

Women's Fund Asia
Annual Report 21-22

We are Women's Fund Asia (WFA)

a regional feminist fund committed to supporting the human rights of all women, girls, trans, and intersex people in Asia. We began in 2004 as South Asia Women's Fund to address the lack of resources for feminist organisations, especially for smaller frontline groups. Our work closes the resource gap by creating sustainable, flexible resources and opportunities essential to supporting the leadership of women, girls, trans, and intersex people in bringing progressive change from within their communities. We now fund feminist human rights work across 18 countries in Asia.

WFA Vision

Our vision is the realisation of the human rights of women, girls, trans, and intersex people in Asia.

WFA Mission

Our mission is to nurture and lead feminist philanthropy in the region; to effectively mobilise resources to support individuals, groups, and networks by enabling their sustainability; and to strengthen partner capacities, leadership, advocacy, and networks in the field.

Note about Constituencies

As of 2021, we have updated how we refer to our constituencies. We feel that 'women, girls, trans, and intersex people' better reflects their individualities and preferred identities.

- WFA acknowledges that there is no consistent and agreed upon definition of 'girls.' WFA supports girls at two levels: through directly funding groups led by girls between the ages of 18 to 24, and through supporting work on the human rights of young women and girls aged 13 and above.
- 'Trans' is used by WFA as a placeholder to cover a diversity of gender identities and forms of gender expressions claimed by people across the region and the world. WFA supports trans rights, including that of transfeminine, transmasculine, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people, amongst other identities.

Where WFA Works

WFA operates in
18 countries
across South, East,
and Southeast Asia

South Asia

Afghanistan
Bangladesh,
Bhutan
India
Maldives
Nepal
Pakistan
Sri Lanka

Southeast Asia

Cambodia
Indonesia
Laos
Malaysia
Myanmar
Philippines
Thailand
Timor-Leste
Vietnam

East Asia

Mongolia

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A Message from the Chair of the Board of Directors and the Executive Directors - Incoming and Outgoing; of WFA

(Chair- Shaheen Anam, E.D., Tulika Srivastava and Anisha Chugh)

As we reflect on our work, struggles and celebrations in 2021-22, we do so with an acknowledgement that our world continues to undergo large-scale volatile and violent upheaval, turning millions into refugees, homeless and bereft. We have still not recovered from the impact of COVID- 19, both in terms of health and our shared economies, which we will continue to experience for many years to come. Feminist human rights defenders, at the forefront of the struggles, are facing increased pushback, repression, and restrictions on their ability and rights to mobilise and organise.

In this context of a harsh operating environment, in the year 2021-2022, WFA continued to embrace and complete a process of change, regrowth, and renewal. The period from 2021-2022, a year of transitions, saw a profound exercise of institutional strengthening come to fruition, to better meet the challenges of the day. We initiated WFA's new strategic direction and completed its strategic plan for 2022-2027 through a creative, reflective, and participatory process. The executive leadership transition (that began in 2020), was a core part of this institutional strengthening, as we underwent significant restructuring in September 2021, and decisively completed the transition in 2022. There is no question that we are already a more resilient, responsive, and impactful organisation due to this strengthening.

Another highlight of the year was that we were able to commit the highest figure in WFA's grant making history –USD 6,617,129!! At the same time, we know and understand that despite the increased numbers, we are only able to meet the resourcing needs of less than 30% of eligible applicants, a reminder that our ability to support the entire range of our robust feminist movements in the region continues to be severely limited. Our resource justice mandate is something we strive towards every day of every year, as we recommit to ensuring greater resources to serve the vision and agenda of movements led by women, girls, trans and intersex people in Asia.

We further continued to collaborate and develop powerful partnerships. A highlight of this was the launch of a one-of-its-kind strategic partnership with sister funds in the region - Amplify-Invest -Reach (AIR) Partnership in January 2022. This unique partnership between women's funds of Asia and the Pacific - Pacific Feminist Fund (PFF),

Urgent Action Fund Asia and Pacific (UAF A&P), Women's Fund Asia (WFA), and Women's Fund Fiji (WFF) - with the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, seeks to build and strengthen feminist movements and promote gender equity across our regions.

We received a gift! We deeply appreciate the much [welcome gift from Mackenzie Scott](#), who included us in her 2019 giving pledge, a brave and revolutionary act in the philanthropic world. This gift was a recognition of the critical work undertaken by WFA and its partners in Asia and the Pacific region. It also creates a larger mandate for WFA to pursue resource justice- both mapping and serving the invisible and barely served communities in its region and powering up its demand and claim to a much bigger slice of the 99% of funds that DO NOT currently flow to feminist movements.

31st March 2022 marked the conclusion of Tulika's executive leadership at WFA, in place since 1st July 2010; and the coming on board of Anisha as the Incumbent Executive Director from 1st April 2022, who will take full charge from 1st July 2022. The resilience of organisations is often tested during these kinds of changes in leadership. As a feminist organisation, leadership transition is a commitment to shifting and sharing power, as well as building a continuous process of accountability to its communities, its donors, within the organisation- to its team, and its mandate. And it is this embracing of change and transformation that makes an organisation strong, accountable, resilient, and sustainable. With a strong commitment to this transition, we closed the year 2021-22, with a three-month timeline from April 2022, to further absorb these transitions, embrace the changes and strengthen ourselves in this transformation.

This letter comes from all three of us- Shaheen, Tulika and Anisha; as we review the last year collectively, acknowledging our challenges and our navigation of the same. We take this moment to thank all of you- our grantee partners for holding us accountable, our donors for always believing in our vision, our community of our sister funds and the Prospera Network for always having our back, our board members for guiding our journey and our fabulous team for always being in the trenches, building new paths and walking with us.

In solidarity and with strength and love,
Shaheen, Tulika and Anisha

“Wishing you all the patience and the energy to continue to dismantle power, and make it accountable to people- claiming resources on the grounds of equality and non-discrimination”

- Tulika Srivastava, Outgoing Executive Director, WFA



KEY STRATEGIC AREAS

In over a decade of achievement, WFA has disbursed upwards of USD 16 million to well over 800 initiatives supporting women, girls, trans, and intersex people across Asia. We provide opportunities for learning and networking, technical and fiscal support, and leadership in changemaking. WFA's work is focussed in four broad areas of Grantmaking, Institution Building, Linking and Learning, and Influencing Philanthropy and Claiming Resources.

Our flexible and multilevel *grantmaking* bridges the resource gaps as dictated by the needs and priorities of women, girls, trans, and intersex people-led organisations, networks, and consortiums.

Institution Building

is vital to reflect our expanded mandate and team, and to bolster our feminist funding model and systems of delivery.

Linking and learning

allows for collective learning, reflection, and exchanges, bringing together our partners, allies and other catalytic actors. In so doing, we facilitate, create and participate in needs-based spaces and opportunities.

Influencing Philanthropy and Claiming Resources

enables us to guide, influence, and build alliances with a diverse set of stakeholders, strengthening the region's feminist architecture towards women, girls, trans, and intersex people human rights work.

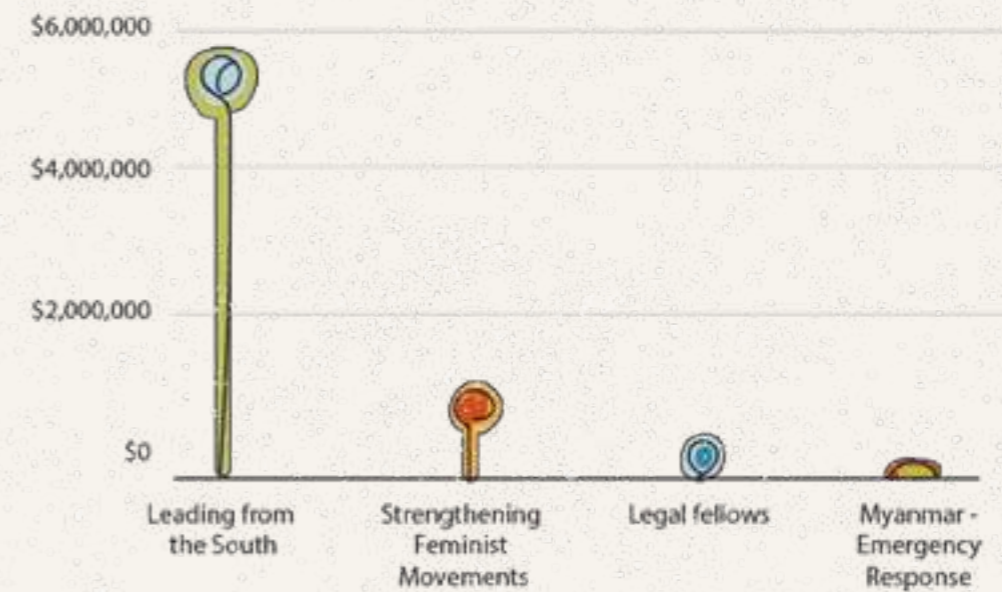
I. GRANTMAKING

Supporting feminist movements in Asia

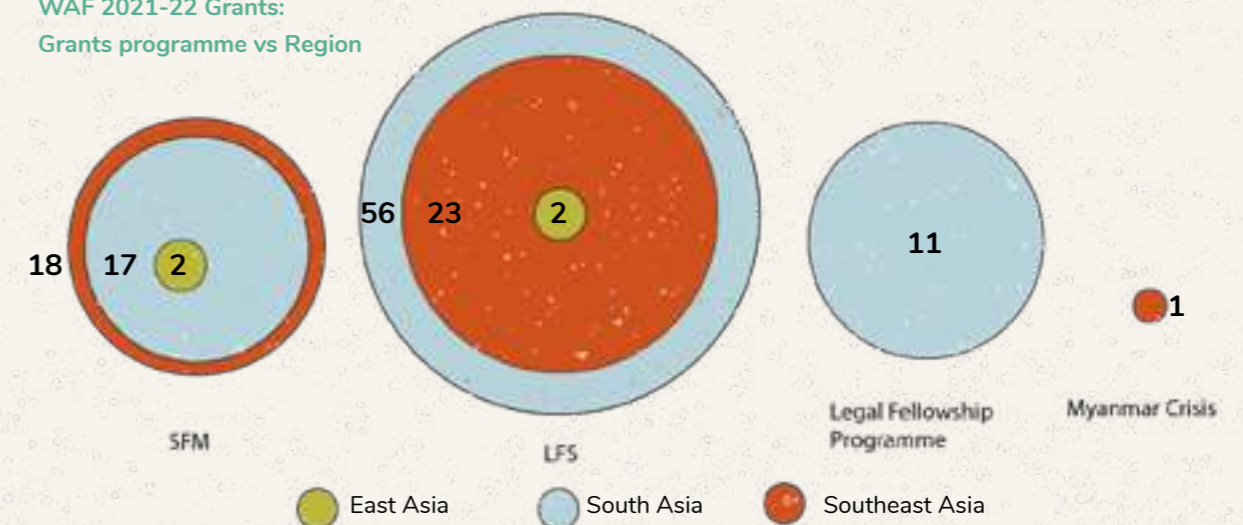
This reporting period saw WFA continue to ensure a flexible and responsive approach to grantmaking, focussing particularly on the context in which the grantee partners live and operate. The rapidly changing context in Asia, affected by a multitude of socio-political, economic, health and climate crises, has impacted WFA's strategic direction for the next few years. Such contexts include the ongoing socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the decades of austerity policies imposed upon most Asian countries which have eroded health and economic infrastructure, and the increasing restrictions placed by states upon the rights of civil society actors and feminist rights defenders, in particular, to work freely and effectively. Another unwelcome trend has been ever stricter financial and legal compliance regulations across Asia, meaning that ensuring a steady flow of resources to feminist movements, particularly for small, unregistered, grassroots groups, has become increasingly complex and time intensive. Our flexibility in this context has allowed us to seed and sustain movements and individuals that otherwise have limited access to resources.

As has been noted, the financial year 2021-22 saw WFA make the highest commitment in grantmaking in WFA's herstory, at USD 6,617,129. Of this amount, 93.3% was for direct grantmaking (USD 6,173,770) across four grants programmes: Leading from the South (LFS), Strengthening Feminist Movements (SFM), the Legal Fellowship Programme, and the Myanmar Crisis Fund. The remaining 6.7% (USD 443,359) was for fiscal sponsorship, regranting, and subgranting to support other groups and fulfil our commitment to strengthening the regional feminist aid architecture in Asia.

Grantmaking in 2021-22 by Programme	Committed Amount (USD)
Direct Grantmaking	
Leading From the South	\$5,531,833
Strengthening Feminist Movements	\$576,937
Legal Fellowship Programme	\$55,000
Myanmar Crises Fund	\$10,000
Total - Direct Grant Making	\$6,173,770
Fiscal Sponsorship, Regranting & Subgranting	
LFS - Pacific Feminist Fund	\$200,000
Sangram	\$198,949
Prospera Asia & the Pacific Chapter	\$44,410
Total - Fiscal Sponsorship, Regranting & Subgranting	\$443,359
Total Committed Grantmaking:	\$6617,129



WAF 2021-22 Grants: Grants programme vs Region



On a regional scale, in South East Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam) **41 grants** have been disbursed as part of the LFS and SFM programmes. In South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan) there were **84 grantees** across the LFS, SFM and Legal Fellowship programmes. 4 grantees working in the LFS and SFM programmes are based in East Asia (Mongolia).

A. Direct Grantmaking

I. Strengthening Feminist Movements, (SFM) makes small grants and fellowships to provide programmatic and institutional support to strengthen local and national women, girls, trans, and intersex rights activists and organisations, working at local and national levels in Asia. By November 2021, through a participatory grantmaking process that involved an 18-member advisory panel, WFA selected 81 partners who were granted a total of USD 576,937. This reflected a 15.5% increase in SFM support this year compared to the previous cycle.

SFM partners work and are based in 12 countries -Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam- out of 17 eligible countries.

Grants and consultancies by country:

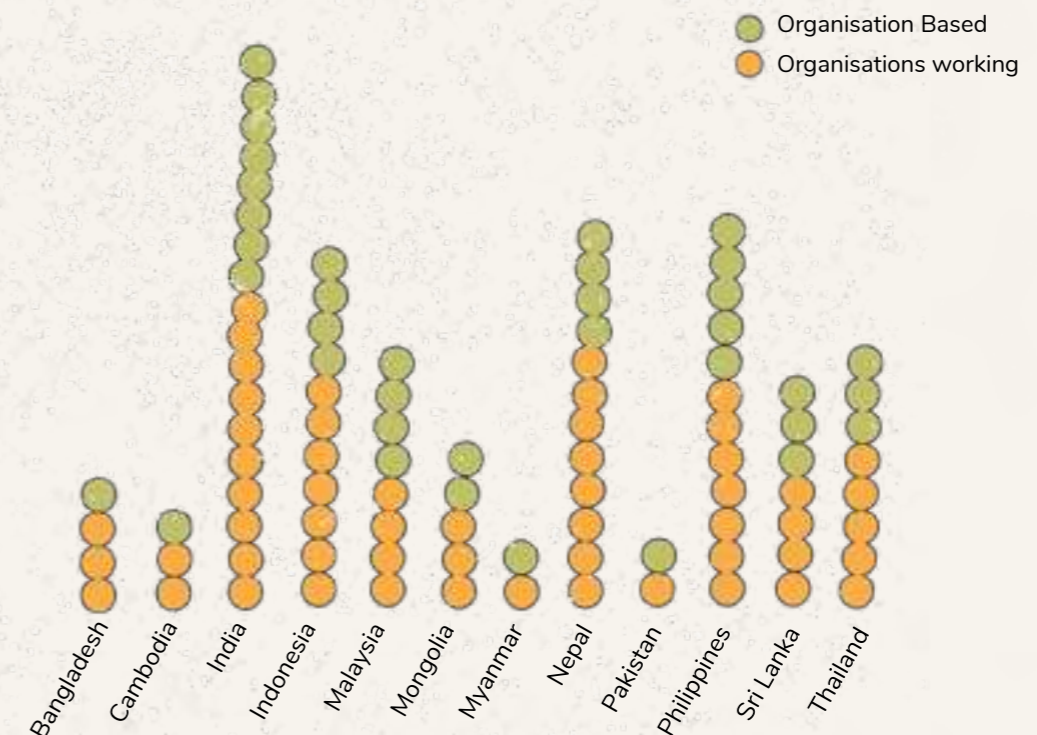


2. Leading from the South, (LFS) funds large programme grants to support activism led and implemented by organisations in the global South. The LFS grantmaking programme at WFA is resourced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and is implemented by four women’s funds – [African Women’s Development Fund \(AWDF\)](#), the [International Indigenous Women’s Forum \(IIMI\)](#), the [Fondo des Mujeres del Sur \(FMS\)](#), and WFA. In the second phase of LFS - LFS 2 - a total of 37 women, girl, trans, and intersex-led groups (20% of the 188 applications received) were selected, again using a diverse grant advisory committee composed of 18 regional, constituency, and thematic experts.

In total, USD 5,531,833 was committed to support 37 grantee partners, representing a 125% increase from 2019.

LFS 2 offers three tiers of grantmaking for diverse organisational sizes and levels of work:

- **Frontline Defenders** for a maximum grant amount of EUR 50,000 for three years to organisations and networks working directly with communities on mobilisation and leadership building at the community and sub-national levels.
- **Amplifying Voices** for a maximum grant amount of EUR 221,818 for three years to organisations and networks working on campaigns, knowledge, and capacity building, research, and evidence-based advocacy at the national and/or sub-regional levels.
- **Promoting Regional Feminist Agendas** for a maximum grant amount of EUR 441,818 for three years working at the macro level on capacity building of other feminist groups and activists, as well as undertaking knowledge building, evidence-based advocacy initiatives at regional, multi-country, and global levels.



3. The Legal Fellowship programme was set up by WFA in 2013 to support women lawyers working in the primary courts, and in doing so, to support access to justice for a cross-section of women. In 2019, WFA commissioned a study into the Legal Fellowship Programme to assess its challenges and achievements, and to map out its future direction.

The study notes that the programme is unique in the region for its work at the community level of justice, its focus on the primary courts, and its feminist approach.

Recognising the long-term nature of this work, the programme strategy has consistently supported and sustained a small group of women lawyers in their pro bono litigation. In the year 2020-21, we further aligned this programme with the organisation's work across all of WFA's 18 mandated countries in Asia, as well as with to include trans and intersex people. In the year 2020-21, we continued to support 11 eligible legal fellows from the 2019-20 cohort, through transition grants for the years 2021-22. **The Legal Fellowship Programme with its aim to advance a feminist legal praxis at the district and primary court level, by supporting women, trans and intersex legal practitioners, focuses on strengthening the capacities of legal fellows and feminist lawyers, rather than on their litigation work.**

4. The Myanmar Crisis Call: We've touched on how the operating environment across WFA's regions of activity has become increasingly hostile in the past few years. CSOs across the region, especially feminist human rights defenders, organisations and movements, are facing increased restrictions, scrutiny and antagonism. We have thus resolved that greater investments are required to shore up the safety, security, and resilience of activists, organisations, and movements, and, in every possible way, to nimbly facilitate their ability to persevere with and intensify their work. An example of how we've mobilised resources in a crisis situation has been during Myanmar's military coup and the subsequent unrest and political crisis across the country. This prompted WFA to set up a **Special Crisis Funding** in 2021. Through agile and responsive direct grantmaking, an initial USD 10,000 was allocated to provide crisis support to the feminist movement in this country. Given the combined impacts of this political crisis and COVID-19, WFA also ensured flexibility for SFM 2020-21 partners based in the country to use the grant as they deemed fit, including for supporting staff members, institutional running costs, and for supporting women human rights defenders.



GRANTMAKING BY THEMATIC AREA

As part of the above-mentioned areas of direct grantmaking (SFM, LFS, Legal Fellowship and the Myanmar Crisis Call) in the reporting period 2021-2022, the following thematic areas were supported. These include:

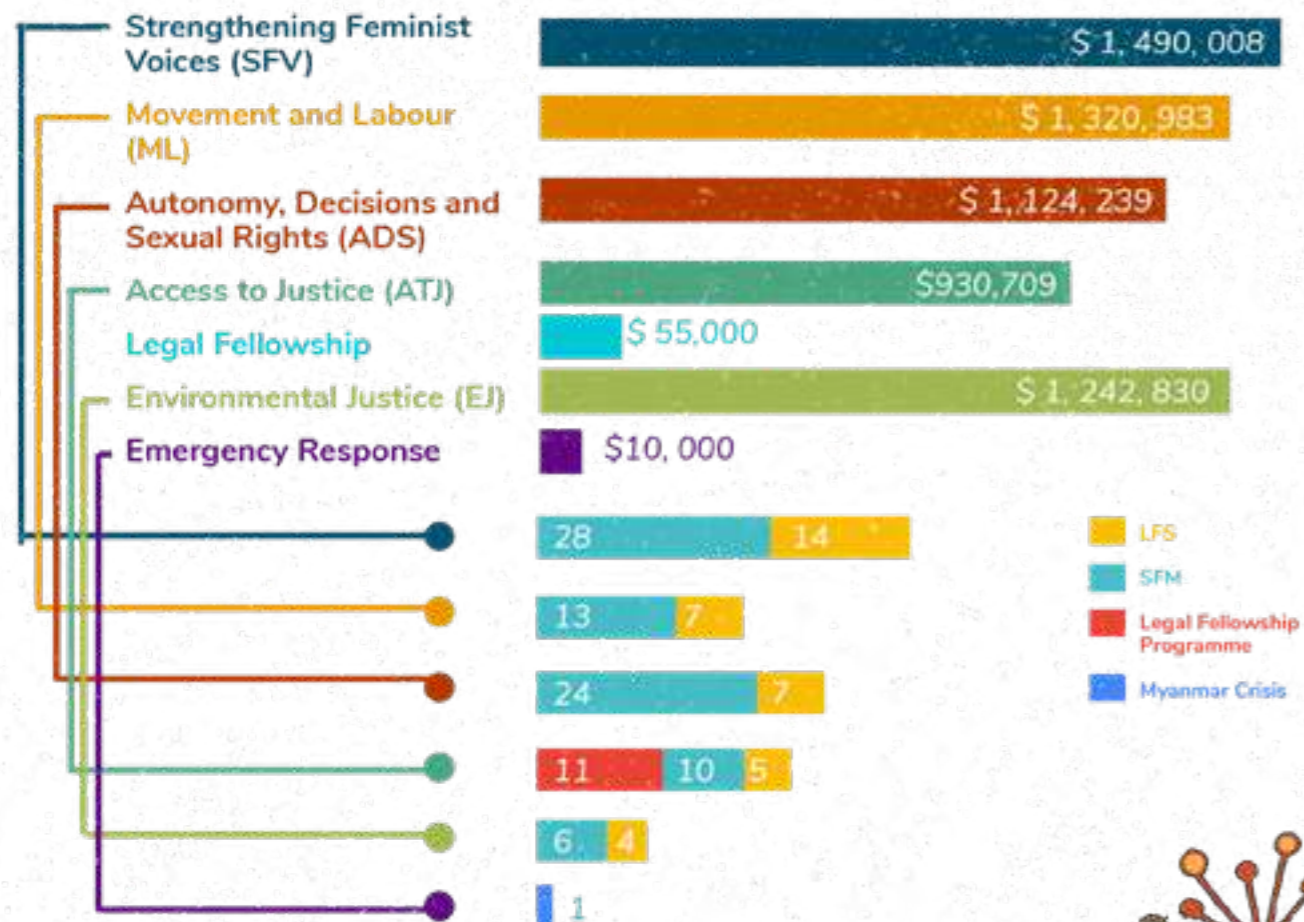
- Strengthening Feminist Voices (SFV)
- Movement and Labour (ML)
- Autonomy, Decisions and Sexual Rights (ADS)
- Access to Justice (ATJ)
- Environmental Justice (EJ)

Overall,

33 LFS grants were disbursed under WFA's thematic areas of ML, SFV, ATJ and ADS

75 SFM grants were disbursed under WFA's thematic areas of ADS, ATJ, EJ, ML and SFV

11 legal fellows across the region were supported through the Legal Fellowship programme, which falls under the ATJ thematic area.



a. Strengthening Feminist Voices: The SFV portfolio is a flexible fund that bridges the gap between resources and the grassroots feminist movements and sustains their efforts while exploring new strategies. This year, we supported initiatives that strengthened the leadership capacities of women to address peace-building and gender-based violence; supported movement-building in conflict areas; and strengthened the capacity for advocacy among women with disabilities. **We supported 42 SFV grants totalling USD 1,490,008 making this our largest portfolio.**

b. Movement and Labour: The ML portfolio provides grants to interventions that challenge the traditional anti-trafficking discourse that represents women, girls, trans, and intersex people as powerless victims—rather, it advances and strengthens the approach that affirms their right to agency and autonomy in decisions regarding their movement and labour. Initiatives that we have funded during the last year have supported women workers in different contexts, including migrant women workers. **We supported 20 grants totalling USD 1,320,983 under this thematic area of work.**

c. Autonomy, Decisions and Sexual Rights: The ADS portfolio supports diverse constituencies that amplify voices to challenge gender-based discrimination and to advance the sexual rights and bodily autonomy of all people. Sexual rights are an inalienable part of human rights and are central to the realisation of the highest standard of human rights for all. During the last year, we have supported initiatives including those that directly address the sexual and reproductive health and rights of marginalised girls (such as girls living with visual impairments) and those that strengthen network-building and self-led advocacy efforts by trans and queer persons. **We supported 31 grants totalling USD 1,124,239 under this thematic area of work.**

d. Access to Justice: The ATJ portfolio supports grassroots organisations, activists, and women lawyers that fight for the justice of women, girls, trans, and intersex people, particularly survivors of violence, by providing pro bono legal services in primary courts. This portfolio has two components: grant funding that supports justice interventions and the Legal Fellowship Programme that offers financial and technical resources to women lawyers. During the last year, organisations were supported to build awareness of legal rights and support survivors of VAW to become changemakers within their own communities. Several women lawyers were also supported so that they could carry out pro bono litigation on behalf of women from marginalised groups and with limited access to justice systems.

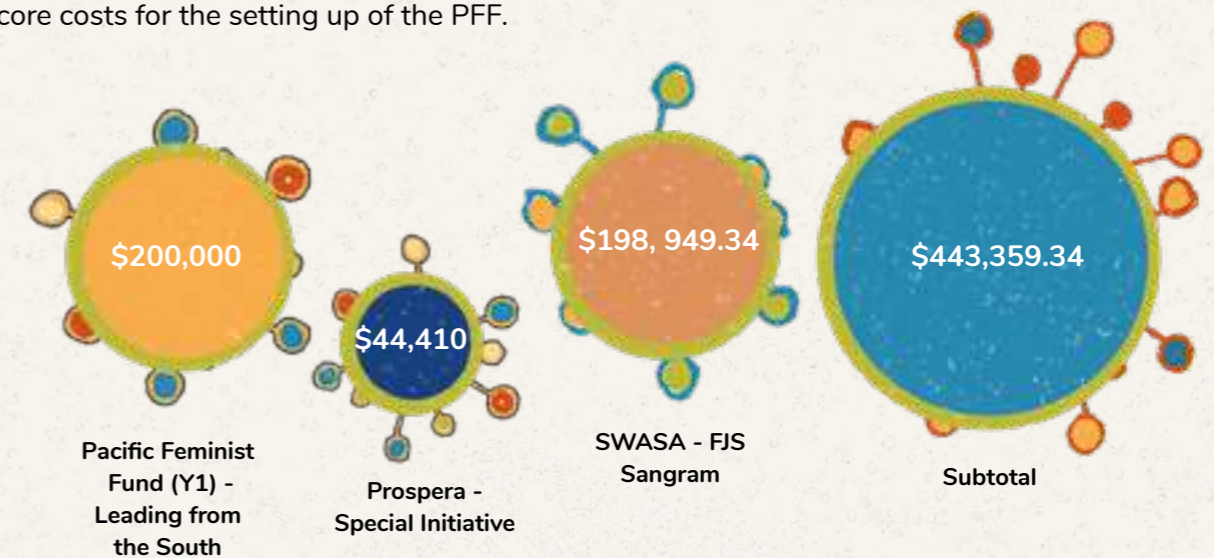
In 2021–22, WFA supported 26 grants totalling USD 930,709 under this thematic area of work. Our Legal Fellowship Programme, which falls under the ATJ thematic area, continues to provide support of USD 55,000 to a cohort of 11 legal fellows across the region.

e. Environmental Justice: The EJ portfolio supports the voices and leadership of women, girls, trans and intersex constituencies to ensure that they are involved in the decision-making processes around the distribution of natural resources, the creation of disaster risk reduction management policies, and the provision of opportunities for sustainable development and climate resilience within their communities. In 2021-22, WFA was able to give environmental justice grants as part of its LFS 2 and SFM grantmaking programmes to partners, working on issues related to building grassroots feminist leadership, to address issues related to women’s land rights, environmental destruction being faced by farming and fishing communities, forest rights, and disaster risk reduction. **In 2021–22, WFA supported 10 EJ grants totalling USD 1,242,830 under this thematic area of work.**

Response to Crisis: WFA reacted swiftly when Myanmar was faced a political and civil upheaval following the February 2021 military coup. A collaborating partner in Myanmar helped to channel USD 10000 to activists and organisations who found themselves at risk during the crisis.

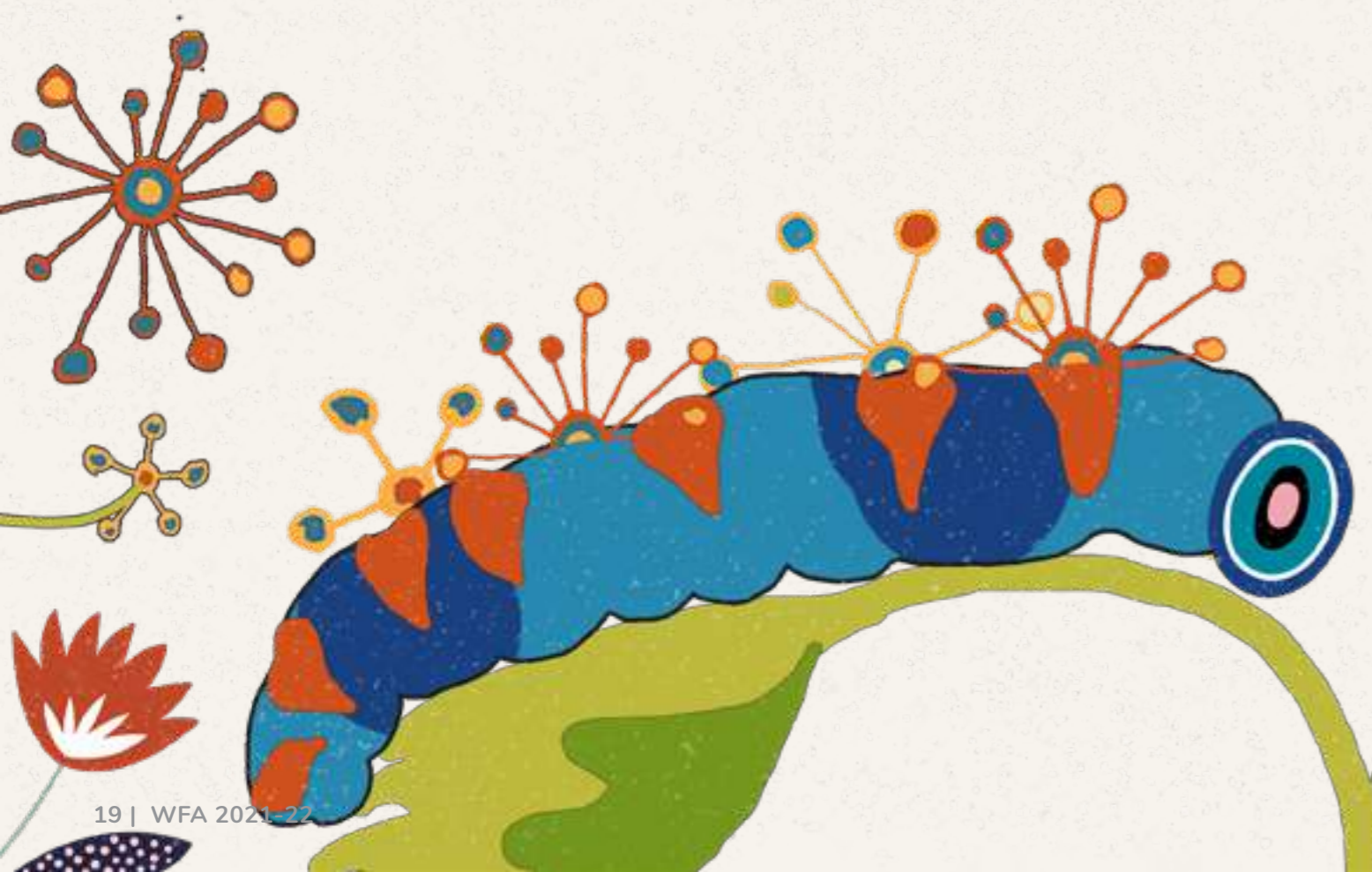
B. Fiscal sponsorship, subgranting and regranting

6.7% of our total grant commitment in this financial year **amounting to a total of USD 443,359** was for fiscal sponsorship, regranting, and subgranting. Through a regrant to Urgent Action Fund-Asia and Pacific (UAF-A&P), WFA is exercising its mandate to strengthen feminist aid architecture in the Asia and Pacific region and ensure sustainable resources for feminist movements in the region. This includes support for the setting up of a Pacific Feminist Fund (PFF). The grant from WFA supports non-grantmaking work, including consultations, convenings, strategy development, resource mobilisation, and other critical core costs for the setting up of the PFF.



C. Grantmaking the Way Forward

As we plan for the coming year, we are reviewing our strategies so that we continue to innovate to become stronger and respond in improved ways to the emerging needs of movements. While our grantmaking has evolved to become more flexible and responsive to crisis and emergency situations, we need to be better informed of the emergency contexts within which our constituencies operate to allow us to build a more effective crisis-response into grantmaking strategies. This will help us to maintain a balance between flexibility and accountability to ensure the flow of funds to partners in a timely manner. We are focusing on stronger grantmaking processes that are more effective and responsive to the needs of our partners and true to our feminist principles. This includes implementing plans to provide two-year grants to smaller groups under the SFM programme for the first time and a strengthened focus and outreach on structurally excluded constituencies (trans, intersex, queer, caste, ethnic, religious) and geographies. We are also working on conceptually strengthening our thinking around our thematic portfolios.



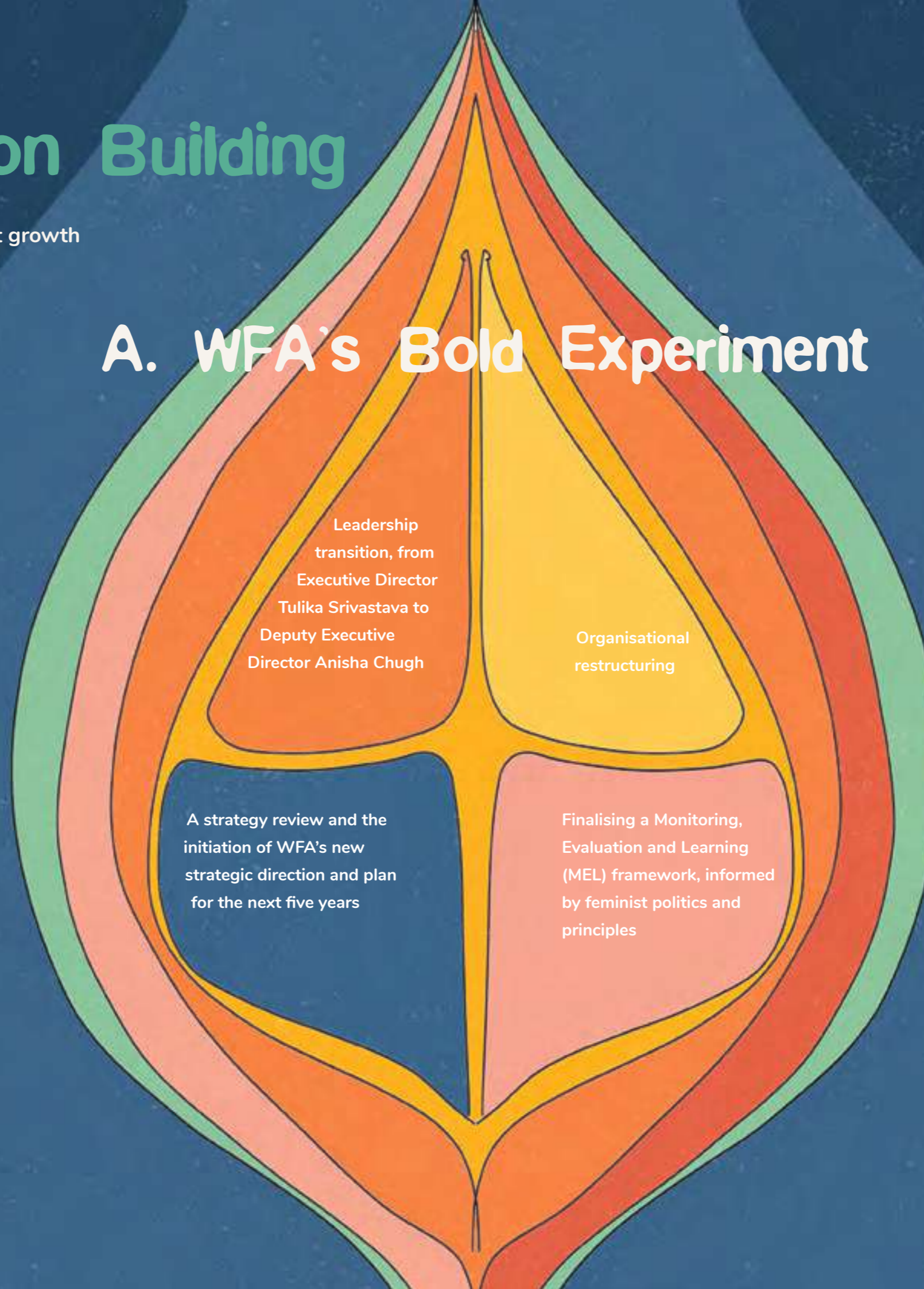
2. Institution Building

Strengthening our Core to support growth

In 2021, we stepped up to the need to build and strengthen WFA as we grow and renewed our determination to focus on institutional strengthening. Recognising that we face new challenges in the more restrictive and hostile operating environments, we embarked upon several organisational development processes. Strengthening our core allows us to become more agile and more responsive to changes in the current geo-political context of the region. This includes ensuring that we continually pay attention to creating a supportive and caring working culture accounting for challenges related to the growth of our team, and the expansion of WFA with the concomitant demands of organising and communicating virtually.

In 2021, bolstering institution building and reinforcing our feminist funding model and systems of delivery (The Bold Experiment) began in earnest. The different components of the Bold Experiment included:

A. WFA's Bold Experiment



Leadership Transition:

The Leadership Transition Committee (LTC) was established by the WFA Board in November 2020. The leadership transition process was thoughtfully planned over a period of time, with the support of external experts and taking into account WFA's complex context including the virtual nature of the organisation, the need to navigate multiple legal and financial compliances within a range of political realities, the nature of the work and the COVID context.

"Leadership transitions are not only necessary but non-negotiable to keep moving forward especially in today's times when things are not just regressing but worsening at most times. For an organisation to move beyond the image of its foundational lead, it must evolve, develop its own DNA, its own vision, and become, in fact, its own person. This is a process that demands change along with stability. A process that demands accountability along with freedom. A process that demands diversity along with consistency. A process that demands growth with sustainability. WFA today is ready to embrace change, growth and a stronger, bolder and bigger strategic direction. I have had the privilege to lead SAWF and then WFA with trust, confidence, freedom, and love and now it is my turn to hand over the baton, with grace and humility to new leadership".

**Tulika Srivastava,
WFA's outgoing Executive Director**

Strategic Plan: Deep thinking and planning for the future has been a key part of the transition and growth of WFA, and our five-year strategic plan direction began in September 2021 with a strategic review process that examined key questions related to the four overall themes of -relevance, representation, response and resilience. Building on this strategic review, the new strategic plan 2022-2027 presents the direction and vision of WFA for the next five years, to be achieved through four key pillars- *feminist grant-making; advocating, influencing & alliance building for resource justice; linking and learning; and feminist organisational development.*

Within the four strategic objectives the plan addresses key actions that are at the core of our work :



- Seeding, strengthening, and sustaining groups working at multiple levels that are led by women, girls, trans, and intersex activists
- Diversify the resource base and mobilize funds from large and influential philanthropic actors and funders for Asian feminist movements across multiple geographies.
- Strengthen feminist skills and knowledge, through community exchange and knowledge production.
- Invest in WFA's capacity and acumen to effectively channel more resources to the Global South.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework, informed by feminist politics and principles: In 2021, WFA's Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation Framework (MELF) was developed. Through consultations, dialogues with external allies of WFA and the finalizing of MEL Tools, as well as capacity strengthening sessions with the entire WFA team, we further sharpened our MEL thinking and practice. The MEL framework is aligned with the feminist values of WFA, which are rights-based, inclusive, intersectional, transparent, accountable and collaborative. The framework is also mindful of the many different levels of power dynamics inherent in MEL, particularly in relation to WFA's role as a funder with grantee partners and WFA's role as a recipient of funds with donors.

Our MEL Framework is a structured pause and reflection tool for our Theory of Change. It enables us to systematically pause and ask consistent questions about whether we have achieved what we set out to achieve. It is integral to enabling greater accountability, transparency, and evolution of our programming and strategies, while ensuring that we remain true to our feminist principles and values.

The new strategic plan is not about a dramatic shift in direction but rather focuses on **building** on success, **sharpening and refreshing** our politics and thematic leadership, **exploring** emerging areas of work; **deepening** strategic partnerships with sister funds, allies and other stakeholders and **staying focused** on delivering on our commitments. We know that we must delve more deeply into responding and showing up in times of crisis and opportunity, centring care and well-being in feminist politics and practice and strengthening thought leadership and feminist governance by investing in our own capacities and learning.

Organisational Restructuring and Strengthening: In concert with the process of strategic thinking and planning, a separate team of consultants initiated a process to strengthen feminist governance of WFA's Board, senior management, and larger team. This was to enable more autonomy, accountability, direct participation in decision-making and greater initiative-taking as well as enhancing leadership and ultimately building the capacity of the entire team towards a more resilient and impactful organisation. One of the key outcomes of organisational strengthening has been the restructuring of WFA's organogram, to align it with the new strategic plan .

B. Other areas of institutional strengthening

- **Grants management was streamlined** through a database system, Salesforce, that handles all information relating to grantees, from the application process up to the grantee approval, reporting, assessment of grant progress and grant closing. This allows the analytics of grantmaking to be readily accessible for WFA's own accountability to donors.
- **Digital Security Assessment and Website Audit** was completed in 2021 to implement better security of WFA's Digital Workspace.
- **A new communications strategy was finalised in August 2021** with a focus to expand the visibility of WFA as a women's fund in the region and amplify the voices of the grantee-partners in varied spaces; support the organisation's resource mobilisation strategy by enhancing WFA's profile within the global donor community; and to contribute to influencing the feminist resource architecture.

C. Institutional Strengthening: The way forward

We have taken important steps towards strengthening the core of WFA, but there is lots more to do. As we move forward, we will be investing in capacity strengthening, and mentoring and coaching for our team on feminist leadership. In addition we will focus on staff learning, well-being and intentional community building as well as introducing more feminist technology that supports efficient and secure virtual workspaces. We will also invest in strengthening our skills, capacities and compliances so that we are able to more confidently manage risk and navigate the increasingly stringent regulatory environments in the region. We feel this is critical in terms of implementing our feminist values and being more responsive to the movements in the current geo-political contexts of the region.

3. Linking and Learning

Connection, Collaborations and Knowledge Exchange

As we have continued to grow, exploring new relationships and spaces for exchange and learning across the region, we recognise the need for a strategy that is appropriate and feasible within our role as a funder. As we spread our wings, we must expand horizons, not cast shade.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we learned about adapting to different contexts and using new modalities for our work (for instance facilitating the linking and learning spaces virtually or using a hybrid format) and we continue to be flexible and innovative. We worked with partners on institution and capacity strengthening aspects like holistic security, financial resilience and management. We supported the participation of grantee partners in critical advocacy spaces and the organising of convenings for learning, exposure, and knowledge sharing as well as linking our partners to diverse funding opportunities.



A. Key activities and strategies:

Capacity strengthening of grantee partners on financial resilience:

Given the context of increasingly hostile and complex legal and financial compliance requirements targeted especially at human rights organisations in our region, WFA facilitated learning and capacity strengthening spaces on financial management and resilience. Two trainings on - *Finance Compliance and Accounting Fundamentals* and *Financial Management, Compliance, and Reporting* were organised by WFA, and were attended by over 30 participants. WFA team continued to provide support after the workshop, especially to the smaller groups working at the grassroots level.

Accompaniment Support to grantee partners on advocacy:

WFA along with Urgent Action Fund Africa and Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights has been part of the Feminist Generation Consortium. As part of this consortium since 2020, WFA has been working on Beijing +25 at various levels - through critical grant-making and accompaniment support to its partners. WFA's engagement aimed to amplify the perspectives and voices of grassroots feminist movements in the Beijing+25 review process, including the GEF, and to influence philanthropic and aid practices towards greater, better quality and sustainable funding for grassroots feminist movements.

Between March and August 2021, in the lead up to the Generation Equality Forum (GEF – held on 30th June 2021), along with our technical partner Breakthrough, WFA organised four online Beijing+25/GEF learning and sharing sessions with grantee-partners. These sessions were designed as accompaniments to the 17 grants under the special call, to build knowledge and perspectives of partners in Asia around the Beijing +25 processes. Many of the grantee partners had either not engaged with Beijing Platform For Action (BPFA) processes or had been largely excluded and side-lined in key spaces. The sessions included discussions on the need for BPFA in today's world while providing the historical perspective, imparting details on the GEF



process, and explaining how partners can use it to advance their agenda and advocacy, both by engaging directly and by demanding inclusion and accountability from the process. These sessions provided exposure to regional and global policy and advocacy spaces for the partners (a majority of them for the first time), and strengthened advocacy skills specific to these spaces and processes.

Dialogue and Discourse: WFA hosted the first linking and learning convening of LFS 2, *The Politics of Power, Resistance and Leadership of Global South Feminists / Feminisms*, virtually, from 7-9 December 2021. The LFS Consortium shared insights on the changing context, the challenges and learnings from responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, needs and priorities of feminist movements in the different regions and the role women's funds continue to play in these regional contexts.



B. Linking and Learning: The way forward

Linking and Learning has been recognised and strengthened as a cross-cutting strategy in WFA's new strategic plan and as grantee partners request more opportunities for exchange, we know that this requires time for gathering, harvesting, and weaving together information, ideas, and relationships. In this regard, we are placing greater emphasis on establishing multiple layers of thought leadership within and outside the organisation. WFA recognises its influence and power to convene and engage with different actors that can support the feminist resource architecture and the larger ecosystem and the need to continue to play this role for the region in the years to come. Moving forward, we must continue to strengthen the commitment to convenings, consortiums and alliances wherein relationships are deepened and strengthened and skills and knowledge continue to be shared. We are also looking to strengthen our own political thinking, movement analysis and feminist grantmaking abilities, which will require us to invest time into our staff for learning and building conceptual understanding continuously.

4. Influencing Philanthropy & Claiming Resources



Ensuring access to resources for feminist activism

In this period of transition, influencing philanthropy and strengthening the feminist resource architecture in Asia remains one of the key institutional strategies of WFA and we are deepening our engagement with this as we continue to review and refine the resource mobilisation principles that guide us. We have a significant role to play in the ecosystem of feminist funding and our participation as an organisation amongst those who are committed to bringing resources to feminist movement building work, especially in the Asia region, is critical. We engage in different regional and global networking and advocacy spaces, with multiple stakeholders and allies. These include other women's funds, private philanthropy community, bi-lateral donors, corporate foundations and others. Our core objective here is to channel increased and improved resources for strengthening feminist movements in Asia and to claim and share resources for feminist movement-building in the global South.

A. Key Activities and Strategies

Strengthening the regional feminist resource architecture to respond to current geo-political realities

In 2021, a major focus of the resource advocacy work at WFA was to understand the impact of Covid-19 and other crises on feminist movements in the region in a strategic and collective way (with other women's funds); advocate with funders collectively to support marginalised groups during times of crises through unrestricted, flexible and long-term funding; and support and contribute to the documentation and evidence building by the community of women's funds on feminist grantmaking during times of crisis. WFA along with seven other sister funds in the Asia and Pacific region joined the **Learning Circle of Prospera International Network of Women's Funds**. This Learning Circle came together to share and document experiences and reflections of the eight women's funds on responding to feminist movements during the Covid-19 Pandemic. WFA also joined the core leadership team of **Feminist Alchemy: A Community of Practice for Feminist Funds Crisis Ecosystem**, initiated by the Global Fund for Women, along with 14 other funds from across the globe to discuss and frame our responses as feminist funds to situations of emergency and crises, and to co-create emergency response perspectives and tools in line with feminist principles.

Influencing global spaces to claim resources

Generation Equality Forum: Along with sister funds of the Prospera network, WFA joined the global advocacy to demand more resources for groups led by women, girls and trans people. Between the Mexico conference (March 2021) and Paris conference (July 2021) of Generation Equality Forum, WFA participated in consultation spaces to emphasise the importance of resourcing feminist movements in Asia and the Pacific. We collaborated with other members of Prospera Network to develop a [social media campaign "10% to Women's Funds"](#) demanding that 10% of all gender equality funding be directed to women's funds over the next five years (2021-26), as a commitment to furthering the goals and objectives of governments, the private sector, and civil society after 26 years of the landmark Beijing Conference.



Alliance for Feminist Movements (AFM): As a member of the planning group of the AFM, since 2021, WFA along with others worked on the design of the Alliance and its transition from the design to the operational stage. Being part of this multi-stakeholder alliance has been an important space and opportunity for WFA to strengthen its resource advocacy work and engage with diverse global actors. WFA sees this emerging multi-stakeholder alliance as a strategic and unique opportunity for women's funds and other feminist funds, bi-lateral donors, private philanthropic community, feminist organisations and other civil society organisations to come together and drive a global commitment to bring in much needed resources for feminist movements to resist, claim and thrive.

Shimmering Solidarity: Global Rights Summit, organised by the Global Philanthropy Project: WFA hosted a session on *Resourcing Feminist Movement-Building in Asia in a Post-COVID World* at this funders' conference. The session highlighted the ways in which the pandemic in Asia has deepened existing inequalities and facilitated a further backlash against women's, sex workers' and LGBTIQ rights by authoritarian governments.

Leveraging the power of Leading from the South

Another key area of the resource advocacy work at WFA in 2021 along with other consortium partners, has been to further highlight and leverage the unique partnership of the LFS Consortium to influence and develop other strategic partnerships with sister funds, bi-lateral donors and private and corporate foundations, for increased sustainability.

In June 2021, the LFS consortium participated in a panel discussion titled, "Leading from the South: Resourcing Women's Rights Activism in the Global South". The Consortium highlighted the case of collectively contributing towards elevating discourses to achieve gender equality, by forefronting realities of resource distribution, accountability, and power. The panel highlighted the need to invest heavily in autonomous grassroots feminist movements, and the important role of women's funds and feminist funds in reaching and supporting these movements.



Furthermore, the Consortium presented its successes at disrupting the funding space by mobilising Official Development Assistance (ODA) from the MFA for feminist movements in the Global South at the Paris Peace Forum in November 2021. WFA represented the consortium at this session at the forum and highlighted the leadership of women's funds from the global South.

In the year 2020-21, the Consortium has been able to partner with Fondation Chanel, to further build and advance the political identity and vision of resourcing and strengthening feminist leadership and feminist movement building in the global South.

B. Influencing Philanthropy: The way forward

We need to diversify our resource base in order to build our reserves and enable the kind of flexible and long-term funding for ourselves that we want to offer more of to our grantee partners. We will continue to build a strong set of strategies for resource advocacy and resource mobilisation and communication that focuses on reclaiming resources and addressing the deprioritization of Asia in resource flows.



Board and Team during the period from 1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022

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Kristi Lynn Huynh, MEMBER, USA

Priya Paul, MEMBER, INDIA

Sivalee Anantachart, MEMBER, THAILAND (TILL 9/21)

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Anisha DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kishani DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

Malyn DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMES

Sanjana DIRECTOR OF STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMMES

Madhu PROGRAMME OFFICER - MONITORING, LEARNING & EVALUATION

Kim PROGRAMME ASSOCIATE - MONITORING, LEARNING & EVALUATION

Nikita PROGRAMME OFFICER - STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Pim PROGRAMME OFFICER - COMMUNICATIONS

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Priyanka PROGRAMME OFFICER - GRANTS MANAGEMENT

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Yasmin PROGRAMME OFFICER - GRANTS MANAGEMENT

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Heloise MANAGER - ADMINISTRATION AND EVENTS

Miruna FINANCE MANAGER

Anukriti FINANCE OFFICER

Mifaza FINANCE OFFICER

Abhilasha OPERATIONS OFFICER

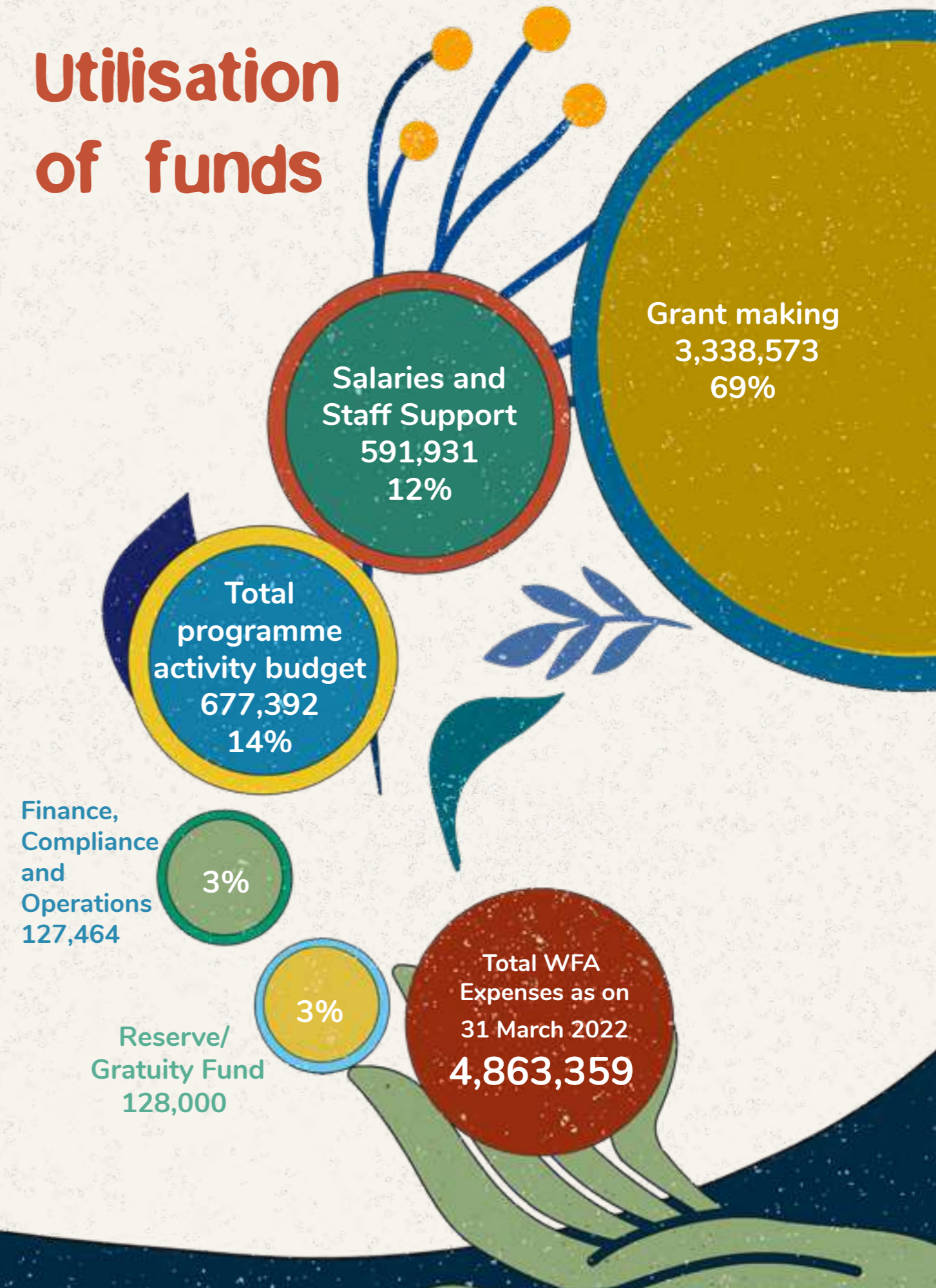
Dharini FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT

Pinki ADMIN ASSISTANT

Preeti ADMIN ASSISTANT

Jayanthi OFFICE SUPPORT STAFF

Utilisation of funds



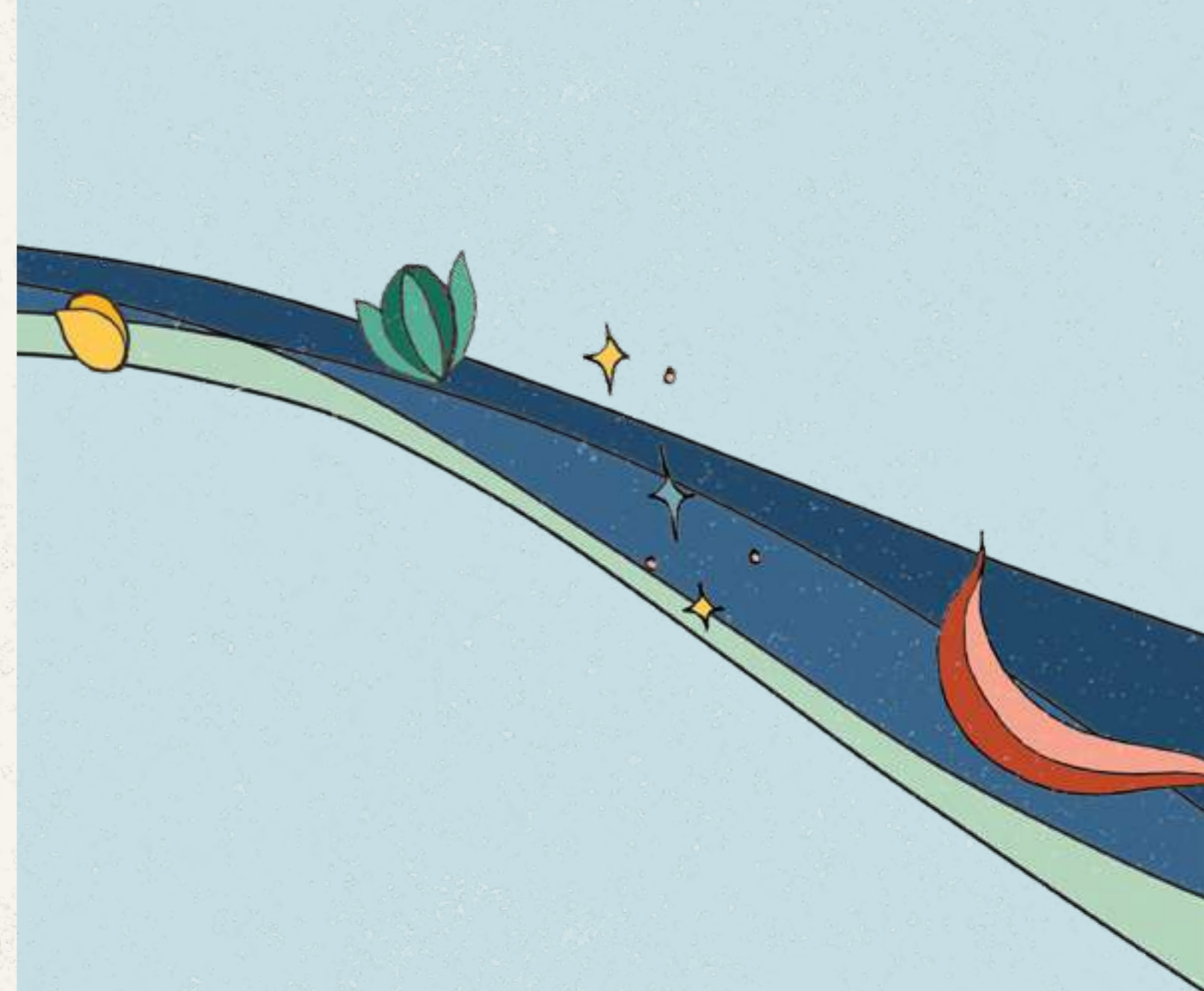
Thank you

We are deeply grateful to our grantee-partners, not only for the courageous and crucial work they do, but also for their continued faith and belief in us. You always push us to be accountable, transparent, and reflective.

WFA would like to thank our funders for being steadfast companions in our journey as we navigate difficult challenges and celebrate critical victories. Thank you for your continued solidarity, support, and commitment to the human rights of women, girls, trans, and intersex people in Asia. Your support has been especially invaluable in the last year with the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and we are grateful to you for standing with us.

Thank you - Comic Relief, Equality Fund, Fondation Chanel, Ford Foundation, Foundation for a Just Society, Global Fund for Women, Global Fund for Community Foundations, Mama Cash, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, New Venture Fund, Oak Foundation, Prospera - The International Network of Women's Funds, Silicon Valley Community Foundation, The Commonwealth of Australia represented by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Tides Foundation, Urgent Action Fund Africa, United Nations Foundation, Wellspring Philanthropic Foundation and Women Win.

Our gratitude to all the amazing feminists across the region who have supported our work by being part of our various advisories. Your wisdom has guided us during some very challenging times.



Women's Fund Asia

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