

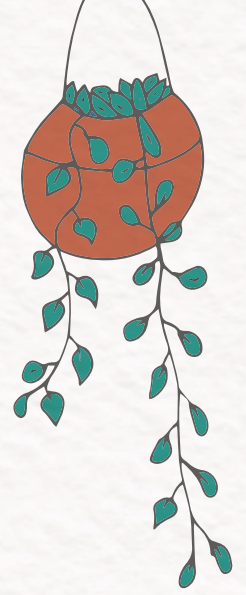
# Memories of Water

The AWDF 2020 Annual Report



AFRICAN  
WOMEN'S  
DEVELOPMENT  
FUND

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# An Introduction to the Theme

*Some stories you tell in a whisper. Quietly. Quietly.*

It is said that there was once a community of women who flew with the birds. Women who caught pieces of the clouds and the seeds in the sky and the water in the air and brought them all to land. Women who told stories by the river and spoke the language of dirt, who braided each other's hair, whispered to the seeds, and resolved conflict by looking for answers in the trees.

At the smallest and largest sighting of the moon, two times every orbit, the women gathered at the top of Dandelion Mountain to scream. With water in calabashes at their feet, they called to the moon and held its reflection in their hands. EEEELLLLLLELEEEEELELELELEEEEE!!!! Their voices created vibrations that shook the ground beneath them, and when the tremors threatened their balance, they dropped the moon's reflection in the calabashes and held each other's hands to keep from falling. "We scream to remember that only our voices together can vibrate through the mountain beneath our feet and the sky above our heads," they were known to say.

This is the story of the conjure women. Most women have known this story, so many have forgotten it. When we tell this story, we tell it slowly, slowly.



In this community, water was sacred. It held the stories of the animals that walked through it, the plants that touched it, and the people who bathed in and drank from it. It held the screams of the women and the elements of the moon at the top of Dandelion Mountain. In this community, people knew what so many now have forgotten, that water remembers everything that passes through it. That water is changed with every herb that it touches. In this community, when people became sick, they looked to the conjure women who searched the land for medicine, who sailed for days across waters collecting herbs.

Conjure women, who contended with the vastness of the sea, the unpredictability of the waves, and the sometimes treacherous waters. Conjure women who in their search found their resting place in those waters because not all made it out. Conjure women who seeped herbs in moon water to heal the ailing.

For the Conjurers, water has always been the way.

Some stories you tell like a secret. Softly. Softly.

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This report is a recollection of a year that, like water, held everything that came before it—the consequences of all that it experienced, all the elements it contained. As told by African women, this report is a narrative of water remembering, water finding its way. A year as concentrated as it was diluted. As dangerous as it was healing. Floods and flows. Moving always. It is a remembrance of AWDF's work in 2020 and a celebration of the achievements of women across Africa making their way.




# A Message from the CEO

*As the new CEO of the African Women's Development Fund, it is with great joy that I introduce this report to you. It is a compilation of the work of African women's organisations, AWDF's exceptional contributions to women's rights in Africa in 2020, and a celebration of the determination of the staff and the leadership of my predecessor, Theo Sowa in an incredibly challenging year.*

I joined the African Women's Development Fund at the end of 2020, a year that felt like a watershed in many ways. Having taken the world by surprise, the COVID-19 pandemic uncovered truths African feminist activists and organisations had been telling for years. That girls, women and non-binary people are hit harder by all crises, that they are better placed than anyone else to address such crises, and yet, that they are disproportionately under-resourced and most often left out of decision-making spaces.

With people confined to their homes for months, rates of violence against women and LGBTQI+ people increased significantly across the continent, particularly with relation to domestic and intimate partner violence, child marriage, female genital mutilation, and online abuse. And yet, world leaders continued to address the pandemic with a narrow health and economic lens. While a reckoning on racial justice prompted soul searching conversations globally about the value of Black lives and equity within the international development and philanthropic sectors, cases of police brutality escalated across Africa - from Nigeria to Uganda to Kenya and South Africa. In this time, the work of feminists became even more dangerous and harder on the body and the soul.

As an African feminist, I felt like I was drowning in doubt. Could all the gains made for women's rights and gender justice over the years be curtailed just like that? How could feminist organisations survive when funding was fast dwindling? And how could African feminists organise if we continued to be confined to online spaces in a continent where women bear a disproportionate brunt of low internet access and technology use?



Joining the AWDF team gave me some of the answers I had longed for and ushered me into learning what the Fund achieved during such a fragile year. Under the leadership of my predecessor Theo Sowa, whom I am proud to call a sister and a friend, the organisation, with its brave and creative team, mirrored the extraordinary energy and resilience that African feminists have always exhibited in the face of crises.

Way before the pandemic struck, AWDF began to integrate a model that gradually encompassed grantmaking for systemic change, strengthening of our grantee partners' capacities and governance, supporting feminist leadership and movement-building across the continent, amplifying the voices and messages of African women, and providing strategic advice to global philanthropic actors, including to the global donor community and the general public.

So, when COVID-19 hit, we focused on adapting, rather than shifting our course. We adapted our grantmaking processes to meet the changing needs of our grantee partners through COVID-19 support grants and targeted financing to local and national feminist campaigns against the pandemic induced increase in violence against women. We fully embraced our advisory role to other donors and furthered our collaboration with the women's funds community, which enabled us to shape donor strategies during and beyond the pandemic.

To me, one of the most heart warming manifestations of how AWDF showed up and stepped up amidst the tall waves of 2020 was our team's decision to donate a percentage of their own salaries towards providing emergency financial support to victims of the August 2020 explosion in Beirut, and to feminists campaigning against violence against women, particularly against rape in Nigeria. The AWDF "workplace giving" tradition is a testament of our team's solidarity and commitment to funding the change we seek for women's rights.

Owing to the team's hard work and Theo's visionary fundraising, AWDF was able to secure important funding streams – a feat in these times of heightened uncertainty. With the renewal of Leading from the South and the establishment of a partnership with the Equality Fund, we are proud to be able to continue nurturing feminist work across Africa and in selected Middle Eastern countries.

Learning from my wonderful colleagues about what they and AWDF's grantee partners built in 2020 reminded me that feminist movements were born out of adversity and made to face and thrive in crises. Our work as feminist organisations has never been more critical. Yet, facing these challenges with boldness also means exploring collective ways to breathe, rest, and prioritise

wellness. With the pandemic stretching longer, the AWDF team continued to transform our ways of working to remain connected and efficient in serving African women's organisations. Through our virtual *SISTER to SISTER* space, we facilitated conversations about the fear, anxiety and panic caused by the pandemic, drawing lessons from the February 2020 Flourish Retreat which centred the emotional needs and resilience of African feminists.

In the same way water remembers all that it touches, I carry all of these reflections close to my heart as AWDF nears the end of our five-year strategy. I look forward to building on Theo's extraordinary legacy towards a future in which all African women and non-binary people are free from the weight of patriarchy – and to doing so with AWDF's team and partners. I am inspired by your continued commitment to supporting African feminist movements and the work of African women's rights organisations.

As I peer into the future, I am reminded of words I heard Mrs Graça Machel tell a group of African feminists ten years ago: "Each of you is doing outstanding work but, alone, you are only a drop. It is by working with others that you will form a river and then an ocean of change for girls and women in Africa." The journey ahead is a collective one. Let's come together and make every drop count.



**Françoise Moudouthe, CEO**



An aerial photograph of a coastal region. A road, likely a highway, runs vertically through the center-right of the image. To the left of the road, there is a large body of water, possibly a bay or a large lake, with a light blue-green hue. The surrounding land is a mix of green and brown, indicating vegetation and possibly agricultural or undeveloped land. The overall scene is captured from a high angle, showing the layout of the road and the proximity of the water.

**A Glimpse Into  
The Vast Sea**

*If ever there was a time for Conjurers, 2020 was the time. If ever there was proof that water remembers, 2020 was the proof. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, present were the elements of the screams of African feminists, who for decades have been telling the world to prioritise care, to fund public services, to support wellness, to make inequality history, to support the informal sector, and to protect women from violence. Present were all of the missteps of people in power. Present also was the work of women's rights organisations, the foundation and the innovation, that carried us through the year.*

Along with the usual systemic and societal restraints on women's lives, in 2020, women were further overburdened as care workers and were left unprotected with their abusers in global lockdowns. African women's rights organisations were overworked and underfunded while figuring out how to do the work with constraints on movement and organising. For AWDF and our partners, 2020 brought to light what we have learned throughout the years, that funding women's rights organisations through flexible and responsive processes creates change. The processes that we have refined over the years enabled us to respond to the times and to the shifting needs of our grantee partners.

This year, our grantee partners created visibility and voiced women's rights issues, pushed and succeeded in putting laws in place that protect women, created understanding around harmful norms and policies, built women's political, financial, and advocacy skills, increased women's representation in political office, improved women's access to and ownership of property, contributed to increased budget allocations to public services, and responded to the needs of their community in a time of COVID-19 and other crises. Alongside our grantmaking work, we disseminated knowledge products and evidence-based advocacy tools, delivered capacity building trainings and a wellness retreat for grantee partners, and increased visibility and dialogue on issues that affect the lives of African women.

Internally, it was a time of reflection, change and growth. Our Director of Programs, Jessica Horn and CEO, Theo Sowa, both left AWDF in 2020, leaving behind a legacy of feminist leadership rooted in radical imaginings of freedom, of what we can be and how we can fund our dreams for African women's futures. The work described in this report is a reflection of their vision and labour, hand in hand with our grantee partners and staff.

# A Glimpse In Numbers



**136 grants**



**USD \$8,902,980**  
awarded



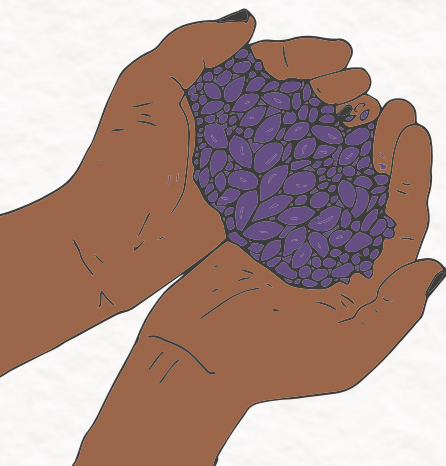
**32 countries**  
(including transnational and regional grants)



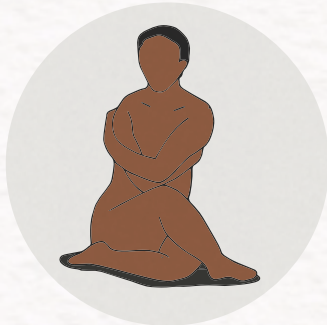
**88.9%**  
increase in total grantmaking from 2019



**46.4%**  
increase in grants to Francophone countries from 2019



Like in past years, AWDF's grants in 2020 were divided across our three priority areas, but while the grants are situated in one of these areas, we worked with the understanding that they are all interrelated.



## Body and Health Rights

85 grants  
USD \$4,136,160  
27 countries



## Economic Security and Justice

22 grants  
USD \$2,057,750  
9 countries

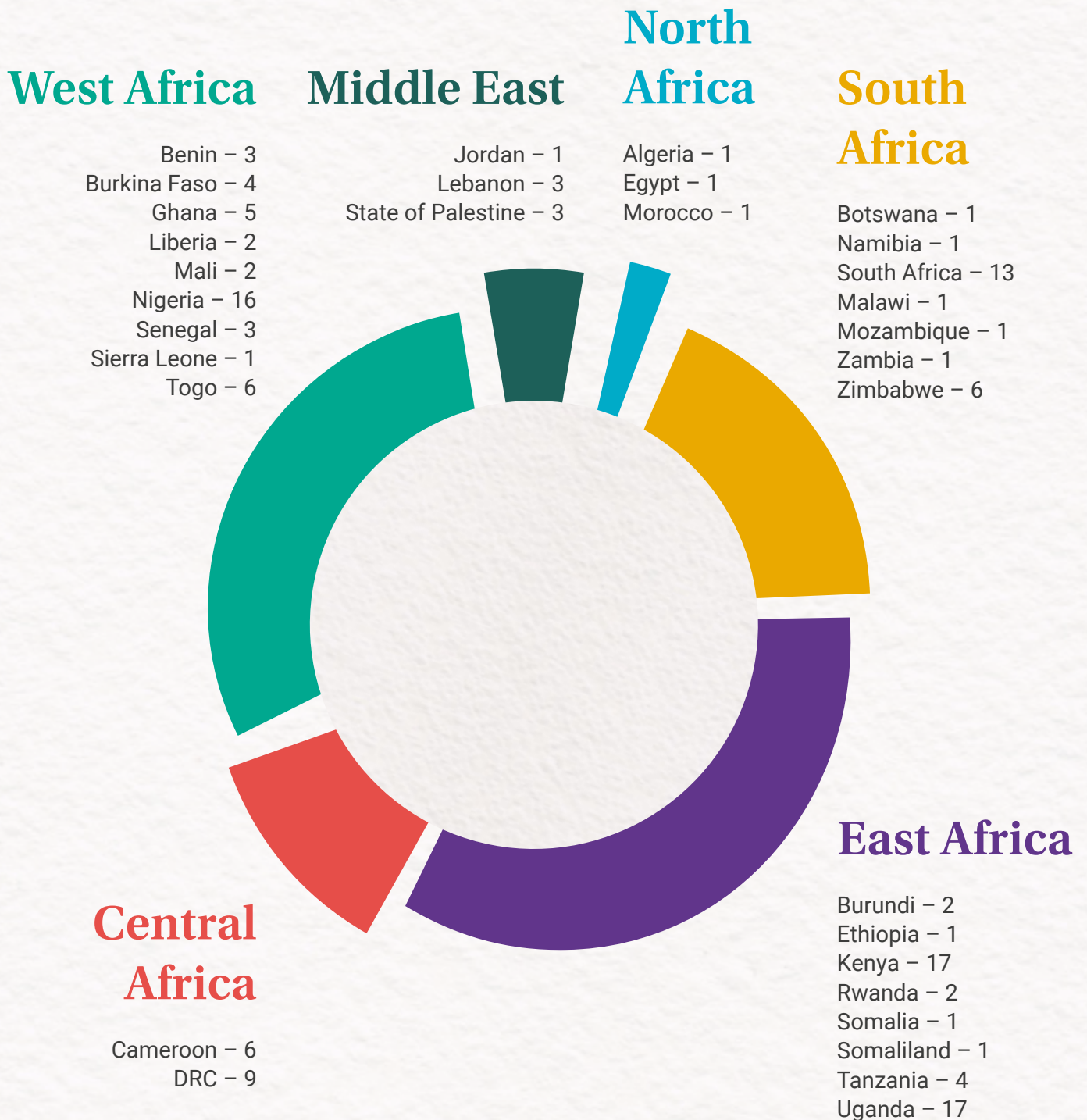


## Leadership, Participation and Peace

29 grants  
USD \$2,709,070  
17 countries

A total of \$122,000 of all the grants in 2020 went to responding to the emergency elements in the year, particularly COVID-19 rapid response and anti-violence campaigns led by women's rights organisations across the continent.

In 2020, AWDF funded 136 grants to organisations in 32 countries. The geographical coverage is as always, primarily on the African continent where we reached 29 countries, and the remaining three countries were in the Middle East, particularly under our Leading From the South partnership.



# A Glimpse In Words

## Steered donor engagements for sustainable financing of African women's organisations

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, where women's rights organisations were underfunded globally, AWDF managed to raise \$45 million, which is our highest ever amount raised in a single year of fundraising. Through deepened funder engagement around resourcing sustainable strategies for financing African women's rights organisations during and post COVID-19, our donor advocacy yielded a breakthrough towards longer-term financing opportunities for our grantee partners.

## Reimagined feminist capacity building

The AWDF capacity building programme was reimagined to centre wellness, financial and advocacy skills amidst the fragility brought on by the pandemic. Ninety-nine grantee partners participated in the *SISTER to SISTER* conversational space, which we created to strengthen emotional, spiritual and soulful wellness in a time where grantee partners were striving to innovate and remain able to serve their constituencies.

## Nurtured African women's voices

In 2020, graduates from AWDF's 2019 Writers Workshop went on to publish books, blogs and articles. A selection of these knowledge products include Ingrid Nayame's book, *Cupid's Arrow*, Bigoa Choul's *The Girl who Fought for Freedom* and Beryl Adhiambo's article on *Dealing with Pneumonia in the wake of COVID 19*. This was a critical step in exercising their skills and contributing to shaping African feminist narratives.

## Connected more users to African feminist knowledge

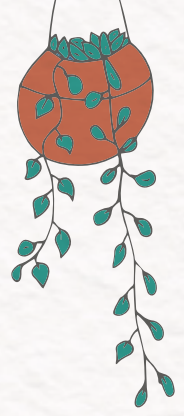
Over 15,000 users globally accessed knowledge from AWDF's online knowledge hub - [AfriRep](#). By the end of 2020, the site hosted over 9,000 knowledge materials produced by individual African women and African women's rights organisations. This impact is a critical step towards influencing a feminist and decolonial knowledge economy in which African women are not just users but recognised creators of all forms of knowledge resources on the continent and globally.

## Increased feminist community engagement

Our virtual communications initiatives saw a sharp rise in uptake of feminist messages and engagement around the works of African women's rights organisations. AWDF's Twitter following grew from 10,200 in January 2020 to 13,345 by November 2020, representing a 31% growth, while our Facebook following grew from 14,200 in January 2020 to 20,291, a leap of 43%.

# **Prepping the Waters, Cleansing the Soul**





*Every year, we test the waters. We check the temperature, and we prepare ourselves for the coming of the days. The process is humble and continuous and it lasts throughout the year. Whether the waters are calm or treacherous, like our sisters throughout the continent, we prepare for the mundane and the extraordinary.*

In 2020, this preparation ritual emerged as one of our most valuable practices. We thrived on the expansiveness of the elements, on how resilient our systems, infrastructure and capacity had grown to be through the many years of *prepping the waters and cleansing the soul*.

Our preparations involved building skills and collecting tools for the work. This meant gathering the knowledge and resources to ensure healthy minds, bodies and souls and building the overall capacity of the individuals and organisations who do the work. It meant staying connected and checking in – in service always to the health, wellbeing, and success of the sisters and of the movement.

## Healing the Healers

This year deepened AWDF's belief in centring the health, healing, and emotional wellbeing of African women. Through our convenings and interactions with partners and grantees, we observed that more and more African feminist spaces were full of stories of power and change, but also of fatigue and disillusionment with growing violence and discrimination against women's rights organisations and activists across continent. We allocated time, resources, and tools to reach the women who drive the work in their communities and in the movement. Our efforts reflected what we heard activists echo – the importance of deliberate planning and resourcing of self-care as an integral component of African feminist work.

Through our CREATE Initiative, a programme that explores the use of feminist arts in West Africa to support women's rights and social justice, AWDF held the inaugural Flourish Retreat for select grantee partners as one of the fullest manifestations of our desire to create feminist spaces for healing, resilience, and mindful growth. The Retreat took place in early 2020, in Sogakope, Ghana with twenty feminist activists from ten African countries in attendance. The activists included those working on VAW prevention among sex workers, women living with HIV and AIDS, rape crisis centres, and feminist movement building.



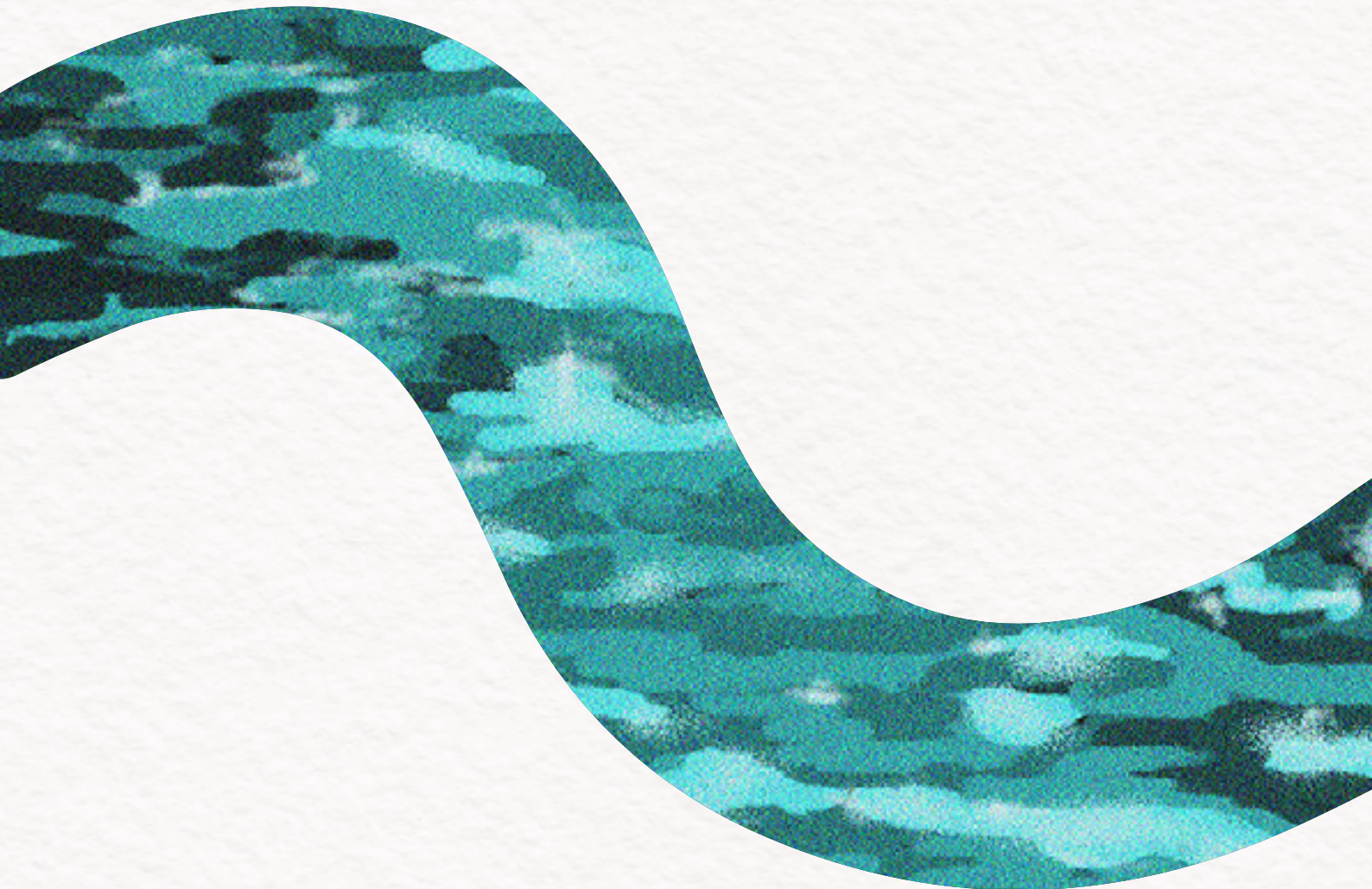
AWDF's coaches and staff took participants through a reflective seven-day journey of healing. The scene was set to centre beauty and relaxation and included engaging sessions on chakras, moon rituals, essential oils and aromatherapy, exercise, breathing practices, journaling, yoga, building altars, and individual and group counselling. The choice of these approaches and tools was guided by participants' pre-retreat assessments, which showed the need to address stress, burnout, happiness, and motivation levels.

Post-retreat assessments from the Flourish Retreat showed that participants valued the tools learned to deal with stress, cultivate happiness in their work, and handle personal and professional problems. Throughout the year, we saw women's rights organisations more boldly approach care and wellness for their staff and communities.

**The little time I spent at the retreat taught me lifetime lessons; that happiness and self-care are also in small things and actions and that I don't have to wait to have enough money, enough time or the right moment to take care of myself. I had been pushing myself for years, not resting, putting everything and everyone before myself, and feeling guilty for even wanting to rest, wanting to let go. The retreat confirmed to me that self-care is a political act ... It helped me think of ways to add what I learned into our work and share it with the team in order to strengthen the organisational culture of family and love.**

*Mpumi Mathabela, One in Nine Campaign.*

# **Of Ripples, Waves and Floods**



*In times of chaos, we hold onto the foundation. We scream at the sky, grasp at the moon and feel the ground tremble beneath our feet. Like the conjurer women who came before us, holding tight to the hands of our sisters to keep from falling.*

*2020 was a year amongst years. A deluge of sorts. The waters were rough and calm, dangerous and healing. Its elements were both old and new and AWDF responded to the times with presence and innovation. We stood on the foundations built by African feminists and African women's rights organisations over the years. We drew on the strength of our networks and the sisterhood. We listened to our grantee partners when they told us what they needed and how, we shifted platforms and modes of communication, and we responded to tumultuous, sometimes violent events and cultures with support and solidarity.*

## The Eruption

The global shutdown and economic downturn caused by COVID-19 resulted in an increase in the rates of violence against women and girls (including domestic and intimate partner violence) across many parts of the continent. Additionally, rates of child marriage and female genital mutilation increased and the burden of care grew with disproportionate effects on women and girls. There were limitations on formal and informal work resulting in reduced or lost incomes, and there was a significant impact on women's mental health and wellbeing. Grantees were constrained in their ability to carry out long term project implementation, provide crisis support, and directly reach women in their communities. For the grantees, enforced containment saw many unable to meet at all with the turn towards virtual spaces being limited because of poor internet connectivity and technology distribution. Their work was severely reduced and sometimes, only when feasible, taken online.

## Grantee Adaptations

While every context has its own peculiarities, grantees noted similar struggles and adaptations for dealing with a COVID-19 world. Processes were delayed, organisations, staff and communities were in lockdown, and resources were diverted to address emerging needs. Grantees did what so many were doing globally; they attempted to take the work online and address the specific needs brought on by the pandemic.

For example, Women and Land in Zimbabwe (WLZ) developed and put in place an organisational COVID-19 preventative and preparedness plan to prevent the spread of the virus. They engaged the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture, enabling them to be categorised as essential service providers and continue activities while adhering to COVID-19 and WHO preventive measures. They procured and distributed masks, soap, and sanitisers to programme areas. WLZ strengthened its digital technology engagement using online platforms such as virtual meeting platforms, WhatsApp, and Facebook to mobilise and enhance participation. The use of online media also allowed WLZ to participate in policy debates and engagement meetings and ensure women's voices remained visible and audible even during the lockdown. When the situation improved, WLZ physically visited various communities, but instead of bringing women to a central point, as was the practice, WLZ held district meetings in eight rural districts of Zimbabwe. Participants cascaded what was discussed and shared with their constituencies, who met in much smaller groups.

Internally, the impact of COVID-19 made us critically re-think how we work, presenting us with both challenges and opportunities. We created e-learning platforms that transformed face-to-face training programmes and self-care sessions into virtual ones; we conducted virtual site visits; we increased our workplace giving and ensured open communication and flexibility with grantees.

Most critically, 2020 was a year of reimagining the future of feminist capacity building. Through our feminist coaches' model and the help of e-learning experts, AWDF launched an online space named *SISTER to SISTER* for grantee partners to explore their experiences and share ideas on how to cope in the COVID-19 era and for AWDF to identify other measures of support relevant to these needs. The conversations were led by African feminist organisational development, leadership and wellness experts Hope Chigudu and Dr Yene Assegid with the participation of over 140 grantee partners and AWDF staff. The Capacity Building Programme, over the years, has contributed to robust systems and shifts in practices among African women's rights organisations. It has also increasingly created safe spaces that support difficult and challenging conversations on issues and topics that are not commonly given space. We continue to draw on these successes and the agility of AWDF's grantee partners, coaches, trainers, staff and feminist consultants as the future of feminist capacity building continues to evolve.

One of the loudest messages that came out of 2020 for AWDF as an African feminist fund, was the importance of creating responsive and relevant funding processes that enable grantees to address emergencies, unforeseen circumstances and actual needs on the ground. While AWDF is not an emergency action grant maker, we created rapid response grants to provide targeted COVID-19 support and urgently resource campaigns against the increased cases of violence against women during the pandemic.

**“Capacity building is not only about teaching someone how to do something, but also teaching them how to think about something, how to see, and how to analyse to create change.”**

*Sandra Zenda, Institute for Young Women's Development, Zimbabwe*

# The Constant Chaos

For AWDF and women's rights organisations, 2020 was more than just COVID-19; it had the elements of every other year before it - all of the violence, the trauma, and the chaos that women deal with and work against.

In Nigeria, the rapes and murders of two Nigerian students, Vera Uwaila Omosuwa and Barakat Bello, sparked a campaign in the streets and on social media. In response, AWDF awarded grants worth \$57,000 to seven feminist organisations in Nigeria to support rapid action in the anti-rape campaign. One of our grantees, the Women Environmental Programme, engaged with Members of the Benue State Houses of Assembly to enact the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law, and after citizen campaigns, the State Governors in Nigeria called for a state of emergency over the rape of women and children, and 14 states enacted the law.

The global Black Lives Matter uprisings encouraged conversations within AWDF and with our virtual audiences about police brutality and other forms of state-sanctioned violence against activists and human rights' organising in Africa. Our [engagement and reflections](#) shined light on the gains of African women's rights organisations in these times and contributed to global debates around women's safety thereby joining women and human rights organisations in building solidarity for the safety and protection of women on the continent and globally.

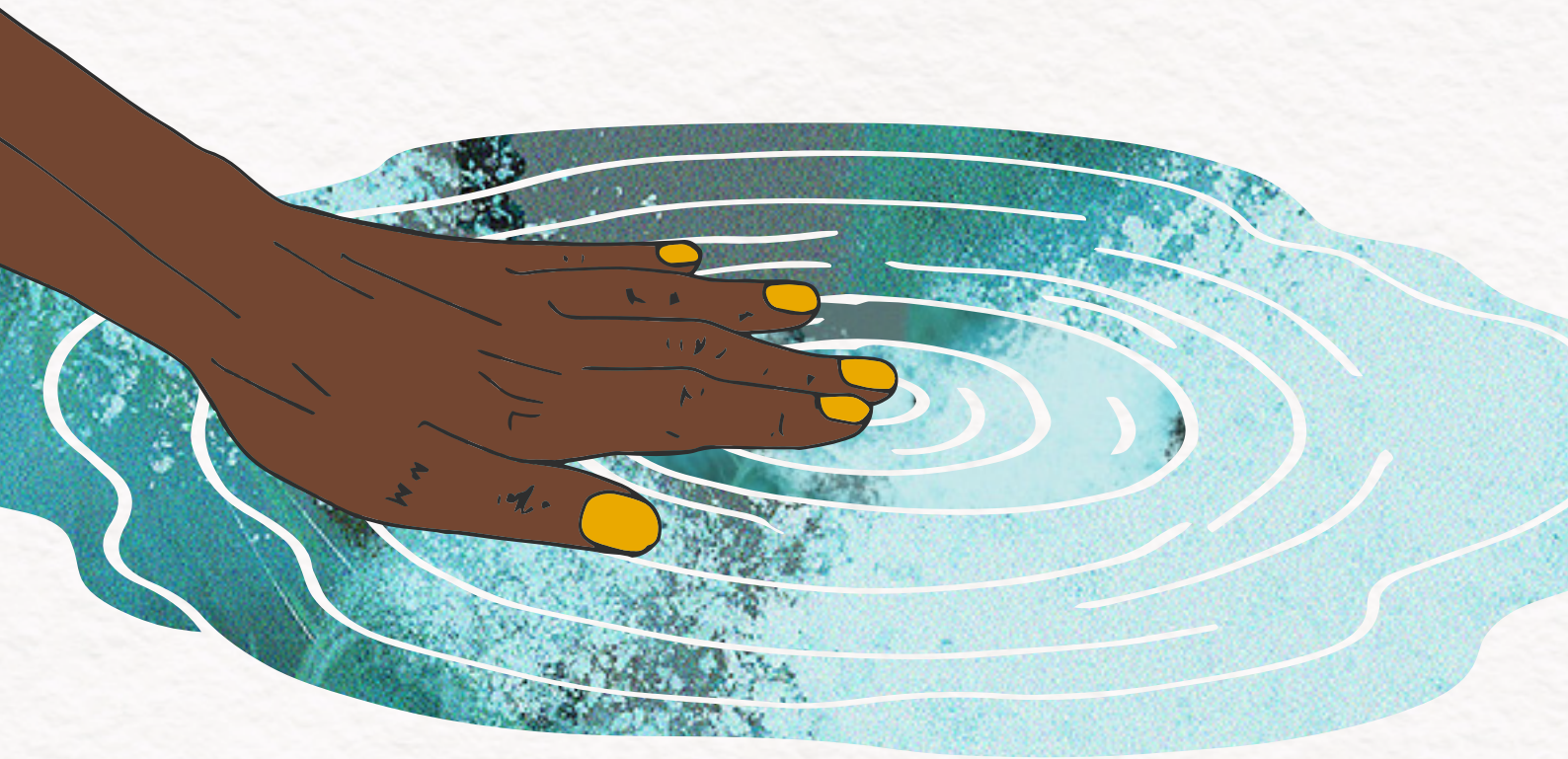
# Solidarity Through Workplace Giving

There are so many ways that we come together, that we hold each other's hands. Amidst the eruption and the constant chaos, there was solidarity. Since 2006, AWDF staff have contributed money into the workplace-giving fund managed by staff members who donate a part of their monthly salaries to fund projects that they choose through an internal committee.

What AWDF is doing with workplace giving is not so different from what communities across the continent do in their everyday lives. Individuals, neighbors, family members, communities, giving their resources, money and time, when someone gets ill, when school fees are outstanding, when rent is due, for a funeral, a wedding and the list goes on and on. The AWDF workplace giving initiative systematises every day giving, acting within its mission, building in solidarity, and in doing so, expanding the scope and reclaiming continental and global understandings of philanthropy. In 2020, AWDF staff gave \$11,000 in emergency support to seven organisations in three countries – Lebanon, Nigeria, and South Africa.

In a letter to AWDF staff, the A Project team in Lebanon, who received financial support after the August 2020 explosion in Beirut caused 215 deaths, injured 7,500 and left 300,000 people without homes, wrote, "To think that staff have taken from their earnings to support us in this time is an act of solidarity that leaves me somewhat tongue-tied. Please send our deepest appreciation to all staff at AWDF and tell them the kindness and thoughtfulness that we have been met with from AWDF and other south based feminists from around the world since this blast occurred has brought warmth and hope to our hearts..."

**All That is Touched  
is Changed**







*The women on top of Dandelion Mountain held the reflection of the moon in their hands and they felt power. They created moon water and they made change. They searched the waters for herbs and they healed. This is the work of conjure women. So much happened in 2020. Below are some of the highlights of our work and the work of our grantee partners. Below is what change looked like in 2020.*

## Reflections of Light

Here are some highlights of the work of our grantee partners.

**APPROFES** in **Senegal** worked to ensure that local leaders commit budget allocations within their municipality to support women and girl survivors of violence. Discussions and debates around VAWG led to the establishment of alert and monitoring committees in the localities of Guinguinéo, Dara Mboss and Gandiaye.

The **Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTF)** initiated the **Creating Spaces Project** that enabled increased representation of women in legislative houses with the goal of influencing policies and laws that work for women in states, including Edo and Kano. The project produced two female executives and one government affiliate who are direct project beneficiaries. They also formed the Professional Women Groups movement in Edo State focused on supporting women politicians.

**Integrated Disabled Women Activities (IDIWA)** in **Uganda** recorded improved access, control, and property ownership for women and girls with disabilities from 36% to 58%. IDIWA's work has resulted in the development of district-level ordinances (developed through consultations with women and girls with disabilities) in Iganga and Mayuge Districts on promoting the employment and economic rights of people with disabilities.

Seminars on how to survive in male-dominated patriarchal political parties and technical consultations with political parties on how to open space for women in power, conducted by the **Tanzanian Women Cross-Party Platform (TWCP)**, had a significant impact on shifting mindsets and increasing women's participation in different positions in government.

**Women in Law and Development in Africa** operating in **Togo** supported the ratification of the Maputo Protocol in 14 West African countries and ensured systemic change that led to access to productive land resources for over 12,000 women farms. It has also led to the mobilisation of 526 traditional leaders working on shifting norms and policies around child marriage in Togo, Benin and Mali.

**Mother's School Society (MSS)** in the **State of Palestine** enhanced the role and position of women within the family and community by enabling them in various fields, including the world of work. MSS' work with women workers in private companies in Israeli settlements has led to 30 women being assigned to workers unions, some in leadership positions.

The work of **Women and Law In Southern Africa (WLSA)** based in **Zambia** resulted in two women appointed to leadership positions in Chikankata, a reduction in the registration fees for women to get into political parties, church structures allowing women to preach in their auditoriums and a significant shift in behavior and attitudes with relation to women in leadership positions.

The work of **Association pour le Progrès et la Défense des Droits des Femmes (APDF)** in **Mali** included training 50 women in the village of Kolokani on income-generating activities such as soap making and tattooing, which led to a better standard of living and decision making power at the household level. APDF's advocacy and outreach contributed to the Imam of Kangaba joining their campaign and lending his voice by speaking on women's rights in the mosque and admonishing the idea that the Quran supports the subjugation of women.

**The Institute for Young Women Development (IYWD)** in **Zimbabwe**, through its Feminist Popular Education program, trained and developed young women running for political office in local government and is working on passing a 50/50 quota system for women's representation in government.

Four hundred women street vendors in the cooperatives formed under a project run by the **Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA)** in **Uganda** increasingly engaged in civil action on behalf of their communities and represented them in local and national policy platforms.

**The Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust** in **South Africa** signed an MOU with the Deputy Minister of Justice, setting out demands for a sexual offenses court system to be established in Khayelitsha, Cape Town's largest township.



# Leading From the South

The Leading from the South (LFS) initiative is a ground-breaking partnership built on a foundational belief in the power and capacity of Global South women's funds, launched in December 2016 – a collaboration between the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and four Global South women's funds - AWDF, Fondo Mujeres del Sur (FMS), International Indigenous Women's Forum- AYNÍ Fund (FIMI), and Women's Fund Asia, (WFA). Under this partnership, AWDF awarded a total of 48 grants by the end of 2020. This support enabled grantees to create tangible change in the areas of body and health rights, economic security and justice, and leadership, participation and peace.



## LFS Impact in 2020

- **Change in awareness:** 5,4734 women and girls participated in advocacy and actively engaged in change processes around various women's rights issues.
- **Stronger movements:** Nine grantee organisations consolidated alliances and movements in their constituencies, nationally and regionally.
- **Public discourse and visibility:** 287 media houses, including radio, print media and television and social media were engaged, discussing and educating their audiences on issues related to VAW and gender inequality.
- **Change in policy and practices:** 24 laws related to VAW were reviewed, and 12 land reform and succession as well as women's economic empowerment laws were reviewed.

# Spotlights on Feminist Knowledge and Engagement

In 2020, AWDF cultivated partnerships for knowledge and evidence-based engagement on women's rights issues. We launched AWDF's continent-wide study on [Women and NCDs in Africa](#) in collaboration with the Women and Girls Africa Summit, amplifying African women's leadership on the issue. Experts in the field, Dr Ana Mocumbi of the Lancet NCDI Commission and Dr Beatrice Wiafe of the Breast Care International linked the research with longstanding global and continental debates and the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the dissemination activities, AWDF saw a diversity of voices from researchers, policymakers and practitioners underscore the need to invest in the leadership of African women's rights organisations for effective prevention and response to NCDs in Africa.



Moreover, we deepened existing collaborations to steer continental debate on violence against women prevention using the [\(VAW\) prevention primer](#), co-produced with Raising Voices in 2019. Our active participation through [speaking opportunities](#) with partners like Raising Voices and the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) calling for equitable partnerships in researcher-activist collaborations and strengthening ownership of VAW prevention knowledge on the continent, were a critical achievement in the year.

# Campaigns and Commemorations

As part of the 2020 Sixteen Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) campaign, AWDF funded women's rights organisations working to intensify education and awareness on preventing violence against women and promoting women's access to comprehensive mental health and wellness services. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the communications team intensified its campaign online, producing graphics that depicted key messages and ways to identify, prevent and stop violence against women and girls. These were shared on our social media platforms and garnered high audience engagement. A [video](#) featuring members of staff displaying messages on placards was also produced and shared on YouTube.



As part of the celebration of International Women's Day and Women's Month in March 2020, AWDF, in collaboration with the [Young Feminist Collective](#) (YFC), held an exposition entitled "Women at the Centre: Art x Feminism," that explored how women's work in the arts helps transform narratives about feminism and womanhood. The gallery showcased photos, paintings, prints, short films and live music and poetry performances with multiple artists, including Ria Boss, Edem Robby, Selasie Djameh, and Yaa Addae. The panel discussion explored the feminist creative space in Ghana and the reality of navigating art spaces as women and featured young artists including, Josephine Ama Budge and Caren Akoto-Adade. The event was attended by over 300 participants and had engagements on Twitter and Facebook.



# The Conjurers

*The alchemy of the work is done by those who brave the waters. Those who hold the moon's reflection, who choose the herbs, who work with the elements and make the change, those who heal and are healed in practice. For AWDF, the alchemists are our grantee partners, our staff and board members. Here are the Conjurers.*

#### **ALGERIA**

- Association Djazairouna des familles victimes du terrorisme islamiste

#### **BENIN**

- Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE-BENIN)
- Groupe d'Action pour la Justice et l'Egalité Sociale (GAJES)
- Réseau pour l'Intégration des Femmes des ONG et Associations Africaines (section Bénin): RIFONGA-Bénin

#### **BOTSWANA**

- Emang Basadi Association (EBA)

#### **BURKINA FASO**

- Coalition Burkinabé pour les Droits de la Femme (CBDF)
- Initiative Pananetugri pour le Bien-être de la Femme (IPBF)
- Organisation pour de Nouvelles Initiatives en Développement et Santé (ONIDS)

#### **BURUNDI**

- Synergie Des Partenaires Pour La Promotion Des Droits De La Femme (SPPDF)
- Young Women's Knowledge and Leadership Institute Burundi (YOWLI Burundi)

#### **CAMEROON**

- Association Hope Africa Internationale
- Horizons Femmes
- FIDA Cameroon (International Federation of Women Lawyers)
- Mengbwa: Actions Jeune Cameroon
- North West Association of Women with Disabilities (NWAWORD)
- Women in front Cameroon (WIFC)

#### **DRC**

- Action Femme et Eco-Justice (AFECOJU)
- Cause Rurale
- Focus Droits et Acces
- La Floraison ASB DRC
- Réseau Femme Et Développement, REFED/NK

- Si Jeunesse Savait
- Synergie Des Femmes Pour Les Victimes Des Violences Sexuelles (SFVS)
- Together We Can Foundation (TWCF)
- Une Femme qui en Soulève une Autre « FESA »

#### **EGYPT**

- Future Girls Association

#### **ETHIOPIA**

- Young Women's Christian Association in Ethiopia (YWCA Ethiopia)

#### **GHANA**

- Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre
- Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT)
- Network of Women in Growth (NEWIG) Ghana
- Women Support and Activists Group (WOSAG)
- ABANTU for Development

#### **JORDAN**

- SIGI-Jordan (Sisterhood Is Global Institute - Jordan)

## **KENYA**

- African Leadership Centre (ALC)
- Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK)
- Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW)
- Eldoret Women For Development (ELWOFOD)
- Flone Initiative
- GROOTS Kenya Association (GROOTS Kenya)
- Indigenous Information Network
- Kenya Network of Women with AIDS (KENWA)
- Kenya Sex Workers Alliance (KESWA)
- Most at Risk Young Mothers and Teenage Girls living with HIV Initiative (MOYOTE)
- Moving the Goalposts
- Ripples International
- Women Challenged to Challenge
- Youth Changers Kenya (YCK)

## **LEBANON**

- Kafa (Enough) Violence & Exploitation
- Queer Women Network
- The A Project

## **LIBERIA**

- Gbowee Peace Foundation Africa

## **MALAWI**

- Human rights of women and girls with disabilities in Malawi

## **MALI**

- Association « Côté Cour »
- Association De défense Des Droits Des Aide-ménagères et Domestiques – ADDAD

## **MOROCCO**

- Union Feministe Libre

## **MOZAMBIQUE**

- Forum Mulher

## **NAMIBIA**

- Rights not Rescue Trust of Namibia

## **NIGERIA**

- Ajegunle Community Project
- Alliances for Africa (AFA)
- Alliances for Africa / Nigerian Feminist Forum
- Community Empowerment and Development Initiative (CEDI)
- Education as a Vaccine (EVA)
- Fate Foundation
- Girl Child Art Foundation (GCAF)
- New Initiative for Social Development
- Project Alert on Violence Against Women
- Raise Foundation
- Teach Project Women Initiative (TechHerNG)

- Women & Community Livelihood Foundation (WOCLIF)
- Women Against Violence and Expediency Handling Initiative (WAVEHI)
- Women At Risk International Foundation-WARIF
- Women, Infants and Children Care Initiative (WICCI)
- Women's Initiative for Self-Actualisation

## **STATE OF PALESTINE**

- The Society of Women Graduates in Gaza Strip (SWG)
- The Women's Studies Centre (WSC)
- Women Media and Development (TAM)

## **RWANDA**

- Rwasa United Youth Association (RUYA)
- Women's Health and Equal Rights Association Rwanda (WHERAR)

## **SENEGAL**

- And Soppeku
- Gënji Hip-Hop
- Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance (PFPC)

## **SIERRA LEONE**

- 4HER Initiative Sierra Leone



- **SOMALIA**
- Women's Association for Relief & Development Actions (WARDA)

- SOMALILAND**
- NAGAAD Network

- SOUTH AFRICA**
- Africa Women Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum (AWIEF)
  - Agenda Feminist Media
  - Gender Dynamix (GDX)
  - Graca Machel Trust
  - Legal Centre for Gender-Based Violence Association (Lawyers against Abuse-LvA)
  - Mosaic Women's Training Service and Healing Centre
  - One in Nine Campaign
  - Rape Crises Cape Town Trust
  - Women's Legal Centre (WLC)
  - WoMin African Gender and Extractives Alliance (WoMin)
  - Sisonke National Movement

- TANZANIA**
- Eagle Wings Youth Initiative (EYWI)
  - Prosperous Health Life Initiative (PHLI)
  - Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA)
  - Temeke & Kisarawe Network of Girls living with HIV (A loose network hosted by Children

Education Society – CHESO) - Kisarawe Branch Office

- TOGO**
- Association Togolaise "Femmes et Sida" (ATFS)
  - Cercle d'Aide Femme Enfant (CAFE)
  - ONG ALAFIA
  - Women in Law and Development in Africa - Afrique de l'Ouest (WILDAF-AO)
  - Women in Law and Development Togo

- UGANDA**
- Action for Rural Women's Empowerment (ARUWE)
  - Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMWA)
  - Arise Integrated Development Effort (AIDE) Uganda
  - Center for Disability and Rehabilitation Uganda (CDR Uganda)
  - Centre for Women in Governance (CEWIGO)
  - Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE)
  - Integrated Disabled Women Activities-IDIWA
  - Nation Association for Women's Action in Development (NAWAD)
  - National Association of Women's Organisations in Uganda (NAWOU)
  - Platform for Social Justice
  - Raising Voices
  - Strategic Initiative for

- Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA)
- Transgender Equality Uganda (TEU)
- Voice of Mitooma
- Women's organisation Network for Human Rights Advocacy (WONETHA)

- ZAMBIA**
- Zambia National Women's Lobby

- ZIMBABWE**
- Emthonjeni Women's Forum
  - Female Students Network Trust (FSNT)
  - Institute for Young Women Development (IYWD)
  - Jekesa Pfungwa Vulingqondo (JPV)
  - Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association
  - Women Institute for Leadership Development (WILD)

# AWDF Staff

## Programmes

• Alexandra Asamoah Anang •  
Ayesha Abukari • Beatrice Boakye-  
Yiadom • Belinda Amankwah • Dinnah  
Nabwire (from April 2020) • Gifty Ayebea  
Anim • Jessica Horn (until August 2020) • Joyce  
Renee Ago Djanie • Lana Razafimanantsoa (from  
April 2020) • Madonna Kendona (until September  
2020) • Mary Akukumah • Nana Akosua Hanson  
(until August 2020) • Nancy Akanbombire •  
Pontso Mafethe (from September 2020) •  
Rose Buabeng • Sarah Benewaa Fosu (until  
September 2020) • Shirley Serwaa  
Boakye •

## Operations & Finance

• Abigail Ninson • Afi Quashie • Emmanuel  
Boakye • Felix Odei • Gertrude Annoh-  
Quarshie • Janet Okumi • Mathew Iddi •  
Mavis Gardiner • Mohammed Soulemana  
• Sarah Ansah • Selasi Anne Tofoatsi (until  
December 2020) • Sheila Anum • Vivian  
Korkor Acheampong •

## Partnership & Outreach

• Abena Bomo Afari • Abigail  
Burgesson • Ablodegbo Ameyo  
Dekoleadenu • Afua Gyapomaa (from  
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Ziblim • Françoise Moudouthe (from  
November 2020) • Lydia Maclean •  
Maame Kyerewaa Marfo (left April  
2020) • Nana Bamea Kyei-Boadu •  
Theo Sowa (until December 2020) •  
Zeytuna Abdella Azasoo •

## Board Members

**Ndeye Coumba Ramatoulaye Sow Sane**, Chair  
**Hilda Mary Tatria**, Co-Founder/Member  
**Olabisi Oluyemi Adeleye-Fayemi**, Co- Founder/Member  
**Arielle Asomaniwaa Enniful**, Treasurer  
**Agnes Phiri**, Member  
**Taaka Awori**, Member  
**Theo Sowa**, CEO – Ex-officio Member (until December 2020)  
**Françoise Moudouthe**, CEO – Ex-officio Member (from November 2020)



# **The Paddles and Treasures**

# The Paddles and Treasures

Incomes and expenditures in 2020



Total Income

**\$10,644,617**

Total Expenditure

**\$10,400,569**

Grants awarded:

**\$8,357,892.00**

Fundraising and communication:

**\$428,495.00**

Capacity Building Activities:

**\$136,533.00**

Management and Institutional Development:

**\$409,663.00**

Programme Management:

**\$872,768.00**

Other Programmes:

**\$195,218.00**

\* Please refer to our 2020 audited accounts for a comprehensive look at our financial undertakings for the year.

## Institutional Donors

- Anonymous Institutional Donor A • Anonymous Institutional Donor B • Both Ends • Comic Relief
  - Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs • Equality Fund • Fidelity Investment Charitable Gift Fund • Foundation for A Just Society • Ford Foundation • Global Affairs Canada • Global Fund for Women
- Individual Donors • Libra Foundation • Mama Cash • New Venture Fund • NoVo Foundation Fund of Tides Foundation • Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) • Prospera International Network of Women's Funds • Stephen Lewis Foundation • William and Flora Hewlett Foundation • Women's Foundation of Minnesota •

The image features a white background with several horizontal, wavy, abstract shapes in various shades of teal and blue. These shapes are arranged in a vertical sequence, with some overlapping. The word "Flow" is centered in a bold, black, serif font. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, with a focus on fluid, organic forms.

# Flow

*The flow of water is continuous.  
The waters' edge is an illusion;  
there is no end. There is just  
the constant and persistent  
existence of life. The future is  
always creating itself, always  
present. 2020 is 2019, and  
it is also 2021. The water  
remembers, and the water is  
also constantly changing. The  
Conjurers make it so.*



*Below are the words of a sister. Imaginations in sisterhood, dreams of freedom, reflections of hope and power to carry us on.*

...I listened to the stories of fellow pilgrims who are going beyond fears and permitting themselves to imagine more humane ways to be humans together. My eyes opened; I began seeing possibilities, and I challenged my thoughts. "Do these sisters of mine need so many funds to begin to change their mindsets and look to the future with hope?" I asked. Do they? No! "Do I need to empower a thousand women to feel fulfilled?" I asked. Do I? No! "If I can put a smile on the face of one woman who can empower her children to live fulfilled lives, would that not translate to an impact on many?" I asked. Would it? Yes!

Although the journey into myself seemed to have taken so long, in many ways, it is a journey without distance because I have travelled from where I am to where I have always been. I have been pulling down the fences. I have stood before something fearfully and wonderfully made-- myself, and I did not see because I have let fear cripple me. I will not deny the fact that I will always look for reasons to be afraid. When I find myself in situations that are simply beyond me, and I feel I cannot cope or pull through, I will again listen to the tender voice in my heart.

On this journey, I have discovered that "awareness" is about coming home, about rediscovering myself and not about changing myself. It is to be who I am and free my mind so that I can have dreams, see visions, and dare to believe that I have enough.

Therefore, as I leave fear behind and welcome imagination, I have to relate to myself with compassion, with no self-condemnation, because I walk in hope and travel on the path that hope gives. With the support of all the sisters in this circle, I am confident that I can risk taking this road because I have the blessed assurance that you are with me on this journey.

Rev. Sr. Ngozi Frances Uti  
Executive Director,  
Centre for Women Studies and Intervention, Abuja, Nigeria.

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Date: September, 2021



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