FEMINIST
OPPORTUNITIES
NOW

This is Power

FON
Global Communications Campaign

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Editor's Note

Dear Allies of the Movement,

There is a moment, and many of us have lived it, when something shifts. When a hand is extended across a room, a story is told out loud for the first time, or a retrogressive law is challenged in a courtroom. In that moment, something ancient and unstoppable stirs. That is what this heartfelt compilation is about.

This is Power Campaign is a recognition, that for centuries, across every continent and culture where FON operates, from the highlands of Ethiopia to the barrios of Colombia, from the fishing communities of coastal Senegal to the densely packed cities of Bangladesh, there have been people who refused to accept that inequality was inevitable. People who built shelters when the state would not. Who held listening circles when institutions fell silent. Who went to court, to parliament, to the street, and to each other.

These people are civil society organisations. And this magazine is here to tell their stories. FON, the Feminist Opportunity Now fund, was built on a single, radical premise: that the women, girls, LGBTQI+, intersex, and gender-diverse people closest to the problem are closest to the solution. Our job is to resource, accompany, and amplify their work.

In this edition you will meet the organisations doing that work. You will read the numbers that make the case for urgent action. You will hear voices that the mainstream rarely centres. And you will see, we hope, that feminist approaches are the most effective framework we have for building a world that is safer and fairer for everyone, rather than a niche concern or a political position.

We publish this magazine in English, Spanish, and French, because this movement is global and its stories belong to everyone. We dedicate it to every CSO leader who stayed, every survivor who spoke or healed in silence, every community that organised when it would have been easier to give up.

THAT IS POWER.

With solidarity,

FON Editorial Team



What is Feminist Opportunities Now (FON) and what does it stand for?

Feminist Opportunities Now project is a global initiative that exists to strengthen and amplify the work of grassroots feminist organizations across the globe. The project spans across four regions and in ten countries, namely: East Africa (Kenya & Ethiopia), West Africa (Cote d'Ivoire & Guinea), Latin America (Colombia & Mexico) and Asia (Bangladesh & Sri Lanka).

The consortium that is implementing this project is composed of the International Planned Parenthood Federation – Africa Regional Office (IPPF ARO) as lead agency, Creating Resources for Empowerment and Action Inc. (CREA), Empow'Her (EH), the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and Médecins du Monde-France (MdM-FR).

FON believes that the people closest to the challenges are also closest to the solutions. By creating opportunities for collaboration with grassroots feminist organisations through storytelling, learning, and advocacy, FON works to ensure that local voices shape global conversations and that community-led action receives the visibility and support it deserves.

FEMINIST OPPORTUNITIES NOW



This is Power Campaign

This is Power is a 360 degree communications campaign running globally in three languages, English, Spanish and French. Based on feminist principles, the campaign amplifies the stories, and impact of grassroots Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working to advance gender equality, justice and social inclusion. It is grounded in the belief that communities are best placed to drive lasting change, FON provides a platform for community advocates, and organizations to share knowledge, inspire action, and influence conversations that shape more equitable societies.

The campaign focuses on promoting equal rights opportunities, dignity, equity and justice, advocating for equitable access to comprehensive SRHR information, services, and bodily autonomy for all.

Grounded in three pillars, This is Power Campaign told a story on each of these pillars, namely:

1. Understanding Feminism

Feminism is one of the most misunderstood words in public conversation. It has been caricatured, weaponised, mistranslated, and deliberately distorted by those who benefit from the systems it seeks to dismantle. So before we go further, let us be direct.

Feminism, as lived by many Grassroot Organisations, is the pursuit of justice, equality, autonomy, and dignity, achieved through solidarity and systemic change. It is not a movement against men. It is not a Western import. It is not about victimhood. And most importantly it is not new.

The Myths vs The Truth

Myth
Feminism is anti-men and anti-family.

Truth
Feminism is for everyone. When women and girls are safe, educated, and free, men, children, families, and entire communities benefit. Feminist movements have always included men as allies, partners, and advocates.

Myth
Feminism is a Western ideology imposed on other cultures.

Truth
Every region FON works in has its own deep history of women's organising, resistance, and leadership, from the women of the Maasai community to the feminist movements of Ciudad Juárez. Feminism is rooted in local realities. FON's approach is explicitly decolonial.

Myth
Feminist organisations help victims. That's it.

Truth
Feminist CSOs are first responders, yes, but they are also lawmakers, researchers, advocates, community builders, and drivers of systemic change.

Myth
Feminism divides communities by focusing only on women.

Truth
FON's feminist approach is intersectional. It centers on women, girls, LGBTQI+, intersex, Afro-descendant, indigenous, and all structurally excluded communities, because none of us are free until all of us are free.

In Their Own Words

"Feminism is care. Caring for dignity. Caring for choice. Caring for the right to live free from harm."

Community Member, Eastern Africa

"Feminism is not about hating men. It is about changing a system that harms all of us, men, women, alike."

CSO leader, West Africa

"Feminism is simply the mobilization of women to be recognized within the category of humanity and to have their rights guaranteed."

Jessica Murillo, Human Rights Advocate, Latin America

"When I first heard the word feminist, I was afraid of it. Now I know it simply means I believe in fairness. And who does not believe in fairness?"

Youth Leader, Asia

What Feminism Looks Like in Practice

1.

It looks like a shelter in Addis Ababa that takes in women fleeing violence and gives them legal aid, psychosocial support, and HIV treatment.





2.

It looks like a paralegal network in Bangladesh training community members to recognise and report intimate partner violence, operating in places where the formal justice system has never set foot.

3.

It looks like an organisation in Colombia that turned a femicide survivors' collective into a legal advocacy body that has changed how judges interpret gender-based crimes.

4.

It looks like a queer community centre in Sri Lanka providing affirming healthcare to LGBTQI+ people denied care everywhere else.



Feminism is the work being done right now, in communities across the world, by the civil society organisations in this magazine.

2. Communities That Drive Change

Why Grassroots Feminist CSOs Are the Frontline

A Funding Gap

Across the regions where FON operates, the evidence is unambiguous: **1 in 3 women** in Africa experiences **intimate partner violence. Unsafe abortion** accounts for **9% of maternal deaths** in Sub-Saharan Africa. Women in Asia hold only **20% of parliamentary seats.** LGBTQI+ and intersex people face **forced sterilisation,** conversion practices, and systematic denial of care in dozens of countries. In much of Latin America, femicide rates continue to climb even as legal frameworks are slowly strengthened.

The need is vast. Yet Less than one percent of all gender equality funding reaches feminist civil society organisations directly. Read that again.

The response must be local. And the organisations best positioned to deliver that response, Feminist Grassroots CSOs, are the least resourced actors in the ecosystem. FON exists to change that equation. Here is why it matters, and how.

1. They Are First Responders and So Much More

When a survivor of gender-based violence needs help at 2am, a multilateral institution is the furthest reach for help. She calls the women who run the safe house down the road. Feminist CSOs are and remain to be the first point of contact in a crisis. But their role does not stop there.

These organisations are simultaneously shelters, legal advocates, policy researchers, community educators, and movement builders. They respond immediately and fight for the structure. They hold both at once, and they do it with a fraction of the resources available to larger international actors.

According to a report by The Guardian, 1 in 3 women face violence in their lifetimes and the irony is only 1% of gender equality funding is going to feminist's organisations. This comes even as funding commitments to support gender equality efforts increase, with governments and international institutions pledging more than $1bn in financial support.

The same report further suggests that true gender justice requires a radical overhaul of traditional funding structures, beginning with the direct shifting of financial resources to feminist movements in the Global South, where a mere 1% of aid currently reaches grassroots organisations.

Donors must move away from rigid bureaucracy toward agile, long-term funding models, such as the "Leading from the South" initiative, that treat local movements as equal partners and mandate critical transformation of institutional politics to truly turn commitments into systemic social change, a commitment FON and consortium partners are devoted to.

2. They Drive Systemic Change

FON's partner CSOs are delivering services, they are reshaping norms, influencing legislation, and building the evidence bases that are changing how governments and institutions respond to gender inequality, while at it.

In Ethiopia, the Good Samaritan Association has documented the intersection of HIV stigma and gender-based violence, informing national health policy. In Colombia, feminist legal collectives have

secured landmark court decisions on femicide. Case in point the campaigning for the 2015 "Rosa Elvira Cely Law," which criminalized femicide, and advocating before the Supreme Court to clarify the aggravating circumstances of "being a woman".

Survivor-led organizations and civil society networks in Bangladesh have been heavily advocating for the recognition of sex work as formal labor and the repeal of laws that leave sex workers unprotected from violence and exploitation. An article by iProbono calls it "the paradox of sex work", where sex work is not illegal yet it is somehow unlawful.

3. Our Consortium Model Multiplies Impact

FON operates as a consortium, bringing together IPPF, Médecins du Monde, CREA, FIDH, and Empow'Her, each anchoring the fund in a specific region. This model provides something that standalone funding mechanisms cannot: the combination of local embeddedness and global legitimacy.

Brings decades of feminist organising expertise in Asia.

Brings health systems knowledge and community access in Latin America.

Provides the Africa-wide infrastructure and the convening power to bring CSOs into regional and global advocacy spaces, ACHPR, AWID, UN bodies.

Together, they ensure that no CSO supported by FON is left to navigate complex donor requirements, reporting frameworks, or political crackdowns alone.

4. Sustainability Is Part of the Model

One of the most persistent failures of international development funding is the project cycle: resources flow for three years, then disappear. FON is designed differently. The fund actively supports CSOs to develop hybrid sustainability models, combining grants with income-generating activities, community financing mechanisms, and digital fundraising tools, so that organisations can survive and grow beyond any single donor relationship.

This is so that we move away from charity into an investment in infrastructure that treats feminist CSOs as social enterprises that are worthy of institutional support.

5. They Own Their Own Stories

Perhaps most importantly, FON's approach to communications and narrative change is built on a principle that sounds simple, yet is rarely implemented: the people doing the work should tell their own stories.

Rather than extracting survivor testimonials for donor reports, FON invests in the storytelling capacity of the CSOs themselves, giving the communicators a platform, building digital presence, and supporting survivor-centred media. The result is a narrative that is more authentic, more powerful, and more sustainable than anything produced from the outside.

> **We are not the subject of someone else's story. We are the authors.**
> ***CSO leader, West Africa***

This is what it looks like to take a solidarity-driven approach seriously. Creating the conditions in which communities can speak, and be heard for themselves.

Why Donor Voices *Matter*



Transforming systems requires more than financial investment, it requires trust, shared purpose, and a willingness to redefine how change happens. For too long, international development has been framed as a one-way relationship where donors provide solutions and communities receive them. *This Is Power* Campaign challenges that narrative.

At the heart of the campaign is a simple but powerful belief: **that the people closest to the challenges are also closest to the solutions.** Grassroots feminist organisations possess the knowledge, relationships, and lived experience needed to drive lasting change. The role of donors is not to lead these movements, but to stand alongside them as trusted partners—providing the resources, flexibility, and long-term commitment that enable local leadership to thrive.

That is why hearing directly from our funding partners matters.

Their perspective offers an important insight into what equitable partnerships look like in practice, why investing in locally led feminist movements creates stronger and more sustainable outcomes, and how donor-community relationships are evolving beyond traditional aid models.

In these conversations, our partners reflect on the importance of supporting sexual and reproductive health and rights, strengthening grassroots organisations, and building funding models rooted in trust, accountability, and shared responsibility. Their voices reinforce a central message of the *This Is Power* campaign: meaningful and lasting change happens when communities lead, and when donors choose to amplify—not overshadow—that leadership.

Together, these interviews demonstrate that power is not held by those who fund change. **Power belongs to the communities creating it every day.**





Eastern Africa in Focus

Kenya & Ethiopia

Eastern Africa sits at a crossroads of profound transformation and profound resistance. Women and girls across Kenya and Ethiopia are leading movements that are reshaping their countries' relationships with gender, health, and power, and they are doing so in the face of entrenched systems that have long treated their bodies, choices, and voices as secondary concerns.

In Kenya, gender-based violence remains pervasive, with intimate partner violence affecting approximately 1 in 3 women. Legal frameworks have strengthened in recent years, the Sexual Offences Act, the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act, but implementation is uneven, and rural communities often remain beyond the reach of formal justice systems. LGBTQI+ Kenyans face both legal marginalisation and social stigma, with same-sex relations still criminalised under colonial-era statutes.

Further, Kenya is presently struggling with a regional spike in adolescent fertility rates, heavily driven by entrenched poverty and systemic gaps in reproductive education. According to UNESCO, 1 in every 5 teenage girls between the ages of 15-19 years, have either had a live birth or are pregnant with their first child. This rate increases rapidly with age from 3% among girls aged 15, to 40% among girls aged 19.

When young girls face early pregnancies, they are routinely forced out of the school system, cementing an intergenerational cycle of economic dependency and vulnerability to further exploitation.

Grassroots organizations argue that, when a 14-year-old girl becomes a mother, her childhood effectively ends, making local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) the ultimate line of defense in restoring their educational and socioeconomic futures.

Perhaps one of the most grievous of all Femicide. This crisis reached a breaking point as Kenya

recorded its highest-ever femicide toll with at least 170 women killed in 2024, representing a staggering 79% increase from the previous year, as documented by Africa Check. This trend represents the lethal conclusion of unaddressed domestic abuse, highlighting the urgent need for donor-backed safehouses and legal aid.

As one frontline Kenyan rights activist, within the FON Network put it, "We are dealing with a societal emergency where home has become the most dangerous place for a woman."

In Ethiopia, the intersection of gender-based violence and HIV stigma creates compounding vulnerabilities for women, particularly those who have experienced sexual violence or who are engaged in sex work. Despite significant government rhetoric around gender equality, the practical infrastructure for survivor support is concentrated in urban centres, leaving vast rural populations without access to services. Child marriage, though declining nationally, persists in certain regions at rates that continue to rob girls of their education and autonomy.



The Conflict in the region has further catalysed the injustice against women and children. It has effectively turned women's bodies into active battlefields. Survivors of conflict-related sexual violence endure profound physical trauma and psychological devastation, yet they are routinely cut off from formal medical and psychosocial infrastructure.

Recent independent field reports highlight that armed forces frequently perpetrate sexual violence, with brutal patterns of gang rape and sexual slavery by armed groups continuing up through recent years, as verified by Amnesty International.

Coupled with the conflict, severe climate shocks, including devastating regional droughts, have compounded the effects of the crisis. Desperate families are forced into extreme survival strategies that directly endanger young girls. In these fragile ecosystems, families increasingly utilize child marriage as a desperate financial coping mechanism to offset resource scarcity.

Data tracked by the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect notes that child marriage rates rise by roughly 4 percentage points in highly conflict-affected areas. Frontline advocates emphasize that families are selling their daughters' futures for a few head of cattle because climate shocks destroyed their livelihoods, leaving local feminist CSOs as the only voices reminding communities that girls possess inherent value.

What FON CSOs are Doing in Eastern Africa

Between 2022 and 2026, the Feminist Opportunities Now (FON) project allocated a €7 million sub-granting and capacity-building fund to civil society organizations (CSOs) across 10 countries, with 65% of all funds dedicated specifically to African grassroots feminist organizations.

FON's Eastern Africa portfolio is anchored by a deep commitment to accompaniment, beyond just funding, walking alongside CSOs as they navigate hostile political climates, resource constraints, and the daily emotional labour of frontline work. FON supports organisations working at the intersection of GBV response and HIV care, organisations building feminist leadership in communities historically excluded from advocacy spaces, and organisations challenging the legal and cultural norms that permit violence against women and LGBTQI+ people.

Data highlights a severe overlap between gender-based violence (GBV) and HIV. UNAIDS reported an estimated HIV prevalence of roughly 5.9% in eastern and southern Africa, but this figure spikes up to 42.8% among highly vulnerable and marginalized transgender populations and 29.9% among sex workers. FON partners like the International Community of Women Living with HIV Eastern Africa champion the rights of women living with HIV by actively challenging healthcare, domestic, and state-based violence Ethiopian CSOs frequently operate under resource constraints and shifting political landscapes that hinder women-led advocacy. FON (led in the region by the IPPF Africa Region) utilizes a peer-to-peer, horizontal feminist leadership model to empower grassroots activists. While specific, localized numerical impacts are highly qualitative, these trainings directly facilitate safe community spaces for marginalized women to drive their own advocacy.

In Kenya, femicide remains the most prevalent, urgent lethal issue facing women, with over 1,600 killings recorded between 2022 and 2024, disproportionately affecting women aged 18 to 35. Data indicates that 77% of victims knew their killers, highlighting the lethal nature of intimate partner violence and a low accountability rate with fewer than 10% of cases reaching a conviction. FON-supported civil society organizations work to disrupt this cycle by acting as local first responders and advocating for state recognition of the crisis.

FON combats femicide in Kenya by financing 144 civil society organizations (CSOs), including 27 local CBOs, through a €14 million global budget. The program provides up to €60,000 in flexible funding to organizations like Feminists in Kenya and the Wangu Kanja Foundation to address coercive control and provide legal support in high-risk areas. For more information, visit the IPPF Africa Region.





Human rights are not things that are put on the table for people to enjoy. These are things you fight for and then you protect.

Wangari Maathai

Founder of The Green Belt Movement & Nobel Prize Laureate



West Africa in Focus

Côte d'Ivoire & Guinea

West Africa holds some of the continent's most dynamic feminist civil society, and some of its most entrenched gender inequalities, with Côte d'Ivoire ranking 114th and Guinea ranking 124th globally on the Global Gender Gap Index. In Côte d'Ivoire, women own fewer than 15% of agricultural land, while in Guinea, 94.5% of women and girls face the trauma of Female Genital Mutilation, and 54% are forced into child marriage before age 18.

Despite navigating these complex cultural, religious, and political landscapes, a vibrant network of over 150 active feminist groups is mobilizing across both nations. Operating with limited formal budgets, these feminist organisations are leveraging grassroots networks and digital coalitions to advance the rights of women, girls, and LGBTQI+ communities with immense courage and creativity.

In Côte d'Ivoire, gender-based violence remains a significant public health and human rights issue, with official data recording an alarming 10,747 cases of GBV and 841 rapes in 2025 alone. Femicide and domestic abuse cases are heavily underreported and inadequately prosecuted because survivors are structurally blocked by the high cost of mandatory medical certificates and systemic pressure for out-of-court settlements.

Access to sexual and reproductive health services, including safe abortion, is severely limited by law, and cultural taboos continue to silence the 19.2% of young girls who experience sexual violence before adulthood. At the same time, a



new generation of feminist leaders, supported by FON, is building legal advocacy movements and establishing holistic survival structures like the *Akwaba Mousso care centre.* By training advocates across 19 regional organizations and directly funding grassroots cells like *NGO Djigui Tugu* and La Ligue, FON is successfully shifting the national



conversation, empowering rural women to reject harmful practices like FGM, and driving systemic legal reforms to break the culture of impunity as raised above.

In Guinea, gender inequalities are deeply structural, with over 80% of women experiencing gender-based violence and 94.5% of women and girls subjected to the physical trauma of Female Genital Mutilation. For the LGBTQI+ community, the landscape is additionally hostile due to strict criminalization under the national penal code, which systematically blocks marginalized groups from accessing health services and legal safety.

In response to these complex religious, cultural, and political dynamics, FON is deploying crucial financial infrastructure to sustain frontline operations. FON's West Africa work centres on legal advocacy, survivor-centred media, and the strengthening of feminist organisational infrastructure, empowering groups like WAFRICA Guinée to roll out comprehensive protection across 10 regional schools to dismantle school-based rape, early marriage, and harassment. By supporting networks like *Rainbow Africa Guinea,* which protects a hidden membership of over 580 sexual and gender minorities, alongside organizations like Organisation de Secours aux Handicapés de Guinée (OSH-Guinée), Solidarité Suisse-Guinée, and Femmes, Développement et Droits humains en Guinée (F2DHG) FON is building a resilient framework of legal, medical, and psychosocial aid. These targeted interventions are directly enabling grassroots advocates to safely challenge deep-seated institutional taboos and protect the region's most vulnerable survivors.



"This is what makes the difference

Voilà ce qui fait la différence"



Latin America in Focus

Mexico & Colombia

Latin America has produced some of the most powerful feminist movements of the twenty-first century. From *Ni Una Menos* to the Green Wave, from the anti-femicide marches of Mexico City to the legal battles of Colombian feminist collectives, this is a region where feminist organising has changed laws, toppled injustices, and built a new generation of women-led institutions.

And yet the violence continues. In Mexico, femicide rates are among the highest in the world, with official registries tracking an average of **10 women murdered every single day.** Impunity is endemic, with independent studies revealing that over **95% of femicides and intentional homicides against women go completely unpunished,** leaving survivors and families with deep grief and no legal justice. Access to safe abortion has expanded across **over 20 states** following landmark Supreme Court rulings, but implementation across the country remains highly uneven, and up to **80% of women in rural and indigenous communities** face the greatest geographic, financial, and linguistic barriers to care. Concurrently, LGBTQI+ people, particularly trans women, face extraordinary levels of violence, with monitoring groups recording between **50 and 70 transphobic murders annually.**

In Colombia, the legacies of a decades-long armed conflict intersect with gender inequality in ways that are still being reckoned with. The national Single Registry of Victims has documented **over 35,000 unique cases of conflict-related sexual violence,** yet survivors face systemic barriers to justice, medical care, and reparations due to bureaucratic corruption and localized instability.

Feminist legal organisations have secured significant precedents, including expanded legal definitions of femicide and stronger frameworks for gender-based persecution in asylum claims, but the gap between law on paper and justice in practice remains wide, leaving nearly 40% of legal abortion and reproductive healthcare requests in rural conflict zones blocked by institutional delays and illegal physician objections.

What FON CSOs are Doing in Latin America

FON's Latin America portfolio is anchored by **Médecins du Monde (MdM - France),** leveraging deep roots in community health, human rights defense, and equitable access to sexual and reproductive rights to bridge the gap between progressive laws and frontline realities. By managing a multi-million euro regional fund, FON bypasses rigid international funding bureaucracies to deploy flexible sub-grants (ranging up to **€60,000 per initiative**) directly to unregistered collectives, indigenous women's associations, and grassroots advocates who bear the daily emotional labour of frontline work.

Through these targeted resources, FON-supported CSOs are actively driving impact across four key strategic pillars:

1. Autonomous Femicide Documentation & Legal Aid

In Mexico, FON finances independent feminist observatories and pro-bono legal clinics. Because state entities frequently misclassify femicides to manipulate public safety data, these groups provide independent forensic tracking and direct legal representation to families, systematically chipping away at the region's 95% impunity rate.

2. Democratizing the Green Wave (Abortion Access)

To ensure landmark legal victories reach beyond capital cities, FON funds community-led abortion accompaniment networks. These grassroots cells safely distribute medical abortion information, reproductive health counseling, and direct care to rural and indigenous women who are structurally excluded from formal state hospitals.

3. Trauma-Informed Mental Health & Defender Care

Recognizing the severe emotional toll of crisis work, FON-supported CSOs operate dedicated psychosocial hubs across Colombia and Mexico. These safe spaces provide specialized, trauma-informed therapy and mental health support specifically designed for human rights defenders, frontline activists, and families of victims.

4. Protective Infrastructures for Trans Women & Sex Workers

FON explicitly champions communities historically excluded from advocacy spaces by financing protective networks for sex workers and trans individuals. These initiatives provide emergency temporary shelters, legal defense against state-based and police violence, and targeted pathways to secure, stigma-free HIV and healthcare services.



“Femicide is a state crime. For it to take place, there must be a criminal convergence of silence, omission, negligence, and partial or total collusion on the part of the authorities responsible for preventing and eradicating these crimes.”

Marcela Lagarde

Legendary Mexican Academic, Anthropologist, Author, Researcher, Feminist Activist & Politician





Asia in Focus

Bangladesh & Sri Lanka

Asia is a continent of staggering diversity in culture, religion, governance, and the particular forms that gender inequality takes within each context. In Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, feminist CSOs are navigating this diversity with sophistication, building movements that are rooted in local realities while connected to the global fight for gender justice.

This sophisticated mobilization occurs against severe structural barriers. In the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index, Bangladesh ranks 99th and Sri Lanka ranks 116th out of 146 countries. Financing for these movements remains a critical global bottleneck; AWID mapping reveals that less than 1% of international gender-equality funding ever reaches local grassroots women's rights groups directly. This scarcity forces local activists to rely almost entirely on unpaid volunteer labor. Despite these resource constraints, women in Asia have achieved remarkable visibility, currently exceeding 50% of gender equality movement leadership in many local spaces, the highest regional proportion documented globally.

In Bangladesh, physical and sexual violence against women, female sex workers, and transgender



(Hijra) people is a critical concern. National health data confirms that over 70% of married women have experienced intimate partner violence at least once in their lives, an issue that remains deeply underreported due to social stigma. Child marriage rates,(short advocacy film against child marriage) though declining globally, remain



elevated in specific rural districts, with 51% of girls married before their 18th birthday. Additionally, the country's multi-billion dollar garment industry employs over 4 million workers, roughly 60% of whom are women, who face routine labour exploitation, wage theft, and workplace harassment. Feminist organisations are working on all these fronts simultaneously, often with minimal resources and in the face of increasingly restrictive civic space and digital surveillance laws.

Addressing Technology-Facilitated Gender Based Violence (TF-GBV) faced especially by the young people in Bangladesh, the Grassroots Youth Alliances for Digital Safety (funded via CREA's Window-III network grants) operates as a dynamic coalition combating the rising tide of cyber violence and digital blackmail. In an environment where rapid internet access has outpaced safety regulations, this alliance trains young women and student activists to recognize, report, and legally fight back against targeted online defamation campaigns. Backed by FON, they develop digital media toolkits and run community-led legal clinics for victims of online harassment. Their impact is vital in preventing young girls from being driven out of virtual and physical educational spaces, successfully protecting their mental health, reputation, and structural autonomy.

In Sri Lanka, LGBTQI+ people face both legal marginalisation and social stigma, with consensual same-sex relations criminalised under Section 365 and 365A of the Penal Code, carrying prison sentences of up to 10 years. Migrant women workers—who provide over $5 billion in annual remittances to sustain the national economy—face extreme structural vulnerabilities, including labor exploitation, trafficking risks, and severely limited access to justice abroad. At the same time, Sri Lanka has a growing, highly adaptive civil society ecosystem, including organisations working on sexual and reproductive health, disability and gender, and the rights of historically excluded indigenous (Veddah) women.



What FON CSOs are Doing in Asia

FON's Asia portfolio is anchored by CREA, one of the region's leading global South-based feminist international human rights organisations, which possesses decades of experience supporting grassroots movements. Rather than trying to rebuild structures from scratch, FON's explicit role is resourcing and sustaining the feminist leadership that already exists. By deploying flexible sub-grants ranging up to €60,000 per initiative, FON enables local civil society organizations to transition from temporary crisis-response cells into permanent institutional actors.

Through CREA's strategic accompaniment model, FON-supported CSOs are actively driving impact across four key pillars:

1. Securing Labor and Workplace Protections

In Bangladesh, FON distributes resources to community-based garment worker collectives. These funds are used to establish local legal aid networks, conduct workplace harassment tracking, and empower female factory workers with formal bargaining training to directly counter corporate exploitation.

2. Legal and Psychosocial Defense for LGBTQI+ Networks

Operating within Sri Lanka's punitive legal environment, FON finances local human rights lawyers and activist networks. These groups provide strategic litigation, safe houses, and emergency legal support to protect the LGBTQI+ community from arbitrary police arrests under Section 365, while pushing for formal legislative decriminalization.

3. Protecting Migrant Women and Indigenous Communities

FON funds specialized migrant-rights coalitions and indigenous women's associations in Sri Lanka. These initiatives build cross-border monitoring systems to protect women from human trafficking networks, while simultaneously tailoring sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) information to match local indigenous languages and customs.

4. Holistic Organizational Accompaniment

Recognizing that grassroots groups are frequently targeted by hostile state regulations, CREA provides direct, structural accompaniment to sub-grantees. This includes building robust internal governance structures, training activists in encrypted digital communications to bypass state surveillance, and designing long-term fundraising frameworks to ensure these organizations remain financially sustainable.



Feminism is not a biological war. It's a war against a mindset.

It is a vision of a world where everyone can live with dignity.

Kamla Bhasin

Pioneering Feminist Icon, Activist & Poet





Be Part of the Movement

Join Us in Resourcing Feminist Change

The organisations featured in this magazine are doing extraordinary work with extraordinary constraints. They are changing laws, healing communities, and building movements, often on budgets that would not cover the travel expenses of a single international conference.

The question for you is not whether this work matters. The evidence is overwhelming that it does. The question is whether you will help ensure it continues.

FON offers a partnership model designed to be transparent, accountable, and aligned with your institutional priorities, whether those are evidence of systemic impact, sustainability models, inclusivity of reach, or crisis adaptability.

What Your Partnership Makes Possible

Direct funding to feminist CSOs
Reaching organisations that less than 1% of gender equality funding currently reaches.

Capacity building at scale
Socioeconomic empowerment, digital storytelling workshops, safeguarding support, and sustainability planning for CSO leaders across all FON regions.

Regional embeddedness
Your investment is contextualised and accompanied by consortium partners with deep local knowledge, so your funding works in reality, not just on paper.

Narrative change
CSOs and survivors gain the communications capacity to influence public opinion, media coverage, and policy debate, creating multiplier effects beyond the direct grant.

Partnership Levels

FON welcomes conversations with donors at every scale, from institutional funders and foundations to individual philanthropists and corporate partners. Whether you are joining the movement for the first time or deepening an existing commitment to feminist organising, there is a partnership structure designed for you. For enquiry, please reach out to our team at *wwairimu@ippf.org*.

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