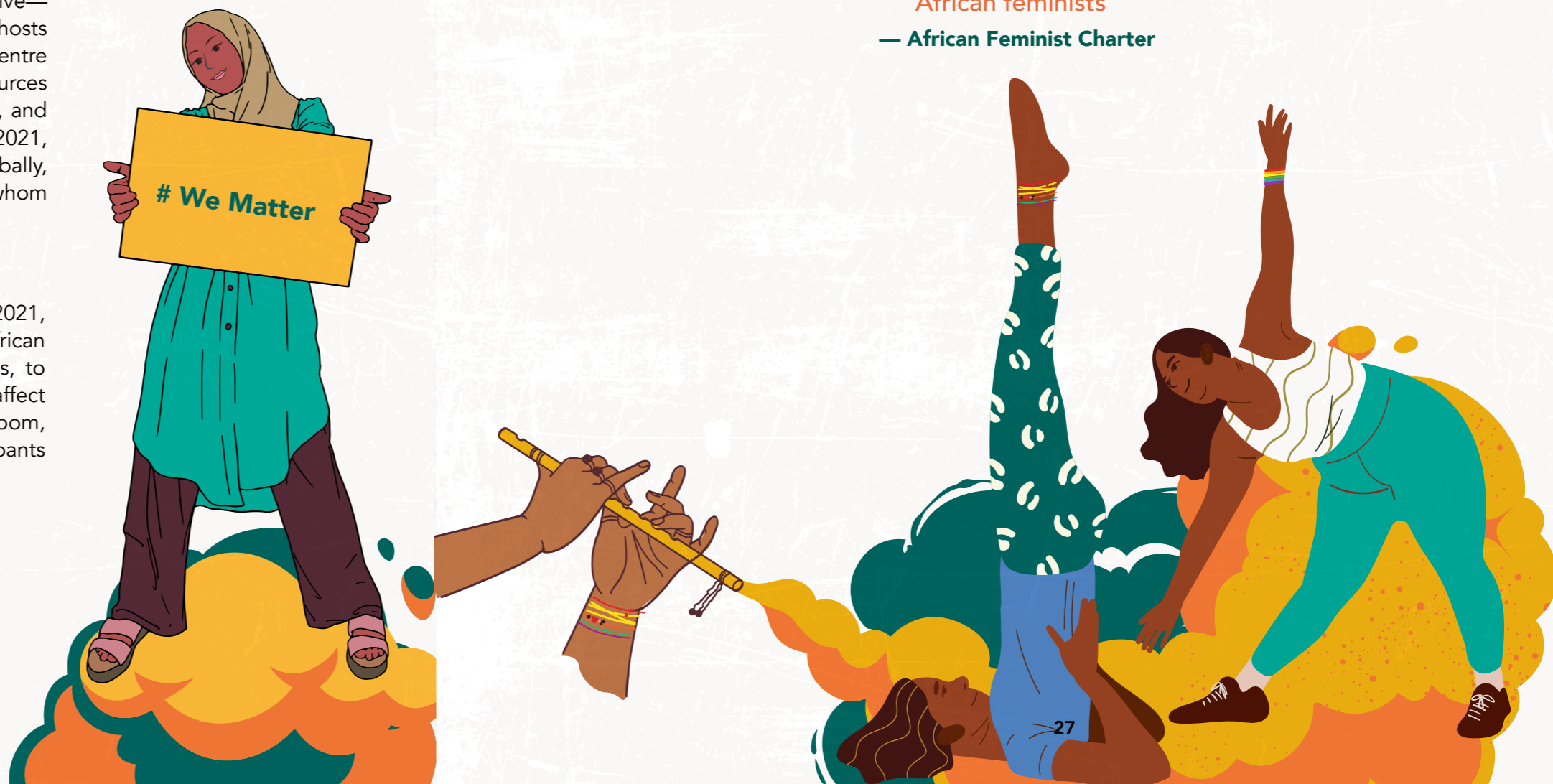
The writers’ workshops continued to increase the numbers of female voices of authority in public spaces that contribute to changing perceptions around women’s rights and ultimately to changing policy. The participants have since submitted written pieces, including articles and poetry in public journals and other non-text platforms.

Resourcing the movement to generate our own evidence

AWDF, Raising Voices, and the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) unveiled an **introductory guide** for the creation of prevention knowledge and evidence for African women’s rights organizations in a webinar. It was themed **Decolonised and Inclusive: Reflections on the generation of VAW prevention evidence for African Women’s Rights Organisations.** AWDF stood in solidarity with participants’ commitment to generate knowledge and evidence on prevention of violence against African women. We agreed on the importance of utilising African women’s wisdoms and age-old ways of researching, finding, understanding, learning, and taking action against violence.

Djembe drum at twilight. Pause. Linger and listen

“We invoke the memory of those women whose names are hardly ever recorded in any history books; we insist that it is a profound insult to claim that feminism was imported into Africa from the West. We reclaim and assert the long and rich tradition of African women’s resistance to patriarchy in Africa. We henceforth claim the right to theorise for ourselves, write for ourselves, strategise for ourselves, and speak for ourselves as **African feminists**”
— **African Feminist Charter**



Praise for the Artists:

AWDF Funders, Financials, Grantee partners and staff

AWDF is grateful for the phenomenal African feminists working on the frontline. Your tireless efforts and commitment to the rights of all women are incredible. Our gratitude also goes to the funders who made this work possible. We celebrate you.

Our Grantee Partners

ALGERIA

- Association Djazairouna des familles victimes du terrorisme islamiste-Algeria

ANGOLA

- Arquivo de Identidade Angolano
- Associação Mwana Pwo

BENIN

- Association BIOWA- Benin
- Groupe d'Appui aux Initiatives Féminines pour un Développement Intégré et Durable (GAIFEDID)

BURKINA FASO

- Association Aide Moi à être mère (AEM)
- Association Relwende Pam-Panga des femmes handicapées/Burkina Faso
- Women Environmental Programme Burkina Faso

BURUNDI

- Femmes Unies pour la Paix dans la Région des Grands Lacs-FUPGL
- Young Women's Knowledge and Leadership Institute Burundi-YOWLI

CAMEROON

- Association pour la Santé et la Prospérité (ASSAPRO)
- Common Action for Gender Development (COMAGEND)
- Community Education For Life (CEFLife)
- Women In Front Cameroon
- WRIGTS SOCIETY-Cameroon (Women's Rights Integration In Governance and Transforming Society)

CAPE VERDE

- Cape Verdean Association to Fight Gender-Based Violence

COTE D'IVOIRE

- Stop au Chat Noir

DJIBOUTI

- Djibouti women's rights initiative

DRC

- Action de Solidarité des Femmes pour la Femme et l'Enfant en sigle (ASOFFE)
- Action pour la Promotion des femmes (APfemme)
- Association des Jeunes filles et Femmes Autochtones Engagées dans la Protection

de l'Environnement et la Lutte Contre la Pauvreté Féminine « AFPE »

- Focus Droits et Accès
- Forum des Femmes pour la Gouvernance des ressources naturelles
- Women In Action for Human Dignity, WAHDI asbl- DRC

ETHIOPIA

- Faith in Action

GHANA

- ABANTU for Development
- Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre (GSHRDC)
- Iseguri Initiative
- Savannah Women Integrated Development Agency, Ghana
- Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) Ghana
- Women's Initiative for Self Empowerment (WISE)

GUINEA CONAKRY

- Today's Women International Network ou Réseau International des Femmes d'Aujourd'hui - TWIN/RIFA

IRAQ

- Baghdad Women Association

KENYA

- African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET)
- AkiraChix
- Boxgirls Kenya
- Flone Initiative
- Hope Foundation for African Women (HFAW)
- Hope to the Vulnerable Communities (HOVUC)
- International Community of Women Living with HIV - Kenya Chapter (ICWK)
- International Community of Women Living with HIV-Eastern Africa (ICWEA)
- Kombato Christian Hope for HIV/AIDS Orphans and Widows Program
- Most at Risk Young Mothers and Teenage Girls living with HIV Initiative (MOYOTE)
- Rising Women Organization
- Solidarity With Women And Girls in Distress (SWAGID)
- The Community Advocacy and Awareness Trust - CRAWN Trust
- Ufanisi Women Group (UWG)
- Women Beyond Barriers (WBB)
- Women Empowerment Group
- Women for Cancer Early Detection and Treatment
- Women Spaces Africa
- Youth Changers Kenya (YCK)

LEBANON

- Anti-Racism Movement
- KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation

MALAWI

- Human Rights Of Women And Girls With Disabilities In Malawi (WAG Disability

Rights)

- Young Women Rise (YOWORI)

MOROCCO

- L'Union Féministe Libre (U.F.L)

MOZAMBIQUE

- Movimento das Jovens Feministas de Moçambique-MovFemme (Young Feminist Movement of Mozambique)

NAMIBIA

- ATHENA

NIGER

- Association Nigérienne pour le Progrès et la Défense des Droits de la Femme (ANPDDF)
- Cellule Nigérienne des Jeunes Filles Leaders

NIGERIA

- Advocacy for women with Disabilities Initiative (AWWDI)
- African Girls Empowerment Network
- Alliances for Africa (AfA)
- BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights (BAOBAB)
- Centre for 21st Century Issues(C21st)
- Circuit Pointe
- Girl Child Art Foundation
- Girls Inspired Development Network (GIDN)
- Hands Off Initiative
- Leadership Initiative for Youth Empowerment
- OhLeSe
- Partnership for Justice
- Project Alert on Violence Against Women
- She Writes Woman Mental Health Initiative
- Women Against Violence and Expediency Handling Initiative
- Women and Community

Livelihood Foundation

- Women in Management, Business and Public Service -WIMBIZ
- Women Information Network (WINET)
- Women's Initiative for Self-Actualization (WISA)
- Women's Rights and Health Project (WRAHP)
- Women's Right Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA)

PALESTINE

- Mothers School Society
- Stars of Hope Society for Empowerment of Women with Disabilities
- YWCA of Palestine

RWANDA

- Burera Volunteers for Development Association
- Community Health and Development Initiative (CHADI)
- Rwanda National Association of Deaf Women (RNADW)
- Rwsa United Youth Association
- SPECTRA: Young Feminists Activism

SENEGAL

- And Soppeku
- Association des Juristes Sénégalaises (AJS)
- JGEN Women Global Entrepreneurship
- Réseau Ouest Africain des Jeunes Femmes Leaders-Sénégal
- Sourire de Femme

SIERRA LEONE

- Women's Health and Reproductive Rights Organization (WHRRO)

SOUTH AFRICA

- Ikhwezi Women's Support Center



- Initiative for Strategic Litigation in Africa (ISLA)
- One in Nine Campaign
- Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Task Force (SWEAT)
- Soul City Institute for Social Justice
- The Women's Legal Center (WLC)

SOUTH SUDAN

- Global Empowerment for Poverty Alleviation - GEPA
- Women for Change

TANZANIA

- Readership for Learning and Development (SOMA)
- Women With Dignity (WWD)

TOGO

- Réseau des Femmes et Développement de la région des Savanes (REFED/S)

UGANDA

- Artivism, and Forever Media
- Emanzi Community Empowerment Foundation Uganda
- FitcliqueAfrica/

- Fitclique256(U)
- Health And Rights Initiative Lira
- Imarisha Dada Uganda
- International Women's Coffee Alliance (IWCA) Uganda chapter
- Irise Institute East Africa (IIEA)
- Kabarole Women Health Support Initiative
- Kasese Women's Health Support Initiative (KWHSI)
- Kitabu Integrated Development Association
- Paradigm for Social Justice and Development
- Resilient Women's Organization
- Shared Action Africa
- Simma Africa Creative Arts Foundation
- The Mentoring and Empowerment Programme for Young Women (MEMPROW)
- Trans Youth Initiative – Uganda
- Trans Youth Initiative-Uganda(TYI-Uganda)
- Women Human Rights Defenders Network Uganda
- Women Leadership Development - WLEDE

YEMEN

- Basement Cultural Foundation

ZAMBIA

- Young Women in Action (YWA)

ZIMBABWE

- Chengeto Zimbabwe Trust
- Citizen in Action Southern Africa
- Female Student Network Trust
- Institute for Community Development in Zimbabwe (ICODZIM)
- Katswe Sistahood
- Pan African Positive Women's Coalition-Zimbabwe (PAPWCZ)
- Tag a Life International (TaLI)
- Women and Law in Southern Africa-Zimbabwe
- Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ)

Joyous sounds in the movement, 2021 playlists

Before we tell you about the artists that make up the AWDF team, come share in our music some of the playlists that gave us joy in 2021. Every month we came together to meet about our business, but first, we danced in unforgettable sessions called *Get down, Breakdown*. We were refreshed to show up and do our work well.

Find some of our favourite music on Youtube [<https://bit.ly/3C5mg59>] featuring artists from everywhere including:

Jannah | Voice Only by Muad ft. Zain Bhikha **Pump Up The Jam** by Technotronic **Hosanna / For Those Who Are To Come** by Hillsong Worship **African Relaxing Music** by Tuko Pamoja-Buddha's Lounge **Great Is Thy Faithfulness** by Maranatha! Music **Papa Ngwasuma** by Koffi Olomide **Gal- Bae Batla** by Mlesho ft Charma **Shekere** by Yemi Alade Ft Angelique Kidjo **Thy Grace [Part II]** by Kofi Kinaata **Dégaine** by Aya Nakamura feat Damso **See What the Lord has Done** by Nathaniel Bassey **The Story I will Tell** by Naomi Raine ftl Maverick City Music and TRIBL **Am I Wrong** by Nico & Vinz **Me, Myself I** by Joan Armatrading **Girl In The Mirror** by Sophia Grace ft Silento I wake up every day like hello beautiful [TikTok Song]Crazy Network **MIKA** by Grace Kelly **Vai Devagar** by Preto show ftAnselmo Ralph (Prod:Teo no Beatz) **Golden** by Jill Scott **Read All About It** by Professor Green ft Emeli SandelStephen Manderson **Something Inside So Strong** by Kenny Rogers **Good Soil** by Chibundu Onuzo **Live and Die in Afrika** by Sauti Sol **Stand up** by Cynthia Erivo **Malaika** by Nyashinski **Kora Music from West Africa** by Sona Jobarteh & Band **Buga** by Kizz Daniel ft Tekno **Pula** by Spoek Mathambo, The San of Platfontein, Mash.O, DJ Spoko, Bheki Cele and Thulasizwe **Shay'mpembe** by DJ Mavuthela X Swizz Pinache X Ribby **Shabasiko** by Phillbill ft Kétia Anzouer **Coming with fire** by Wiyala **Obiaa** by Akwaboah ft Cina Soul **Monalisa** by Lojay X Sarz X Chris Brown **Ava** by Pip Millett **Healer** by Sampa The Great **Queen Shooter**



Our Artists, the AWDF Staff

Programmes

Abena Bomo Afari, Abigail Nti-Tenewaah, Alexandra Asamoah Anang, Anatu Ben-Lawal, Ayesha Abukari, Beatrice Boakye-Yiadom, Dinnah Nabwire, Fadzai Muparutsa, Gifty Ayebea Anim, Joyce Renee Ago Djanie, Lana Razafimanantsoa, Malaika Aryee-Boi, Mary Akukumah, Maureen Douabou, Nana Bamea Kyei-Boadu, Nancy Akanbombire, Pontso Mafethe, Rose Buabeng, Shirley Serwaa Boakye, Valindra Chaparadza, Zeytuna Abdella Azasoo

Françoise Moudouthe
CEO

Partnerships and Outreach

Abigail Burgesson, Ablodegbo Ameyo Dekoleadenu, Afua Gyapomaa, Caren Akoto-Adade, Fauzia Kassim Ziblim, Françoise Moudouthe, Lydia Maclean

Operations and Finance

Abigail Ninson, Afi Quashie, Belinda Amankwah, Emmanuel Boakye, Felix Odei, Gertrude Annoh-Quarshie, Hellen Nutakor, Janet Okumi, Mathew Iddi, Mavis Gardiner, Mohammed Sulemana, Sarah Ansah, Sheila Anum, Sylvia Commey, Vivian Korkor Acheampong

Our Board Members

Hilda M. Tadria, Founder
Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi, Founder
Taaka Awori, Board Member
Ndeye Sow, Board Chair
Arielle Enniful, Treasurer
Agnes Utunga Phiri, Board Member
Françoise Moudouthe, Chief Executive Officer



Our Funders

Bilateral/Multilateral Agencies

Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Global Affairs Canada

Public Foundations

Comic Relief
Equality Fund
Prospera International Network of Women's Funds

Private Foundations

Anonymous Institutional Donor A
Anonymous Institutional Donor B
Fidelity Investment Charitable Gift Fund
Ford Foundation
Foundation for A Just Society
Libra Foundation
New Venture Fund
NoVo Foundation Fund of Tides Foundation
Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA)
Stephen Lewis Foundation
Silicon Valley Community Foundation
Nommontu Fund
Goldman Sachs Philanthropy Fund

Our Financials



2021 Total inflows: **USD \$12,879,182²**

2021 Total expenditures: **USD \$12,495,522**

Total grants awarded in 2021:
USD \$9,922,219

Total finances—fundraising and communication:
USD \$487,891


Total finances—capacity-building activities:
USD \$68,177

Total finances—management and institutional development:
USD \$528,673

Total finances—programme management:
USD \$1,187,558

Total finances—other programmes:
USD \$301,004

*//2 This represents total funds raised of U\$29.5 for the year, less deferred income for future initiatives.//



*Please refer to our 2021 audited accounts for a comprehensive look at our financial undertakings for the year.

Future Notes:

Marvellous Tunes to Come

May age, veils, gender taboos, power grabbers,
and excluders never defeat

your process or stifle your music,

Stand on the front stage as tall and as wide as
you wish.

Bi Kidude did it in Zanzibar years ago, singing
Taarab, unveiling

sensuousness trailblazing, healing, laughing,
leading, unique wisdoms,

storytelling, and many more.

The price has already been paid forward.

Beat your drum in public, wear your own crown.

Yes, we are the ones we have been
waiting for.



Authors: AWDF, Amanda T. Agaba, Dinnah Nabwire
Editors: Tara Agaba, Pontso Mafethe, Malaika Aryee-Boi, Françoise Moudouthe
Translators: Bolingo Consult Ltd
Design and Layout: NextLevel Stories.

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