



COMPREHENSIVE REPORT
FINAL DRAFT

Documenting the Constellations of African Feminist Philanthropy



Table of Contents

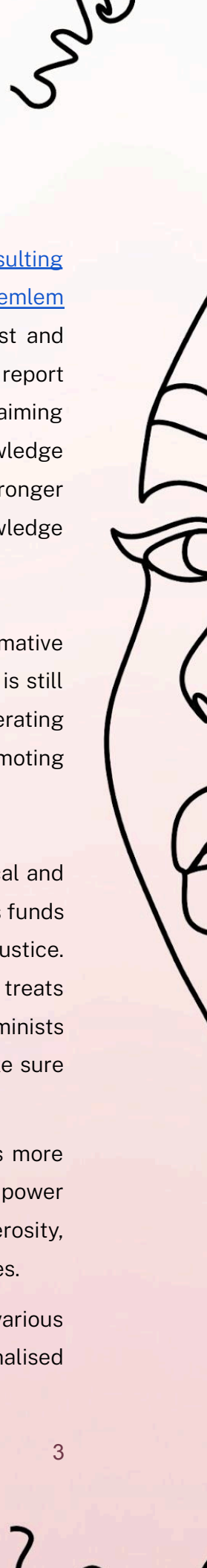
Acknowledgements.....	1
Executive Summary.....	3
Glossary.....	5
1. Introduction.....	8
2. Herstorical Context of African Feminist Philanthropy.....	9
3. The Influences of African Feminist Philanthropy.....	12
4. The Pluriverse of African Feminist Philanthropy.....	16
4.1. Individual Giving and Autonomous Resourcing.....	16
4.2. Identity Formation and Mobilisation.....	19
4.3. Institution-Building.....	20
4.4. Reimagining Resourcing and Ways of Working.....	22
4.5. Ecosystem Cultivation.....	24
4.6. Transforming the Global Philanthropic Sector.....	25
5. The Impact of African Feminist and Women's Funds.....	29
5.1. Modelling Systems Change Praxis through Feminist Institution-Building.....	29
5.2. Trust-Based, Participatory and Flexible Funding Strategies.....	30
5.3. Capacity Strengthening and Knowledge Sharing.....	31
5.4. Intersectionality and Inclusivity.....	32
5.5. Community-Centred and Horizontal Philanthropy.....	33
5.6. Decolonising Philanthropy.....	33
5.7. Deepening Constituency-Led Change and Mutuality.....	35
5.8. Transcending Erasure and Patriarchal Backlash.....	36
6. African Feminist Philanthropy Frontiers.....	37
6.1 Shifting Power Through Building Autonomous African Feminist Philanthropy Infrastructures.....	38
6.2 Engaging High Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs).....	38
6.3 Healing Justice as an Organising Framework within African Feminist Philanthropy.....	40
6.4 Shifting Power Through Reparative Philanthropy.....	41
6.5 Popularising African Feminist Philanthropy Narratives.....	42
6.6 Transforming our Relationship with Power Through Reimagining Accountability.....	42
7. Conclusion.....	43

Acknowledgements

With the overwhelming patriarchy backlash and threats to democracy, telling the story of African Feminist Philanthropy (AFP) is a powerful political act—one that shapes both narratives and new futures. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the visionary African feminists at the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) who committed to documenting African feminist narratives of philanthropy as a part of their institutional commitments to the Harambee-Ubuntu: Pan-African and Feminist Philanthropies Initiative. This study and Comprehensive Report was conducted by Lorha Nakambe Consulting, an African feminist collective working to support the realisation of a just funding ecosystem that is movement-led, abundantly resourced and organising transformatively to build more just worlds. The study was co-led by Iris Nxumalo-De Smidt, Bongiwe Mahlangu, Elma Ooro, Jennifer Chinoye Amadi, Lucky Kobugabe and Yasmina Benslimane over an eighteen month period from January 2024 to June 2025. Invaluable support and guidance was provided by numerous teams at AWDF, including the Partnerships and Philanthropy, Operations, Executive Office, as well as the Knowledge and Voice teams. We extend immense gratitude to Chandapiwa Sisila, Nadia Ahidjo, Amina Ibrahima and Moreen Majiwa for being thoughtful, wise, generous and insightful collaborators. This Comprehensive Report and accompanying political education materials would not be possible without the significant contributions of the following African feminists who shared their wisdom, strategies and reflections in 43 written and oral interviews:

- Aicha Ba
- Alice Kanengoni
- Coumba Toure
- Cynthia Eyakuze
- Dinah Musindarwezo
- Ese Emerhi
- Everjoice Win
- Faye Macheke
- Felogene Anumo
- Fnot Gebremicael
- Hakima Abbas

- Happy Kinyili
- Hilda Tadia
- Hlompho Mokoena
- Hope Chigudu
- Jacqueline Asiimwe
- Jaynice Del Rosario
- Jessica Horn
- Kaata Minah
- Laetitia Tonye Loe
- Lakshmi Moore
- Leila Hessini
- Lerato Mashianoke
- Lusako Munyenembe
- Madonna Ainembabazi Vicky
- Mase Kealeboga Ramaru
- Masego Madzwamuse
- Mukami Marete
- Muthoni Wanyeki
- Nicolette Naylor
- Phumzile Mthethwa
- Purity Kagwiria
- Rophiat Bello
- Rose Maruru
- Rouguiétou Khady Sow
- Semda Ben Jebara
- Shireen Motara
- Tariro Tandi
- Theo Sowa
- Vanessa Thomas
- Yvette Kathurima
- Zanele Sibanda
- Zuziwe Khuzwayo



Executive Summary

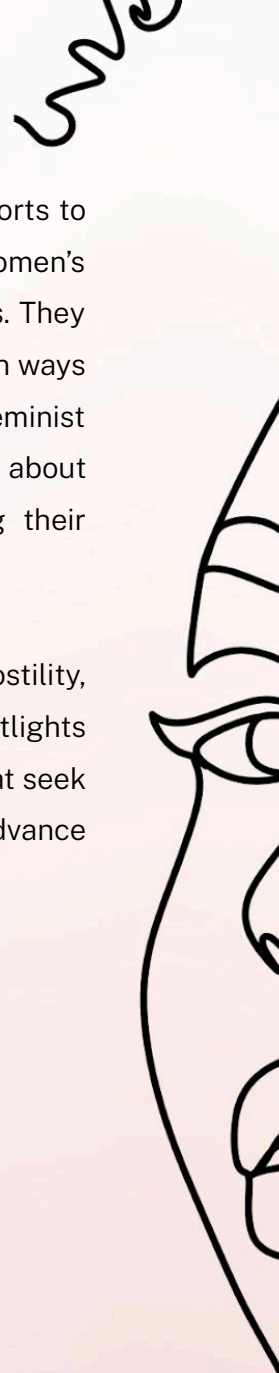
The African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) commissioned [Lorha Nakambe Consulting](#) to Document the Story of African Feminist Philanthropy as part of its ten-year [Lemlem Strategic Framework \(2023–2033\)](#). AWDF recognizes the vital role African feminist and women's funds have played in promoting gender justice across the continent. This report highlights the herstory and current strategies of African Feminist Philanthropy (AFP), aiming to uplift its impact and contribute to shaping the narrative and building a body of knowledge that will, strengthen support for gender justice movements, and build a stronger philanthropic infrastructure in the African continent. It adds to a growing body of knowledge that celebrates and supports the power of African Feminist Philanthropy.

This report looks at how AFP has grown and evolved as part of larger transformative philanthropic efforts to achieve gender justice. In a context where feminist funding is still very limited, it shows how this kind of philanthropy acts as a political and liberating force — challenging inequality, supporting intersectional feminist movements, and promoting social justice through autonomous, community-led and solidarity-based funding.

The documentation of the Constellations of AFP was done by looking at its herstorical and the social, political, and economic factors. It shows how African feminist and women's funds and networks have helped support feminist movements and build systems for social justice. The research was done using Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) that treats knowledge as a powerful tool for change. The voices and experiences of African Feminists and Women's Rights Organisations in their diversities were put at the center to make sure their work and ideas are not erased.

The report looks at important themes that show how deep and powerful AFP is. It's more than just giving money — it's a way of living and organizing that challenges unfair power structures within philanthropy and society at large. It's based on values like generosity, solidarity, collective care, community, social justice, and building strong feminist spaces.

The AFP ecosystem includes many different initiatives, funds, and networks that use various ways to support their work, like mutual aid, autonomous resourcing and institutionalised



philanthropy. Together, they show the creativity and strength of African feminist efforts to build a better world and resist injustice. Within this context, African feminist and women's funds are key in supporting feminist movements. They help local organizing, advocacy, and leadership, and make sure resources are shared in ways that reflect feminist values and shared goals. The importance of telling the story of feminist work and building a body of knowledge is emphasised to challenge mainstream ideas about philanthropy, making African feminist movements more visible, and highlighting their leadership and power.

Even when AFP continues to face significant challenges including political hostility, shrinking civic spaces, and reduced funding, towards the last section, the report spotlights the impact of AFP. The report concludes with the emerging opportunities for AFP that seek to strengthen movement sovereignty, expand autonomous resourcing, and advance transformative social justice across the continent and beyond.

Glossary

Term	Definition
African Feminist Philanthropy	A form of philanthropy rooted in African women's agency, knowledge, and leadership. It challenges patriarchal structures and systemic inequalities by supporting feminist movements and communities through both everyday giving and institutional funding, emphasising collective solidarity and transformative social change.
African Feminist Pluriverse	A conceptual framework recognising the multiplicity and diversity of African feminist epistemologies, practices, and worldviews. It embraces multiple feminist realities that coexist and interact, challenging universalising narratives and promoting autonomy and solidarity.
African Feminist Praxis	The lived practice and embodiment of African feminist principles in activism, philanthropy, and community organising. It integrates indigenous knowledge systems, intersectional analysis, and collective empowerment to challenge oppression and build feminist futures grounded in African realities.
African Philanthropy (AFP)	A broad concept encompassing diverse giving practices rooted in African cultural values such as solidarity, reciprocity, collective humanity, and community support. It includes informal and formal acts of giving beyond monetary donations.
Autonomous Resourcing	Funding mechanisms and resource mobilisation strategies owned and governed by African feminists themselves, independent of external donors or Global North agendas, enabling feminist movements to set priorities and sustain activism long-term without dependency.
Constellations	Dynamic, interconnected networks or clusters of activists, organisations, and movements that collaborate flexibly and non-hierarchically, enabling shared leadership, resource pooling, and mutual support across diverse feminist actors.
Global Majority World	Refers to the majority of the world's population, primarily in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, who have historically been marginalised and excluded from global power structures. African feminist philanthropy emphasises solidarity and self-determination within the Global Majority, promoting indigenous and locally led philanthropic practices.
Global Minority World	Refers to the economically dominant countries and populations, primarily in the Global North, that hold disproportionate wealth, power, and influence in global systems, including philanthropy. African feminist philanthropy

	critiques and seeks to transform these imbalances by centring Global Majority voices and leadership.
Healing Justice	A political organising framework that integrates collective healing into feminist activism, addressing systemic injustice, intergenerational trauma, and secondary trauma experienced by activists. It nurtures wellbeing and resilience to sustain long-term social justice work.
Herstory	Organising narratives of the past to the present that centres the stories, knowledge and strategies of women and non-binary people.
Horizontal Philanthropy	A mode of giving characterised by mutual aid, reciprocity, and solidarity, often practised informally within communities. It contrasts with vertical, institutionalised philanthropy by emphasising egalitarian relationships and collective responsibility. African feminist philanthropy values horizontal philanthropy as a foundational practice rooted in African cultural traditions.
Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs)	Illegal movement of money or capital across borders, including tax evasion, corruption, and money laundering, resulting in significant resource losses for African countries and undermining development and feminist social justice efforts.
Institutionalised Philanthropy	Philanthropy which is mediated by formal and legal structures and systems of operation. Within this context, philanthropy is conducted through public and private foundations, trusts, and donor agencies. These institutions often engage in philanthropy through structured grant-making processes and strategic frameworks, overseen by a governance body such as a Board of Directors, Advisory Council and/or Movement Leadership Councils.
Intersectionality	A framework that recognises how multiple social identities such as gender, race, class, and ethnicity intersect to create unique experiences of oppression and privilege. African feminist philanthropy employs intersectionality to address the complex and overlapping forms of marginalisation faced by African women and gender-diverse people.
Mutual Aid	Voluntary, collaborative resourcing based on solidarity and support for one another.
Mutuality	A principle of reciprocal care, support, and responsibility within feminist organising and philanthropy, emphasising horizontal relationships where power and resources are shared to foster solidarity and collective wellbeing rather than hierarchical or transactional interactions.
Worldbuilding	Creative alternative feminist realities rooted in liberation, justice, equity and planetary flourishing.

Women's Rights
Organisations
(WROs)

Organisations led primarily by women that focus on advancing women's rights, gender equality, and social justice through advocacy, service delivery, and empowerment at local, national, and regional levels.

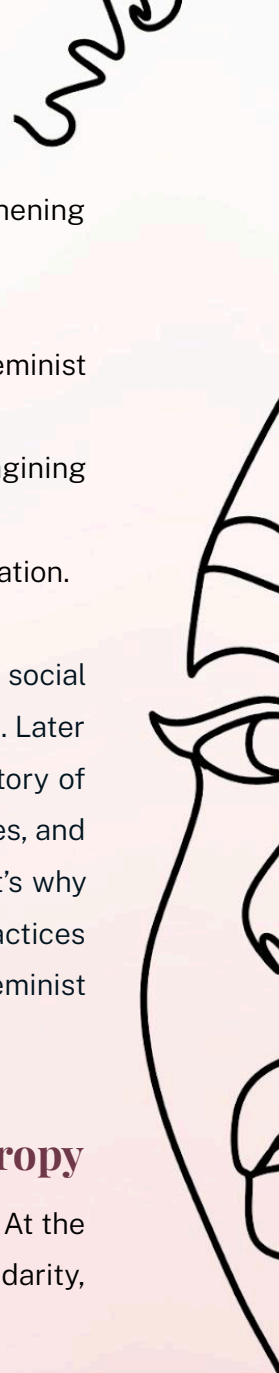
1. Introduction

Even with some changes within institutionalised philanthropy, feminist groups still don't get enough support. This is reflected in the current funding flows, where less than 1% of gender equity government funding and approximately 0.5% of gender equity private foundation giving reaches feminist movements and WROs. Furthermore, the Black Feminist Fund revealed that Black feminist movements globally receive a mere 0.1% - 0.35% of global philanthropic funding from foundations. This shows how racism, sexism, and power imbalances still shape who gets support in the funding world. AFP understands that unfair funding is tied to deep power imbalances. That's why it treats giving as a political act, working with movements to shift power, support liberation, and create change at all levels, from individuals to whole systems.

AFP is not only a way of giving, but a way of being and organizing that stands against all forms of oppression — like patriarchy, racism, classism, and colonialism. It includes personal giving, mutual aid, movement-led funding, and institutionalised philanthropy, all rooted in the long history of Black women fighting for justice.¹ It is a clear call to action for a different way of giving that is rooted in care, joy, community, solidarity and centering the liberation of African, Black and Afro-descent women, girls, and gender non-conforming people across the world.

AFP acknowledges and values the connection of all forms of life which is reflected by how it focuses on caring for the planet in sustainable ways to protect it for future generations. The AFP ecosystem includes African, Black and Afro-descent girls, women and gender non-conforming folks' resource redistribution practices through mutual aid, autonomous resourcing, feminist and women's funds, as well as those situated within philanthropic infrastructures across the world. It is against this background that we sought to explore and document the herstories of AFP in order to:

¹ Sylvia Tamale (2020) *Decolonization and Afro-Feminism*. Ottawa: Dajara Press.

- 
- Spotlight the power of African feminist and women's funds in strengthening feminist movements and advancing social justice.
 - Explore the lessons and insights from African feminist philanthropies;
 - Honour and celebrate the evolution of giving practices in the feminist philanthropic ecosystem;
 - Contribute to narrative and evidence-building efforts in reimagining Pan-African Feminist Philanthropies; as well as
 - Uplift African feminist narratives of philanthropy and sectoral transformation.

The report begins by looking at the herstory of AFP and the political, economic, and social factors that shaped it. It also explains the feminist methods used to tell these stories. Later sections explore how AFP works, its strategies, and the impact it has made. The story of AFP isn't just one story, it's made up of many voices, ways of giving, political strategies, and ideas that together show how powerful and deep the AFP ecosystem really is. That's why we use Cynthia Eyakuze's idea of AFP as a constellation — a mix of African feminist practices that use different ways of resourcing as acts of resistance, care, and creating feminist futures.

2. Herstorical Context of African Feminist Philanthropy

AFP has evolved over time, influenced by and shaping significant herstorical events. At the first instance, it is shaped by diverse powerful [African giving systems](#) rooted in solidarity, togetherness and reciprocity from before independence, through and after.²

Across historical periods, AFP exists within African philanthropy and its influence on the African political economy is undeniable³, including trying to uplift Africa's place within the global political sphere. Much like giving practices in other historical periods, pre-colonial giving practices reflected the power struggles that occurred within kingdom-building, expansion, resistance, migration, conquest and domination. Giving was attached to kinship, healing, communal associations, ritualistic and faith. As noted by Aina, "the facts of mass

² Tade Akin Aina (2013) The State, Politics and Philanthropy in Africa: Framing the Context. In T.A. Aina & B. Moyo (Eds.), *Giving to Help and Helping to Give: The Context and Politics of African Philanthropy* (pp. 1-36). Dakar: Amalion Publishing & TrustAfrica.

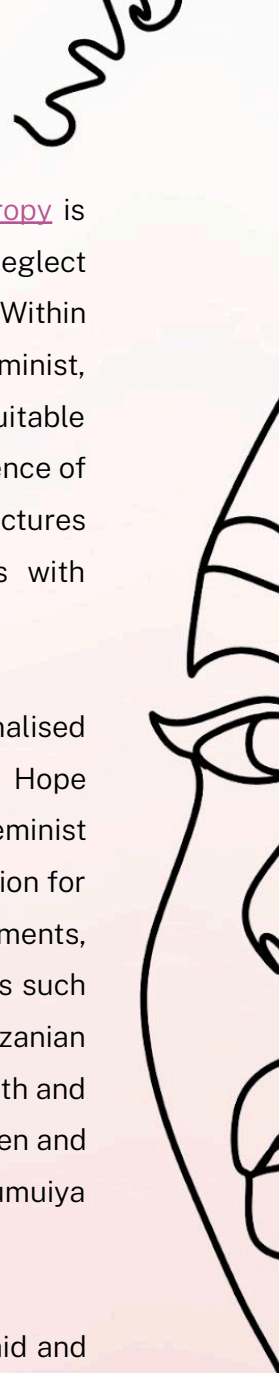
³ Bhelinkosi Moyo (2013) Introduction. In T.A. Aina & B. Moyo (Eds.), *Giving to Help and Helping to Give: The Context and Politics of African Philanthropy* (pp. xix-xxiii). Dakar: Amalion Publishing & TrustAfrica.

poverty and the evidence of continuous systematic dislocation and disruption of the patterns of economic and political evolution of many parts of Africa in the precolonial era explain some of the processes and modes of organising that we see later in the colonial and contemporary periods in Africa". This version of AFP predates institutionalised philanthropy and shows that since time immemorial, feminist work has co-created giving structures to support collective wellbeing, survival, resistance and build feminist worlds. Individual giving, also referred to as mutual aid or everyday giving, also confirms that philanthropy doesn't necessarily originate from the West or with big charities during colonial times. In fact, an interesting thing to note is that the resourcing of colonial institutional philanthropy was initially from the African continent to the Majority World. Wealth was taken away from Africa through slavery, plunder, extracting resources, this is why AFP partly frames philanthropy as a form of reparations and reparative justice.

During the colonial era, African giving systems evolved to respond to, survive, resist and transform the socio-economic, political and cultural conditions under imperial rule. Giving practices during this time included merry-go-rounds, burial societies, hometown associations, harambee, religious voluntary associations and mutual aid⁴. It is for this reason that Alice Kanengoni notes how "... Africa has managed to sustain herself through all the plundering and colonialism, because there is a lot of giving at family, community and country levels". While centering Pan-Africanism, black feminist internationalism and African socialism, individual and everyday giving often supported liberation movements across the continent and the Majority World. This was different as compared to colonial missions which were seeking to "civilise" Majority World populations in order to take more away from them. The structure of missionary philanthropy characterised by paternalism forms a background for the framing of institutionalised philanthropy as charity rather than social justice or solidarity, centring whiteness, othering of racialised communities and an unwillingness to fund their movements and organisations, concentration of power, failure to recognise and address structural racism, short-termism, overvaluing quantification and formalisation and an unwillingness to dismantle systems of oppression.

Institutionalised philanthropy witnessed the rise of social justice philanthropy in the post-World War II era, which mobilised "financial, human and technical resources in order for

⁴ Aina, pp. 8-13



marginalised people to take control of their own destinies”⁵. [Social justice philanthropy](#) is marked by its commitment to fill in the gap where institutionalised philanthropy’s neglect and under-resourcing of social movements, giving resources to social movements. Within institutionalised philanthropy, Social justice philanthropy became a space where feminist, Black, queer, sex worker, and Indigenous groups could work together to push for equitable funding for people at the intersection of multiple systems of oppression. The emergence of women’s and feminist funds in particular, is a powerful tool to change how giving structures operate and fight against patriarchy and its deeply rooted interconnectedness with racialised capitalism, ableism and queerphobia, among others.

In the last decade of the 20th century, African feminist and Pan-African institutionalised philanthropic structures grew stronger, marked by the emergence of Women’s Hope Education and Training Trust (WHEAT) in 1998 and the launch of the first African feminist fund, African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF), in 2000. These groups laid foundation for the growth of a strong AFP ecosystem over two decades - alongside feminist movements, activists, and women’s rights organisations - including African feminist philanthropies such as Urgent-Action Fund Africa (2001), Fonds Pour les Femmes Congolaises (2007), Tanzanian Women’s Fund (2007), Mediterranean Women’s Fund (2008), East African Sexual Health and Rights Initiative (UHAI-EASHRI founded in 2009), XOESE Fund for Francophone Women and Initiative Sankofa d’Afrique de l’Ouest (ISDAO) which were both founded in 2015, Jumuiya Women Fund (2019) and the Doria Feminist Fund (2020), amongst others.

These institutionalised forms of AFP drew on the politics and practices of mutual aid and movement resourcing in order to challenge the prevailing logics of global philanthropy from an African Feminist vantage point. They are working in a global philanthropic system that is characterised by white supremacist, cis-heteropatriarchial neoliberal capitalist ideals. “So if you are going to be a feminist working in this space”, as noted by Zuziwe Khuzwayo, “you need to be aware of [the nature of the global philanthropic sector] and how you are going to challenge it needs to address those issues”. Institutionalised expressions of AFP view philanthropy and institution-building as tools to influence how resources flow ensuring that more resources move to marginalised groups, including African feminist movements. This positioning is not without its contradictions. As noted by Hakima Abbas, institutionalised

⁵ Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi (2013) *Speaking for Myself: Perspectives on Social, Political and Feminist Activism*. Ibadan: Amandla Consulting



philanthropy often works in ways that contradict gender justice and the different ways that African feminist movements operate. For example, African feminists understand institutionalised philanthropy as an institution of exclusion that often does not reach the people it claims to serve. Additionally, it is inherently contradictory to operate in a sector deeply rooted in imperial plunder, gross inequality and the hoarding of resources while upholding African feminist values, it was noted by many as a clear mandate to transform and dismantle institutionalised philanthropy. It is for this reason that some argue that AFP cannot exist, and instead prefer to refer to Institutional Philanthropy inspired by African feminism. Because as noted by Mase Ramaru, “in a feminist world, institutionalised philanthropy should not exist because everyone will have what they need, money circulates and is accessible to all of us”.

3. The Influences of African Feminist Philanthropy

Between the 1960s and early 2000s, the post-independence period shaped Africa's governance, economic policies, and social dynamics including the growth of AFP. Following independence from colonialism and apartheid and the change in governance structures, there was an evolution of African Feminist Philanthropy as well. Governance structures in this period included nation-building efforts, democratic transitions, the rise of one-party states, and coup d'états, which often hindered democratic consolidation across Africa. In response, civic organizing through democratic and social justice movements played a key role in resisting authoritarianism and reconnecting with the post-independence aspirations of Pan-Africanism. Pan-Africanism is built on the basis that African people's struggle for liberation is interconnected, across geographies, and the belief that it is the unity and solidarity of Africans across the world that will realise the political and socio-economic liberation of the continent.

Pan-Africanism was a broad ideological movement that united activists, scholars, and visionaries committed to African unity and liberation. However, post-independence structures were often exclusionary, sidelining or not acknowledging the contributions of women and non-binary leaders in liberation movements, political education, governance, institution-building, and policymaking. This is why African feminist scholars like [Patricia](#)

McFadden critiqued Pan-Africanism's alignment with patriarchal nationalism — arguing that it not only erased the contributions of women and gender non-conforming individuals, but also shaped the political exclusions and violence seen in the post-independence era. Uniting against patriarchal nationalist agendas, African women and non-binary folk continued organising and mobilising resources to resist oppression and promote gender equity within their own movements and as a part of broader social justice and democratic movements across the continent. Being mainly resourced through mutual aid and autonomous giving, this laid the foundation for African feminist and women's funds who would engage in solidarity philanthropy to support women's rights activists operating under repressive political conditions.

In the post-independence era, many African states focused on rebuilding their economies through Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), international aid, and the rise of a professionalized development sector contributing to the NGO-isation of activism. Due to colonial exploitation and extraction, most states inherited underdeveloped economies heavily dependent on raw material exports, particularly agricultural commodities and minerals. This overreliance on single-commodity economies led to instability and made them highly vulnerable to external shocks and market downturns. In response, newly independent governments adopted state-led development strategies including nationalisation and industrialisation policies aimed at stabilising and transforming these economies through import substitution and the establishment of domestic manufacturing hubs. While these policies expanded state power and built manufacturing infrastructures that brought short-term gains, the extension of patriarchal nationalism into the economic realm pushed women into dangerous and/or informal economic sectors deepening gendered economic marginalisation⁶ and widening inequality.

The global debt crisis and economic downturn of the 1980s negatively impacted African governments, driving many countries into what economists refer to as Africa's "lost decades." Rising debt levels driven by excessive borrowing for industrialisation projects and ever increasing global interest rates made it impossible for African states to meet their debt obligations. In turn, many governments turned to the World Bank and the International

⁶ Ifi Amadiume (1987) *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society* London: Zed Books.



Monetary Fund (IMF) for financial relief. Loan conditions imposed by these financial institutions enforced SAPs, which mandated harsh austerity measures such as deep cuts in public spending and the privatization of essential services. These policies mostly impacted women by undermining their livelihoods, deepening economic inequalities and reducing social safety nets⁷. It is against this background that the feminisation of poverty was introduced as a tool to highlight how poverty and economic inequalities affect women more. African women and non-binary activists continued to mobilise across the continent, forming WROs and feminist movements dedicated to resisting patriarchal domination in all its forms. These movements filled in the gap left by SAPs, providing essential services for women including health, education, economic rights, as well as asserting women's agency in reclaiming their social and economic wellbeing.

Despite the promises of liberation, the post-independence political and economic marginalisation of African women and non-binary individuals profoundly reshaped gender relations and social organisation of African communities. This context influenced the organising strategies and resistance of African women and non-binary activists. The practices of African Feminist Philanthropy during this period included leveraging mutual aid and autonomous resourcing to invest in their survival, care and resistance. These traditions of communal giving and solidarity included social clubs, savings groups, and women's associations, which was critical for women to pool resources to address immediate community needs and sustain broader feminist agendas. For example, in Nigeria, market women's associations have historically functioned as economic and social solidarity sites, mobilising funds to support widows, orphans, and community infrastructure⁸. Similarly, in Ethiopia, Burkina Faso and South Africa, rotating savings clubs such as debo, tontines, and stokvels respectively show how [women's networks](#) have long supported economic resilience and unity. These led to the development of women-led initiatives which funded literacy programs, vocational training, reproductive health services, and civic education efforts. While often patriarchal, faith and cultural institutions became important sites of feminist resistance.⁹ Women built on faith-based philanthropy to promote education for girls and organise against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), while some feminists reclaimed indigenous

⁷ Amina Mama (1997) "African Women's Movements: Transforming Political Landscapes," in *African Feminism: The Politics of Survival in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. Gwendolyn Mikell: Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

⁸ Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (2005) Women and Economic Development in Nigeria: *Nigerian Economic Review*, 78–80

⁹ Amadiume, p.90



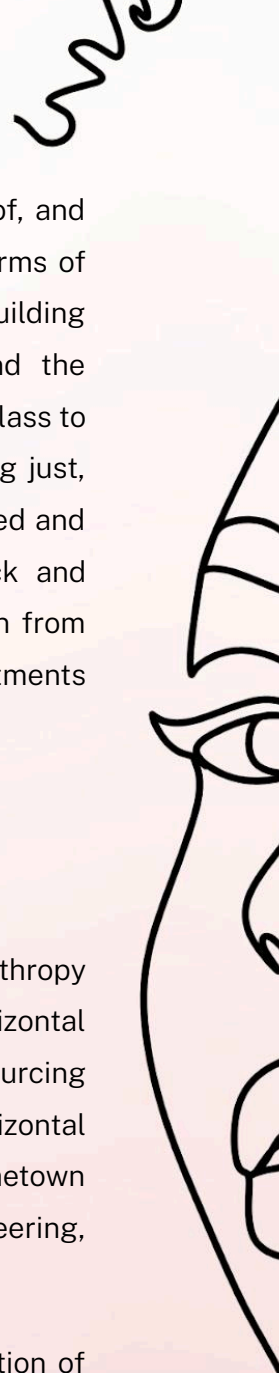
matriarchal practices. Ifi Amadiume illuminates how “religious and cultural spaces have been reimagined by African women as arenas of empowerment, where faith intersects with feminist praxis”. For example, in Malawi, women’s ministry networks have long functioned as philanthropic entities, raising funds for schools, hospitals, and emergency relief, and advocating for women’s education and maternal health within conservative religious frameworks.¹⁰

The political, economic, and social forces that shaped the rise of African Feminist Philanthropy in the post-independence era reveal a deeply structural and complex context that distinguish it from traditional philanthropic models. African Feminist Philanthropy did not start as a charitable cause, it rose as a powerful act of resistance against persistent marginalisation and systemic domination of African women in newly independent African nations. It represents a courageous reclaiming of power and a deliberate strategy to build spaces where African women and non-binary individuals nurture more inclusive visions of justice, empowerment and collective wellbeing. As noted by [Amina Mama](#), “African women’s giving practices have long been rooted in indigenous knowledge systems, Pan-Africanist ideology, and global feminist influences, reflecting a distinct tradition of collective empowerment.” These practices cultivated a conducive environment for the establishment of African feminist and women’s funds in the twenty-first century.

4. The Pluriverse of African Feminist Philanthropy

AFP is made up of diverse ideological frameworks, organising strategies, identities, reflexive practices and resourcing frameworks that work to advance the liberation of African, Black and Afro-descendent people. It is a diverse world where social justice visions merge to resist and transform cis-heteropatriarchy, queerphobia, racialised neoliberal capitalism, ableism and climate crisis. Rooted in the values and principles of African feminism, AFP seeks to disrupt power dynamics within and beyond the global philanthropic ecosystem. It centres marginalised groups and affirms their leadership in its practice. AFP is diverse and can be found within a variety of contexts. Similar to intersectional feminist organising, it encourages

¹⁰ Chisale Mhango, “Women’s Ministry Networks and Community Development in Malawi,” *Journal of African Studies* 12, no. 2 (2018): 134–137



working together and discourages working in silos, often working within, outside of, and beyond limited institutionalised structures. This section talks about the different forms of AFP through individual and autonomous resourcing, identity formation, institution-building praxis, reimagining resourcing and ways of working, ecosystem cultivation and the transformative impact of AFP. AFP uses African feminisms as a lens and magnifying glass to illuminate the harm of enduring systems of oppression and works towards creating just, life-affirming possibilities. As demonstrated by the practices below, AFP is people-led and recognises that the lives, wellbeing, labour, visions, and work of African, Black and Afro-descendent feminists are at the centre of social change. AFP draws inspiration from Ubuntu, therefore centres, values and resources people aligned to its political commitments to centre the humanity of activists and organisers.

4.1. Individual Giving and Autonomous Resourcing

Individual giving and autonomous resourcing are ways of practicing horizontal philanthropy that exist within and beyond the AFP pluriverse. Despite the naming, horizontal philanthropies occur in the context of power imbalances and their diverse resourcing strategies can either maintain, disrupt, or transform existing power dynamics. Horizontal forms of philanthropy include individual giving through burial societies, hometown associations, crowdfunding, rotating savings clubs, stokvels, harambee, volunteering, cooperatives and merry-go-rounds.

Autonomous resourcing, on the other hand, refers to the generation and redistribution of resources by social justice movements “for daily acts of solidarity and survival [in order to] respond politically, collectively and powerfully”. Autonomous resourcing transforms movement autonomy into a form of political capital, deepening people power, enhancing movement responsiveness, and enabling flexible organizing beyond the constraints of NGO-isation and institutionalized philanthropy. Halima Mahomed refers to autonomous resourcing as an internal financing mechanism for movements that is “most valuable and often underrecognised”. It includes movement self-financing through “the voluntary contribution of time, efforts, skills, and social and intellectual capital”, donations, raising



funds through events and consultancies, sharing resources, and membership dues, amongst other examples.

African feminist-informed individual giving and autonomous resourcing seeks to co-create decentralised resourcing infrastructures centred in Ubuntu and interdependence as a pillar of the AFP pluriverse. Giving is rooted in shared responsibility and mutual aid, rather than excess, reflecting the principles of mutuality that AFP seeks to cultivate. Such is the widespread nature of individual giving and movement resourcing on the African continent that Lakshmi Moore remarked “everyone in Liberia is a philanthropist”. This is further echoed by experiences of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Africa. [65%](#) of organisations surveyed by EpicAfrica revealed that they were resourced through individual giving, and it was cited as one of their top sources of funding. As noted by both the Global Philanthropy Tracker and the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Funding Flows in Africa Scoping Study, horizontal philanthropy between individuals, communities and movements of the Majority World far surpasses institutionalised philanthropy in quality and quantity.

This is demonstrated by the [2023 Global Philanthropy Tracker](#) which highlighted that in 2020, majority world remittances were estimated at USD\$590 billion which far exceeded global philanthropic contributions (USD\$70 billion), Overseas Development Assistance (USD\$180 billion) and private capital investment (USD\$400 million) combined. With reference to frequency, the EVAWG Funding Flows in Africa study demonstrated that community-grounded actors were most likely to be resourced through individual giving, movement resourcing, and membership dues¹¹ - highlighting the power and transformative potential of horizontal philanthropies.

Despite how common individual giving and autonomous resourcing is, it has been erased from philanthropic narratives or not even considered as a form of philanthropy. Additionally, the naming of philanthropy as opposed to giving or gifting has resulted in a further grift of horizontal philanthropies from philanthropic conversations. However, as noted by Jacqueline Asimwe, “centering everyday giving is a kind of pushback against colonialism... AFP has a disruptive power to recognise everyday giving because to give is to be human”. AFP’s recognition of horizontal philanthropies forms part of a radical reclamation of the forms of

¹¹ Iris Nxumalo-De Smidt, Bongiwe Mahlangu, Elma Ooro, Jennifer Chinoye Amadi & Lucky Kobugabe (2023) *Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Funding Flows in Africa Scoping Study: Comprehensive Report*. Pretoria: Masimanyane Women’s Rights International & The Private Office of the President of South Africa.



resourcing engaged in by African, Black and Afro-descendent women, girls and gender non-conforming folks. It has often acted as a safety net and is more visible in contexts of crisis. It highlights the power and possibilities of alternative ways of resourcing outside of capitalist frameworks, and shows the implications of resourcing through solidarity economies.

Horizontal philanthropies coexist alongside institutionalised forms of AFP, further emphasizing the versatility of AFP. While we draw differences between these philanthropic practices, many African feminists participate in both sets of practices as a part of their way of being and activism over the course of their lifespans. The collaboration between horizontal and institutionalised AFP expressions is not only demonstrated by the uplifting of horizontal AFP principles in institutionalised philanthropy, but is also showcased in the memory work role that African feminist and women's funds play. As noted by Lakshmi Moore, African feminist and women's funds provide political leadership by conserving and safeguarding African feminist practices inspired by horizontal philanthropies. This reflects the caution shared by Hakima Abbas to retain the autonomy of individual and movement resourcing practices because institutionalised philanthropy has a tendency to co-opt and distort the intellectual labour, structures, practices and operating frameworks of social movements.

A key part of AFP practice is knowing which forms of knowledge to protect within the AFP pluriverse and which to share more widely. This reminds us that institutionalization is not the goal of AFP, but one of the tools the AFP ecosystem uses to support its worldbuilding

4.2. Identity Formation and Mobilisation

The people involved in AFP come from different backgrounds and beliefs, showing how diverse the movement is. Their identities and the ways they organize reflect the many influences that shape how AFP works in real life. Within institutionalised philanthropy, different identities like African, feminists, African feminists, Pan-African feminists, Liberian feminists, radical feminists, young feminists, Black feminists and decolonial feminists, among others, were framed as resources that individuals leveraged to build community and inspire sectoral transformation. The wide range of identities in the AFP space shows that it isn't one single way of doing feminism. It brings together many voices and approaches that

all share a common goal—to challenge how mainstream philanthropy works around the world.

AFP's identity is also inspired by African ways of understanding the world, or cosmologies. Zanele Sibanda described African cosmologies as ways of seeing, experiencing and being in the world, rooted in the ethos of ubuntu which is the understanding that African social organisation is characterised by interrelatedness, interdependence and interconnectedness. This connection also shapes how wellbeing is seen, not just as individual but as everyone's shared responsibility. African feminists often draw strength from their maternal roots, seeing their mothers, aunts, and grandmothers as early role models in giving, organizing, and building community even if they didn't call it philanthropy at the time.

African feminists use their political identities to ask tough questions about power, privilege, and bias in philanthropy. They're honest about its flaws and push for change, knowing there's always room to grow. AFP's identity is rooted in a strong political understanding of global inequality—how gender, class, language, and geography all play a role in the oppression of African women, girls, and gender-expansive people. This perspective shapes how AFP thinks about and uses resources. It challenges where power and resources, both money and other forms, are held, how they move, and who controls them. Theo Sowa's assertion that "AFP is about tearing down systems of oppression and putting up systems rooted in equity for liberatory dreams of the marginalised" explains how AFP's identity is rooted in transformative and justice-centered worldbuilding practices.

4.3. Institution-Building

"I don't think oppressed people need to be represented in philanthropy. I think they need to dismantle it. But we can create philanthropic institutions where oppressed people are the decision makers so that they can model a different practice of philanthropy that moves money to more people" - Hakima Abbas

AFP uses institution-building as a way to centre and resource the leadership, struggles and liberation dreams of marginalised communities. The rise of African feminist and women's funds shows a clear understanding that organizations can be powerful tools to support gender justice and directly resource intersectional African feminist movements in bigger and



better ways. Hilda Tadria shares in the co-founding of the AWDF with Joanna Foster and Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi, they focused on creating an organization that would be a space for African feminist leadership—where African women would lead and manage the flow of resources. This kind of leadership is central to the AFP pluriverse, challenging the 'Great Man' stories of patriarchal nationalism and pushing back against ongoing doubts about women's leadership. As noted by Felogene Anumo, “it centres the lived experiences, knowledge, brilliance and leadership of African women and gender diverse people, and intentionally creates spaces where African feminists can lead and shape giving agendas”.

AFP's approach to building institutions is guided by the African Feminist Charter. It aims to transform philanthropy, the development sector, the African continent, and the wider world by staying rooted in feminist values, organizing strategies, bold political visions, and a strong commitment to reparative justice. Organizations then become spaces for trying new ideas and imagining new worlds, where building institutions is part of finding our way toward feminist futures. These practices involve using African feminist ideas to create new ways of funding and organizing, building ways of working that truly reflect feminist values, resisting being absorbed into mainstream systems just to meet rules, and making sure feminist movements are at the center of leadership and decision-making. African feminist institution-building uplifts the leadership of movements in philanthropic conversations and decision-making processes. It acknowledges the politics of knowledge and centres the documentation of AFP narratives and practices. AFP recognises multiple levels of exclusion and resists the pull to fund “donor darling” countries, issues and civic organising spaces. Instead, AFP dares to fund where philanthropy chooses not to, including direct funding to community-grounded feminist organisers, crisis response in conflict-affected contexts, resourcing unregistered collectives, funding in West and Central Africa, Sahel, Francophone Africa, people with disabilities, sex worker and queer organising, amongst other examples. While AFP works to ensure the full representation of marginalised constituencies, it is clear that representation is not the end goal. The goal is to create a fairer society where how resources are shared helps break down oppression. It aims to make sure marginalized people can access resources, feel welcomed and empowered, and are supported to build new feminist futures.



How institutionalised AFP is positioned is important to note. Instead of being “benevolent outsiders” who are disconnected from the contexts and situations that they are resourcing, AFP insists on being deeply rooted in the contexts that African feminist and women’s rights movements organise in. Some practices that ensure the rootedness of African feminist and women’s funds include having staff members, and/or offices, across the continent to ensure the accessibility and proximity of these institutions to gender justice movements. This emphasis on AFP proximity seeks to counter familiarity biases and funding barriers, where funders’ distance from marginalised communities reduce the likelihood of African and Black feminist movements from receiving funding from institutionalised philanthropy. Mase Ramaru deepens this assertion by noting that “we are a part of the communities that we are resourcing ... [and contribute] as a part of the whole to enable movement work”. This proximity and movement embeddedness enables African women and feminist funds to respond more rapidly to windows of opportunity and crisis, deepens movement leadership and the accountability of institutionalised AFP to the movements and communities it serves.

4.4. Reimagining Resourcing and Ways of Working

AFP’s resourcing praxis is grounded in the realities of the African continent and the feminist vision to transform this context through social justice movement-building. AFP looks at the history of how funding flows in philanthropy and calls out the deep inequalities that lead to crisis, instability, and conflict around the world. The AFP pluriverse upholds a commitment to organise differently in order to challenge the status quo. African feminist and women’s funds in particular, seek to resource movements with dignity, provide flexible funding, understand the conditions that movements organise in, respond to the crises that WROs and feminist movements face, enhance the capacities of movements and walk long-term journeys with African feminist movements. AFP centres relationship-building and humanity, engages in resourcing with care and humility, seeks to move away from burdensome resourcing processes and transform power dynamics in the philanthropic ecosystem. AFP praxis also focuses on resourcing Majority World movements and centring their needs, influencing global funding choices and practices, uplifting invisibilised communities and movements as well as creating spaces for constant learning and reflection.



AFP's commitment to rethinking funding and ways of working in institutional philanthropy shows how African feminists are challenging and reshaping the tools of global philanthropy. AFP seeks to make resources accessible with as little red tape as possible, rethink the funding requirements that exclude feminist movements and WROs from accessing funding, and increase the accessibility of grantmakers and participatory decision-making structures. AFP challenges how institutional philanthropy works by questioning its usual ways of operating and how money flows through the system. It is committed to building and proposing resourcing alternatives through deep listening, co-creation with movements, transforming the movement-donor relationship and radically resourcing movement-building in a context of patriarchal backlash. AFP has shown strong ability to navigate power dynamics and complex contexts, using its deep historical, cultural, political, and movement knowledge to move resources in response to national, regional, and global changes.

AFP's resourcing process includes leveraging 'unusual' methodologies to receive movement applications, simplifying application processes, ensuring that funding calls reach all feminist actors within the gender justice ecosystem, and resisting the normalisation of red-tape structures and processes to ensure that processes remain responsive, flexible and appropriate to the needs of movements. It seeks to provide impactful funding through core, long-term and flexible resourcing as well as implementing participatory grantmaking practices where possible. AFP is intentional about translating African feminist principles and values into ways of working. This shows in the funding strategies of African feminist and women's funds, which focus on language justice, support the leadership of girls and young women, offer paid leave, change governance models, provide wellness support, share and challenge power, and take on risks and compliance to make sure movements get funded on time. Additionally, AFP seeks to deepen accountability and power sharing by disrupting the concentration of power and the transactional nature of philanthropy. The practice of African feminist leadership in resourcing rests on trust and time - resisting urgency addiction. The AFP pluriverse takes the time to do things well, is deliberative in nature and interrogates its own forms of power in order to ensure that resources (and power) shifts to movements. These ways of working, remarked Jaynice Del Rosario, are the reason why African feminist, women and girls' funds can resource the most marginalised, underresourced, and neglected contexts, movements and issues. As such, Alice D. Kanengoni identified 13 characteristics that distinguish AFP from traditional philanthropy. These include:

- 
- Greater alignment between progressive talk and philanthropic practice;
 - Resourcing practices associated with humaneness and heart;
 - Respects individuals and movements;
 - Pays attention to the how of resourcing;
 - Understands the challenges of mobilising resources for gender equity and women's rights;
 - Resourcing practices centred on co-creation and feedback;
 - Better engagement with movements;
 - Creates spaces and platforms for movement and philanthropic engagement;
 - Ensures proximity to movements across the African continent;
 - Flexible and adaptive;
 - Responsive to the diverse contexts of gender justice organising;
 - Alive to the realities of the African continent; and
 - AFP recognises the deep commitment that movements have for gender justice.

4.5. Ecosystem Cultivation

“When we started, we were the only women’s fund. We have been able to hold hands of localised women’s funds and enable them to hold their own philanthropic ventures in their countries. It is exciting that we are growing and grooming other funds” - Hilda Tadria

The AFP ecosystem includes multiple, diverse people, groups and communities working towards gender equity and social justice, including movements, funders, activists, human rights defenders, thinktanks, women’s funds, policy makers, scholars and philanthropic practitioners among others. The strength and energy of the AFP ecosystem come from understanding that the African feminist movement can’t grow if the ecosystem remains divided and underfunded. As Faye Macheke expressed, “systems change work cannot be achieved by having one or two organisations doing the work individually”. It is within this context that AFP leverages unity within the ecosystem as a strategy to build and nurture solidarity within and beyond AFP, redefine how resources are mobilised and utilised to support feminist organising, and uses these relationships to influence regional and global advocacy. The mushrooming of African feminist and women’s funds over the past two decades speaks to Hilda Tadria’s words illuminating the role that these funds play in



supporting the development and establishment of feminist funds. The AFP sisterhood of feminist and women's funds is built on collaboration, sharing knowledge, working together on strategies, building skills, and growing the ecosystem unlike the competitive and power-driven approach often seen in the wider international development sector

AFP advances ecosystem cultivation through building collective power. AFP has played a critical role in leading and influencing ecosystem networks such as the African Grantmakers Affinity Group (AGAG) and the African Philanthropy Network to build the infrastructure for African philanthropy and infuse it with African feminist philanthropic values, thought leadership and practice. AFP uses networking and alliance-building to change the global philanthropic system as shown by its leadership in the Prospera International Network of Women's Funds, CountMeIN! Consortium, Leading from the South, Black Feminists in Philanthropy network as well as the Harambee-Ubuntu: Reimagining Pan-African and Feminist Philanthropies Initiative. AFP's ecosystem cultivation demonstrates its internationalist positioning - partnering with peer feminist funds, bilateral and multilateral funders, as well as traditional philanthropic organisations to better resource gender justice movements. In this role, AFP advocates for changing how funding is given and the conditions attached to it, aiming to better support social justice in Africa while strengthening movement leadership and independence to reshape feminist funding.

AFP also builds on the positionality of African feminists across the global philanthropic ecosystem to respond to crises. This was most recently demonstrated by the Black Feminists in Philanthropy network convened by the Black Feminist Fund. During a quarterly member call in 2023, African and black feminists noted the philanthropic and humanitarian system's neglect of, and [inertia](#) with regards to the Sudanese Civil War. The network established the Black Feminist Action on Sudan Working Group to move resources to Sudanese feminist organising. The Working Group, led by African and black feminists in institutionalised philanthropy alongside Sudanese feminist leaders, demonstrated the power of feminist alliance-building by swiftly raising USD\$1.5 million to resource Sudanese feminist movements, extending political solidarity and increasing international visibility on the Sudanese civil war in institutionalised philanthropy. They demonstrated the power of AFP's internationalist positioning- leveraging its constituent members across the world to



mobilise financial and non-financial resources to provide crisis response to feminists living and organising in conflict-affected contexts.

4.6. Transforming the Global Philanthropic Sector

The AFP pluriverse has demonstrated that it is possible to fund community-based organisers directly and abundantly, challenging capacity myths. AFP's approach to building institutions shows different, feminist ways of organizing and funding movements moving past elitism and the co-opting of feminist politics. The rich herstories and unique organizing styles within AFP have played a key role in changing the global philanthropic sector, highlighting its international focus and influence. Despite limitations, AFP has demonstrated that it is possible to build and resource new worlds through everyday practice, reflecting the power of the big and small ways that African feminists show up in the world. The AFP pluriverse demonstrates that the world cannot experience transformative change while philanthro-capitalism remains unchanged and uncontested. In order to build a more just and equitable world, institutionalised philanthropy needs to change too. Felogene Anumo, Hakima Abbas and Mase Ramaru agree with this assertion by noting that in the feminist futures we are co-creating through AFP praxis, the systems of oppression that exist in institutionalised philanthropy would not exist. Further, institutionalised philanthropy, itself, in its present neocolonial form, would cease to exist. This section highlights four AFP-led shifts in institutionalised philanthropy, including narrative, practice, organising and ontological shifts.

AFP shows a shift in the story of giving. Instead of the fixed donor-grantee roles set by traditional philanthropy, AFP embraces a giving culture based on mutual support and shared values. In these constellations, identities of both feminist funds and movements are not solely determined by their resource mobilisation and redistribution strategies. Additionally, in these realities, feminist funds and movements are not only recipients but also philanthropists, grantmakers creating mutual benefits for themselves and the wider gender justice community. AFP has been intentional about shifting and building new narratives to influence philanthropic practice as demonstrated in AFP thought leadership. The AFP pluriverse has also supported narrative shifts through political education, consciousness-raising, alliance-building spaces and networks such as PROSPERA,



CountMEIN! Consortium, Black Feminists in Philanthropy Network, KOMBOA as well as the Harambee-Ubuntu initiative. AFP works to change how power is understood in institutional philanthropy, moving away from win-lose and controlling ideas of power, toward feminist approaches like 'power with' and 'power within' that focus on shared strength and inner agency.

The AFP pluriverse has led narrative shifts that transform the image of Africa, how African feminists, movements and African feminist and women's funds are perceived. The continent is still largely framed as a recipient of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) and philanthropic funding, when in reality, the continent gives more than it receives, historically and at present through everyday giving, movement resourcing through Majority World remittances as well as Illicit Financial Flows. While AFP narrative-building has highlighted, and challenged the erasure of, feminist movements and WROs at the forefront of social change, it also challenges the idea of activists as just 'agents of change' by centering their full humanity and working to support all aspects of their lives and organizing. Hilda Tadria notes the role that AFP has played in changing perceptions in the field of philanthropy, noting how in the early 2000s African feminist and women's funds were viewed as small philanthropic organisations that didn't need much money. She reflects, "I can't say that we have huge amounts of money, but when we ask for millions of dollars, no one asks questions anymore if that's not too much for African women".

AFP has pioneered transformative practices in institutionalised philanthropy, contributing to shifts in discourse and practice. As noted by [Jessica Horn](#) during the Reimagining Pan-African and Feminist Philanthropies 2023 Indaba¹², AFP "has demonstrated that it is possible to resource civic organising with flexible, multi-year funding, redefine risk, co-create approaches to resources based on dignity, centre political framings of care and wellbeing; and create transformative Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) frameworks that enable the sector to deepen its understanding of social change". AFP's pioneering praxis includes the rapid mobilisation of resources to respond to neglected crisis, supporting

¹² The Reimagining Pan-African and Feminist Philanthropies Indaba was convened by Urgent Action Fund-Africa and TrustAfrica in Naivasha, Kenya in February 2023 to co-create a solidarity agenda to support the transformation of the philanthropic ecosystem. It furthered deliberations from the Planning Meeting convened in July 2023 that co-created three priorities centred around narrative-building, strengthening and expanding philanthropic infrastructure and ecosystems and advancing philanthropic advocacy. The initiative is currently referred to as the Harambee-Ubuntu: Reimagining Pan-African and Feminist Philanthropies initiative.



and amplifying hidden voices, working in coalitions and donor collaboratives as opposed to working in siloes and adopting intersectional approaches to resourcing activism that seeks to address the issues that affect women, girls and gender diverse people. AFP praxis fully recognizes the value and power of women's rights organizations and feminist movements. It works to correct past and present injustices by directly redistributing resources to movements. AFP promotes transparency, is intentional about questioning and shifting power, aims to be as participatory as possible, supports clear accountability both across and within movements, practices co-leadership and shared governance, and pushes back against restrictive demands from governments and other funders placed on African WROs, feminist movements, and feminist funds.

The evolution of the AFP ecosystem over the past two decades is also understood as a practice shift within institutionalised philanthropy. The active involvement of African feminists and women's funds, along with changes in how AFP works and tells its story, has increased its visibility and influence in the global philanthropic space. AFP's advocacy within the global philanthropic sector has called for unrestricted, core, long-term and direct funding to movements, led donor education and pooled funding initiatives, invested in the movement leadership pipeline within institutionalised philanthropy and feminist movements, resourced movements beyond project cycles and demonstrated successful feminist leadership transitions - reflecting the leaderful nature of African feminist movements. AFP challenges the biases and barriers that block movements from getting funding and works to fix the lack of support for marginalized groups in how resources are shared. AFP maintains its closeness within feminist movements and maintains a sense of community with feminist movements and WROs rooted in solidarity, trust and accountability. Over time, the presence of AFP has been exceptionally influential despite slower shifts in the broader global philanthropic sector. As noted by Felogene Anumo, "... philanthropy is not evolving as fast as we need to confront the intensification and scale of [the] crisis we are facing". The global philanthropic sector still often moves money in ways that harm gender and environmental justice. African feminist analysis has shown that, while AFP has made powerful changes, its narrative and practice shifts are still not the norm. That's why the AFP pluriverse continues to focus on worldbuilding strategies to change both global philanthropy and the broader global system. The next section explores the impact of African Feminist and Women's Funds.

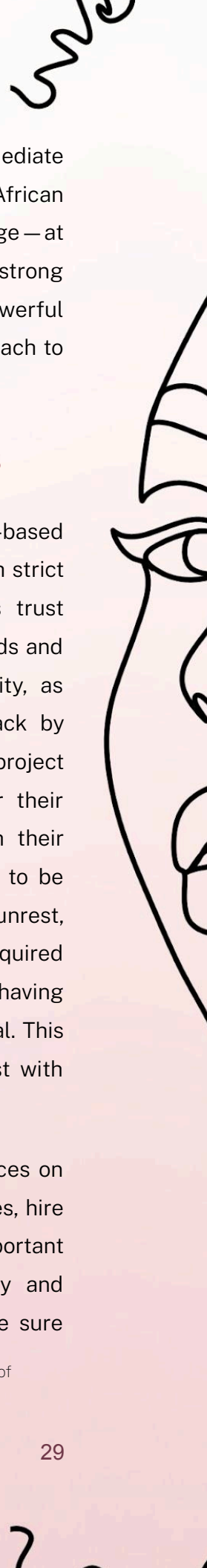


5. The Impact of African Feminist and Women's Funds

5.1. Modelling Systems Change Praxis through Feminist Institution-Building

African feminist and women's funds are creating fairer access to funding, support, and leadership roles for women, girls, sex workers, and gender-expansive individuals across the continent. Grounded in African feminist praxis, these funds, led by community and movement leaders, emphasise collective action, mutual aid, and challenging patriarchal systems that exclude women and gender-diverse people. They tackle systemic inequities, uplift grassroots movements, and support women and gender-expansive individuals in shaping their world. Their strategic focus combines fundraising and supporting locally-led solutions, placing African feminists at the centre of Africa's growth in communities and economies. These funds play a critical role in fostering economic independence for marginalised groups who are leading positive change across the continent. By creating supportive networks that help people earn and grow financially, they enhance access to financial resources and independence, enabling women and other historically marginalised groups to take control of their destinies. African feminist and women's funds adopt an intersectional and decolonial feminist lens toward financial systems, ensuring equitable access to opportunities to help bring bigger changes in society. Deeply rooted within their communities, African feminist funds provide a way of giving that fits local needs and supports people in many ways. This proximity fosters deep understanding of local challenges while offering both financial and practical resources to address specific needs. Beyond financial support, they advocate for policy reforms that promote women's rights and dismantle deep-rooted inequality in society. They work to create inclusive governance frameworks, supporting women to access and hold leadership roles in order to influence the policies that affect their lives. By amplifying women's voices in decision-making, these funds ensure that women are not just perceived as beneficiaries of philanthropy but more so recognized as powerful leaders shaping the future of giving and justice.

African feminist and women's funds are changing the way philanthropy works by putting movements first, building trust, and using intersectional approaches. By learning from



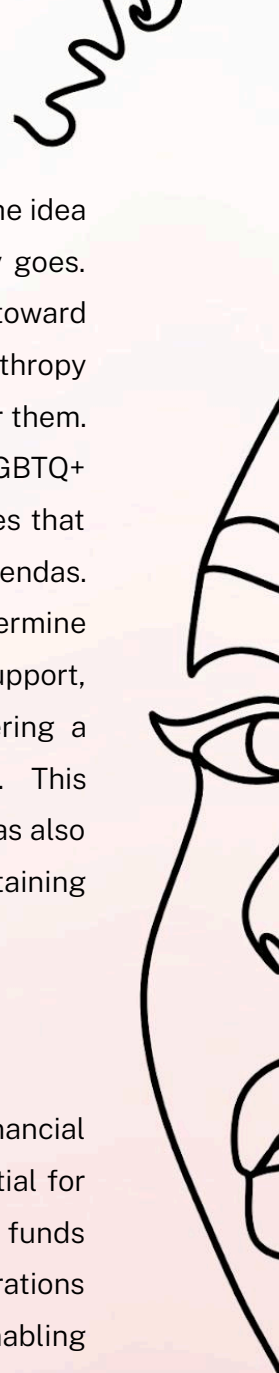
movements, supporting local leaders, and offering flexible funding, they address immediate needs while challenging systemic inequities. AFP is powerful because it puts African feminists and their movements—along with their voices, experiences, and knowledge—at the centre of change. This helps AFP organise, fund, influence, and build strong relationships with progressive social movements. By funding and organising in powerful ways, AFP helps African feminists imagine and build a more inclusive and fair approach to philanthropy.

5.2. Trust-Based, Participatory and Flexible Funding Strategies

AFP reimagines conventional donor-movement¹³ relationships by championing trust-based and flexible funding approaches. Unlike conventional funding models that come with strict restrictions on how financial resources could be utilised, many feminist funds trust organisations with the autonomy to allocate resources according to their unique needs and circumstances. This flexibility is critical for long-term planning and sustainability, as unrestricted funds let organisations plan for the future without being held back by short-term project requirements or heavy bureaucracy. By not being tied to specific project deliverables, organisations can invest in building their own capacity, caring for their communities, responding to crises, and doing strategic outreach that align with their missions and the needs of their communities. This approach allows organisations to be responsive to change. In rapidly evolving contexts, whether due to social and political unrest, economic shifts, or pandemics such as Human Immunodeficiency Virus-Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV-AIDS), Ebola and Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), having the ability to rapidly pivot and direct resources where they are most needed is crucial. This kind of responsiveness makes their work more effective and builds stronger trust with communities.

As Leila Hessini noted, “Traditional philanthropy could begin with basing its practices on what feminist funds do – use participatory strategies, work with advisory committees, hire people from movements and constituencies they serve.” This shows how important participatory funding is for accountability and responsiveness. When community and movement members are part of the decision-making process, feminist funds make sure

¹³ While this is typically referred to as donor-grantee dynamics, we have used terminology that disrupts the identification of movements solely on the basis of their funding relationships.



those most affected are heard and prioritised. Participatory grantmaking challenges the idea that only a few people in big philanthropic institutions should decide where money goes. Instead, it shifts decision-making into a collective process that moves resources toward social justice. UHAI is a great example: its participatory model of activist philanthropy ensures that marginalised communities benefit directly from the resources meant for them. One key practice is its participatory grant-making process, where activists from the LGBTQ+ and sex worker movements lead decision-making on resource allocation. This ensures that funding is driven by the actual needs and priorities of the community, not external agendas. UHAI also promotes transparency and trust, empowering movement leaders to determine their own strategies for social change. In addition, UHAI works beyond financial support, engaging in movement-building by convening and strategizing with activists, offering a holistic model of philanthropy that emphasises solidarity and partnership. This activism-rooted model, which nurtures leadership within the communities it serves, has also supported the seeding of similar funds like ISDAO, fostering a broader, self-sustaining ecosystem of feminist and activist-led funding across Africa.

5.3. Capacity Strengthening and Knowledge Sharing

Capacity strengthening is a cornerstone of AFP, as these funds recognize that financial support alone cannot drive lasting and sustainable change. Holistic support is essential for empowering women-led organisations and enhancing their impact. Many feminist funds invest in technical training that equips organisations with skills to improve their operations and effectiveness. They support the acquisition of practical knowledge, enabling organisations to navigate complex challenges with greater confidence. Leadership development programmes play a critical role in nurturing feminist leaders within women-led organisations. This emphasis on leadership is about fostering a diverse and dynamic leadership landscape that reflects the voices and experiences of women across various contexts. Knowledge-sharing platforms are vital to these capacity-building efforts, as they encourage collaboration and the exchange of strategies among organisations. These platforms help build resilience and promote collective learning. Capacity building and knowledge sharing serve as key strategies in AFP, enabling women-led organisations to thrive and contribute to a more equitable society.

5.4. Intersectionality and Inclusivity

Intersectionality is a foundational principle of AFP, as it acknowledges the complex and interconnected nature of the various forms of oppression that African women, girls and gender non-conforming people face. Recognizing that race, class, geography, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation intersect to shape unique experiences of power and marginalisation is essential for developing effective funding strategies. Yvette Kathurima noted that one of the great AFP practices is mobilising resources quickly for areas that had long been neglected because they were labelled high risk or crisis regions. In this context, feminist funds prioritise tailored approaches that address the specific needs of diverse groups of women, including those with disabilities, LGBTQ+, sex workers and those living in rural or conflict-affected areas. By understanding the distinct challenges faced by these communities, feminist funds create targeted initiatives that promote equity and inclusivity. This ensures that resources are allocated effectively and actively supports those at the intersection of systems of oppression to take charge of their own narratives and solutions. AFP also fosters solidarity across diverse communities by supporting movements that operate at the intersections of social justice issues. This commitment to cross-movement funding recognises difference and actively creates space for shared power and alliance-building. As Hlompho Mokoena stated, “Intersectionality is at the heart of AFP. In acknowledgment of the above statement, we need to consider how various forms of oppression intersect and how our philanthropic efforts can address these complex realities.” By embedding this commitment to intersectionality in their funding strategies, feminist funds ensure that their initiatives not only address the unique challenges faced by different groups of women but also contribute to a broader movement for social justice.

5.5. Community-Centred and Horizontal Philanthropy

AFP demonstrates that it is possible to resource communities and movements in ways that deepen collective power, autonomy, and wellbeing. Rather than focusing solely on financial contributions, AFP emphasises nurturing relationships and fostering community support as a core part of its philanthropic praxis. African feminist and women’s funds draw on a



communitarian ethos of mutual aid and movement resourcing to transform power relations and challenge the typically vertical structures of institutionalised philanthropy. Horizontal models of philanthropy disrupt top-down approaches, demonstrating the forms of mutuality that African feminist funds seek to embed in their work. AFP demonstrates the power of solidarity philanthropy grounded in being in community with each other which deepens our capacity to respond to each other's needs.

This community-centred model fosters a sense of belonging and shared purpose, encouraging individuals and collectives to actively participate in the well-being of their communities. By embracing collective giving and horizontal models of philanthropy, AFP builds environments where resources are distributed equitably, amplifying movement leadership and reinforcing community resilience. This challenges conventional philanthropic practices that often prioritise transactional relationships over genuine connections. AFP redefines the narrative around giving, showcasing that meaningful change is rooted in the strength of movement engagement and the collaborative efforts of community-grounded actors whose organising seeks to transform systems of oppression and marginalisation.

5.6. Decolonising Philanthropy

"Today's wealth inequalities stem from colonial legacies of resource theft and the exploitative labor of Africans, Afrodescendants, and Black people. Therefore, philanthropic resources rightfully belong to African people, and every effort should be made to return stolen resources to their rightful owners. This restitution should be done promptly, respectfully, and in support of African visions for liberation." - Felogene Anumo

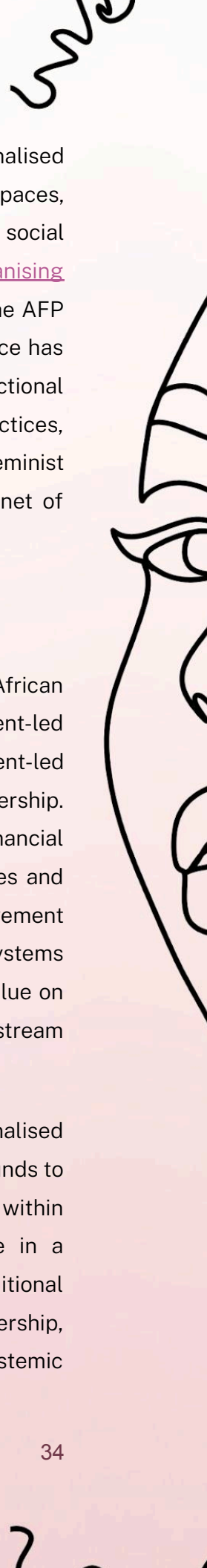
Over the past 15 years, the winds of change have gained momentum within institutionalised philanthropy, with narratives of change forming part of the global philanthropic zeitgeist. Discourse shifts challenging White Saviour Complex, paternalistic and colonial forms of giving through the emergence of decolonisation, #shiftthepower, and localisation, amongst other narratives of change, presented transformative ways of being and resourcing within the sector. However, global philanthropic practice has often lagged behind the progressive rhetoric. In spite of the shortcomings of narratives of change such as decolonising philanthropy that centre institutionalised philanthropy in a way that obscures the diversity of giving systems across the world, do not always align with movement-led agendas for change, and in some ways, keep existing power structures in tact, AFP bridges such discourses to deepen the calls for sectoral transformation. AFP praxis has expanded the



decolonising philanthropy discourse by amplifying horizontal philanthropies, AFP principles and values, transnational solidarity, amplifying the agency of the continent and feminist movements, as well as transforming philanthropic narratives and practice. In doing so, AFP responds to the need to reframe decolonial philanthropy beyond dominant narratives. It shifts the focus toward structural transformation led by feminist movements and grounded in collective liberation—moving beyond rhetoric to reshape the systems and stories that govern philanthropic power.

As noted by Aicha Ba: “Philanthropy should not be a one-way street where resources flow from the Global North to the Global South. It should be a mutual exchange where local knowledge and leadership are valued and prioritised.” This directly challenges the traditional power dynamics that tend to characterise philanthropic relationships, where resources are depicted as flowing from wealthier nations to those deemed “less developed.” AFP challenges the false narrative of one-way giving by highlighting how individual donations, local movement support, remittances, and even illicit financial flows from the Global Majority far exceed ODA and traditional philanthropy combined. AFP underscores the importance of recognizing and uplifting local expertise and leadership, asserting that communities in the Global Majority, especially Africa, possess invaluable insights and solutions. This shift requires rethinking narratives about resource flows for social change, how resources are allocated and ensuring that funding is not merely a transactional act, but rather an act of political solidarity that affirms movement leadership and responds to community needs. It bridges with calls to decolonise philanthropy by dismantling the paternalistic attitudes that have historically defined donor-movement relationships. It calls for the establishment of equitable partnerships that empower movements, allowing them to determine how best to utilise resources in alignment with their priorities and aspirations. With values of reciprocity and mutual respect, the focus shifts from charity to solidarity, promoting feminist worldbuilding that is genuinely reflective of the communities it seeks to serve. By valuing local knowledge and leadership, the process becomes one of co-creation, where all parties are active participants in shaping solutions that resonate with their lived experiences and those of their communities.

Healing justice was recognised as one of the critical elements of decolonising philanthropy. The necessity of healing justice approaches acknowledges the oppression and inequality



that led to the rise of institutionalised philanthropy, the harm that institutionalised philanthropy has inflicted upon movements, the widespread burnout within AFP spaces, harmful practices within feminist movements, and the often-traumatic realities of social justice work. Healing justice is thus understood as a liberation tactic and [organising framework](#) that shapes how AFP organises, redistributes resources and cultivates the AFP pluriverse. While this has yet to emerge as a consolidated AFP practice, healing justice has found expression through resourcing for collective care and healing justice, intersectional funding, resourcing African feminist movements to thrive, holistic resourcing practices, deepening accountability through transparency practices, centring rest in feminist organising, participatory grantmaking and a recognition of healing as a central tenet of gender justice.

5.7. Deepening Constituency-Led Change and Mutuality

While there is divergence about the positioning of AFP as a part of or an ally to African feminist and women's movements, AFP praxis deepens the practice of movement-led change. These possibilities are grounded in AFP's belief in the power of movement-led change and its investment in resourcing movement and community-grounded leadership. While AFP engages in political solidarity by redistributing financial and non-financial resources, movements provide critical political leadership, sharing insights, strategies and contextual analysis that informs philanthropic strategies. By recentring movement leadership at the heart of philanthropic strategising and practice, AFP advances systems change by transforming who provides philanthropic leadership - placing immense value on the insights and solutions of movements which were previously overlooked by mainstream philanthropic practice.

AFP challenges and transforms traditional models of giving within institutionalised philanthropy by repositioning movements from 'passive' recipients of philanthropic funds to active agents of change. This praxis not only transforms the role of movements within institutionalised philanthropy but also promotes resource and economic justice in a landscape often characterised by inequality and paternalism. By challenging traditional philanthropic models, AFP actively redefines narratives around social change leadership, social justice and development. It emphasises the importance of addressing systemic



inequalities that often hinder access to resources and opportunities. It advocates for equitable distribution of funds and calls for the dismantling of racialised, gendered and spatial trust gaps that perpetuate marginalisation as well as the underfunding of African gender justice movements.

AFP believes that leaders rooted in their communities are best placed to guide funding strategies and align them with long-term goals for social change. By deepening movement-led agendas for change and uplifting the degree of mutuality between AFP and gender justice movements, AFP enhances movement autonomy and leverages these transformed relationships as a basis for dismantling existing power dynamics within the global philanthropic ecosystem. This creates a ripple effect, as movement leaders transform their communities while also contributing to the transformation of the philanthropic landscape.

5.8. Transcending Erasure and Patriarchal Backlash

“Historically and currently, marginalized folx, queer folx, disabled folx, women, people who are located in different communities have been instrumental parts of building liberation movements but they have been strategically written out of our own stories as the work of patriarchy, stories that we wrote, communities that we built” - Mase Ramaru

AFP prioritises feminist memory-work to challenge the erasure of African feminist philanthropic narratives, practices and scholarship. Across the AFP ecosystem, African feminist and women’s funds have invested immensely in resourcing the capacity of movement partners, as well as their own organisations, to document the herstories of their organising, institution-building and social change praxis. AFP is committed to making feminist knowledge open and accessible to all, resisting the trend of turning knowledge into a paid or exclusive product. African Feminist memory-work is not only about preserving and promoting feminist narratives and practices. Instead, it is deeply committed to transforming knowledge production, decolonising political memory, and advance collective practices of remembrance that further feminist movement-building for gender justice across philanthropy and society. AFP’s attention to feminist memory-work therefore acts as both a form of resistance and worldbuilding, politically resourcing gender justice organising with historical insights, contemporary analysis and political strategies to build the AFP ecosystem as well as counter feminist backlash and erasure. The practices and movements that AFP centres also resists erasure. Their incorporation of horizontal philanthropies as a

wave

pillar of AFP praxis, according to Jackie Assiimwe, “[lifts] the veil ... giving voice, agency, and visibility to how African women give, what they give and what drives their giving. It means collectivising AFP in ways that amplifies our unified efforts, energies, and wisdoms in advancing social justice and gender equality”.

6. African Feminist Philanthropy Frontiers

“Black feminism offers the solution to a world in crisis. Continuing to ignore, undervalue and under-resource Black feminist movements will cost us everything” - Tynesha McHarris and Hakima Abbas

AFP has been a key part of building a free and just world across generations by creating feminist alternatives. This report has illuminated the role of AFP in shaping historic and contemporary struggles. This section is therefore forward-looking in nature, and explores the future frontiers that AFP seeks to nourish through narrative-building, autonomous philanthropic infrastructures, healing justice, engaging wealth holders, reparative philanthropy and expanding accountability. While the global context is characterised by the persistent rollback of progressive human rights frameworks, rising fundamentalisms and militarism, climate crisis, shrinking civic spaces, and diminishing social justice funding; AFP praxis reminds us that a central tenet of its worldbuilding is its visionary capacity to imagine and embody expansive feminist alternatives as a form of resistance amidst existential threats. It is for this reason that Black feminisms - which include African and decolonial feminisms - are a solution to a world in crisis, because of its commitment to reclaim people power, build feminist solidarities and transform systems of oppression in order to facilitate human and planetary flourishing. By so doing, AFP responds to Patricia McFadden's call to “transcend narrow nationalist frameworks and boldly step into new worlds that are waiting for us as beautiful human beings”.

6.1 Shifting Power Through Building Autonomous African Feminist Philanthropy Infrastructures

AFP has emphasised the imperative of building autonomous feminist infrastructures to deepen the collective power of African feminist movements. These infrastructures are



[envisioned to](#) help AFP be more flexible and responsive to new opportunities and crises. In pursuit of these ideals, African Feminist Philanthropy has been creating spaces for political dreaming, experimenting and mobilisation to transform the global philanthropic sector. One example is the Harambee-Ubuntu initiative, which brings together philanthropic leaders to change the sector by promoting Pan-African and feminist ways of giving and by setting up a fund to support this work long-term. These infrastructure-building efforts seek to scale the feminist institution-building impact of African feminist and women's funds by mobilising diverse ecosystem actors to build collective power and transform the terms upon which African feminist movements, and funds, are resourced. Building autonomous feminist infrastructures enables African feminist movements to define their own priorities, mobilise resources for radical movement-building and sustain feminist organising that creates new social, political, and economic realities.¹⁴

6.2 Engaging High Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs)

The COVID-19 pandemic spotlighted the significant capacity of African High Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs) to respond generously and effectively to crises, underscoring the critical role they play in philanthropy. Similarly, the rise of transformative giving by philanthropists such as MacKenzie Scott has opened a promising frontier for AFP to explore. This moment presents a unique opportunity for AFP to build on this momentum and secure more consistent, sustained support for feminist movements from within the continent. Strategically engaging African HNWIs through culturally resonant, feminist aligned, and healing justice informed philanthropic approaches offers AFP the potential not only to expand its resource base but also to transform power dynamics within philanthropy, ensuring that African feminist movements are adequately resourced to lead, innovate, and sustain their work over the long term.

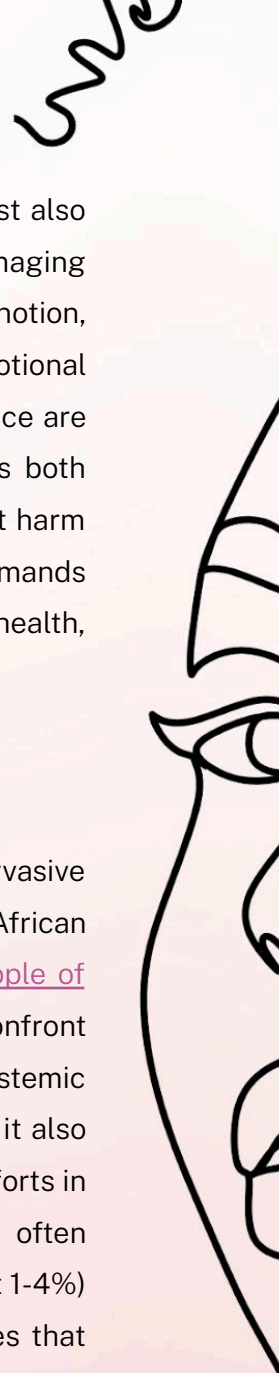
Rophiat Bello raises critical questions about how African Feminist Philanthropy could engage wealth holders similar to Shake the Table's model. [Shake the Table](#) exemplifies a transformative approach that bridges philanthropy, government, and grassroots movements for racial, gender, and economic justice by fostering bold, collective action and shifting power to those most affected by social inequities. By learning from models like Shake the

¹⁴ Jessica Horn (2025) *African Feminist Praxis*. Social Science for Social Justice Series. Sage: London.

Table, which promotes more flexible and longer-term funding for local and underfunded groups, AFP can help build fairer and more effective giving systems. However, AFP must also establish robust checks and balances when engaging with HNWIs to ensure that these partnerships do not reproduce the power imbalances that feminists seek to dismantle, particularly those associated with Western philanthropy. It is important to recognise that HNWIs are not apolitical actors, with their own interests, so their influence must be managed carefully to avoid repeating power imbalances. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, HNWIs provided limited funding to feminist movements, largely due to political sensitivities and a preference for funding essential services. Addressing this gap requires intentional narrative- and evidence-building to amplify the transformative power of feminist advocacy and the critical need for sustained, flexible funding that supports movement-building and systemic change.

6.3 Healing Justice as an Organising Framework within African Feminist Philanthropy

Healing justice is increasingly recognised as a critical frontier within AFP. The AFP ecosystem acknowledges that healing justice is an essential part of feminist organising, addressing the emotional and psychological toll of activism, including secondary trauma experienced by women human rights defenders and feminist organisers. While healing retreats and dedicated spaces for care are becoming more common within movements, their integration into philanthropic practices and systems remains emergent. As Hilda Tadia noted, “...healing justice is not yet a consolidated practice within African Feminist Philanthropy”. Healing justice challenges institutionalised philanthropy to move beyond transactional funding models towards care-centred, holistic resourcing that supports the full humanity of activists and organisations. UAF-Africa has been at the forefront of modelling healing justice as an organising framework through its development of a healing justice framework, investing in the healing farm, and embedding healing justice as a core part of its funding strategy. Despite these advances, AFP still has critical work to do to unlearn harmful philanthropic norms and create funding practices and systems that do not contribute to the dis-ease or burnout of activists.



Zuziwe Khuzwayo emphasises that African feminists working within philanthropy must also benefit from healing justice, allowing themselves to receive care and resist the damaging expectation that African feminist bodies function as “resilient machines”. This notion, articulated by Rophiat Bello critiques the pervasive culture of overwork and emotional labour placed on African feminists, calling for a radical shift in how care and resilience are understood and supported within feminist organising. Embracing healing justice is both necessary and practical to help feminist groups keep going and resist pressures that harm activists’ wellbeing, health and sustainability. As elaborated by Yvette Kuthurima, it demands that philanthropy not only funds feminist movements but also actively nurtures their health, leisure and realisation of their rights.

6.4 Shifting Power Through Reparative Philanthropy

In recent years, there has been a renewed global focus on reparations for the pervasive injustices of the Atlantic slave trade and colonialism experienced by people of African descent. The African Union declared 2025 [the Year of Justice for Africans and People of African Descent Through Reparations](#), highlighting a continental commitment to confront historical injustices and structural inequalities rooted in slavery, colonialism, and systemic exploitation. While this momentum is gaining traction at the intergovernmental level, it also represents a critical frontier for AFP to engage, lead, and shape reparative justice efforts in ways that centre gender, equity, and local agency. Although philanthropy has often benefited from exploiting African labor and resources, it only gives a small part (about 1-4%) of its money back through grants and programs.¹⁵ This stark disconnect underscores that current philanthropic giving is insufficient to meaningfully redistribute wealth or repair the structural harms inflicted on African communities and diasporas. Consequently, the reparations discourse demands a fundamental reorientation of philanthropic priorities and strategies to address these deep rooted inequities.

¹⁵ Esther Stanford-Xosei (2022) *Sunrising: A Reparatory Justice Approach to Expending Intergenerational Wealth*, in *Speaking Back|Speaking Black: Reflections from African, Afrodescendent and Black Voices Transforming Philanthropy*. Africans in the Diaspora.



This moment coincides with a significant shift among some donors who are adopting “spend down” or “sunsetting”¹⁶ strategies which are aimed at intentionally spending their endowments to shift wealth and power to local movements. The rising interest in this strategy presents a timely and critical opportunity for AFP to position itself as a crucial vehicle through which donors interested in reparative philanthropy can channel their spending down efforts. The principles of solidarity, collective agency, and justice grounding AFP offer an authentic and accountable framework for reparative giving, as noted by Felogene Anumo¹⁷. Linked to these commitments, Muthoni Wanyeki also underscored the critical role of African Women’s Movements (AWMs) in addressing illegal financial flows and resource theft that affect sustainable feminist economies.

6.5 Popularising African Feminist Philanthropy Narratives

Another critical frontier for AFP is the political act of documenting and popularising narratives of giving that reflect African feminist values and the continent’s rich philanthropic histories. This effort serves not only as a strategic counter to dominant global philanthropy discourses which often portray African philanthropy as informal, fragmented, or overly reliant on foreign aid, but also, as a powerful act of reclaiming narratives of solidarity, reciprocity, and collective agency within mainstream conversations. AFP takes back control of narrative space, affirming feminist philanthropy as a potent political and cultural practice. AFP ecosystem actors are at the forefront of amplifying these narratives through media engagement, rigorous research, and dynamic storytelling platforms. They work to elevate the visibility and impact of African feminist giving. Popularising these narratives is essential not only for mobilising resources and influencing policy but also for asserting African feminist epistemologies. For instance, trust-based philanthropy, a practice often credited to Western philanthropic innovation, has its origins deeply embedded in African philanthropic traditions of reciprocity and collective responsibility. The appropriation of such frameworks by Western philanthropies underscores the urgent need for African feminists to document and popularise their own frameworks to transcend erasure and co-optation. Centring African

¹⁶Spending down or sunsetting are usually used interchangeably, they refer to intentionally giving away all philanthropic resources over a specific, often relatively short period and then closing the foundation or fund. Motivations for these strategies include wanting to “give while living,” responding urgently to pressing social issues.

¹⁷ Felogene Anumo (2022) *The Jacket Was Mine: It is Time for Philanthropy to Pay What it Owes Africa's Liberation*, in *Speaking Back|Speaking Black: Reflections from African, Afrodescendent and Black Voices Transforming Philanthropy*. Africans in the Diaspora.



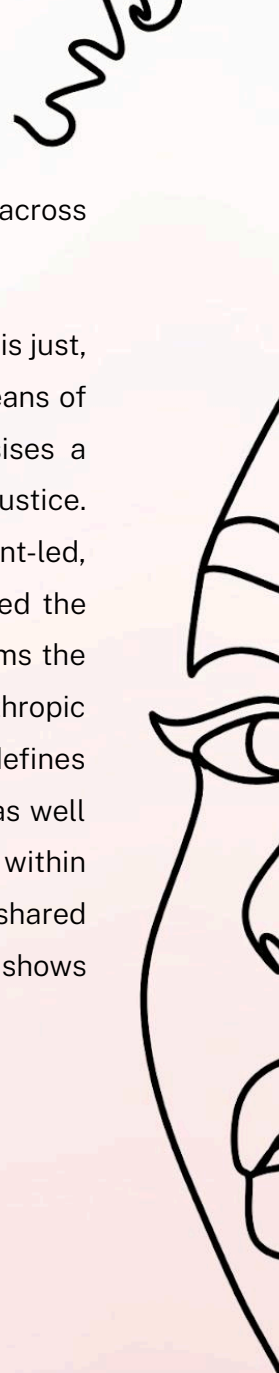
feminist values and herstories in philanthropic narratives ensures the movement is recognized as a leader shaping global philanthropy.

6.6 Transforming our Relationship with Power Through Reimagining Accountability

AFP is disrupting old ways of accountability by trying new approaches based on openness, respect, and sharing power. As noted by Lerato Mashianoke, traditional philanthropic accountability models are often characterised by one-sided, top-down reporting and rigid donor requirements which do not work in the best interest of feminist and grassroots movements. These reimagined accountability practices build trust between funders and partners, reduce bureaucratic burdens, and promote feminist autonomy. By embedding accountability within relationships of solidarity rather than control, AFP transforms power dynamics in philanthropy and fosters more effective and just resource distribution. While critical progress has been made, there is a need to further strengthen accountability in philanthropy and for AFP actors to continuously reflect on their own power, blindspots and biases. Additionally, creating a philanthropic body to hold philanthropy accountable similar to an ombuds office would further expand institutionalised philanthropy's accountability.

7. Conclusion

The AFP pluriverse marks a major shift in philanthropy—from top-down donor models to more equitable, community-centered approaches. It reflects a deeper view of philanthropy—where giving time, skills, and resources becomes a way to resist injustice, care for others, and build new worlds. As noted by Hope Chigudu, “AFP is about life [and] caring for each other”. AFP shows how both financial and non-financial resources can break down systemic barriers by providing core, flexible, and long-term support to African gender justice movements. By focusing on collective action, shared power, and dismantling patriarchy, AFP uplifts marginalised voices and redefines how we think about movement-building, philanthropy, and justice. This ethos underscores the transformative power of AFP, making them catalysts for social change that empower women and gender



diverse individuals to shape their destinies and drive the movement for gender justice across the African continent and the world.

AFP engages in worldbuilding that seeks to advance a shared vision for a future that is just, feminist and inclusive. This vision involves transforming philanthropy not just as a means of distributing resources but as a tool for social transformation. The vision emphasises a holistic approach to philanthropy, where the focus shifts from charity to reparative justice. This reimagining is key to building a philanthropic ecosystem that is truly movement-led, rooted in solidarity, and focused on lasting systemic change. This report has outlined the herstorical context of AFP, including its roles and systems change strategies. It affirms the practice of African feminisms as a practice of plurality - both in terms of the philanthropic expressions contained within AFP as well as the actors who drive AFP praxis. AFP redefines the role of philanthropy in the context of social change and demands more of itself as well as the global philanthropic sector. The range of practices, beliefs, and approaches within AFP makes the ecosystem stronger — helping connect stories of change and build a shared vision. AFP's commitment to building feminist futures across sectors and institutions shows how central solidarity-based funding is to African gender justice movements.



LORHA NAKAMBE CONSULTING



www.lorhanakambe.org



info@lorhanakambe.org



[Lorha Nakambe Consulting](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Lorha+Nakambe+Consulting)



[@lorhanakambe](https://www.instagram.com/lorhanakambe)

South Africa