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February 2010

Context and Trends Influencing the Funding Landscape for Gender Equality and Women's Organizations & Movements

awid women's
rights

Association For Women's Rights in Development

AWID's 2009-2010 FundHer Research Update Brief Series was first published by the Association of Women's Rights in Development (AWID), 215 Spadina Avenue, Suite 150, Toronto M5T 2C7, Canada and Cerrada de Mazatlán #12, Colonia Condesa, Mexico City C.P. 06140 Mexico in 2010.

www.awid.org

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Graphic design and layout by
Storm. Design + Communication

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Printed and bound in Mexico City

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Introduction

AWID first produced findings on *Where is the Money for Women's Rights?* in 2005, when we aimed to look at the funding landscape for women's rights and women's organizations at the ten-year anniversary of the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women. While data was limited, we saw a clear picture of funding shortages across different funding sectors—cut-backs within many donor agencies or inaccessibility of many of the existing funding sources for the large majority of women's organizations responding to our survey. We also identified great challenges faced by women's organizations themselves, as many of them described being in a state of 'survival and resistance'. They were limited by their own ways of engaging in resource mobilization, often not making the link to resource mobilization as a key element of broader women's rights agendas and movement building. Some aspects of that funding landscape have changed dramatically in the last few years, as has the context shaping that landscape.

The Scope of the Research and this Paper

The focus of AWID's *Where is the Money for Women's Rights?* research in 2009 was to examine some of the most important shifts, as well as the persistent trends. We looked at:

- i. how the shifting context is impacting possibilities for resource mobilization for women's organizing (presented in this document);
- ii. what impact the financial crisis and economic recession is having on key donor sectors; and
- iii. experiences to date and levels of support from some of the recent dedicated funds or budget lines focused on advancing gender equality (e.g. MDG3 Fund, UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, etc).

Although we did *not* conduct another survey of women’s organizations, we have used anecdotal data from a small number of interviews, as well as the research done by AWID’s *Influencing Development Actors and Practices for Women’s Rights* (IDeA) initiative on the impact of the crisis on women to draw some preliminary conclusions as to how women’s organizations are faring in this context.¹ Within the context of resource mobilization, we know that for many women’s organizations—in the Global South, North and East—with relatively small budgets and limited access to international funders, funding available has continued to remain limited and inaccessible. They are clearly feeling the impact of the crisis and struggling to sustain their work.

A Moment of Great Challenges but also Opportunities

We believe the current moment poses some significant challenges as well as opportunities for resource mobilization for women’s organizing. On one hand the context of crisis—financial and economic, but also, as we discuss in this document, a situation of ‘systemic’ crisis—raises the stakes and pressures on civil society organizations and donors alike to respond, to alleviate negative impacts on their constituencies, and to propose real development alternatives for the medium and longer term.

Despite the challenging context, there have clearly been positive changes in the funding panorama in the last three or four years, with new women’s rights and gender equality-specific funding (or funds) created (for example, the MDG3 Fund, the UNIFEM Fund for Gender Equality),² as well as a strik-

1. To access the IDeA series of briefs, “Impact of the Crisis on Women: Sub Regional Perspectives” refer to: <http://www.awid.org/eng/About-AWID/AWID-News/Brief-Series-Impact-of-the-crisis-on-women-sub-regional-perspectives>.

2. For more information please see AWID’s brief: *Trends in Bilateral and Multilateral Funding*, available at www.awid.org.

ing increased interest in supporting ‘women and girls’ coming from the large private foundations and the large international development NGOs (Gates Foundation, CARE, Novo Foundation to name a few). Also, some women’s funds have been clearly growing and launching innovative ways of mobilizing resources for women’s rights organizing and movement building.



Can women’s organizations tap the new funding opportunities while also trying to influence the way in which resources are distributed?

While some of this interest reflects increased awareness of the crucial importance of gender equality and women’s rights, and the central role played by women in society at many different levels, some remains framed in a way that targets quick fixes, without necessarily using an understanding of the power dynamics inherent in advancing women’s rights, and a clear recognition of the key role played by women’s organizations and movements in advancing gender equality. The challenge, it seems, for women’s organizations in all their diversity, is whether they can access that funding, whether they can work with committed donors to grapple with the complexities of change to advance women’s rights and gender equality, while they offer responses to the crisis’ impact on women that are consistent with their agendas for transformative change. Can women’s organizations tap the new funding opportunities while also trying to influence the way in which resources are distributed?

Now more than ever is a time for women’s organizations and movements to be creative and continue to strengthen collective resource mobilization efforts and overcome concerns of institutional capacity, pressure to measure their impact, so they can continue to take great strides in advancing gender equality and women’s rights.

We hope that the analysis of trends and context presented in this paper will serve to help both women’s organizations and donors alike to inform their analysis and strategizing for resource mobilization for women’s organizing.

Part 1. The current global systemic crisis and its impact on women

The current world reality is determined by a set of interlocking crises: financial and economic, food, energy, environmental, and also social (i.e. growing inequality, inadequate responses to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, etc.). Many of these 'crises' are not new at all; they have been with us for years (in some cases decades) and gradually worsening in that time.

It is important to examine current events from the perspective of a global systemic crisis, where the financial and economic are but only two dimensions.

The current financial crisis and economic recession are connected and affecting all of these other crises. The last year has offered undeniable evidence of the deeply interconnected nature of all countries and their realities. Though many countries from the Global South and East have lived in crisis for a long time, the current global financial crisis and economic recession affects them in particular ways and represents a clear imminent threat to the generally meager progress achieved on some key social development indicators.

AWID believes it is important to examine current events from the perspective of a global systemic crisis, where the financial and economic are but only two dimensions. This means that responses to effectively tackle any of the crisis dimensions depend on the capacity of governments and other key actors to ensure that the right connections are made and that a longer-term perspective is also used in the search for and implementation of solutions, keeping gender equality, social justice, human rights and environmental sustainability at the center of the short, middle and long term responses.

If we look at the financial and economic dimension of the crisis, 'the differential impact [of the crisis] on women versus men will vary across countries'.³ The overall and women-specific effects of the crisis will de-

3. Seguino, Stephanie. *The Global Economic Crisis, Its Gender Implications, and Policy Responses*. March 7, 2009. Available at http://www.uvm.edu/~sseguino/pdf/global_crisis.pdf.

pend not only on gender job segregation in each country and the existence of social protection nets, but also on the characteristics of each country in relation to dependence on remittances, trade, international reserves, levels of foreign direct investment, strength of their exchange rates, current account deficits, dependence on overseas development aid and low Gross Development Product per capita.⁴ Of course, conflict and post conflict countries have particular difficulty coping with the crisis because of their underlying fragilities and smaller space to maneuver.

Existing inequalities and gender discrimination put women in a disadvantaged position across all countries to cope with the impacts of the interlocking crises.

Clearly, existing inequalities and gender discrimination put women in a disadvantaged position across all countries to cope with the impacts of the interlocking crises. All of this adds to the often invisible but pivotal role that women play in the economy, particularly related to what is known as ‘the care economy’. Important progress achieved in a few areas related to gender equality—for example, labour rights, access to public services, access to education—is also being seriously compromised or lost.

It is not the objective of this paper to make an extensive analysis of the impact of the crisis on women and women’s rights, but we do include in the boxes below information on some key impacts that the financial crisis and economic recession, and their interconnections to already existing crises (food, energy, environment) are having on women and women’s rights.

4. Tsikata, Dzodzi. *The Global Financial Crisis and Women in West Africa: Developing Impacts and the Implications of Policy Responses*, 2009. Available at <http://www.awid.org/eng/About-AWID/AWID-News/Brief-Series-Impact-of-the-crisis-on-women-sub-regional-perspectives>

Box 1

Financial Crisis And Economic Recession: Some Key Impacts On Women And Women's Rights

(Data drawn from *The impact of the crisis on women's rights: A crossregional analysis* available at www.awid.org)

Increased Unemployment & Informalization

- ❑ Whatever sectors are most harmed by the economic crisis, women tend to be the first fired. Global, regional and country-level data show women being most affected by layoffs.
- ❑ 40% of respondents to a global survey in 2005 agreed that when jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job.
- ❑ ILO estimates for 2009 that the crisis will generate 50 million new unemployed persons in the world, of which 22 million will be women.
- ❑ The UN has reported that while men's job-loss rate is now slowing, the rate for women keeps going up. The global unemployment rate for women could reach as high as 7.4% compared to 7.0% for men.
- ❑ Women are clearly getting pushed into the informal sector as a result of lay-offs and the shrinking availability of jobs in formal sectors.
- ❑ Men who lose their formal sector jobs, tend to move into the informal sector as well, becoming competitors for jobs there.
- ❑ Women's work in the urban informal economy consists mostly of trading and artisanal services; they are less well represented among the growth enterprises. Their situation is likely to become even more insecure since the loss of urban incomes is likely to affect the demand for their goods and services, including food.

Increasing Poverty & Marginalization:

During crisis women's already limited income and their capacity to cover basic needs for them and their families, further increases poverty and marginalization as well as taking a toll on psychological health. This happens in different ways, for example:

- ❑ By losing their paid jobs due to laid-offs

- ❑ By having access to decreased wages and in some cases having to work longer hours for less pay
- ❑ By having to pay higher prices for food and other basic needs
- ❑ By having less purchasing power related to exchange rate losses
- ❑ By receiving less support related to the significant drop in remittances
- ❑ By having to cope and in some cases pay for services and goods related with increasing health problems caused to malnutrition of dependants, also related to cuts in state services
- ❑ Due to lower prices for products produced by women's farmers (particularly relevant in rural areas)
- ❑ By a decrease in the demand or lower prices paid for services offered by women in the informal sector
- ❑ By decreased amounts of aid to existing social programs, particularly in highly aid-dependent countries.

Increased Care-Related Work:

Experience indicates that although women often experience impacts of crisis more deeply, and in very unique ways, their situation is many times worsened by unfavorable policy choices to mitigate the impacts of a crisis. These policies include, as examples from different countries show, cuts in social spending such as health, food security, education, pensions and so on. As a consequence of such cuts, women assume expanded roles as care providers in their homes and communities.

Girls Taken Out Of Education:

Girls are often the first to be taken out of school when a crisis hits. Already there are documented cases of this happening in different regions, where boys' education is given greater priority.

Violence Against Women Rising:

In times of crisis, different forms of social violence increase, severely affecting diverse oppressed populations, such as ethnic minorities, migrants, sexual and gender minorities. Women from all of these different groups are among the most affected.

There have already been reports and well-documented information on the increase of cases of diverse forms of violence against women in different countries around the world. From the US, to Bulgaria, to Mexico, to Benin, women are facing increased violence related to the hardship and tensions bolstered by the crisis.

Increased Malnutrition And Hunger

According to Food and Agriculture Organization, 1.02 billion people do not have enough to eat - more than the populations of USA, Canada and the European Union; and of them more than 60 percent of chronically hungry people are women. Therefore, even before the food crisis hit, an estimated 7 out of 10 of the world's hungry were women and girls. As the majority of the working poor, informal workers, and farmers in developing countries, women who have already been living without secure food access and without social protections are among the hardest hit in the food crisis.

Particularly vulnerable groups, such as young children and pregnant women, are now at risk of becoming permanently malnourished – irreversibly impacting the next generation. All of this adds to the fact that cultural practices in many societies mean that women and girls eat last and least.

As has been shown before, food shortages and high poverty levels are also contributing to a decrease in the number of women seeking family planning services and antenatal care. The number of home deliveries is also on the rise, as the constant search for food for their families leads women to neglect their own health. Also, poor nutrition, even for only a year, is damaging for women in their reproductive years, particularly when pregnant or breastfeeding.

Greater Difficulty To Access Credit And Other Financial Services:

- ❑ There is increased evidence that credit restrictions are affecting microcredit, having significant impact on female entrepreneurs and women in the agricultural sector
- ❑ In different regions, such as South Asia and Latin America, a decline in access to credit for self-employed women is also evident, as the meager amounts of institutional credit that women could previously access have –for the most part– dried
- ❑ The deteriorating credit situation will make the situation of women in informal work even more difficult. This is likely to affect traders, small service providers, artisans and farmers

Financial resources in times of crisis

Responses to the crisis from governments and multilateral institutions have made clear the fact that the world is not short of resources, but it is short of political will to allocate resources to human development sectors and priorities that could really support low and middle income countries to cope with the crisis and ensure that the impact on already marginalized impoverished populations will be the least possible. Where the money has gone in terms of responses to the current crisis, particularly the financial one, gives us a clear indication of the amount of resources governments can make available in the short term, but also, on where the priorities lie.

According to the United Nations report on the World Economic Situation, governments have made available massive public funding for, among others, the recapitalization of banks, taking partial or full government ownership of ailing financial institutions and providing guarantees on bank deposits and other financial assets. This burst of public funding amounts to USD 18 trillion or almost 30 percent of World Gross Product.⁵ One important part of this has been the replenishment of the funding for international financial institutions (like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank), in the order of 1.1 trillion USD agreed in the G-20 Summit in London⁶ in 2009, which has further strengthened them as key financing institutions, particularly for low income countries, along with their capacity to continue pushing conditionalities. Many countries have also adopted fiscal stimulus plans—increasing spending on public consumption, infrastructure investment, cutting taxes and increasing

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5. World Economic Situation and Prospects. Update as of mid -2009. United Nations, 2009.p. 16.

6. G20 Leaders Statement, “The Global Plan for Recovery and Reform”, April 2, 2009. Available at <http://www.g20.org/Documents/final-communique.pdf>

benefits and subsidies—totaling about USD 2.6 trillion (about 4 percent of World Gross Product) to spend between 2009 – 2011.⁷

As the mainstream development model continues to be based on economic growth and profit, most of the investment done to weather the crisis is clearly being channeled to re-boost the private sector and not aimed at key structural changes such as establishing clear mechanisms to regulate the banking and financial sector that could prevent a similar crisis from happening in the future. Substantial resources and clear commitments to effectively deal with the current dramatic food crisis have not been allocated, and governments across the board are resorting to budgetary cuts in social expenses, limiting significant investments in the real economy and job generation, as well as in social protection. It is not surprising that the prospects are not very good for the most needed bold political and financial agreements to tackle the climate change crisis, as the recent UN Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen attested.

The United Nations and civil society organizations have already posed serious warnings that the limited progress made to date in fighting poverty and hunger might be at risk. It has also been predicted that a substantial slowdown in progress toward the other Millennium Development Goals should be expected as well, and that these adverse outcomes could persist long after the global economy rebounds.⁸

Women have been actively engaging at different levels in analyzing the impacts of the crisis on women, trying to influence policy discussions at the UN and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), as well as providing a critical view and making inputs to policy responses.

7. World Economic Situation and Prospects. Update as of mid -2009. United Nations, 2009.p. 19.

8. Protecting Progress: The Challenge Facing Low-Income Countries in the Global Recession. Background paper prepared by World Bank Group staff for the G-20 Leaders' Meeting, Pittsburgh, USA, September 24-25, 2009.p.8.

The Women's Working Group on Financing for Development (WWG on FfD) has released several statements during 2009 in order to provide inputs and recommendations for the global discussions and responses to the crisis.⁹

In particular, the Women's Working Group has called for greater recognition of the current financial and economic crisis as a critical political *opportunity* to make significant structural changes in the global development macroeconomic and financial architecture to reflect rights-based and equitable principles.¹⁰ In terms of some of the many proposals that the WWG on FfD has put forward, they highlight the relevance of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in financing development. The group called for strengthening *"the authority of the UN to lead the necessary rights-based pro-development economic and financial reforms, in particular responding to issues of global macroeconomic policy including its social and ecological dimensions"*.¹¹ In the same statement there is a call for *"ensure that developed countries fulfill their commitments to increase the quantity and quality of Official Development Assistance (ODA), including addressing the negative effects of the crisis in developing countries, particularly on gender equality and women's empowerment. Traditional ODA and new financing must not impose any policy conditionality, including on the basis of gender, environment and human rights"*.

9. To access all the statements and declarations from The Women's Working Group on Financing for Development. See: <http://www.ffdngo.org/gender-financing-development>

10. Women's Working Group on Financing for Development, "A call for structural, sustainable, gender equitable and rights based responses to the global financial and economic crisis", April 27, 2009. See: <http://www.ffdngo.org/gender-financing-development>

11. Women's Working Group on Financing for Development, Time to Act: Women Cannot Wait .A call for rights based responses to the global financial and economic crisis, June 2009. See: <http://www.ffdngo.org/gender-financing-development>



Box 2

Select Highlights of the Impact of the Crisis on Women's Organizing

AWID's previous work on resource mobilization for women's organizing revealed that many women's organizations around the world, particularly in the South, work with annual budgets under 25,000 USD per year (36% of respondents to AWID's 2008 survey of over 1000 women's organizations). The reports on annual budgets of these organizations are not a clear reflection of the actual value of the work they carry out each year, and point to the fact that a significant amount of the work done is actually subsidized by women's activists' own volunteer or unpaid work. The financial crisis and economic recession is clearly impacting resources available to support such women's organizations in different ways:

- Many women's organizations around the world reported in 2005 being in a situation of 'survival and resistance'. This has not changed significantly over the years, and it is in this situation that women's organizations are facing and coping with the impacts of the current financial crisis and economic recession, and the other related interlocking crises.
- Women's organizing in this current crisis becomes even more challenging since funding from different funding sources is decreasing, while they are at the same time experiencing increasing workloads (particularly those that do service provision).
- The very personal capacity of women's activists to contribute to the work of their organizations is affected by their own needs to cope with decreasing income, working to ensure that their families can fulfill their basic needs, with the related impacts on their increased workload and stress.
- AWID has been collecting anecdotal data on challenges faced by women's organizations in different parts of the world due to the financial crisis. Here are some examples:

Africa

"It's been difficult to access new sources of funding and our old partners have diminished the quantity" (organization in Togo)

"Reduced funding from donors has led to laying off a number of permanent staff, previously we had 10 now we have 2. This has reduced the work we do and has affected the level of improvement of livelihood in the places we have been working." (organization in Uganda)

Eastern Europe

"Global financial crisis has impacted on our organization's activities; all the activities planned for 2009 could not be implemented and accomplished fully. Because of the crisis, donor organizations refused to finance projects as it was planned by the project." (organization in Georgia).

Latin America

"High [impact], right now we need to cut down our team by up to 75%" (organization in Mexico)

"Right now our project for women victims of violence is jeopardized due to a lack of international funding; at a national level we don't have any kind of support. Even though our monthly administrative expenses are not high (USD 270) we find it very hard to find funding to pay the rent, electricity and phone for our office". (organization in Argentina)

North America

"Silenced many advocacy efforts because of increased fear of losing the federal government funding we have. It is extremely difficult to get funding for more than one project at a time. Funding diversification plan delayed." (organization in Canada).

"Organizations are less likely to partner due to competitive funding environment. Also, volunteer base has diminished due to folks' search for employment and livelihood. Members more focused on raising revenue for individual orgs than they are in engaging in coalition work." (organization in USA).

Part 2. Other key trends influencing funding for gender equality and women's organizing

In 2005, when we asked different funding agencies, 'Where is the money for women's rights?', many were unable to give clear responses, either because they were not tracking funding for women's rights (much less for women's organizations) or because the information available was not comparable or easy to analyze. What was clear was that funding for gender equality and women's rights was extremely limited and that many of the donors historically championing this work, had significantly decreased their funding, down-sized their gender units and mainstreamed gender in such a way that further decreased women-specific funding.

An analysis of the context and trends influencing funding flows was crucial to help us understand the funding landscape and strategize to mobilize greater resources for gender equality and women's organizing. The 2009 research effort undertaken has thus far focused primarily on providing an updated analysis of the current context through assessing what new and emerging trends have been influencing the amount of resources going towards women, gender equality and women's organizing. The section below provides an overview of such trends and their impact on funding, but it is important to note that many of the trends described in previous *Funder* reports, remain relevant in shaping the funding landscape for women's organizing.

Some relevant 'new' trends:

Recently expanded discourse and attention to women as 'agents of change' and 'economic actors' in mainstream media and other institutions (including several donors)

Building on previous work launched in 2007 by the World Bank as part of their Gender Action Plan, commonly known as 'Gender Equality as

Smart Economics', several mainstream media and institutions in the last few months have been producing diverse types of information (videos, books, magazines) or taking action (launching programs or projects, giving awards, etc.) to recognize women's central role in the economy and development, their economic capacity and agency (women as the 'largest emerging market of the world' of the next five years), their changing role in society during the last few decades, etc.

From *The New York Times Magazine*, to the Gates Foundation, from the BBC Special Documentaries to *Newsweek Magazine* and the Clinton Global Initiative, from Nike Foundation to the recent Kristoff and WuDunn Book (*Half the Sky*), all are recognizing and giving visibility to women's key role in society, particularly in relationship to the economy. This increased mainstream coverage represents an important change in the discourse and image of women (traditionally presented as victims in need of protection or rescue). Yet it also poses some challenges when women are instrumentalized from neoliberal perspectives that are finally recognizing women's economic contribution and power, but only in service of the current financial and economic system.

Much of this coverage is missing a rights-based or gender equality approach, and certainly does not challenge the foundations of the economic development model and de-regulated financial system that generated the current crisis. But this discourse has made significant headway in diverse ally-institutions including many donors that find the increased spotlight on women and girls an impetus to expand their funding commitments. This important trend seems to already be influencing some donors' theories of change around how to get the most impact from their investments in women, and will doubtless be influencing the kinds of projects and institutions that get funded, and which evaluation frameworks will be used or pushed. They are important to take note of and if possible engage with, as the amount of committed resources is very significant (in some cases, larger than new funds created by bilateral donors).

From The New York Times Magazine, to the Gates Foundation, from the BBC Special Documentaries to Newsweek Magazine and the Clinton Global Initiative, from Nike Foundation to the recent Kristoff and WuDunn Book (Half the Sky), all are recognizing and giving visibility to women's key role in society, particularly in relationship to the economy.

Many large INGOs (e.g. Plan International, World Vision, Save the Children, CARE) are also expanding their attention to ‘investing’ in women and girls. A CARE-USA representative noted that the major outcome from their last strategic planning process (finalized two years ago) was that CARE is now seeing women’s empowerment as “the critical driver for poverty eradication and that changing the lives of women and girls means lasting change.” This insight, alongside the realization that women-led solutions apply to their audience, framed their 2008 “I am powerful” campaign.

This trend is clearly influencing the work and discourse of some women’s organizations as well; some are following a similar discursive line, and others are questioning how to engage in this conversation in a way that builds on the opportunity it opens, without compromising or setting aside a broader agenda for women’s rights.

A move towards a multipolar world order with new actors influencing the global scene and the recent change in the US administration- and its role globally

The geopolitical scene is changing at a fast pace, and women’s groups should not lose sight of the resulting implications.

Changes in the international community have made evident that we no longer live in a unipolar world led by the USA. The geopolitical scene is changing at a fast pace, and women’s groups should not lose sight of the resulting implications. Several countries or groups of countries are playing critical roles in the current international geopolitical scene: Brazil, Russia, India, China, (commonly referred to as the BRIC countries), South Africa, Venezuela, Iran, the European Union, to name a few. Agreements at the last G-20 Summit in September 2009 in Pittsburgh, USA, are a clear testimony to this, where changes to the governance of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were agreed on to increase the participation and share of middle income countries. In this multi-polar world order, gas, oil and other energy issues are prominent on the international agenda, defining some of the geopolitics around other key issues related to security (for example nuclear weapons ownership and development).

Within this rather new international scenario, the election of Barack Obama as President of the United States raised hopes around important shifts in US foreign assistance policy that would bode well for women's rights around the world. Indeed, one promising sign occurred in January 2009 when Obama rescinded the Global Gag Rule, which had banned US funding for international health groups that provided information on, advocated for or performed abortions. The appointment of Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State and the nomination of an Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues have also raised hopes (and concerns) as to the potential role of the US in increasing the visibility of women's rights in global agendas. Nevertheless, the position of the US on other key issues (human rights abuses, the Doha Development Round, the coup d'état in Honduras, the responses to the financial and economic crisis, among others) as its global hegemony is threatened seems not to have changed dramatically. We are also witnessing the disenchantment with Obama and the pervasive economic and foreign policies prevailing under his administration.

Intensification of conflicts, humanitarian crises and increased militarization

While internationally recognized armed conflicts have been on a decline since they peaked in the early 1990s, there is a resurgence, particularly in intra-state armed conflicts. Especially notable is the recurrence of conflict in areas where states in fragile situations and weak economies have not been able to rebuild.

“of the 39 different conflicts that became active in the last 10 years, 31 were conflict recurrences...the challenges of rebuilding war-damaged states are greater and often less tractable than ending the fighting itself ... more than one billion people live in some 50 failed and failing states whose direct and spillover economic costs of \$270 billion are more than three times annual global development aid of \$80 billion”.¹²

12. Hewitt, et al. *Peace and Conflict 2010*. University of Maryland.

Growing militarization in many regions has contributed to further lessening the space for political dissent as well as a worrisome increase of attacks against women human rights defenders.

The United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)¹³ reported that 2008 saw increased suffering in conflict zones and protracted crises in Afghanistan, Darfur and Gaza, to name a few. The International Crisis Group acknowledges that actual or potential conflicts are present in more than 60 countries around the world as of October 2009. Unfortunately, most of these situations have deteriorated or seen very limited improvements.¹⁴

At the same time, impacts of the so-called war on terror and growing militarization in many regions of the world, have contributed to further lessening the space for political dissent and to greater criminalization of social movements and civil society groups, as well as a very worrisome increase of attacks against women human rights defenders in different regions of the world.¹⁵

Yet the response of the international community to advance peace and human rights remains limited. Even with the existence of international institutions such as the International Criminal Court, impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity, particularly against women, continues to prevail. The existence of Security Council Resolution 1325 and Resolution 1820 related to the participation of women in peace talks and ending impunity for gender based crimes in armed conflicts, contributed to formally acknowledge at the international level the need to address these crimes and put in place preventive measures, but their implementation so far is limited and lacks adequate political and financial support.

13. The United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund is a humanitarian fund established by the United Nations to enable more timely and reliable humanitarian assistance to those affected by natural disasters and armed conflicts.

14. International Crisis Group. Crisis Watch N° 74.

15. Examples include the arbitrary detentions earlier this year of Shiva Nazar Ahari and Shadi Sadr, two Iranian human rights defenders. Other examples are the murdered of Anna Politkovskaya in 2006 and the recent death of Natalia Estemirova in June 2009.

According to reports of the OECD – DAC (Development Assistance Committee), donor countries have been increasing the level of resources allocated to humanitarian aid, as reflected in the chart below.¹⁶ The percentage of the increase in resources is significant, representing a 362% increase between 2001 and 2007.

Humanitarian Aid from the OECD – DAC donors 2001 – 2007 (USD Million)

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
1 932.48	2 940.66	4 424.94	5 338.67	7 972.95	6 689.32	6 995.9

The OECD is also recognizing that the current economic crisis can pose further challenges in countries that are emerging from conflict and in states in fragile situation. Donors have stepped up their aid for what they call fragile and conflict-affected states: in 2007 USD 37.2 billion of ODA went to fragile and conflict-affected states, i.e. 38.4% of total ODA. However, half the ODA destined for 48 fragile and conflict-affected states benefited just 5 countries in 2007: Iraq (23%), Afghanistan (9.9%), Ethiopia, Pakistan and Sudan, and around a fifth was in the form of debt relief.¹⁷ Clearly, as with other ODA, how aid gets allocated responds in most cases, to geopolitical interests of donors.

Also the OECD reports that since its creation in 2001, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has disbursed an estimated USD 2.9 billion in states in fragile situations and affected by conflict. Donors from other funding sectors are allocating resources in such countries as well. For example, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has disbursed an estimated USD 175 million in fragile states over 2000-2007.¹⁸

16. Source: OECD Stats <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx>

17. OECD – DAC, Ensuring that Fragile States are not left behind, Summary Report, March, 2009.

18. Ibid.

However, the 2009 Co-operation Development Report signals that a number of states in situations of conflict or fragility will face decreases in country programmable aid of more than USD 20 million by 2010, threatening their recovery. The frequent recurrence of conflicts points to the urgent need for targeted aid in these contexts, stretching at least 5-10 years beyond the supposed 'end' of a conflict.¹⁹

As is the case with other funding mechanisms, multi-donor trust funds for post-conflict spending currently lack effective mechanisms for marking and tracking resources dedicated to support women's rights and gender equality. For example, in May 2008 at the third Sudan donors' Consortium meeting to review performance in implementing the *Comprehensive Peace Agreement*, women's groups found it was impossible to assess how much of the over two billion that had been pledged to date had either been intended for or had reached women.

Women's organizations working in this context have proven to be key players in the reconstruction, resilience and peace building in their communities. Preliminary evidence suggests that explicit efforts to incorporate women in the peace process in the stages after the termination of violence improve the prospects for more durable peace agreements²⁰ From women's groups in Kosovo which provide support and care for victims of violence in the face of decreased presence of the UN and other international organizations; to Liberia, the Central African Republic and Palestine, they are key players at the community level, but continue to be heavily under-resourced and facing great levels of violence and risk themselves.

The challenge now looking forward to the 10th anniversary of Resolution 1325 (to be celebrated in 2010) is to push for the concrete allocation of resources and mechanisms that allows the UN, its Member States, women's organizations and advocates to address their principles in the field and include

19. Hewitt, et al. *Peace and Conflict* 2010. University of Maryland.

20. Ibid.

gender-responsive approaches in conflict, conflict resolution, emergency relief as well as in peace building efforts.

Religious fundamentalisms continue on the rise

Even with some significant changes in the international scene (like the change in the US Administration and its potential impact on decreasing the power of some fundamentalist actors internationally), regressive political-religious projects continue to gain ground all over the world with particularly negative consequences for women's rights. Greater strategic thinking, dialogue and advocacy on religious fundamentalisms by women's rights organizations and movements and their donor allies are absolutely necessary.

AWID's research²¹ shows that women's rights activists in every region are facing fundamentalist tendencies within the world's major and minor religions. Their work is negatively affected by fundamentalisms, whether the religious context is Buddhist, Catholic, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim or Sikh. For 76% of women's rights activists surveyed by AWID, the strength of religious fundamentalisms has increased globally in the past ten years. Fundamentalist movements are gaining the power to shape social norms, influence international institutions and national decision makers, and define laws and policies, especially in the areas of "morality" and bodily autonomy. The five most frequently mentioned impacts are:

1. Reduced health and reproductive rights
2. Reduced general autonomy for women
3. Increased violence against women
4. Reduced sexual rights and freedoms
5. Reduced rights for women in the public sphere

For 76% of women's rights activists surveyed by AWID, the strength of religious fundamentalisms has increased globally in the past ten years.

21. AWID (2009). *New Insights on Religious Fundamentalisms: Research Highlights*. Includes results from a global survey of over 1,600 women's rights activists, in-depth interviews with 50 key experts and supplementary desk research.

Many fundamentalist movements establish legitimacy through service delivery and charity, in some cases co-opting the language of human rights and even gender.

As a result, they can often appear as appealing counterparts for development agencies and donors. As many as 1 in 5 women's rights activists regard foreign funding for religious fundamentalists as a factor behind their local presence. One-third of the activists AWID surveyed agree that religious fundamentalists in their context have been strengthened by international development aid/post-disaster relief. Women's rights activists particularly mention the governments of Iran, Libya, Saudi Arabia and the United States as sources of funding for fundamentalists. Such funding dynamics are very complex and merit significant further research.

Recent breakthrough in the United Nations System: the New UN Gender Entity

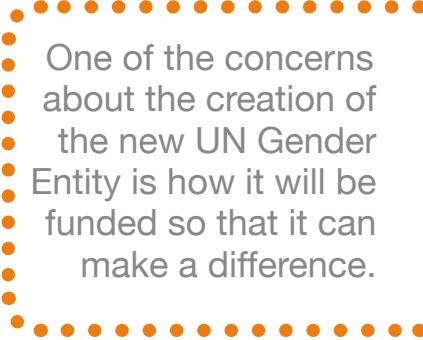
After years of strong civil society advocacy, last September 14th, 2009, the UN General Assembly adopted a historic resolution to create a strong women's agency.²² To be headed by an undersecretary general—the third highest-ranking UN officer, after the secretary general and deputy secretary general—the new unit will consolidate the work of four existing bodies. If robustly implemented, the resolution promises a politically powerful, independent agency with strong leadership and increased funds to move forward on adopted goals for gender equality and women's empowerment.

22. Gender Equality Architecture Reform Campaign (GEAR), a coalition of over 300 organizations in 80 countries worldwide, with global and regional focal points launched in 2006 by women's organizations from different regions of the world, to influence the UN Reform process launched by the UN Secretary General in the beginning of that year. The campaign has been particularly focused on the gender institutionality of the UN dealing with women and gender equality. For more information on the campaign you can go to: <http://gear.groupsites.com/main/summary>

The “gender architecture” of the UN has been formed by four bodies: The Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Institute for Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI). All of these bodies were created at different moments in time.

In terms of the way forward, “a number of structural options have been discussed as models for the new UN agency, and the prevailing consensus is now to create a composite, or hybrid, entity that explicitly merges country level operations with global policy making and monitoring functions that are often separated in UN structures.”²³

One of the concerns about the creation of the new UN Gender Entity is how it will be funded so that can make a difference in advancing gender equality and women’s rights, and make a strong contribution through its high political position, as well as its operational capacity on the ground. The GEAR Campaign and other organizations are urging Member States to commit “ambitious” funding—USD 1 billion—for a propitious launch of the new entity.²⁴ This budget is seen, “as crucial to the success of the new agency; the expansion of an effective country level operation to address the situation of women globally must come from core funding (as opposed to funding



One of the concerns about the creation of the new UN Gender Entity is how it will be funded so that it can make a difference.

23. Bunch, Charlotte, A Powerful Women’s Agency: will the UN deliver?, OpenDemocracy, 27 October 2009, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/charlotte-bunch/powerful-womens-agencywill-un-deliver>.<http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/charlotte-bunch/powerful-womens-agencywill-un-deliver>

24. As explained by Weisser, “the financing system of the UN is based on mandatory and voluntary contributions of its 192 member states. The assessed, mandatory contributions apply basically to the regular budget and the peacekeeping operations and only in a small share to the International Tribunals and Capital Master Plan, while the voluntary contributions apply to the different UN funds and programs. Only the UN specialized agencies have a mixed funding of assessed and voluntary contributions. Each member

that is project specific) to ensure that the agency can work with a high degree of predictability”²⁵. Nevertheless, the GEAR Campaign has pointed out that in a report issued by the UN Secretary General in December 2009 called “Comprehensive proposal for the composite gender equality entity”, the total funding requirement for the start-up phase was set at approximately USD 500 million, with \$125 million for basic support capacity at all levels for normative and operational support, and \$375 million in catalytic funding for country-specific programmatic support. This is well below the called-for USD 1 billion budget to achieve effective gender mainstreaming throughout the system and catalytic gender equality programming at the country level. The GEAR Campaign is clearly stating that the \$500 million figure can only be understood as the resources necessary for the initial phase and that member states must recognize that there will need to be rapid and continuous increases in resources over time. Furthermore, it must be ensured that countries, especially the poorest ones, do not receive less funding than what they are currently receiving from UNIFEM.²⁶

To make a strong case for substantial funding for the new UN gender entity, it is interesting to compare the allocation of resources for the current four gender bodies and other five UN agencies. Clearly, gender inequality in the UN is reflected in the very significant differences in funding allocation

state’s capacity to pay is the basic principle for the assessed contributions. However, the voluntary contributions have no guidelines and limits. The complete UN funding system currently covers approximately US\$ 26 billion of the estimated total annual expenses of the UN including all the various bodies, agencies, programs and funds worldwide. It is a funding system whose budget is financed in bigger parts by voluntary contributions’. (Weisser, Evamaria, Financing the United Nations, Fact Sheet ‘Dialogue on Globalization’, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, March 2009, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/un-finance/background-information-and-analysis.html>)

25. Bunch, idem.

26. GEAR Campaign Response to the Report of the Secretary-General - Comprehensive proposal for the composite gender equality entity, February 2010, PDF version.

across various UN agencies, and their related staff capacity and expenses. Thus, aiming to launch the new gender entity with an initial budget of USD 1 billion is not only reasonable but a relatively modest figure in comparison to entities such as UNICEF and UNDP.

	UNIFEM 2008	DAW 2008	OSAGI 2008	INSTRAW 2008	Subtotal Women's bodies
Total Income	215.4	1.15	0.418	4.12	221.08
Total Expenses	118	-	-	0.94	-
Total Staff	230	28	14	12	284

	UNICEF	UNDP	UNFPA	UN-HABITAT	UNAIDS
Total Income	3,390	5,463	845.3	165.8	290.8
Total Expenses	3,098	4,270	701.9	161.2	244.7
Total Staff	7,200	3,334	1,031	318	900

* DAW, OSAGI, UN-HABITAT and UNAIDS are on biennial 2006-7 and 2008-9 budget cycles. Financial details for 2008 were available for UN-HABITAT and UNAIDS, but for DAW and OSAGI the figures presented are 50% of the biennial 2008-9 budget. Limited information was available from DAW, OSAGI and INSTRAW with respect to detailed budgets.²⁷

27. Oxfam Novib, GEAR Europe, Funding, ODA, Governance and Structural Factors Relevant to the Establishment of a New UN Gender Equality Architecture, Prepared by The Varda Group, June, 2009. p. 4.

Some opportunities could clearly arise from the creation of the new UN gender entity; however, they will depend on the way in which the entity is finally created (and how it will be structured), the level of funding agreed and actually allocated, its operational capacity at the country level included, and also, who will be the person to lead it as its first Under Secretary General. The role of civil society should not be left aside or overlooked. As Bunch mentions '(t)his new agency is the result of the campaigning work of civil society - led by women's groups working with human rights and development organizations. In order to deliver for women everywhere, there must be systematic and meaningful participation of civil society representatives in the governance structure as well as in the operations of the new women's agency.'²⁸

It is the hope of women's organizations that the entity will not only be a strong champion for women's rights within the UN system, but also in every country. A further hope is that the entity could leverage more resources for gender equality, and ensure significant progress to advance women's rights is achieved. The coming months of key decision-making will be critical for this process. The new UN gender entity is expected to be in place before the end of 2010. However, concerns around the recent report²⁹ by the UN Secretary General regarding the establishment of the entity—that it fell short not just in funding, but in the entity's country level operation capacity, civil society participation and a clear guideline for the appointment of the Under Secretary General to head the entity³⁰—raise questions on the extent to which the great hopes for this entity will be realized.

28. Bunch, *idem*.

29. See: United Nations, GA/A/64/58, Comprehensive proposal for the composite entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women. Report of the Secretary-General, January 6, 2010.

30. GEAR Campaign Response to the Report of the Secretary-General-Comprehensive proposal for the composite gender equality entity, Revised February 2010.

Financing to respond to the Climate Change crisis: potential resources for gender equality and women's rights

The current global energy crisis along with the recurrent disasters and humanitarian crises produced by hurricanes, floods, desertification, and raising sea levels are pushing the international community to be more aware of the urgency of addressing pressing environmental problems. The UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) reports that in 2008 more than 211 million people were affected by natural disasters, with more than 238,000 killed and US\$200 billion in damages, making it one of the most devastating years in terms of human and material losses.³¹

Climate change is one of the key issues that will be mobilizing significant resources in years ahead. As women are among the most affected by environmental disasters and the impacts of climate change more generally—not least because of their significant role as agricultural producers in many contexts—it is critical that the climate change financing architecture consider women's rights and the role of women's organizations in responding to the crisis.³²

“Women are particularly affected by climate change because they generally do not have secure affordable access to and control over land, water, livestock and trees; thus they are forced to make do with limited resources and al-



It is critical that the climate change financing architecture consider women's rights and the role of women's organizations in responding to the crisis.

31. United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) Information from their Web Site: <http://ochaonline.un.org/cerf/CERFHome/tabid/1705/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

32. Williams, Mariama and Yves Conze, “Module 7: Gender Mainstreaming in Climate Financing Mechanisms” in *Training Manual on Gender and Climate Change*, available at http://www.unep.org/roa/amcen/Projects_Programme/climate_change/PreCop15/Proceedings/Training%20manual/ClimatechangetrainingManualEnglish.pdf

ternatives when their subsistence needs and livelihoods are threatened”.³³ Women have been dealing with climate change long before it became relevant in the international agenda—in large part due to their social roles as caretakers and their livelihoods as farmers, they have been observing and mitigating the impact of climate change for generations.³⁴

Strategies to facilitate adaptation to climate change-induced impacts as well as to mitigate climate change by shifting practices and behaviours will require significant financial resources. At present, climate change funding mechanisms include public (United Nations – UN Framework Convention on Climate Change-UNFCCC; Global Environmental Facility (GEF); World Bank and other multilateral institutions; bilateral donors; and national governments), private (foundations, venture capital funds, etc.) and public/private partnerships. Currently the private sector finances over 80% of climate change related activities.³⁵

The UNFCCC makes clear that developed countries have a responsibility to finance the mitigation and adaptation costs incurred by developing countries in fulfilling their obligations under the convention. Funding com-

33. Momaya, Masum, How are women impacted by climate change? AWID's Friday Files, 2009. First article in a four part series that explores the gendered impacts of climate change, September 18, 2009. Available at <http://awid.org/eng/Issues-and-Analysis/Library/How-are-Women-Impacted-by-Climate-Change/%28language%29/eng-GB>:

34. Momaya, Masum, Women address climate change by connecting the dots, AWID's Friday Files, 2009. Second article in a four part series that explores the gendered impacts of climate change, October 16th, 2009. Available at <http://www.awid.org/eng/Issues-and-Analysis/Library/Women-Address-Climate-Change-by-Connecting-the-Dots>

35. Williams, Mariama and Yves Conze, “Module 7: Gender Mainstreaming in Climate Financing Mechanisms” in *Training Manual on Gender and Climate Change*, available at http://www.unep.org/roa/amcen/Projects_Programme/climate_change/PreCop15/Proceedings/Training%20manual/ClimatechangetrainingManualEnglish.pdf

mitments for climate change are to be 1% *in addition* to the current ODA target of 0.7% of gross national income.

In the last five years twenty-two new climate and environment funds have been created as bilateral or multilateral donor initiatives. Just the frameworks developed within the multilaterals (World Bank and GEF) total more than USD 7 billion.³⁶ Meanwhile, one estimate indicates that developing countries will need at least USD 150 billion a year to cope with the effects of climate change and to pursue more environmentally sustainable futures.³⁷

The new climate finance architecture appears to be leaning towards the World Bank and other multilaterals banks—reflecting the preference of many donor countries for these institutions (or their own bilateral agencies) as channels. This is in contrast with the preferences of most developing countries to use the GEF and the UNFCCC—considering that the use of non-UNFCCC channels exposes them to potential debt accumulation and policy conditionalities. It has been also discussed that financing for climate change is one of the most crucial areas to be re-organized from a gender perspective. Moreover, it has been said that financing is there for climate change, but the connections are not made to gender equality. Finally, it is also increasingly recognized that there is a need to track the funds and prioritize women as recipients because of the role they play in adaptation and the development of local – innovative solutions.³⁸

36. Schalatek, Liane, Gender Mainstreaming and Climate Finance: “Double Mainstreaming” for Equitable Development. Heinrich Böll Foundation North America, Presentation Made at a WEDO-AAI-HBF-GGCA- UNDP Workshop, December 6, 2008. Poznan, Poland. See also from the author: Gender and Climate Finance: Double Mainstreaming for Sustainable Development, Heinrich Böll Foundation, May, 2009, 29 pp.

37. Suffering the Science, Climate change, people and poverty, Oxfam Briefing Paper 130 – Summary, July, 2009, p. 6.

38. The *Development Dialogue on ‘Climate Change and Development’*, hosted by the Society for International Development 18-19 December, 2008, Bolsena, Italy, pp 18-19.

Climate change financing could boost gender equality by resourcing programs that are accessible to and benefit women. On the other hand, effects could be adverse if the financing generates a loss of women's access and control over land and or other resources. Yet despite the enormous impact of climate change on women, the financing mechanisms—particularly the focus on market driven financial instruments to manage climate change—have clear weaknesses in their accessibility to women's organizations.

“Many activities normally undertaken by women which could count as adaptation and mitigation activities, such as tree planting, are not recognized in the global carbon trade market or are overlooked by various groups of funders. Further, given the complexities of the various climate change funds and their complicated applications processes, women's and community groups may have difficulties accessing and absorbing funds that are designed for large-scale, well capitalized projects. Ultimately, the delivery mechanisms of climate change financing may not be very conducive to the existing level and scope of operations run by women either in the farming, business or household sector.”³⁹

Deep gender biases tend to disadvantage women in financial markets—where women tend to have less access to credit, face higher interest rates or transaction costs, tend to borrow from ‘special’ programmes (with smaller lending budgets)—making gender sensitive government regulations crucial. Further, the ‘technocratic’ bias driving much climate policy as scientific and gender neutral overlooks the deeply political implications of behavioral change and the trade-offs required.⁴⁰

39. Mariama Williams and Yves Conze , “Module 7: Gender Mainstreaming in Climate Financing Mechanisms” in *Training Manual on Gender and Climate Change*, available at: http://www.unep.org/roa/amcen/Projects_Programme/climate_change/PreCop15/Proceedings/Training%20manual/ClimatechangetrainingManualEnglish.pdf, pp 207-208

40. Schalatek, Liane, *Gender and Climate Finance: Double Mainstreaming for Sustainable Development*, Heinrich Böll Foundation North America, May 2009, p. 24.

The UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009 marked a unique opportunity to deliver the necessary financial resources to tackle climate change. However, the agreement failed to meet the substantial financial and political commitments that many civil society and women's rights organizations and movements advocated for in the months leading up to the conference. In terms of financial commitments, USD 30 billion was pledged by developed countries for 2010-2012. The challenge is that it is not clear who will pay what, how those resources will be used, and particularly, what portion-if any- will be destined to advance more gender sensitive financing mechanisms related to climate change.⁴¹

Women's rights organizations expressed their concern about the lack of progress at the Conference noting that the "Copenhagen Accord" was negotiated by just a small group of key countries and that there were no specific measures and actions taken on how the slim commitments made will occur. Now, Mexico will be leading the next steps in the negotiation process at the end of 2010. Women's rights activists affirmed that there is still hope in the way ahead. They are calling to take actions at the global and national levels, such as: pushing for commitments to prioritize the most vulnerable, strengthening gender-sensitive approaches in the draft Mexico agreement and increasing access for women to existing mitigation and adaptation funds.⁴²

41. Kinoti, Kathambi, "Copenhagen: Did it do anything for women?", available at: <http://www.awid.org/Issues-and-Analysis/Issues-and-Analysis/Copenhagen-Did-it-do-anything-for-Women>

42. WEDO, Press Release: Women Discouraged by COP Outcome—But Committed to Hope and Action in 2010, December 22, 2010. Available at: <http://www.wedo.org/category/act/wedo-at-the-copenhagen-climate-conference>.

Persistent trends within donor organizations shaping funding dynamics

In addition to the above contextual factors, some key trends within donor organizations themselves remain relevant in shaping the funding landscape for women's organizing.

Gender mainstreaming vs. women specific programming

After almost 20 years of gender mainstreaming in some funder sectors, it persists as a required strategy, particularly for many bilateral agencies. Much has been said and written about the disappointments and lessons learned from mainstreaming—that it has led to cuts in gender units and staffing, or

'policy evaporation' where good policies are not translated into effective programs or resources because they fade in the midst of institutional vacuums. It also poses a tremendous challenge for tracking resources for gender equality.

When gender mainstreaming was written into the Beijing Platform for Action it was meant as a two-track strategy: to integrate gender equality across all policies and programs, as well as focus on women's empowerment specifically. However, in practice mainstreaming has emphasized the 'integration' track with attention to women-specific programming being drastically reduced.

The longstanding focus on mainstreaming has succeeded in generating more widespread recognition among staff in donor and development agencies that programs should have a gender dimension. However the operational capacity and expertise to implement this 'recognition' is generally both highly underestimated and lacking, instead coming down to 'checking a box'. The gap between design and implementation of mainstreaming strategies is noted repeatedly in many bilateral evaluation reports on gender mainstreaming experience. This makes it all the more important for donor agencies to invest in highly skilled staff with extensive women's

The gap between design and implementation of mainstreaming strategies is noted repeatedly in many bilateral evaluation reports on gender mainstreaming experience.

rights experience and a clear focus on gender equality as an agency priority. The positioning of these staff is key—they must occupy a sufficiently high level that they can effectively breathe life into gender equality understanding and strategies, without being dismissed by the bureaucracy. Often relegated to limited technical or research functions, many current gender experts within donor agencies struggle to have significant impact. As a policy officer from one bilateral agency explained:

“We’ve had tons of gender trainings and ... mention gender equality as an indicator in each strategy, because it’s in almost every strategy, but to transform that into real life allocations and actions—we’re not there yet”.⁴³

Another challenge faced by funders working to effectively mainstream gender is the question of results. The complexity of establishing baseline measures and of thoroughly examining gender-related impacts when it is one among a number of focus areas often leaves many without the solid evidence to make the case for the work they’re doing. It is thus difficult to know what impact mainstreaming is having or what’s working in mainstreaming strategies—this is pushing some donors to reconsider gender-specific ways of working.⁴⁴

These challenges continue to point to the importance of engaging with donors on their mainstreaming strategies, ensuring that stand alone funding for women’s rights continues side by side with integrating women’s rights and gender equality concerns in other ‘baskets’, and also supporting what limited gender architecture or departments remain in donor agencies. Women’s rights organizations, many of which saw their support from donors cut in the rush to ‘mainstream’, can and should be key allies and resources

43. Interview with representative of a bilateral agency, September 2009.

44. Interview with representative of a bilateral agency, September 2009.

in sharing insights and building on their extensive experience with what it means to operationalize gender equality strategies in specific contexts.

Tracking and accountability systems better but still limited

The lack of proper tracking and accountability systems within donor agencies hinders our capacity to understand how they are translating their rhetoric into action to advance women's rights.

Although there has been some important progress made in donor reporting on their funding for gender equality there is still much work to do to properly document the funding allocated. For example, use of the OECD-DAC gender equality policy marker among bilateral agencies has increased significantly. In 2003, only 8% of bilateral (sector allocable) aid was tracked with the marker. For the 2006-2007 period, 52% of bilateral aid applied the marker.⁴⁵

Tracking the funding is an important step—and other donors could draw from the gender marker experience—however tracking the impact that funding is having is also a key area for further investment in order to understand how donor intentions are taking shape in reality. The lack of proper tracking and accountability systems within donor agencies continues to hinder our capacity to properly understand how governments, intergovernmental institutions

and organizations from different funding sectors are translating their rhetoric into action to advance women's rights and gender equality worldwide.

As noted above, better systems are particularly required for tracking mainstreamed funds, but also for tracking *who* receives the funding (for example, it is very difficult to track—on the donor side—how much money reaches women's organizations).

45. OECD-DAC Secretariat. "OECD Analysis of aid in Support of Gender Equality, 1999-2003" and "Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Statistics based on DAC Members' reporting on the Gender Equality Policy Marker, 2006 -2007".



Final thoughts

This document has noted some of the key trends influencing funding for women's rights, gender equality and women's organizing. We see resource mobilization as key—not just for the survival and sustainability of women's organizations—but as an inherent part of building strong, effective women's movements, which are central to maintaining key achievements and continuing to advance women's rights and gender equality worldwide.

The complexity of the current moment, with the challenges and opportunities it raises, will require deeper collective analysis and thoughtful strategizing if women's organizations are to navigate the context effectively, tap the opportunities that are opening up and ensure that new resources that are becoming available are invested in the much needed transformations to radically change the realities of women and girls around the world. The opportunities to frame bold responses to the systemic crisis and to take advantage of the recent increase in attention to the role of women face off with longstanding systems of discrimination as they shape dominant responses to the financial and environmental crises and heightened conflicts and attacks on women's rights.

AWID is committed to working with our allies—in women's organizations and donor agencies alike—to continue deepening the research, reflection and action that will be needed to contribute to strengthening women's organizing to advance women's rights in the ever-complex world around us.



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