



SHAPING AFRICA'S FUTURE

AWDF'S STRATEGIC DIRECTION | 2017- 2021

Established in 2001, the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) is a grantmaking foundation that supports local, national and Africa regional women's organisations working towards the promotion and realisation of women's rights and recognition of African women's leadership in all spheres of life.

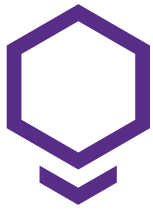
Through specialising in grant making and focused, tailored movement-building programmes, AWDF works to strengthen and support the work of African women's organisations. By amplifying and celebrating African women's voices and achievements, AWDF supports efforts that combat harmful stereotypes, and promote women as active agents of change.

A pioneer in African grantmaking, AWDF is the first pan-African women's fund and an early leader in the work of building African philanthropy. AWDF draws resources from individuals, corporations, foundations and governments in order to provide financial, capacity-building and other types of support to women's organisations across the region.

A key feature of AWDF's grantmaking is support for the initiatives of African women's organisations that often have limited access to mainstream funding for a variety of reasons, including size, language, location, and marginalisation. This has translated into our grantmaking, movement building, donor advocacy and communications roles, where we make sure we are there when it matters for African women.

**We make sure we are
there when it matters
for African women.**





A FUTURES FOCUS

Shaping the Future was developed out of research and exploration around how AWDF and the African women's rights organisations and activists that we resource can contribute to building a future for Africa that reflects the equality and justice that lie at the heart of our continent's progress.

We invested in a process to gather data on future trends for African women, compiled in the report *Futures Africa: Trends for Women by 2030*. We then used this empirical base to craft an imaginative process of generating scenarios- four stories of what the future could look like for African women and women's rights if different political power dynamics and social, economic, technological and environmental trends play out.

This is the first foresight initiative focusing in-depth on gender dynamics, women's rights, and questions around the roles African women play in actively creating just futures for Africa. By designing a strategic framework based on this forward-thinking analysis, AWDF seeks to create a plan that allows for greater innovation and ways to maximise the impact of our work and that of the brave African women's organisations and movements that we support.

Our commitment is to work together to build the best possible futures for the African continent.



VISION

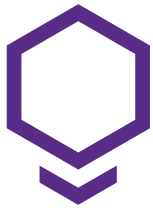


A world where all African women live in peace, with dignity and justice and where there is equality and respect for women's rights.

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



MISSION



OUR VALUES

In keeping with the *Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists*, AWDF upholds the following values in our daily work and strategies:



RESPECT

We believe in the personhood of African women, and that our rights are an inalienable, indivisible and integral part of universal human rights.



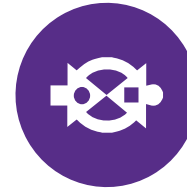
DIVERSITY

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, with ethics at the heart of all we do.



PROFESSIONALISM, ACCOUNTABILITY AND STEWARDSHIP

We believe in the growth and long-term sustainability of organisations led and managed by women in democratic, transparent and progressive ways.

As fundraisers and grantmakers we believe in prudent, ethical and responsible stewardship of all funds and resources in our care.



SOLIDARITY AND PARTNERSHIPS

We believe that change happens through collective action. We are committed to building African women's and feminist movements, and recognise that this organising is linked to movements for justice and equality across the world.



FUTURE TRENDS: THE VIEW FROM 2030

By 2030:

Almost one in every five people in the world will live on the African continent.

Over a third of all Africans will be under the age of 15.

Around 58% of Africa will be of working age

Adult literacy rates will rise to 80%



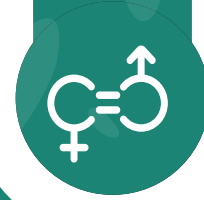
Just under half of Africa's population will be living in urban areas. The number of Africans living in urban slums is projected to almost double.

The number of people over the age of 65 will increase by 66%.

Non-communicable diseases including cancers, diabetes and respiratory diseases will be the leading causes of death, overtaking diseases such as malaria and AIDS.

An estimated 91% of Africans will have access to a mobile connection.

Estimated annual GDP growth will be 5.9% across the African region.

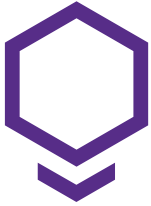


Although child marriage rates are expected to drop slightly, the actual numbers of women married before 18 is expected to rise by 50% due to population growth.

It may not even take until 2030 for trends to change for food. By 2020 as population pressure increases, crop yields are expected to fall by 17- 30%.

Africa is unlikely to be close to gender parity for women in political office. Political participation of women will not reach parity with men in legislatures in developing countries until at least 2047.

...all of these have implications for women, and for our priorities in advancing the rights of African women and girls.



OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

We believe that lack of women's rights and gender equality are caused, at their root, by systems of patriarchal power and intersecting systems of discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of disability, sexual orientation, HIV status, class, age and ethnicity. This is reinforced through formal laws and policies upheld by institutions of the state and traditional/customary authorities as well as social institutions such as education systems and religious institutions; and, informally, through beliefs, norms and values. The full achievement of women's rights, thus, requires a change in both formal and informal power at the individual, community and societal levels.

AWDF invests in supporting the transformation of power relations using **feminist movement building** methods and **human rights approaches** that demand and help build frameworks for accountability of duty bearers in law, policy, financing and programming to respect, protect and fulfill women's rights. Movement-based activism including organising women collectively, raising awareness and transforming public discourse is

We believe that women and girls are best placed to envision the changes they want in their lives, design the strategies that will bring relevant and sustainable change and implement the activities that will shape the new systems of social justice and equality that we aim for.

We acknowledge African women's agency in leading positive change in all domains, and therefore focus our investments in resourcing African women's organising, amplifying their voices, strengthening women's organisations and leadership, and the environment to grow philanthropy for social justice.



Our theory of change is based on the following **assumptions**:

-  Women's rights activists and organisations have been leading players in driving change towards gender equality and justice, and are a core force in continuing momentum for transformation.
-  Women's organisations need sufficient, relevant and consistent resources to be effective.
-  To sustain social, political and economic transformation for gender equality, it is important to build a diverse critical mass (movements) that support women's rights and full justice .
-  Given that gender inequality and abuses of women's rights are reinforced by multiple systems of power, the achievement of women's rights requires changes in many domains of society and women's lives. Securing women's rights requires changes in individual agency, awareness, collective norms and values, and the systems and protections that create an enabling environment. Although transformation does not always require changes in each of these domains of power at once, changes are more likely to be durable if they entail transformation in more than one domain.

-  The promotion of new understandings of traditional African philanthropy; the involvement of African philanthropists (at all economic levels) in supporting social change and justice work and the development of new actors in African philanthropy will lead to greater African-led investment in women's rights work and give greater flexibility for more independent, African-led women's rights agendas nationally, regionally and internationally.
-  AWDF as an organisation must itself demonstrate the value of a strong feminist approach and leadership, illustrate strong ethical governance and management, and therefore strengthen its own institutional base on an ongoing basis.
-  That diverse, flexible and independent funding is foundational to AWDF being able to achieve the implementation of the SFIV.

1. Feminism is the theory and practice of working to end patriarchy and its intersecting oppressions. (See African Feminist Forum (2006) Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists. Ghana: AWDF)

2. Htun, M., & Weldon, S. L. .2012. "The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combatting Violence Against Women in Global Perspective, 1975-2005." *American Political Science Review* , 106 (3), 548-569.

3. Arutyunova, A. and Clark, C., 2013. *Watering the leaves, starving the roots: the status of financing for women's rights organizing and gender equality*. Toronto, Mexico City, Cape Town: AWID
Horn, J., 2013, "Gender and Social Movements Overview Report". Sussex: IDS.

4. Just Associates. 2006. *Making Change Happen: Power*. Washington D.C.: Just Associates ; Kelleher, D and Rao, A. Undated. *What is Gender at Work's Approach to Gender Equality and Institutional change?* Available at <http://www.gendernetwork.org/Portals/o/Uploads/Documents/Gender-Equality-and-Institutional-Change.pdf>

5. Win, Everjoice. 2016. *Feminist Organising for Women's Human Rights in Africa*. Accra, Ghana: The African Women's Development Fund, 1-21. ; Horn, J. 2009. *Christian Fundamentalisms and Women's Rights in African Contexts: Mapping the Terrain*. Toronto: Association for Women's Rights in Development. ; ACHPR. 2015. *Report of the Study of Situation of Women Human Rights Defenders in Africa*. Banjul: African Commission on Human and People's Rights; UN General Assembly. 2010. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, Margaret Sekaggya*. A/HRC/16/44.



OUR THEMES



AWDF's strategic themes to advance women's rights in Africa







BODY AND HEALTH RIGHTS

Affirming the right of diverse African women and girls to full bodily integrity, autonomy and health.

Supporting interventions that help prevent violence and ill health; promoting recognition of women's ownership of their own bodies and enjoyment of full health; and responding to women's bodily rights and health injustices and concerns. Drawing on the evidence base around what works from a feminist perspective, we will invest in growing and sharing feminist and rights-based methodologies that contribute to:

-  Ending violence against women in all forms through prevention and response
-  Advancing the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls, including on issues of sexual orientation, reproductive choice.

-  Sustaining a focus on African women's priorities and organising around HIV/AIDS
-  Building awareness and feminist responses to the rise of non-communicable diseases (cancers and diseases of lifestyle and nutrition)
-  Growing African feminist understandings and approaches to emotional well-being and mental health
-  Advancing progressive understandings and feminist movement building around gender identity and rights



II

ECONOMIC SECURITY AND JUSTICE

Strengthening African women's economic autonomy and supporting activism for economic justice

AWDF supports interventions that seek to increase women's economic decision-making power at micro and macro-levels, demand more equitable law and policy in economic spheres, and create an enabling environment for women to thrive including in relation to the physical environment and impacts of urbanisation:

-  Increasing acknowledgment of and protections around women's economic activities and contributions (including the role of market women, informal sector labour, unpaid care work)
-  Advancing food sovereignty and the leadership and participation of women as Africa's majority food producers, particularly in decision-making around food and agriculture
-  Defending women's land, property and inheritance rights
-  Supporting sustainable livelihoods initiatives for African women that are designed to impact on rights outcomes and are based on effective and just business models (sustainability, equity, profitability and growth potential as well as improved representation in economic decision making).
-  Securing women's housing rights, particularly in the context of urbanisation
-  Strengthening women's rights in actions on climate and environmental justice





LEADERSHIP, PARTICIPATION AND PEACE

Advancing African women's political rights, building feminist leadership and amplifying activist voices and action

AWDF supports interventions that work to expand political space, sustain inclusive governance and full participation of women, including in contexts of conflict prevention, response and peace building. We focus on diversity and quality leadership and participation, and building inclusive feminist leadership for transformation.

↳ Advancing diverse women's participation in governance and decision-making at all levels

↳ Reframing security and advocating for interventions to support women's human security in all contexts

↳ Challenging the rise and impacts of religious and cultural fundamentalisms on women's rights in communities and on the state

↳ Growing individual and collective feminist leadership for social, political and economic change and justice

↳ Defending open operating space for women's rights organisations and defenders





CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

In advancing these themes, we use the following cross-cutting approaches:

I Arts, Culture, Technology and Sports for Activism and change

- Y Grantmaking to initiatives using these methods:
- Y AWDF Ambassadors for the Arts
- Y Integrating arts, technology and innovation into all AWDF programming
- Y Profiling African women creatives in AWDF communications and knowledge products

II Supporting leadership and concerns of women facing multiple discrimination

- Y Active outreach and support for women organising around HIV status, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, rural, urban and other imposed marginalities
- Y Growing focus on young women (under 25)



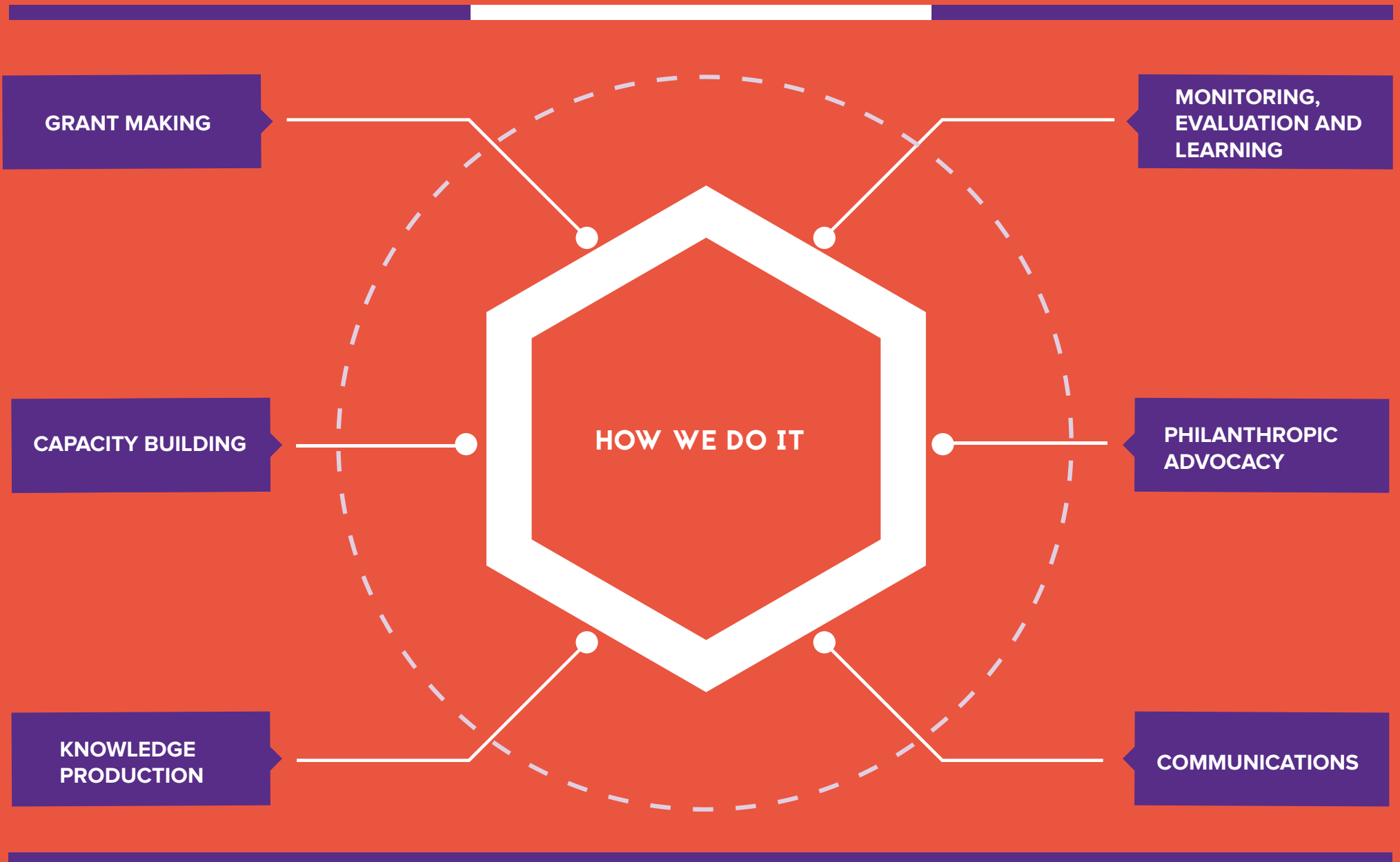
OUR STRATEGIES

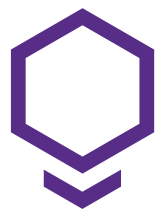


- Resource African women’s organisations and women’s movements to promote, protect and realise women human rights
- Continue to strengthen capacity of African women’s organisations and African feminist leaders through targeted capacity building programming
- Work to deepen knowledge and learning concerning African feminist and women’s rights issues and effective approaches for change through documentation and analysis of grantee methodologies, and publishing feminist analysis on critical issues

- Promote African social justice philanthropy through donor networks and platforms and profile African women’s role as philanthropic actors
- Contribute to changing the narrative around African women’s rights, leadership and agency by providing a platform for diverse voice and analysis by African women, and growing a cadre of African women writers on women’s rights
- Build and disseminate knowledge about African women’s rights priorities and methodologies and AWDF’s strategic themes

- Build feminist principles in all aspects of AWDF’s policies and infrastructure
- Maintain and grow robust financial resources to be able to carry out AWDF’s mandate
- Strengthen all institutional structures and processes in line with growth needs and standards of professionalism and accountability





LOOKING BACK TO LOOK FORWARD

While facing towards the future, we build on over 16 years of experience as Africa's first continent-wide women's fund. Founded in 2001, AWDF was created out of the aspirations of African women's movements to create an autonomous resource base for the work of advancing women's rights and gender equality.

AWDF's approach as a donor and a women's fund is based on an understanding that women's rights organisations need a range of types of resources in order to achieve the ultimate objectives for gender equality, women's leadership and community well-being.

These include not only strengthening and increasing material and financial resources, but building and strengthening human as well as intellectual resources as necessary characteristics of a strong women's rights movement that is able to hold dutybearers accountable to their commitments and work to transform the lives of African women in meaningful and sustained ways.

As part of our commitment to movement building, AWDF has hosted the African Feminist Forum since its inception in 2006.

AWDF is a co-founder of the Amplify Change consortium, with the Global Fund for Women and Mannion Daniels, funding advocacy for sexual and reproductive health and rights globally.

AWDF is also a founding member of the African Philanthropy Network.



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