

Vibrant Canvas

African Women's
Development Fund

Annual Report 2019



AFRICAN
WOMEN'S
DEVELOPMENT
FUND

This is our 2019 annual report.

Yet this report is written in 2020 at a time when the world is responding to the impact of the Covid-19 virus pandemic and global protests around injustice, inequality and anti-blackness. Although that is a story to be painted at another time, present day realities have made clear the importance of the intersectional feminist struggle in Africa and around the world. Our work as African feminists is central to the vibrant canvas that will move us beyond fear, beyond hate and into that just dreamscape that we are building.

Contents

**An
Introduction
To The Theme
4**

**Message
From The
CEO
7**

**The Canvas
10**

**The Colours
13**

**Other
Highlights!
19**

**The
Foundation
23**

**Splashes Of
Light
26**

**Radiant
Designs
29**

**The Artists
32**

**Finances
35**

**Thank You
37**

An Introduction to the theme

One day, a woman standing outside of her house decided to paint her door red. She bought paint and a paintbrush, she took the ladder out from inside of the house just in case, and she began painting. When she was finished, she stepped back to look at it. Although she was pleased with the colour, she felt it needed something more. She met her neighbour on the way back to the paint shop.

They returned to the house and together they splashed a royal blue on the door. When they felt that it was enough, they stepped back and looked at it. Although they were pleased with the splashes of designs and the combination of the colours, they felt it needed something more. When they went back to the paint shop, they ran into some of their neighbours.

They bought more colours and together, they painted more designs. This went on and on and on. After five trips to the paint shop, with nearly all of the neighbourhood women involved, they ran out of colours and began mixing to create new shades, to fill in what was missing.

People said they had gone mad. The door had what looked like all the colours in all of the world, but the women kept coming up with more. They designed in geometrical shapes, they created familiar and unfamiliar images, they painted from memory, sometimes not their own, sometimes so deep into the past, so far into the future that time became something altogether different. One day, as the women were painting, somebody walked by and asked what they were doing. One of the women turned around and said, "We are making the world."

Vibrant Canvas is the world told by African women, created and founded in their experiences. It is an African feminist imagining and an African feminist creation.

In 2019, AWDF granted more money to women's organisations than in any previous years, and we supported the largest number of grantees in our herstory, strengthening their organisations' systems, skills and cultures. We convened, produced and shared knowledge, hosted artists and claimed power in a chorus of feminist voices. We stretched across Africa – North, South, East and West, and further into the Middle East. We grew, in scale and scope. We saw and created change in process and outcome. The canvas soaked in colour, bore new patterns and it reflected light.

Sometimes the larger a thing becomes, the harder it is to find cohesion, a meaning and a purpose. But for AWDF, 2019 meant expansion with connection, it meant a deepening of the work for equality and justice and an engagement in the interconnected realities of womanhood. AWDF and its partners gathered the pieces, collected colour, stretched the canvas and painted for the telling of a story. We revealed a world, and created new designs in glimpses into the world of the future.

Vibrant canvas is a look into the world made by African feminists over the course of 365 days in 2019.



Message from the CEO

Message from the CEO

Welcome to AWDF's painting of the work we did in 2019 to support African women activists as they painted the larger canvas – imagining and pushing to build and make real the just, the loving and the better world that we want to live in.

Sometimes it feels as if AWDF is on a journey of incredible speed. In 2019 our momentum and growth felt like we were careening down complex and often hazardous mountain roads, our heads moving faster than our bodies could. Perhaps that has always been the case for AWDF and for African feminists in general. We dream of better worlds and we know that we will not reach them unless we make them happen and our dreams are often higher, further away, and more challenging than our bodies can keep up with. In some ways this is a beautiful challenge, an inheritance from our mothers and ancestors who dreamt of freedom in captivity; who envisioned equality during oppression; who imagined new ways of being when old ones tried to hold them down. Yet it is also one of the core dangers of our movements. 2019 saw too many of our sisters, mothers, and activist colleagues succumb, in different ways, to the unrelenting stress of trying to make change in a world where the

powerful find new and more nuanced ways of resisting change. While we mourn their grief, their ill health, and in some cases, their deaths, we also celebrate their solidarity, their commitment and their contribution to our feminist dreamscapes. Part of that celebration must be ensuring that we come into stronger ways of solidarity and support for all activists, and that we do more about activist wellbeing.

AWDF cannot make all of that happen – but within our mandate we can work to support, in a myriad of ways, the activists who paint those canvases. So, in 2019 we were able to disburse the largest grantmaking budget in our herstory. We partnered with other organisations to disburse additional funds where the money did not come through AWDF but where we were part of charting the path, raising the money, administering the funds and monitoring progress.

Personally, one of the achievements that I am proudest of in 2019 was our ability to work with and influence donors and philanthropists to give more, give more effectively and more relevantly to African women's rights movements and organisations – not always easy, not always successful, but always worth the endeavour.

I hope you enjoy reading of our efforts. And as you read of our growth in activities and income, spare a thought for the hard work that it has meant in making sure our internal work matches our external work. In 2019, that included a series of departmental assessments led by external collaborators to help us build on our strengths and continue on the journey of filling gaps and making AWDF as strong a feminist organisation as we can. This work continues – helping us to learn and unlearn, to be more consistent in linking our values to our work, and to making sure that our internal operations match our external advocacy. It is an exhilarating, sometimes painful, always enlightening process. Neither our strengths nor our imperfections will stop us in striving to be better.

On a more personal level, 2019 was full of transitional brush strokes for me. In

2018 I spoke with our Board of Directors about beginning a process to find a new CEO for the organisation, to happen in 2020. I've loved my time at AWDF, with all of the highs and lows. Some people have asked why I would leave at a time when the organisation is both growing and more financially stable. Yet, that is exactly the right time for a transition. As activists, we speak of feminist leadership, an important part of which is allowing new growth in our movements, enabling new experiences, and supporting intergenerational dialogue and learning. I believe in that, and I am happy to be able to move on and allow someone with her own vision and energy to continue to build the AWDF legacy. So, in 2019 there were many last brushstrokes for me, as we prepared the way for a new and dynamic leadership.

I hope that as you read this report, you will think about how you are contributing to the vibrant canvas of African women's activism and that you will take joy in joining with AWDF on a journey as we support that activism.

Theo Sowa



The image features a white background with several overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes. At the top center, there is a dark teal circle. Below it, a large teal triangle points downwards. A yellow triangle points upwards, overlapping the teal triangle. A large, irregular pink shape is positioned at the bottom right, overlapping the yellow triangle. The text 'The Canvas' is centered within the teal triangle.

The Canvas

The Canvas



These figures are a trail of AWDF's statistical achievements since 2001

The canvas is women's rights organisations and movements in Africa and across the globe. The canvas is our homes, our communities, our daily lives, our past, present and future. The canvas is our world. And, for the purposes of this report, the canvas is AWDF.

The African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) was created in 2000 by three African women, Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi, Hilda Tادريا and the late Joana Foster who saw the need to redefine philanthropy by aligning it to the needs of African women's organisations. Nineteen years later, it has become a leader in organising and delivering equitable feminist resourcing and a prominent advocate for women's funds. Nineteen years later and this is just the beginning. AWDF continues to resource and anchor women's rights organisations and movements and transform development spaces by shifting power to the centre of the work.

AWDF subscribes to the Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists and we work according to the values on page 12.

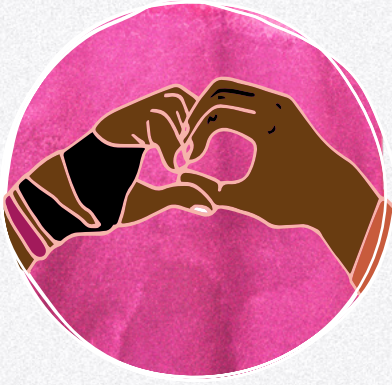


Vision

A world where all African women live in peace, with dignity and justice and where there is equality and respect for women's rights.

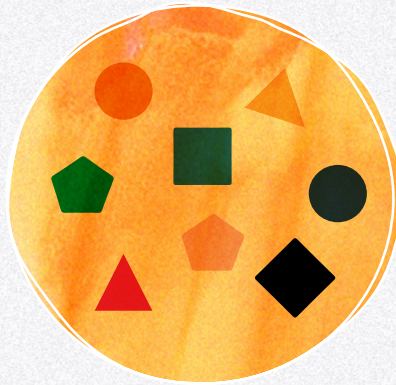
Mission

To mobilise financial, human and material resources to support initiatives for transformation led by African women, women's rights organisations and African women's movements.



Respect

We believe in the personhood of African women, in women's bodily integrity and full autonomy, in valuing and rewarding women's paid and unpaid labour and we believe that our rights are an inalienable, indivisible and integral part of universal human rights.



Diversity

We believe in non-discrimination, proactive inclusiveness and diversity in all areas of AWDF's operations and programmes.



Feminist Leadership

We believe in nurturing feminist principles and promoting feminist leadership, including young women's leadership, and we promote inter-generational transfers of skills and knowledge.



Professionalism, Accountability and Stewardship

We believe in prudent, ethical and responsible stewardship of all funds and resources in our care and we work for the growth and long-term sustainability of organisations led and managed by women in transparent and progressive ways. We encourage positive approaches to individual and collective physical, emotional and intellectual wellbeing.



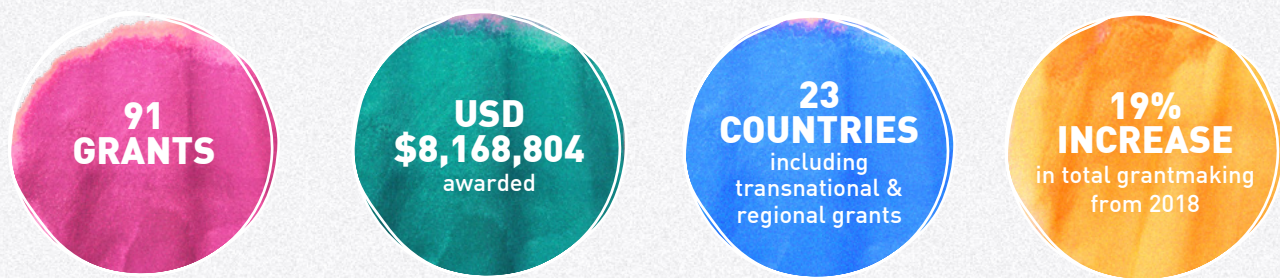
Solidarity and Partnerships

We believe that change happens through collective action. We recognise that our work is linked to movements for justice and equality across the world and we work through multiple partnerships to dismantle discriminatory and patriarchal systems.

The image features a white background with several overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes. At the top, there is a yellow trapezoidal shape. Below it, a red trapezoidal shape overlaps the yellow one. A large purple triangle overlaps both the yellow and red shapes. In the bottom left corner, there is a dark purple, irregular, organic shape. The text 'The Colours' is centered in white, bold font, overlapping the red and purple shapes.

The Colours

The Colours



The year in numbers

In 2019, we were able to give more money in grants than in any other previous years. AWDF grantee partners, through the diversity of their work and processes, created changes in public discourse and visibility; they built skills and analysis, raised awareness and changed consciousness in their communities about the rights of women and the support and services available to them; they built and strengthened movements and consolidated alliances; created knowledge products; and they pushed for and achieved changes in laws, policies and regulations that advance women's rights and gender equality. They, in short, moved us forward in our push for a new world.

The Amplify Change Partnership: A Breakdown in Numbers

Amplify Change is a collaborative funding initiative on sexual and reproductive health rights. It is co-managed by AWDF, Global Fund for Women and Mannion Daniels. AWDF is fully involved in the development, management and implementation of Amplify Change and also oversees 15% of the collaborative's live portfolio. This includes application reviews, pre-contracting processes, managing the grant and the grantees as well as the post-grant making activities such as field visits.

Funding for these grants go through Amplify Change and are therefore not included in the AWDF grants figures presented in this report. Rather, they are indicated separately here.

2014 – 2019

Grants since its inception:
884 grants worth Euro
102,000,000

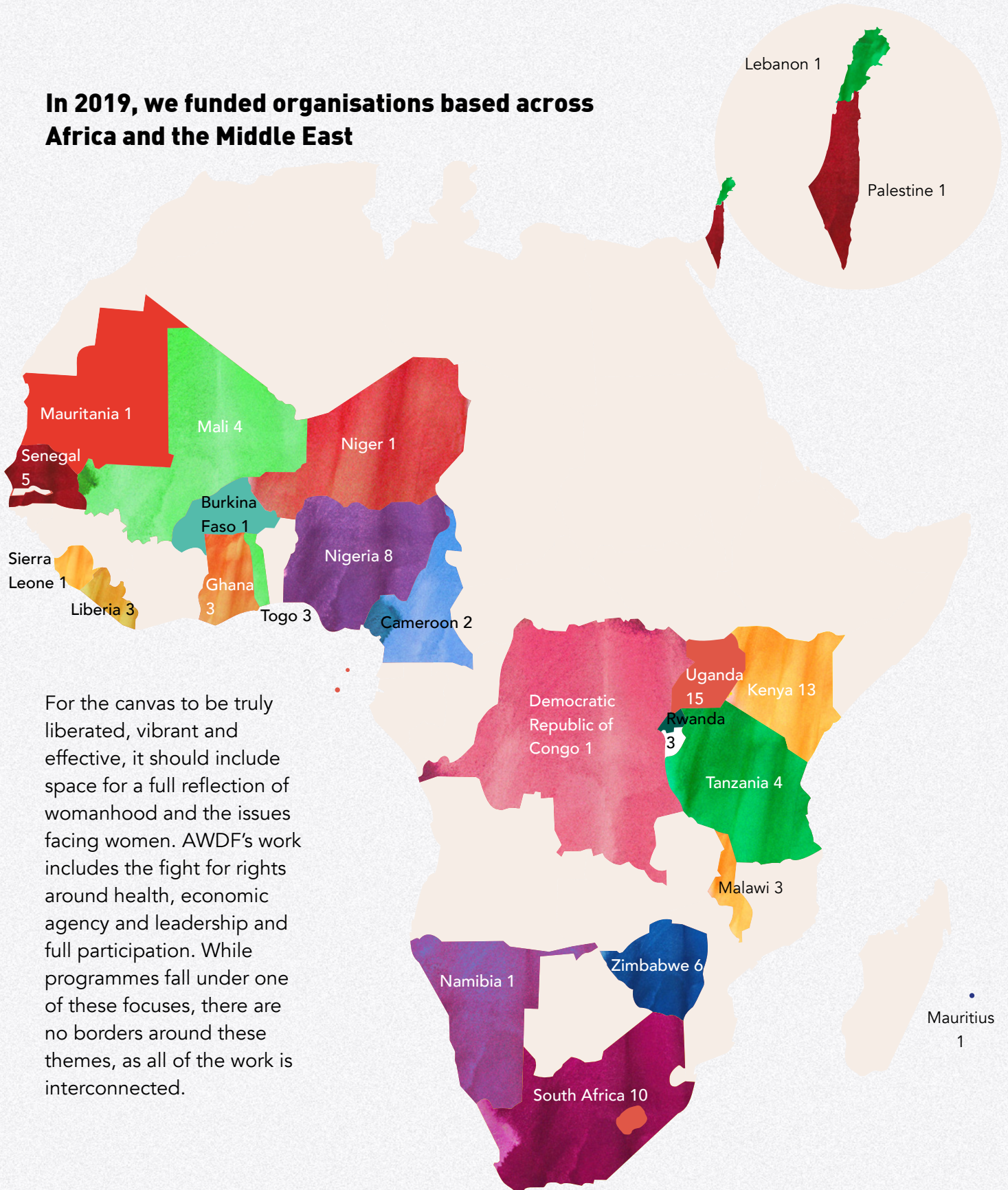
2019

Total live grants: 321 grants
worth Euro 75,000,000

Total new and renewal
grants: 173 grants worth
Euro 21,119,235

*(Source; Amplify Change Grants
Data base, June 2020)*

In 2019, we funded organisations based across Africa and the Middle East



For the canvas to be truly liberated, vibrant and effective, it should include space for a full reflection of womanhood and the issues facing women. AWDF's work includes the fight for rights around health, economic agency and leadership and full participation. While programmes fall under one of these focuses, there are no borders around these themes, as all of the work is interconnected.



Body and Health Rights

53 grants
\$4,399,512



Economic Security and Justice

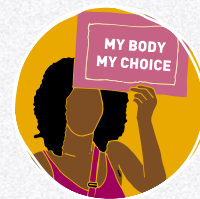
24 grants
\$2,620,980



Leadership, Participation and Peace

14 grants
\$1,148,312

Body and Health Rights



The aim of the Body and Health Rights portfolio is to eliminate violence against women and girls and to ensure respect for women's bodily integrity and autonomy. The grantee partners in this field worked on a range of issues including intimate partner violence, rape culture, sexual harassment, the bodily rights of women with disabilities, female genital mutilation, and the rights of LGBTI communities. Grantee partners expanded their work in scope and scale, they contributed to knowledge products, built local, national and regional alliances and networks, pushed for and achieved policy reform and law implementation around violence against women and discriminatory statutes, increased awareness of women whose bodily rights have been violated on their rights and services available to them, and increased participation of and dialogue around the bodily rights of women with disabilities.

Expanding the Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL)

The Coalition of African Lesbians expanded their work to three countries – Benin, Rwanda and Tunisia! Exciting news for the growth and deepening of the LGBTI movement on the continent and the creation of cross country learning and collaboration at sub-regional and regional levels.

Traditional Chiefs in Togo Sign Declaration to Abolish Harmful Practices Against Women

After conducting advocacy trainings in six districts for 44,710 women and girls in Dankpen, Togo around detrimental widowhood rites and rituals, ONG ALAFIA's work led to a signed declaration by traditional chiefs to abolish harmful practices that constitute violence against women. And the work continues - ONG ALAFIA is in the monitoring phase of the project to ensure that the declaration is enforced and trainees, who are now women peer educators, are training other women in their region on VAW and advocacy techniques.

Economic Security and Justice



The aim of the Economic Security and Justice portfolio is to ensure and protect full economic rights and justice for women. The grantee partners worked on issues including the labour rights of market women and informal sector workers, women cross border traders, land reform and inheritance rights, seed and food sovereignty, climate justice, labour rights, migrant rights, maternity leave and childcare, unpaid care work, and the economic and labour rights of differently abled women. The grantee partners moved the economic justice narrative and agenda further, they strengthened market women's leadership and participation, pushed for changes in land, customary and family laws/policies, and increased women's access to finance and resources.

Abolishing Kafala - Fighting for the Rights of Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon

The Kafala (sponsorship) system governs the 250,000 women migrant domestic workers (mainly from Africa and Asia) who live and work in Lebanon. The Anti-Racism Movement (ARM) has used advocacy campaigns, capacity building, raising public awareness, alliance and solidarity building and the creation of safe spaces through their three community centres, to challenge the racist and class based discriminatory Kafala system that cheapens migrant labour and subjugates migrant workers. They have built a national movement in Lebanon that is being recognised globally. Through the work of organisations like ARM, the movement to end the Kafala system grows stronger and the global networks around labour and migrant rights continues to expand.

Changing Local Laws to Promote Labour Rights for Women and Girls with Disabilities in Uganda

"Sensitisation of duty bearers, employers and the general public has helped [in the] understanding and appreciation of women and girls with disabilities [WGDs] as rights holders," said a representative of Integrated Disabled Women Activities (IDIWA) of Uganda when asked how they have ensured success in their advocacy work for the labour and economic rights of WGDs. Their work, which included direct and media level engagement, led to the development and adoption of district-level ordinances to promote greater access to employment for WGDs in the Iganga and Mayuge Districts. And, because process is impact, the ordinances were developed through consultations with WGDs and district political and technical personnel.



Leadership, Participation and Peace



The aim of the Leadership, Participation and Peace portfolio is to expand democratic space and sustain inclusive governance and equal political participation of women. The grantee partners worked on issues including leadership training, media training, advocacy and law/policy reforms to ensure equal representation of women in decision-making positions. The grantee partners made significant gains in skills training, awareness campaigns and policy/law reforms around equal representation and the campaigns and subsequent wins of women in leadership positions at local and national levels.

Affirmative Action Bill in Ghana – A Win in Sight

Abantu for Development in Ghana has been working on mobilising and strengthening advocacy for the passage of the Affirmative Action Bill into law for several years. After extensive advocacy and awareness raising amongst various networks of women, women's organisations, youth groups, faith-based organisations, traditional leaders, the media and the general public; an Affirmative Action Bill Coalition was formed made up of 152 CSOs, media groups, and individuals. Abantu was elected as the host of the coalition. After a meeting with the Speaker of Parliament in which he pledged his support of the bill, the President of Ghana mandated that the bill appear in parliament within the first quarter of 2020.

Women Leaders in Government in Zimbabwe

Advocacy efforts and lobbying for women's inclusion in leadership by the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ), led to 34 women acquiring leadership positions at various levels and boards. These appointments included those in the Ministry of Defence; Ministry of Youth, Sports, Arts and Recreation; Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services; Ministry of Environment, Tourism and Hospitality Industry; and the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare.



Other Highlights!

Other Highlights!

Creating the Data, Building the Tools

The rates of violence against women (VAW) are at pandemic levels across the world. At the same time, the work of prevention pioneered by women's rights organisations has given us concrete hope, tools and processes to bring the violence to an end. In 2019, African feminists led efforts to eliminate VAW fuelled by gender inequality and patriarchal power and the field of evidence-based prevention continued to grow with promising methodologies for tackling the root causes of violence and transforming norms and behaviours. Through this work, it became clear that prevention is possible within project time frames by using key principles of VAW prevention, securing sufficient financial and human resources, and, ensuring feminist-driven leadership.

Pushing the work further along, AWDF generated tools and strengthened networks between African women's organisations dedicated to VAW prevention and response, and researchers, programmers and funders working on evidence-based prevention. In August 2019 AWDF convened African practitioners, researchers, and donors in Accra, Ghana to explore the evolving field of prevention and ways to centre African feminist analysis and women's organisations. The [convening](#) included 29 participants from African women's funds, private philanthropy, programming, research and community organisations including leading African women's

organisations in the prevention field. In partnership with Raising Voices, we launched a [primer](#) for African women's organisations that outlines key terms, trends, approaches, the existing evidence base and feminist principles to inform prevention programming and address major questions in the field.

Key Principles of Feminist VAW Prevention

- Use an intersectional gender-power analysis
- Work across the socio-ecological model
- Include a sustained, multi-sectoral, and coordinated strategy
- Be informed by theory and evidence
- Inspire personal and collective reflection
- Foster aspiration and activism

Bread and Butter

The Bread and Butter Series was launched as a knowledge production project led by AWDF to deepen analysis around African feminist economic futures. The series features feminist critiques as well as future-focused alternative imaginings of our micro and macro-economic models and interventions. It stands in contrast to the prevailing wisdom of economics being a white, male and Western concept out of reach for African women. Instead, it frames economics as a matter of politics with power at its centre. The series is a part of a larger movement building process and an ongoing contribution to an ever-growing collection of knowledge products, data and documentation pushing for economic justice through African feminist economic alternatives. Through this programme, we saw African feminist writers proactively seek the opportunity to contribute research on macro and micro economic issues affecting them and women and girls across the continent.

As Labour Activists, we dream...

- 1 For women to have the right to rest
- 2 For unpaid work to be recognised and incorporated into the national economy
- 3 For women to stop being penalised for having children
- 4 For equal pay and joy for the work you do
- 5 For women living with disabilities to have the chance to show society that they are productive and can impact the society in a real way
- 6 For justice to be served in the world of women's work

- Participants, AWDF Labour Rights grantee convening

"Women's economic empowerment must be understood and redefined as far more than women's ability to compete equally in existing markets, or as the beneficial outputs of their contribution to economic growth. It must include women's access to and control over economic resources including land, access to decent work, control over their own time and meaningful participation in economic decision-making at all levels from the household to international institutions and policy spaces."

- Crystal Simeoni, FEMNET, writer in the Bread and Butter Series

... And Roses Too

That now famous slogan, "We Want Bread, and Roses Too," is as important today as it was over a hundred years ago when it was first recorded in the streets. AWDF's work around labour rights centres the belief that the right to work must mean the right to dignified, safe, and equitable work. As part of this work, AWDF held a labour rights convening in November 2019 with six grantee organisations (Association des Femmes Handicapées de Madagascar – Madagascar; FIDA Kenya – Kenya; NETRIGHT – Ghana; Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc (ADFM) – Morocco; Anti-Racism Movement – Lebanon; and Integrated Disabled Women Activities- Uganda) to discuss their work and share experiences around advocacy for women's labour rights. In spite of the geographic diversity of the participants, there were clear commonalities in the constraints and challenges in their advocacy for women's labour rights as revealed in the [convening report](#). The convening resulted in new alliances and networks for a global movement for labour rights and worked as a space for learning and exchange to be implemented in the work of the partners.

The Future of Women's Health

The prevalence and impact of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is immense with [estimates](#) indicating that by 2030, NCDs will be the leading cause of death and disability for women in Africa. Recognising the gravity of the situation and the potential crisis for women's well-being, AWDF began to invest in research and documentation as well as network and outreach in order to prepare for substantial grant making in 2020. We began by commissioning an [in depth study](#) to address gaps in research and assess how to best support women's organisations working on the prevention and response of NCDs. The research covered all 54 countries in Africa and focused on cardiovascular diseases,

diabetes, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases, and mental health conditions. It was determined that while the scale of impact of NCDs on African women's health remains largely underreported and under researched, women-led organisations are a strategic frontline of prevention and response. Building on these insights, AWDF is developing a stream of grantmaking and knowledge sharing around building African feminist leadership for NCD prevention and response.

NCDs and Women in Africa: The Numbers

- 1 An estimated 22+ million women are living with cardiovascular diseases
- 2 Women make up more than half of the 70 million chronic respiratory diseases cases
- 3 Women represent 65% of all cancer cases.
- 4 9.6 million healthy-life years of women in Africa are lost to mental health conditions
- 5 Women's nutrition intake is at significantly low levels - in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Malawi, Nigeria and Tanzania, less than 3% of women eat the recommended five portions of fruits and vegetables daily

* Figures from 2017



The Foundation

The Foundation

The canvas is only as good as its foundation. If it is weak, the image blurs and the colours disappear. In order to strengthen the canvas and ensure that the work is sustainable, AWDF continues to invest in strengthening institutional capacity of African Women's Rights organisations through the work of our Capacity Building Unit.

Transforming Institutional Capacity

AWDF recognises that the only way to make the work last, to ensure sustainability, is to strengthen institutional capacity amongst its grantees. Therefore a major component of our work is capacity building and institutional strengthening of our grantee partners with the aim of building efficient and stronger organisations for long-term sustainability. Our capacity building content is informed by needs assessments as well as our two decades of experience supporting women's organisations.

In 2019, we provided tailored training around leadership and governance, financial management, monitoring, evaluation and learning, resource mobilisation, communications and effective advocacy. Over the course of the year, the capacity building team made changes to our training approach to make our spaces even more user-friendly and in line with our values. This included introducing standard sessions on feminism and AWDF values, and better meeting language needs including Arabic and sign. As a result, organisations that engaged AWDF's capacity building support made significant changes to how they work - they rethought organisational structure and culture; created and updated board governance, human resource and financial manuals to better echo their organisational ethics and best practices in the sector; created resource mobilisation strategies, in many cases for the first time; and revised strategic plans. Post-training assessments showed that for the grantees, this resulted in clarifying internal systems and work cultures, strengthening team cohesion, tightening programme strategies for greater impact, and increasing financial resources and organisational visibility. Two external evaluations conducted in 2019 suggested that grantees found our capacity building programming to be one of the most beneficial aspects of being an AWDF grantee.

"Following the communication training by AWDF, our internal communication has improved as we are able to differently present our organisation. We developed a communications strategy which directs our communication internally and externally. We revamped our website and social media communication which has greatly improved the visibility of WLEDE earning us new donors and partners to work with. This was one area in which WLEDE lacked skills and now we can eloquently say that we are good at it."

– WOMEN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT –
WLEDE

Nurturing African Feminist Leadership

In 2019, we concluded our five-year pilot Feminist Leadership and Governance initiative. Launched in 2014, this initiative guided 30 grantee organisations and 60 individual staff through a process of deep organisational reflection and transformation. Implemented by African feminist coaches, the approach combined personal leadership development for mid-level and senior leaders in each organisation, as well as coaching and technical support for organisational boards. The aim was to build better policies and systems and to reflect on and help transform organisational culture. Each organisation also received a grant to implement change strategies. Drawing on African feminist Hope Chigudu's concept of "[building an organisation with a soul](#)", the programme approach was rooted in acknowledging that organisations are shaped by power dynamics and vision as much as they are by policy and procedure. The leadership coaching centred self-care and self-love with the understanding that transforming individual power means a transformation of collective strength. It also ensured continuity and expansiveness, as one of the trainees said, "Through the coaching, I learnt that leadership should be transformative and that effective leaders give birth to leaders." As a result of the leadership programme, participants expanded their understanding of feminist leadership, they learned how to challenge hierarchies in their organisations, and they transformed in personal growth, in consciousness, confidence, self-esteem and in finding and learning how to project their voices.



For stories of transformation, see [Birthing Leaders: Stories of Change in African Women's Organisations](#)

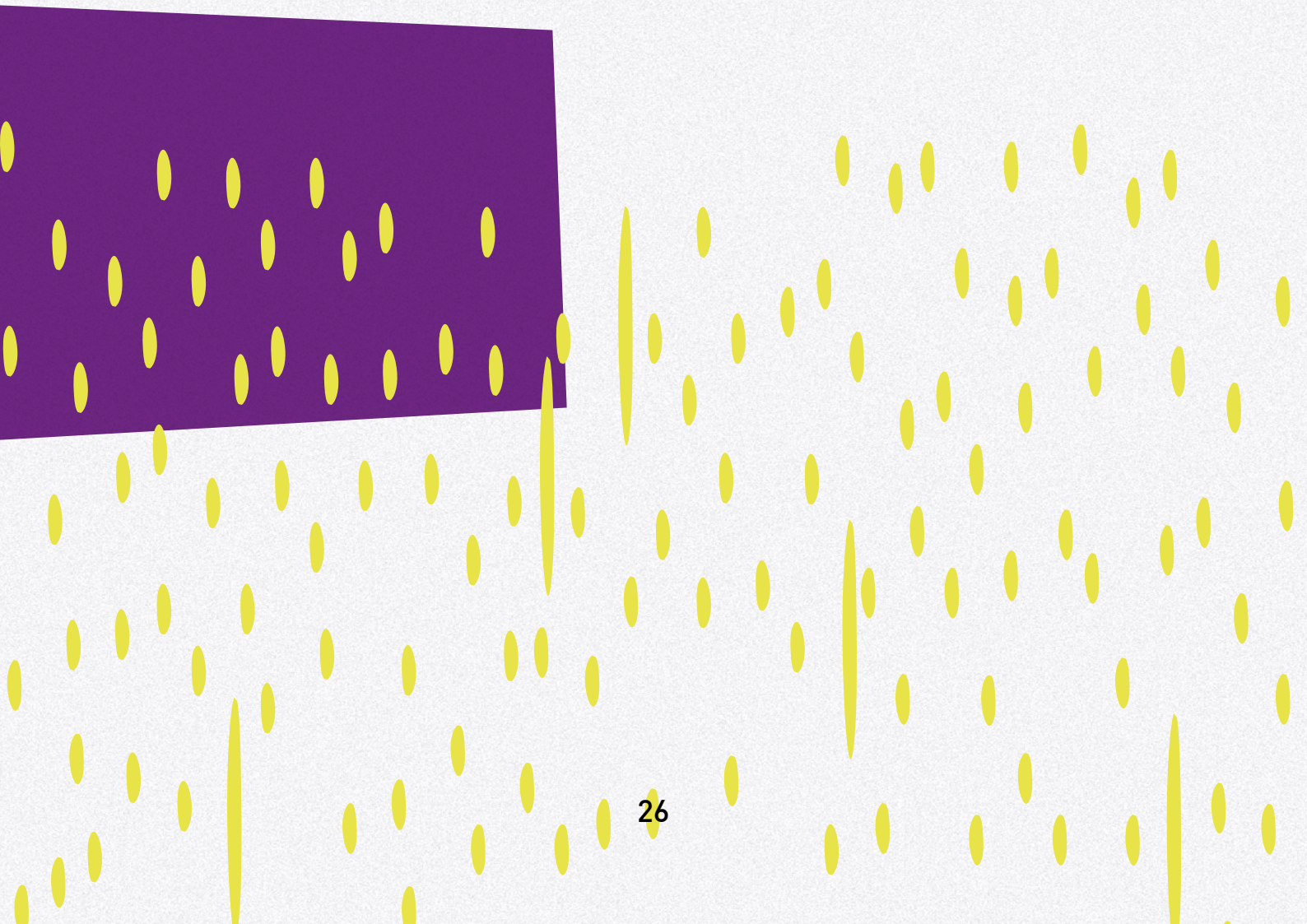
Internal Reflections

An organisation is only as good as its internal reflection. Institutional capacity building is important not just for AWDF's grantees, but also for the organisation itself. In 2018, we began with financial sustainability, human resources and communications audits, the results of which have guided the strengthening of our internal systems, strategies and practices. In 2019, we continued with formal internal reflections:

- 1 We commissioned a grantmaking audit, which looked into our grantmaking policies, practices and procedures in order to ensure grantmaking integrity, establish best practices and identify opportunities for improvement. The recommendations will be implemented to ensure a more transparent, accountable and efficient grant making process.
- 2 We invested in building outcome harvesting into our monitoring, evaluation and learning system.
- 3 Drawing on expertise from women living with disabilities, we began a deep (re) think of how we engage with disability in our workspace and convening's, as well as programmatic and operational processes and systems.
- 4 We drafted a Capacity Building Disability Inclusiveness document and have initiated development of our organisational disability policy.

Additionally, within the context of institutional capacity building, we take seriously our process and our wellbeing as individuals and as a collective. Throughout the year, we engaged in check-ins and assessments to ensure that our systems and our work environment centred self and collective care, and to ensure that we followed our guiding principles and worked in ways that are safe, enriching, and inspiring.

Splashes of Light



Splashes of Light



Light is sometimes used on canvases to bring attention to important aspects of a painting. Light creates spotlights, it adds dimension. This year new and continuing funding to AWDF allowed an expansion and deepening of our work and reaffirmed our principle belief that global south women's funds work and that feminist principles and feminist resourcing of women's rights organisations and movements can change the world.

Shift the Power in Funding

AWDF was founded with the aim of transforming philanthropy, in process and impact, through an African led feminist approach to the resourcing of women's rights organisations and movements. In 2019, AWDF built on previous years of resourcing advocacy to join and help shape The Equality Fund initiative. The Equality Fund, formally launched in June 2019, is both an independent organisation and a Canadian led partnership, with AWDF as one of its 10 partners. The initiative brings together philanthropists, investors, activists and government with the objective of building sustainable feminist resourcing for women's rights globally. Designed by feminists, the Equality Fund has already mobilised C\$100 million to add to the C\$300 million multi-year funding award from the Government of Canada. The aim is for the Equality Fund to mobilise a minimum of C\$1 billion over the next fifteen years to support women's rights organisations and movements in Canada and globally around the themes of peace, power and the planet. AWDF is working with the Equality Fund initiative to truly 'shift the power' in development, human rights and philanthropy by running feminist approaches throughout the design and implementation of this new fund and by growing autonomous,

sustainable, feminist controlled funding for expansion in women's rights work and transformations in scope and scale.

Collaborations in Global South Women's Funds

When we say that we built on our previous experiences to join The Equality Fund, we are speaking, in part, about the Leading from the South initiative (LFS) – a groundbreaking partnership built on a foundational belief in the power and capacity of Global South women's funds. LFS, launched in December 2016, is a partnership between four Global South women's funds – AWDF, Fondo Mujeres del Sur (FMS), International Indigenous Women's Forum - AYNI Fund (FIMI), Women's Fund Asia (WFA), and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Over the past few years, this partnership has demonstrated the critical role and expertise of Global South women's funds in resourcing women's rights organisations and movements. Through the fund, between 2017-2019, AWDF awarded grants to 76 organisations working around our three core themes. An internal interim evaluation showed that in the first three years, the work of LFS grantees enabled the following:

- 9706 women and girls actively engaged in advocating to end VAW
- 27,149 women and 4560 girls whose rights were violated accessed legal, medical, psychosocial and economic support services
- 1420 women and 256 girls accessed decent and fair employment and increased their knowledge of their economic rights
- 6046 women and 1140 girls were reached and actively participated in public and political spaces at different levels
- 2827 women and 736 girls engaged in advocating for economic participation/ economic justice
- 130 media houses, including radio, print media and television, discussed and educated their audiences on VAW and gender inequality
- In 2019 alone, 181 key influencers, including village heads, councillors, traditional and religious leaders, service providers and ambassadors as well as 78 civil society organisations, advocated against VAW

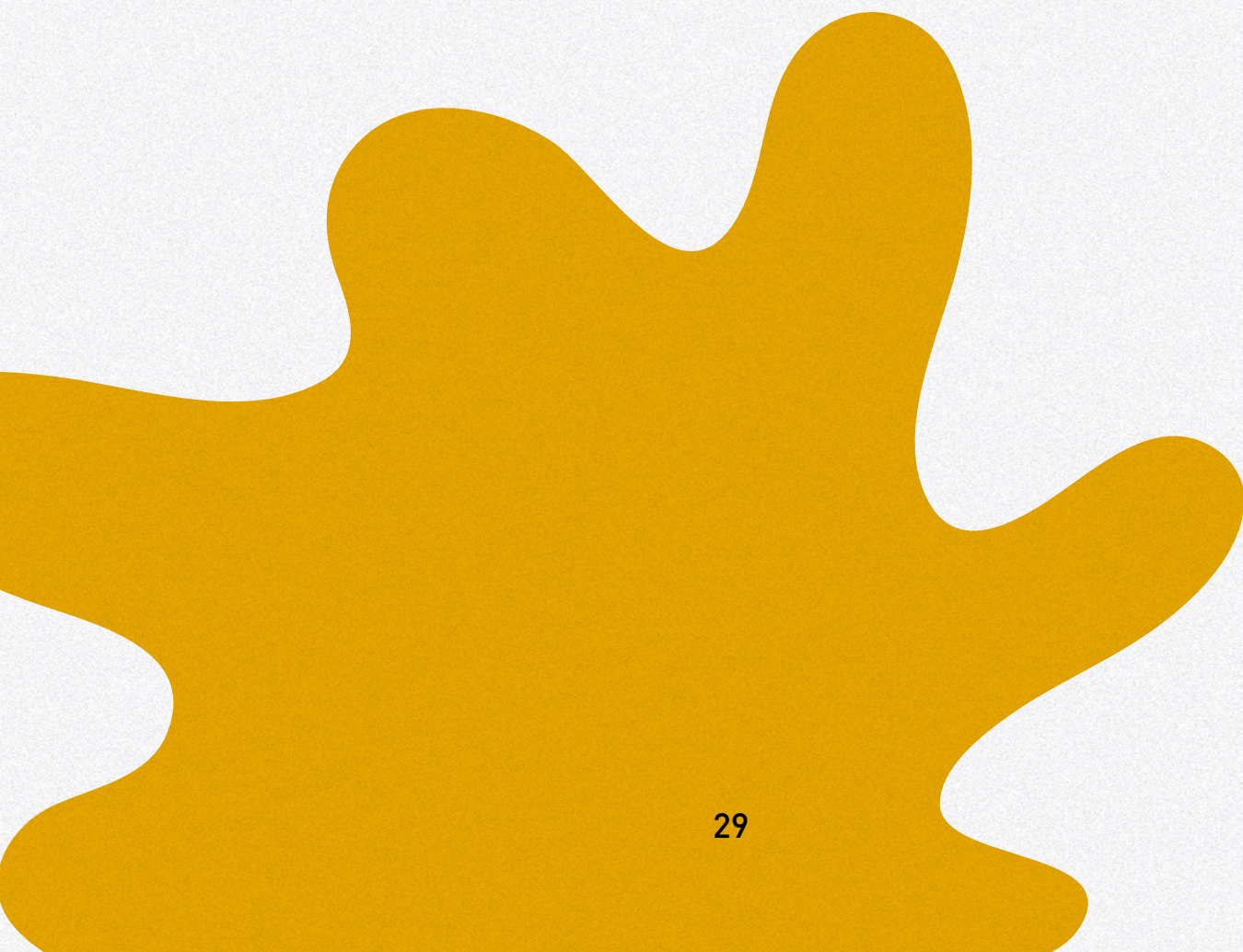
These numbers resulted in significant gains for the women's rights movement in Africa. For example, grantees like The Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust in South Africa lobbied to establish sexual offences courts as well as regulations governing how the special courts will function; the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) trained women cross border traders on entrepreneurship, packaging, and marketing and on the rules and regulations of doing trade in East African countries as most of the women used illegal trading routes and were subject to financial and sexual extortion; Groupe d'Appui aux Initiatives Féminines pour un Développement Intégré et Durable (GAIFEDID), in Benin trained more than 1,500 sex workers in advocacy, leadership, and negotiation skills to help them claim their rights as well as negotiate for fair rates for their work and they engaged key stakeholders, which resulted in a written commitment by influential leaders to ensure the respect of women's rights as well as the rights of women sex workers; and the Jordanian Women's Union formed national coalitions in ten countries advocating to promote civil values and a secular, human rights and equality based family law in the region, and they led a coalition that made recommendations to the national government that resulted in the removal of two discriminatory articles of the penal code (marriage of rapists and honour crimes). And the list goes on and on and on.

Women's Voice and Leadership

In yet another collaboration, AWDF worked on learning exchanges and strategy linkages with women's rights organisations in Africa and with women's funds in other parts of the world that were a part of the Global Affairs Canada's Women's Voice and Leadership Initiative. AWDF has an African regional role in this newly established global initiative for furthering feminist activism. VWL is one of the first action steps in implementing Canada's feminist international assistance policy.



Radiant Designs



Radiant Designs

And on the canvas was more art.

Performance Art to Combat Violence Against Women (VAW)

Because art and activism have always gone hand in hand, AWDF engaged communities around campaigns to combat VAW through art during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence and International Women's Day commemorations. For 16 days of Activism, AWDF awarded small grants to 20 organisations in 10 countries (Cameroon, DRC, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe) for events taking place between 25 November – 10 December 2019. AWDF also collaborated with the Global Arts and Development Centre in Accra, Ghana to fund an event showcasing a series of monologues about violence against women. The first event in the series was held at the University of Ghana and was attended by 120 people who engaged in active discussions around VAW - realities and prevention.

Every year AWDF finds creative ways of engaging in International Women's Day. On 23 March 2019, under the theme of 'The Power of Narrative,' AWDF produced a theatre performance of 'The Vagina Monologues' with a focus on VAW, at the University of Ghana. The event was organised in partnership with the Global Arts and Development Centre and Volta Hall, which is the women's hall of the University of Ghana. The programme made time between each monologue performance for the audience of 250 people to engage in discussions on expressions of womanhood

Writing from the Centre

Telling the story should always be tandem to doing the work. Recognising the importance of African feminist women's writings, AWDF has been creating space for African women writers to write. The African Women's Writers Workshop (AWWW) was created with the aim of building a network of African women writers and voices of authority in public spaces able to provide feminist narratives of womanhood and of women's rights movements. In October 2019, we hosted the third AWWW in Ghana. The workshop included 20 writers from 15 African countries, with representation from Botswana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

As a result of the AWWW, participants have gone on to secure publishing deals, written social change and/or feminist articles published in international media, and have spoken on global platforms such as TED Global. Additionally, AWDF was invited by Rhodes University in South Africa to nominate five writers from our 2019 cohort to be considered for a fully funded residential fellowship.



Because It's Bigger than Hip Hop

AWDF's Create Initiative uses the power of art to expand awareness of women's rights issues and to contribute to widening and deepening dialogue and debate with the aim of building open societies grounded in cultures of equality. Beginning in West Africa, AWDF is funding women-led cultural institutions, sponsoring key public arts/culture festivals with women's rights content, and supporting travel to policy spaces for activist artists and programmers. In 2019, AWDF supported the Genji Hip Hop Collective, a powerful group of 84 women Senegalese rappers, singers, DJs and graffiti artists who perform and create art around women's rights. The funding contributed to a 72-hour festival called Waxal Sunu Bopp, which gathered artists, journalists, cultural programmers and activists around panel discussions; held workshops on photography, dance, digital communication, writing, and djing; and showcased music performances - all organised by and for the benefit of women, all focused on women's rights issues. It was a powerful and beautiful event, which the Genji Hip Hop Collective plans to replicate in the coming years. [Here](#) is an article on the collective published by The Guardian.



The Artists



The Artists



The artists, the ones who do the work and create the future, are spread throughout the African continent and in the Middle East.

BURKINA FASO: Association Catholique pour le Développement Socio-économique (ACDS) ●
CAMEROON: Association Des Femmes Handicapees Du Moungo; Association Dynamic Femmes (DyFe) ● **DRC:** Pilier aux Femmes Vulnérables Actives en RD Congo (PIFEVA) ● **GHANA:** PANAFEST; Ndiva Women's Film Festival; Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT); African Studies Association of Africa ● **KENYA:** Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW); Ripples International; International Community of Women Living with HIV – Kenya Chapter (ICW-Kenya); Pambazuko la Wanawake Magharibi; Gender Violence Recovery Centre (GVRC); Leona Foundation; Kisumu Disabled Self Help Group; Hera Community Initiative; Regional Deaf Women Initiatives Network (RDWIN); Akili Dada; Hope Foundation for African Women; Bethzatha HIV/AIDS and Community Center; Community Advocacy And Awareness Trust (CRAWN TRUST) ● **LEBANON:** Anti-Racism Movement (ARM) ● **LIBERIA:** Women Solidarity Incorporated (WOSI); Liberian Feminist Forum; Angie Brooks International Centre (ABIC) ● **MALAWI:** Coalition of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (COWHLA); Foundation for Civic Education and Social Empowerment (FOCESE); Outreach Scout Foundation-Female Commission (OSF-FC) ● **MALI:** Association Pour le Progrès et la défense des Droits des Femmes (APDF); WILDAF/Mali Women in Law and Development in Africa/Mali; Association « COTE COUR »; Femmes et Droits Humains ● **MAURITANIA:** Association des Femmes Cheffe de Familles ● **MAURITIUS:** Parapli Rouz ● **NAMIBIA:** Namibian Association of Differently Abled Women (NADAWO) ● **NIGER:** Organisation Non Gouvernemental Femmes, Actions et Développements ● **NIGERIA:** Centre for Women Studies and Intervention (CSWI); Positive Action for Treatment Access (PATA); Book Buzz Foundation/Ake Arts And Book Festival; International Community of Women Living with HIV West Africa (ICWWA); Girl Child Art Foundation (GCAF); Women Environmental Programme (WEP); Alliances for Africa (Nigerian Feminist Forum); PAGED Initiative [Participatory Communication for Gender Development Initiative] ● **PALESTINE:** Mothers' School Society (MSS) ● **RWANDA:** Rwsa United Youth Association; Women's Health and Equal Rights Association Rwanda; UmuryangoNyarwandaw'AbagoreBafiteUbumuga-UNABU (Rwandan Organisation of Women with disabilities) ● **SENEGAL:** Association Pour la Promotion de la Femme Senegalese – APROFES; Genji Hiphop Festival; Réseau Paix et Sécurité pour les Femmes de l' Espace CEDEAO (REPSFECO) Sénégal; Réseau Interafricain pour les Femmes, Médias, Genre et Développement, FAMEDEV; Musée de la Femme Henriette Bathily /Women's Museum Henriette Bathily ● **SIERRA LEONE:** Girls Empowerment Sierra Leone (GESL) ● **SOUTH AFRICA:** Sisonke National Movement; Soul City Institute for Social Justice; Wits Justice Project and Wits Radio Academy; The Mothertongue Project; The Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust; Gender Dynamix; Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust (HACT); Women's Leadership and Training Programme (WLTP); Gender Links; WoMin African Gender and Extractives Alliance (WoMin) ● **TANZANIA:** Women's Economy and Gender Support (WEGS); TGNP Mtandao; African Philanthropy Network (APN); Pastoral Women's Council (PWC); TOGO; ONG LA COLOMBE; Assistance Plus Togo (AP-TOGO)

● **UGANDA:** International Community of Women Living with HIV Eastern Africa (ICWEA); Hesawa Foundation (HEFO); Platform for Social Justice (PSJ) *** *Joana Foster Memorial Grant*; Nnabagereka Development Foundation (NDF); Mentoring And Empowerment Programme For Young Women (MEMPROW); Alliance of Women Advocating for Change (AWAC); Club Humanitarian Outreach Ministries; Integrated Disabled Women Activities- IDIWA; Feminature Uganda; National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda (NUWODU); International Women in Coffee Alliance – Uganda Chapter; Isis-Women’s International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE); Akina Mama wa Afrika; Women Leadership Development – WLEDE; Akina Mama wa Afrika ● **ZIMBABWE:** Institute for Community Development in Zimbabwe (ICODZIM); Women and Land in Zimbabwe; Ntengwe for Community Development; Women’s Institute For Leadership Development (WILD); Sam Moyo African Institute For Agrarian Studies (SMAIAS); Women’s Coalition of Zimbabwe ●

The artists are also AWDF staff!

Programmes

Ayesha Abukari • Beatrice Boakye-Yiadom • Belinda Amankwah • Benewaa Fosu • Gifty Ayebea Anim • Jessica Horn (DOP) • Joyce Renee Ago Djanie • Madonna Kendona • Mary Akukumah (from October 2019) • Nana Akosua Hanson • Nancy Akanbombire • Rissi Assani-Alabi (until May 2019) • Rita Nketiah (until October 2019) • Rose Buabeng • Shirley Boakye

Outreach & Partnership

Abena Bomo-Afari • Abigail Burgesson • Dahmata Tene Yabre (until October 2019) • Fauzia Kassim-Ziblim • Lydia Maclean • Maame Akua Marfo • Nana Bamea Kyei-Boadu • Theo Sowa • Zeytuna Abdella Feyissa • Zita Dekoleadenu

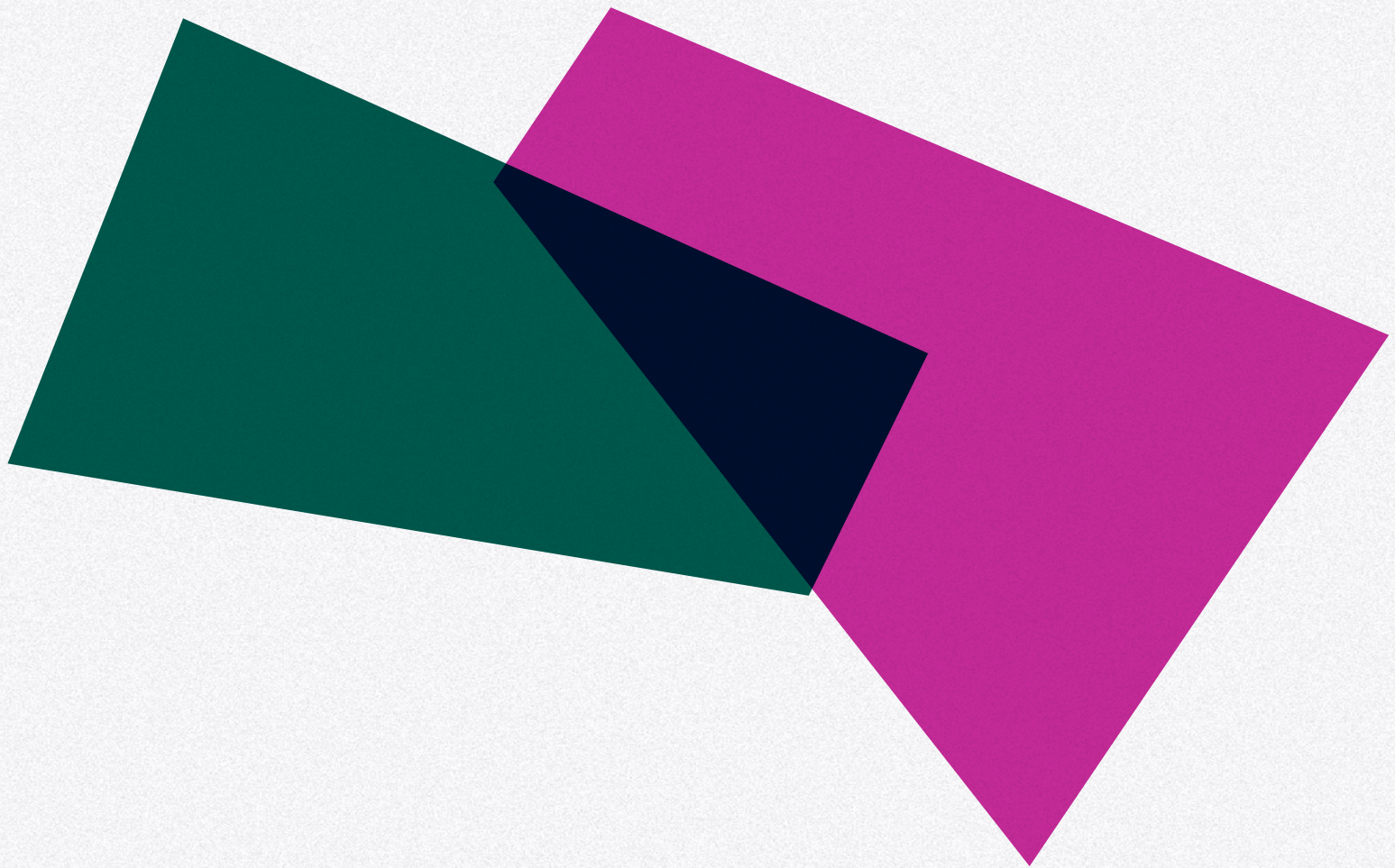
Operations & Finance

Abigail Ninson • Afi Quashie • Emmanuel Boakye • Felix Odei • Gertrude Bibi Annoh-Quarshie (DOO) • Grace Amenyogbeli (until January 2019) • Janet Okumi • Matthew Iddi • Mavis Gardiner • Mohammed Sulemana • Sarah Ansah • Selasi Tofoatsi • Sheila Anum • Vivian Korkor Acheampong (from February 2019)

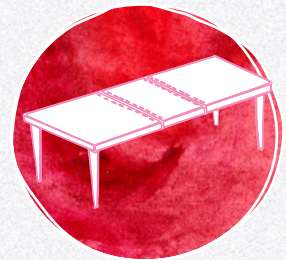
... and the AWDF Board too

Agnes Phiri	(Member)
Arielle Enniful	(Treasurer)
Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi	(Co-founder)
Hilda Tadria	(Co-founder)
Ndeye Sow	(Chair)
Taaka Awori	(Programmes Sub-Committee Chair)
Theo Sowa	(Chief Executive Officer - Ex officio member)

Finances



Finances



Capacity Building
Activities:
\$203,198



Grants Awarded:
\$8,168,804



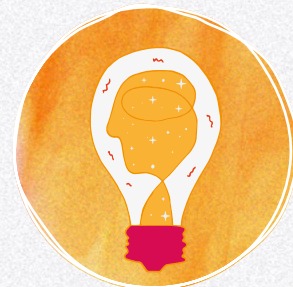
Other Programmes
\$350,104



Programme Management
\$1,056,415



Fundraising and
Communication:
\$414,846



Management and
Institutional Development:
\$409,518

* For more detailed information, please see the [2019 audit report](#).

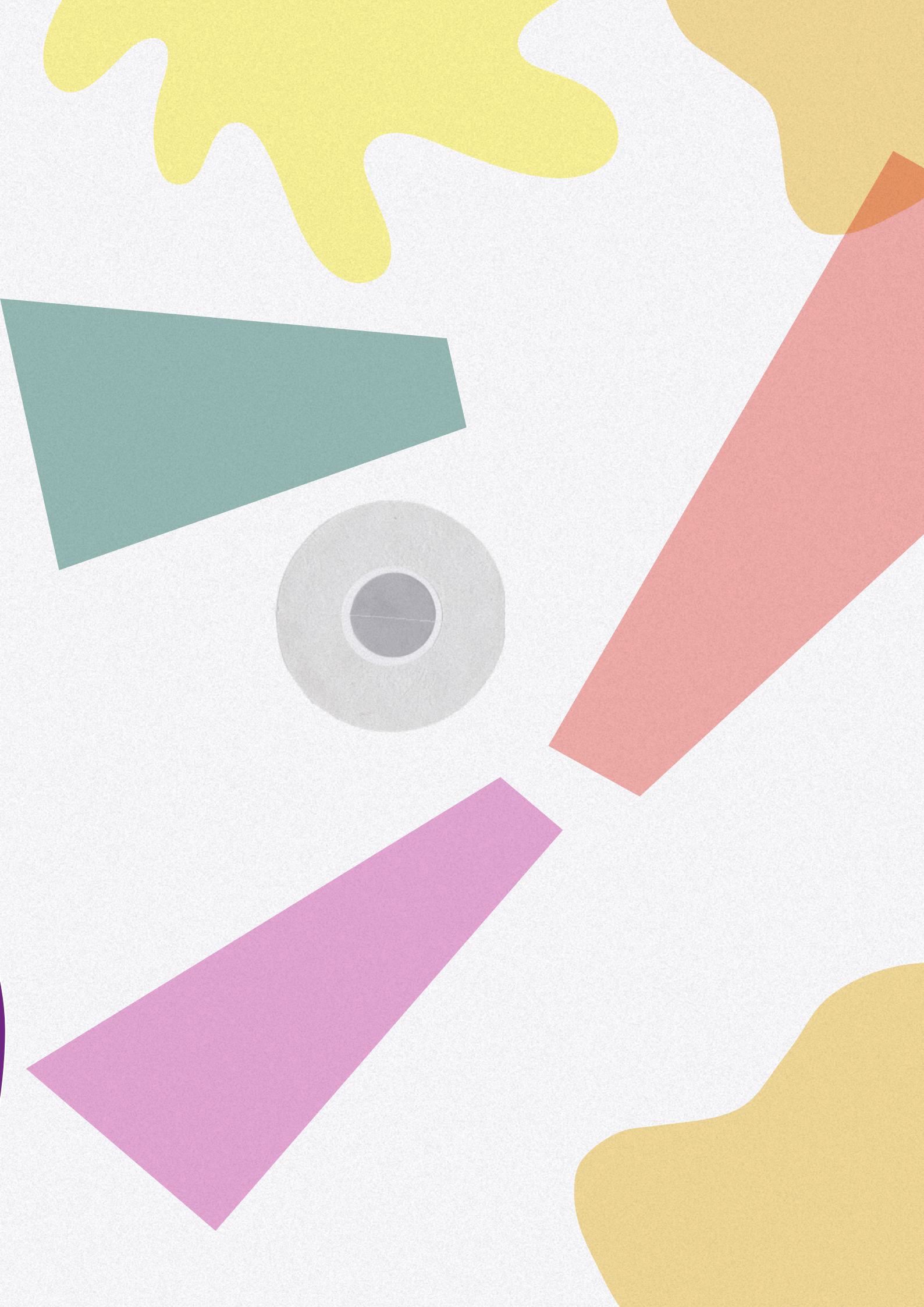


Thank you

The paint on this canvas, AWDF's work, is the result of collective action and collaboration with a range of partners and friends. Thank you to our communities of women's rights activists, advocates and supporters. Thank you to our past and present grantee partners and to the donors who help us do this work.

Our donors in 2019

Anonymous Donor A • Anonymous Donor B • Comic Relief • Ford Foundation • Foundation for a Just Society • Global Affairs Canada (Women's Voice and Leadership) • Global Fund For Women • Individual Donors • Libra Foundation • Mama Cash • Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Netherlands) • Novo Foundation Fund of the Tides Foundation • Open Society Initiative of West Africa (OSIWA) • Stephen Lewis Foundation • The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation • Women's Foundation of Minnesota



Report Title: **Vibrant Canvas**

Authors: **AWDF, Agazit Abate**

Date: **September, 2020**

Editors: **Jessica Horn, Dinnah Nabwire, Theo Sowa**

French Translation: **Wangeci Evelyn Ndirangu-Ngari**

French Editor: **Lana Razafimanantsoa**

Illustration and Layout: **Naadira Patel**



In the spirit of sharing feminist knowledge, this series is distributed under a Creative Commons license that allows for non-commercial distribution in original form with full credit given to the authors.

Contact us

AWDF House,

Justice Sarkodie Addo Avenue,

East Legon, Accra, Ghana

P.M.B CT 89, Cantonments, Accra - Ghana

Twitter: @awdf01 | @awdffr

Website: www.awdf.org