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rights

Association For Women's Rights in Development

# WOMEN MOVING MOUNTAINS

COLLECTIVE IMPACT OF THE DUTCH MDG3 FUND  
HOW RESOURCES ADVANCE WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

by Srilatha Batliwala  
with Sarah Rosenhek and Julia Miller **2013**

# Women Moving Mountains

## Collective Impact of the Dutch MDG3 Fund

### How Resources Advance Women's Rights and Gender Equality

by Srilatha Batliwala (Lead Researcher) with Sarah Rosenhek & Julia Miller  
In collaboration with 35 of the 45 MDG3 Fund recipients 2013



The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) is an international feminist, membership organization committed to achieving gender equality, sustainable development and women's human rights. AWID's mission is to strengthen the voice, impact, and influence of women's rights advocates, organizations, and movements internationally to effectively advance the rights of women.

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In collaboration with 35 of the 45 MDG3 Fund recipients  
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One of the most profound social transformations of the past century is the deep and broad shifts in the status of women, and more importantly, in the worldwide acceptance of the notion of women's rights and gender equality as desirable goals. This incredible shift has occurred not by accident but by design — through the conscious and determined struggles of courageous women and the movements they have built. Through their activism and advocacy, our very understanding of what constitutes social justice has been indelibly altered, and the once seemingly normal forms of gender-based discrimination, violence, and exclusion are now at least recognized as problems, if not resolved.

The collective impact of women's movements and organizations has bridged theory and practice, the private and public domains, our norm structures and policy frameworks, from the remotest hamlets to global institutions. No other struggle for social justice has had quite the same depth or breadth of impact — and the proof of this lies in the increasingly violent backlash against women's growing equality seen in almost every part of the world<sup>1</sup> — from the rolling back of women's reproductive rights in the United States, to the lashing of jeans-clad young women in Sudan or Indonesia, the banning of girls' schools by the Taliban in northwestern Pakistan, or the killing of women's rights activists across Mesoamerica.

It is truly surprising therefore that women's rights organizing and movements have been functioning, often with quite minimal financial support, even as their experience and effectiveness has increased. Worst of all, many of the very strategies they originally advanced to meet women's practical needs and advance their position in society have been disconnected from the comprehensive approaches of which they were a part, and isolated as "magic wands" that will empower women without dealing with the deeper gender power structures that are at the root of gender inequality: micro-credit and

micro-entrepreneurship programs, for instance, or quotas for women in politics, or legal interventions on violence against women and girls. The steady and essential processes of organizing women, raising their consciousness, helping them analyze the root causes of their disempowerment, building women's collective power and collective strategies for change, supporting women to challenge the cultural and social norms that justify their subordination — in other words, the core elements of a sustainable long-term struggle for transforming the institutions and structures that perpetuate both gender and other forms of discrimination and exclusion — are considered too slow and difficult to measure, and receive little or no support, except from a handful of insightful and experienced donors.

AWID's series of inter-related research initiatives all attempted to address this central conundrum from different angles. In *"Watering the Leaves, Starving the Roots,"* AWID's third FundHer report, we assess the new actors influencing overall development agendas, the factors affecting the more traditional sources of support to women's movements and organizations, the critical role of women's funds in sustaining such support, and the most recent data on the resource situation of the 1000-odd women's rights organizations from all regions of the world who participated in our 2011 FundHer survey. In *"New Actors, New Money: A Mapping of Recent Initiatives for Women and Girls,"* we present the results of our mapping of new donors making major commitments to work with "women and girls," to better understand this trend and its impact on women's organizations. Finally, in *"Women Moving Mountains,"* our survey of the aggregate impact of the organizations that received the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs "MDG3 Fund" grants, we demonstrate the kind of huge reach and transformative change that is possible when organizations working to build women's collective power for change receive serious resources for a decent length of time, applying strategies they have

chosen, honed over time, or newly innovated, rather than donor-determined approaches.

Key to understanding AWID's analysis and recommendations in all these reports are the core assumptions and beliefs we hold, not only about the link between women's rights and resources, but also about what constitutes and produces the conditions for advancing women's rights and gender equality. These are founded in the insights and lessons that have emerged from the dedicated and innovative work of women's rights activists and movements over the past half a century worldwide. These are not rigid, immutable positions or uniform, universal prescriptions – as an international organization, with institutional and individual members from over 150 countries, we are particularly aware that the dynamics and manifestations of gender inequality, and its intersection with a range of other power structures (based on identities, economic power, location, and historical factors), are highly contextual. Following are the eight core propositions that inform the analysis and framing of this series of research reports:

**Our first proposition** is that gender power structures – and substructures – are best transformed through interventions in four key domains:<sup>2</sup>

- i. The internalized beliefs and attitudes of both men and women – what feminists call “consciousness” – where socialization processes from earliest childhood give women and men certain beliefs about their role in society, their power – or powerlessness - as well as their rights, privileges, and responsibilities.
- ii. The social and cultural norms that uphold and “normalize” gendered differences in access to resources, power, privilege, opportunities, and responsibilities. These norms are taught overtly in institutions like the family, clan, or tribe, or by religion,

but more subtly reinforced in the school, workplace, or other spaces where the formal rules may in fact advocate gender equality, but the informal practices reinforce gender differences.

- iii. The formal laws, policies, structures and resource allocations that come through governments, law enforcement machinery, and regional and global multilateral institutions, where gender biases are often subtly embedded, or again, practiced informally.
- iv. Access to material and knowledge resources, as well as to rights and opportunities – this includes not only resources like land or employment or credit, but also education, health care, inheritance rights, training opportunities, the right to be in spaces where development agendas and budgets are shaped, and so forth.

We do not believe that women's position in society will change by simply acting in one domain - increasing their formal rights under law, or increasing their access to resources or income, or by changing social norms while internalized beliefs and formal laws and policies remain unchanged. Interventions towards gender equality and women's rights must somehow address all these domains of gender power.

**Our second proposition** is that deep, sustainable change for women's rights requires women's collective action and power. “Supply” driven approaches, such as empowering individual women with jobs, education, loans, or access to political office cannot achieve systemic, multi-domain change, though it might improve individual women's quality of life or voice in public affairs. Sustainable change in gender power can only be achieved by “demand” driven approaches, by mobilizing women, building their awareness of their strength and the possibility of change, and mobilizing their collective power to lead and act

together for their vision of a more just social order. In other words, we believe – and indeed, have witnessed - that by building movements of women, with a strong consciousness of the roots of inequality, of social and gender power structures and the mechanisms that sustain and reproduce them, they will work together to seek a wider, deeper, and more sustainable social transformation. This is, in essence, what we mean when we use the term “women’s rights organizing” or the “women’s rights approach”, to distinguish it from the instrumental, “supply” driven, approaches.

**Our third proposition** is that truly transformative change in women’s lives will result in giving them access to the full body of human rights as enshrined in internationally agreed human rights instruments and agreements. We do not believe that access to one set of rights – such as economic equality – will guarantee or necessarily lead to increased access to other rights. We seek a world where the full complement of rights – civil and political, economic, social and cultural - will become lived and experienced realities, not distant norms or inaccessible ideals. This is our vision of the ultimate goal of building women’s collective power, and of the better world that can emerge as a result of supporting women’s rights organizing.

**Our fourth proposition** is that women’s rights and gender equality cannot be left to or brought about by market forces – indeed, there is no evidence that they can, even in countries where neoliberal policies have been in place for decades, and women have become both a major part of the formal workforce or a major segment of the market. Ensuring women’s rights and advancing gender equality must therefore continue to be a priority concern and commitment of state actors, and of multilateral bodies at the international level. States exist because of their citizens, and the protection of the rights of citizens is a primary responsibility of the state. When half their citizenry are, by and large, denied equality in social,

economic and political life, or continue to be targets of gender-based violence, states are the primary duty-bearers for the protection of women’s rights and prosecuting those who deny or violate their rights. As such, state and multilateral institutions must continue to be key targets of our advocacy, and will be held to account for their record on protecting and advancing the rights of their women citizens.

**Our fifth proposition** is that even if states and multilateral actors carry primary responsibility for the protection and promotion of women’s rights and gender equality, the role of newer actors in development – especially the private sector – is shaping and influencing women’s access to their rights, or the violation of these rights, in very important ways that cannot be ignored. We therefore believe that engagement with these new actors by women’s rights organizations and movements is an essential strategy, but in a critical, considered way, that does not result in either cooption or uninformed opposition. We need to educate ourselves about the new realities and range of actors involved in development processes, especially those that deeply affect women, analyze the gendered impacts of these, and take informed positions that include critical engagement to influence these processes in ways that could advance our longer-term agenda.

**Our sixth proposition** is that the fruits of transformative change cannot be taken for granted, but must be defended, preserved, and sustained. Experience shows that even women’s rights victories that were won decades ago are under fresh threat of reversal – such as reproductive choice, access to basic education, freedom of movement. Backlash against women’s advances have emerged not only from traditionalists but from new sources like criminal networks and terrorists distorting religion. Women’s rights organizing and strong women’s movements are an essential bulwark against these forces, and are often the only force fighting to protect past gains.

**Our seventh proposition** is that these kinds of collective change processes for long-term social transformation in favour of gender equality cannot be built without resources, and hence our deep concern with the availability of resources for women’s rights organizing and movement building. We recognize that many of the most successful women’s movements in the world are largely self-resourced and financially autonomous – but the organizations that helped build these movements are not! They have all been supported by farsighted donors, governments, and philanthropists, and allowed to find the best pathways to change. Supporting such initiatives, in a world where wealth is being increasingly concentrated, and income disparities are increasing, is a broader social responsibility and an ethical imperative. We therefore believe that all those who proclaim their concern with advancing a more just, equitable and sustainable world, and particularly those who are currently advocating “investing in women and girls”, have a responsibility to resource women’s rights organizing in appropriate ways and with serious money. They have a responsibility to invest in women’s rights organizing. We challenge the myth that this approach doesn’t deserve serious financial support because it is too slow – if we consider that patriarchy and its institutions are at least ten thousand years old, then the kind of changes that women’s rights organizations and movements create in a matter of five or ten years must be seen as occurring at lightning speed!

**Our eighth and final proposition** is that mobilizing more resources for women’s rights organizing and the longer-term struggle for gender equality is a collective responsibility. It should not be entirely up to women’s rights organizations and movements, or other social justice movements, to convince others to invest in and support their work. It is also the responsibility of states, of the private sector, and of other actors from the donor community who wish to advance human rights and social justice, to learn what works best in creating sustainable

results, and invest not only in the quick-return projects, but in the more difficult but transformative work on the roots of injustice. We believe that the current distortions in access to resources for women’s rights groups is not the result of willful neglect, prejudice or discrimination, but a lack of information and understanding of the issues at stake. We believe it is our role to help fill this gap, which is what this report and its sister publications hope to do. We believe it is our responsibility to help catalyze more informed conversations between all the concerned actors, and we hope that publications such as this will help us all move forward in that direction.

With this background to the analysis presented here, we invite you to read and ponder the information, ideas and analysis in this report, and to use it to launch new conversations. We also hope you will share with us your feedback and ideas, to help enrich and inform our future work.

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<sup>1</sup> Strikingly well-analyzed most recently by Deniz Kandiyoti in her “Fear and fury: women and post-revolutionary violence”, 14 January 2013, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/deniz-kandiyoti/fear-and-fury-women-and-post-revolutionary-violence>

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from the Gender at Work matrix first articulated by Rao, Aruna and David Kelleher, “Is there Life After Mainstreaming?” *Gender and Development: Mainstreaming – A Critical Review*, 13.2 Oxfam UKI (July 2005)

We have seen that the global struggle for women’s rights and gender equality over the past century has been extraordinarily transformative in terms of the deep tectonic shifts it has created in the social terrain, but has never quite received an equivalent share of public recognition or financial investment. Indeed, AWID’s “Where is the Money for Women’s Rights?” research studies\* have demonstrated that even today, financial support falls far short of meeting political commitments to gender equality, and there is a decline in funding for women’s rights organizations and movements accompanied by rising investments in more instrumentalist programs targeting “women and girls”.

One factor that may have contributed to this scenario is that women’s rights organizations and movements have not been able to present their achievements in a compelling, aggregate form, showing how their collective impact is far greater than their individual results. This is not because there is a lack of concrete evidence. Donors, for one, have increasingly emphasized results and performance assessment, and have amassed qualitative and quantitative data at an individual organization or project level, but have not analyzed this information to create a historic or integrated picture of what their partners or grantees have achieved as a whole. It is only recently, therefore, that any kind of comprehensive analysis or strong evidence-based analysis has been done to show that it is organizations and movements with a feminist approach and strong focus on women’s rights that have made the difference in advancing longer-term transformative change in favor of gender equality.<sup>3</sup> On the flip side, feminist and women’s organizations and movements themselves have not had the resources, capacity, space or mechanisms to build this kind of aggregate picture of their successes. They are overwhelmed by the plethora of other priorities and struggles they are engaged in – raising funds for organizational survival, fighting backlash, and sustaining their achievements, such as ensuring that the commitment to gender equality remains on the world’s agenda.

One such effort was around the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (hereafter, MDGs). The third goal, or MDG3, to “**promote gender equality and empower women**”, was important but hardly path-breaking, and many feminist advocates around the world – including AWID – were critical of MDG3, since it constituted a significant reduction and dilution of many of the key agreements on gender equality and women’s rights that they had fought for and won in the previous decades. Nevertheless, the absence of any development goal focused on the already negotiated human rights of women would have been worse.

\* [www.awid.org/Library/Watering-the-Leaves-Starving-the-Roots](http://www.awid.org/Library/Watering-the-Leaves-Starving-the-Roots)



Even as the MDGs became a reality, it was clear that none of them were likely to be achieved unless the world's rich nations, and bilateral, multilateral and private funding agencies, committed serious resources to their realization. This was particularly true for MDG3, since AWID's research had shown that funding for gender equality and women's rights was ridiculously inadequate, and had shrunk significantly since 2000, when the MDGs were launched.<sup>4</sup> Our research also showed that women's rights organizations, key players in the eradication of gender inequality, had nowhere near the quantum of resources and consistent funding support that such transformative work requires.

## What are the MDGs?

The "MDGs" are the eight Millennium Development Goals that member states of the United Nations set for themselves in 2000, to be achieved by 2015:

- 1 Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger;
- 2 Achieving universal primary education;
- 3 Promoting gender equality and empowering women;
- 4 Reducing child mortality rates;
- 5 Improving maternal health;
- 6 Combating HIV and AIDS, malaria, and other diseases;
- 7 Ensuring environmental sustainability, and
- 8 Developing a global partnership for development.




It was therefore a ray of light when the Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation dedicated EUR 70 million in 2008 to an “MDG3 Fund” to improve the position of women worldwide. A late extension of the Fund took the total amount awarded to EUR 82 million. This is the single largest fund ever created for gender equality, and targeting women’s rights and civil society organizations, in the history of development cooperation. Through a rigorous and open competition, 45 projects from as many organizations / networks / funds from around the world<sup>5</sup> were awarded grants in 2008 for a variety of initiatives aimed at reducing violence against women, enhancing women’s economic independence and property and inheritance rights, and increasing participation and representation of women in politics and public administration. Although the Fund was framed around the MDG3, the thematic areas supported by the Dutch Fund were far more comprehensive. The grants were awarded initially for a period of three years, but ultimately extended until the end of 2011, making the grant cycle nearly four years.

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## Rationale for learning from a historic experiment

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The MDG3 Fund was nothing short of historic not only due to the unique scale of the resources it made available for women’s rights but also the importance it gave to women’s issues, and the signal it sent out that the situation of women not only matters, but is crucial to the eradication of poverty and social discrimination. It also made a historic investment in women’s rights organizations — of the 45 grants awarded, 34 went to women’s rights organizations or women’s funds operating with a strong rights-based approach. We, at AWID, celebrated the launch of the Fund and were delighted to be one of its recipients. More importantly though, we felt it was vital that the changes catalyzed by this injection of resources to women’s organizations, be tracked and captured in order to effectively speak to the difference that such resources can make. In a gathering of over half of the Fund grantees (organized by AWID in cooperation with the Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation in June 2010), there was a strong consensus that this was not merely the responsibility of the Ministry and the Fund managers. As recipients of the resources, a collective assessment would have enormous power and utility for all those committed to advancing women’s rights. Most of all, we felt that the Fund presented a historic opportunity to demonstrate the aggregate impact of the work supported — to analyze what was achieved collectively, by all the grant recipients, cutting across organization, project, location, issue, and strategy. We felt it was time to show that such an investment in women’s rights could achieve something far more significant than the sum of its projects.



These were not 45 organizations and initiatives chosen at random. Rather, given the rigour of the Ministry’s selection process, the majority of the organizations had a strong track record of women’s rights work, from grassroots to global level. The learning they would generate over the grant period would make a meaningful contribution to strengthening and advancing women’s rights. It would be a great pity if the shifts in knowledge, practice, and social relations wrought by these projects, individually and collectively, were not analyzed at an aggregate level. The Fund provided a unique chance to gather and integrate the learning from these 45 organizations into a set of far-reaching insights about how women can make change happen, and on how that change is advancing the larger global goals of sustainable development, human rights, and social justice. Such a process would not only contribute to the world’s knowledge and practice for advancing gender equality and women’s rights, but it would also create a far more powerful advocacy tool for renewing and replenishing the Fund. It would also make the case with concrete evidence to other donors to invest in feminist and women’s rights organizations and movements on a scale that they have never done so far.

AWID’s aims were fortunately shared by the Gender Equality Department of the Ministry for Development Cooperation of the Government of the Netherlands. They, along with a significant number of the other women’s organizations that received Fund grants, actively supported and empowered AWID to take on the task of initiating the collective learning and aggregate analysis process.

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<sup>3</sup> See for instance Htun, Mala and S. Laurel Weldon, “The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence Against Women in Global Perspective 1975 – 2000”, in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 106, No. 3, August 2012, pp 548 – 569, where the authors conclude that the autonomous mobilization of feminists in domestic and transnational contexts—not leftist parties, women in government, or national wealth—is the critical factor accounting for policy change [on VAW]. Further, our analysis reveals that the impact of global norms on domestic policy making is conditional on the presence of feminist movements in domestic contexts, pointing to the importance of ongoing activism and a vibrant civil society.

<sup>4</sup> Clark, et al. *Assessing Resources and the Role of Donors in the Promotion of Women’s Rights and the Support of Women’s Organizations*. Toronto: AWID. 2006. Web. 12 November 2013; and Kerr, Joanna. *The Second FundHer Report: Financial Sustainability for Women’s Movements Worldwide*, Toronto: AWID. 2007. Web. 12 November 2013 <http://www.awid.org/Library/Where-is-the-Money-for-Women-s-Rights>

<sup>5</sup> The funds were distributed as follows: 35% - projects in Africa; 14% - projects in Latin America; 8% - projects in Asia; and 7% - projects in the Middle East and North Africa; the remaining 29% went to transnational / global projects.

## Phase 1: Survey & Dialogue on the Fund's M&E Challenges

The process began in late 2009, with a survey to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation (hereafter M&E) frameworks being used to track and assess the impact of various Fund-supported projects. Given common challenges with dominant M&E frameworks,<sup>6</sup> we wanted to examine the Fund's M&E systems and indicators. Our capacity to share and aggregate learning about advancing women's rights and the larger social impact of the Fund, would only be as good as the Fund's M&E frameworks and tools. Thus, AWID undertook the task of organizing a Dialogue meeting in June 2010 between MDG3 Fund grantees, and the Dutch Ministry and Fund administrators. The aim was to help strengthen the Fund's M&E process and address any challenges being faced by the grantees in this context. The meeting was a watershed in creating an open and honest dialogue between the grantees, the Ministry, and the Fund managers, resulting in the resolution of several issues and tensions that had arisen. It also fostered goodwill towards AWID as an honest and trusted "broker," laying the foundations for our subsequent aggregate analysis survey at the end of the Fund cycle.

## Phase 2: Harvesting Preliminary Achievements ("Nuggets")

Another outcome of the Dialogue meeting was the formation of a task force of five MDG3 Fund grantees to support the Ministry's efforts to renew the Fund. This group worked closely with AWID to generate a set of preliminary big-picture insights in relation to what had been achieved with Fund support (called the "Nuggets"). AWID harvested these "nuggets" at the end of 2010 into a short advocacy document. The Ministry used data from this document, as well as other evidence from Fund grantees, to push for a renewal of the Fund. Their efforts were reinforced by the strong lobbying by Dutch feminists and women's rights advocates such as WO=MEN.<sup>7</sup> Together they successfully convinced the Dutch Parliament to allocate some additional funding to the MDG3 Fund for its last year of operations (EUR 12 million for 2011, which were given as short project extensions to most grantees) and, more importantly, to renew the Fund. The new Fund, renamed *FLOW* or Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women, was launched in 2012 with a budget of EUR 90 million. The budget was disbursed to 34 organizations for projects focusing on security, economic self-reliance, and political participation in more than 100 countries. This included 17 organizations that had already received the MDG3 Fund.

## Phase 3: Aggregate Analysis of the MDG3 Fund's Role and Impact

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Between 2010-2011, AWID staff conducted in-depth interviews with a select group of MDG3 Fund grantees to begin probing any key achievements, any challenges faced, results of any evaluations conducted concerning Fund-supported work, and any identifiable advantages of the MDG3 Fund as they related to their specific work. These interviews provided valuable insights about both the Fund's unique strengths, as well as how the grantees' contributions to change needed to be assessed at an aggregate level.

The final part of this two-year long process is the substance of this report – the analysis of the combined impact of the MDG3 Fund grants – which was accomplished using a two-pronged strategy:

1. Desk research comprising review of the final narrative reports submitted by the grantees to the Dutch Ministry and any evaluation reports shared by respondents with AWID; and
2. A survey of the 45 Fund recipients, to which 35 organizations responded.

The questionnaire utilized for the survey is presented in Appendix (i) of this report. Out of our 35 respondents, 25 are women's rights organizations (including the women's funds), and the rest are development organizations and policy centres with strong gender equality programs. This represents a very high response rate of nearly 78%, or over three-fourths of the entire group, making the results presented here highly significant from a statistical point of view. The AWID team scrutinized each completed questionnaire, coded the responses, entered, processed, and analyzed the data.

The results of AWID's aggregate analysis study are presented in this report. The data is drawn largely from the responses to our survey questionnaire, but also supplemented, as and when necessary, from information provided in the final narrative reports and SMART data that grantees submitted to the Ministry and voluntarily shared with us. As far as possible, the report uses the words of the grantees themselves in describing achievements, challenges, and why they believe the Fund enabled them to do so much in such a short space of time.

We believe that these results make a strong case for why investing resources in women's rights work, and particularly in feminist and women's rights organizations and movements, is one of the most effective and critical pathways to achieve gender equality, in both the short and long-term.

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<sup>6</sup> Batliwala, S. and A. Pittman, *Capturing Change in Women's Realities: A Critical Overview of Current Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks and Approaches* 2010. Web. 24 October 2013. <http://www.awid.org/About-AWID/AWID-News/Capturing-Change-in-Women-s-Realities>

<sup>7</sup> WO=MEN is the autonomous Dutch gender platform that brings together individuals and institutions committed to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, by influencing public policy, exchanging knowledge and information, and mobilizing and networking supporters. WO=MEN has been instrumental in maintaining Dutch support for gender equality work worldwide at a time when many other Northern countries have reduced development assistance for this area of work.

# I. Profile of the Survey Participants

Of the 45 organizations that received support through the MDG3 Fund, 35 participated in this aggregate analysis survey.

## Box 1: Who they were

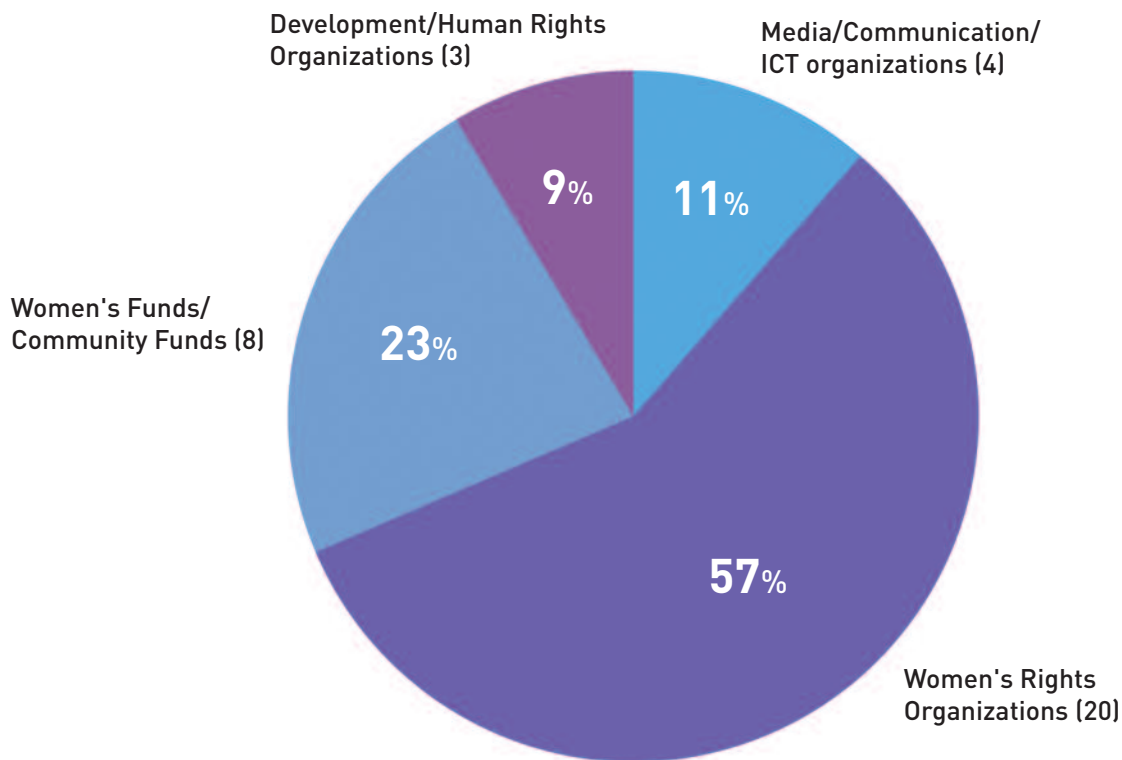
- 1 **APC** (Association for Progressive Communications)
- 2 **AWDF** (African Women's Development Fund)
- 3 **AWANICH** (African Women's Active Nonviolence Initiatives for Social Change)
- 4 **Calandria** (Asociación de Comunicadores Sociales Calandria)
- 5 **AWID** (Association for Women's Rights in Development)
- 6 **Breakthrough**
- 7 **Casa de la Mujer**
- 8 **CLADEM** (Comité de América Latina y el Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de las Mujeres)
- 9 **CREA** (Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action)
- 10 **FCAM** (Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres / Central American Women's Fund)
- 11 **FIDA Kenya** (Federation of Women Lawyers)
- 12 **FGHR** (Fund for Global Human Rights)
- 13 **Gender Links**
- 14 **Global Fund for Women**
- 15 **The Huairou Commission**
- 16 **IAWJ** (International Association of Women Judges)
- 17 **IPS** (Inter Press Service)
- 18 **Isis- WICCE** (Isis- Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange)
- 19 **JASS** (Just Associates)
- 20 **Kvinna till Kvinna** (Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation)
- 21 **MIFUMI** (The MIFUMI Project)
- 22 **LAC** (Legal Assistance Centre)
- 23 **Nobel Women's Initiative**
- 24 **OWFI** (Organization for Women's Freedom in Iraq)
- 25 **Puntos de Encuentro**
- 26 **SAfAIDS** (Southern Africa HIV and AIDS Information Dissemination Service)
- 27 **Semillas** (Sociedad Mexicana Pro Derechos de la Mujer / Mexican Women's Rights Fund)
- 28 **UAF Africa** (Urgent Action Fund Africa)
- 29 **Trust Africa**
- 30 **V-Day Egypt / Karama**
- 31 **WIEGO** (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing & Organizing)
- 32 **WILDAF** (Women in Law and Development in Africa)
- 33 **WIGJ** (Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice)
- 34 **WLP** (Women's Learning Partnership)
- 35 **WLUML** (Women Living Under Muslim Laws)

It is useful to get a glimpse of the kinds of organizations that received the MDG3 Fund, and specifically, the nature of the organizations that participated in our survey, as shown in Figure 1. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of our total respondents (20 or 57%), and indeed, the majority of the recipients of the Fund - were women's rights organizations.

We define women's rights organizations as those that have been set up with the specific objective of advancing women's rights and gender equality, and generally founded and led by women activists and leaders. Women's funds and community funds or re-granting organizations, which mobilize and channel resources for gender equality and/or poverty alleviation and development work, were the next largest group – comprising 23% of our sample (eight organizations). These were followed by media and communications organizations (four organizations), and development/human rights organizations with a strong focus on gender equality (three organizations).

Figure 1: Who they were

N=35

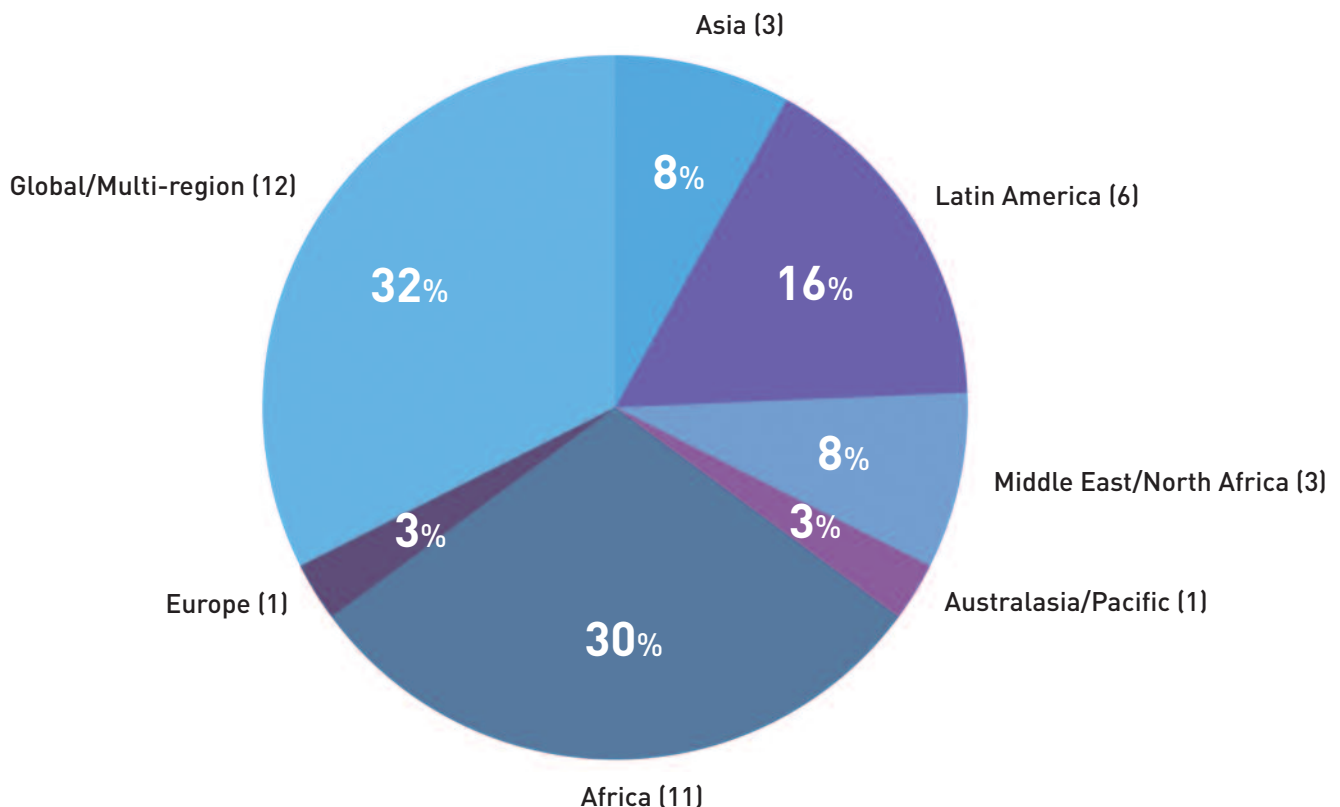


## Where the Work Was Done

Figure 2 illustrates the wide coverage achieved by the Fund grantees, and also some of its unevenness. The chart represents the regions in which grantees did their work, rather than where their offices are located. We see that the largest group of respondents – 12 or 32% – were organizations whose work cut across regions or was at the global level.<sup>8</sup> The highest regional density of organizations was from Africa, accounting for 30% (11) of our sample, followed by organizations working in Latin America (6 or 16%), Asia (3), and the Middle East and North Africa (3). Europe and the Australia/Pacific region accounted for one organization each.

N=35

Figure 2: Where the work was done

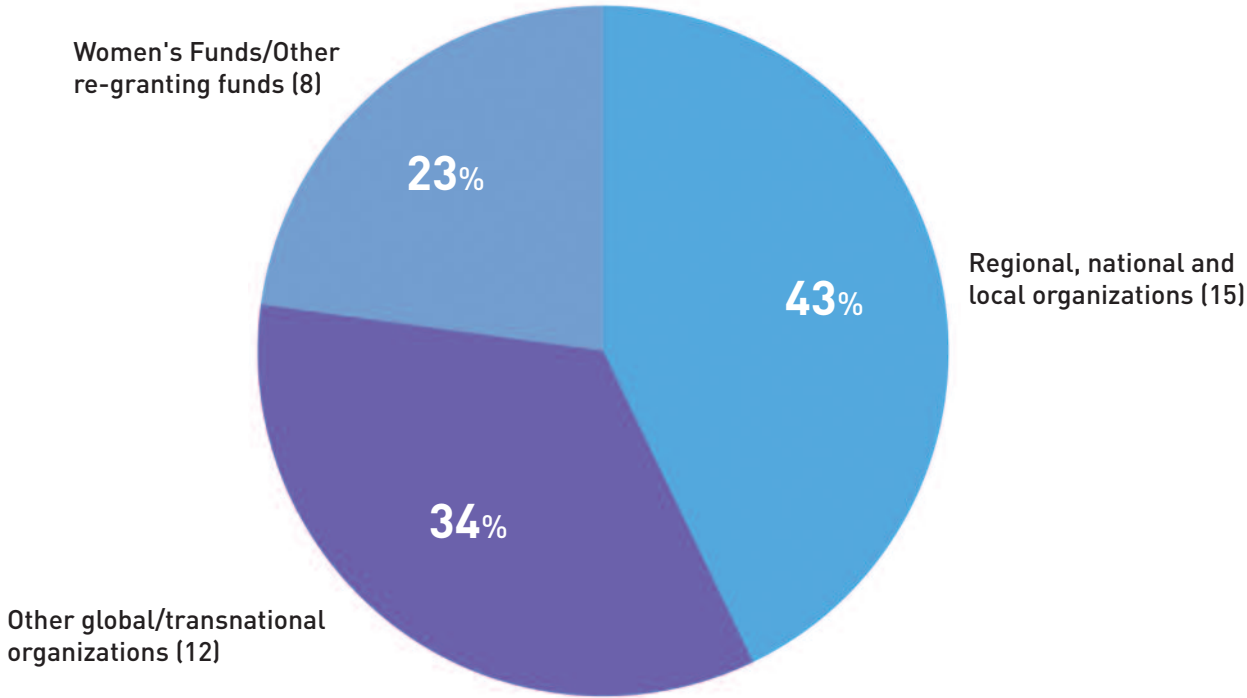




The “global/multi-regional” category includes global organizations like AWID, or WIEGO, but also organizations like Women’s Learning Partnership, Women Living under Muslim Laws, the Huairou Commission, and Association for Progressive Communications, whose work took place in multiple countries across several regions of the world. This is a unique feature of the Fund – supporting several organizations whose mission and advocacy work is at a regional or global level, or who work across different regions and contexts. The recognition of the value and importance of transnational strategies for advancing gender equality at a time when many donors are narrowly focused on the “local”, and on “real grassroots women” is a commendable feature of the Fund. We currently live in a world where the impacts of policy decisions and market fluctuations are felt even in the remotest corners of the world, and the dividing line between the local and global has been completely blurred.

Figure 3: Re-granting organizations supported

N=35



Another significant aspect of the Fund's strategy was the large number of re-granting organizations, including women's funds that were supported. This ensured that its impact would multiply manifold and reach thousands of other organizations, including small grassroots women's groups. Nearly a quarter of all the respondents in our survey fell into this category, and they represent a significant proportion of the total sample - as depicted in Figure 3.

Overall, the very strategic way that the Fund distributed its resources shows an appreciation for what women's movements have understood for years: in order to make a lasting impact on gender equality and to seriously advance women's rights, we need organizations, movements, and strategies at multiple geo-political, strategic, and policy levels. We need alliances and coordinated efforts that cut across all the traditional divides.

The results of the aggregate analysis survey will demonstrate why this diverse mix of local and global organizations, with the strong preponderance of women's rights organizations in particular, was able to achieve so much in the short time span of four years. It is quite possible that this mix achieved far more than if the MDG3 Fund resources had been invested in only one type of organization, working at just one site or level at which gender inequality and women's oppression occurs.

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<sup>8</sup> Organizations that worked in three regions or more were classified as "multi-regional"; those that worked in two regions were counted in both the regions, giving rise to a numeric total of that is slightly higher than our sample size of 35 organizations.

## II. The Big Mountains that Moved

Let us begin by looking at the extraordinary reach and coverage achieved by our 35 organizations in a little less than four years.

### Box 2: The extensive aggregate impact of MDG3-funded interventions

1. Fund-supported initiatives **reached 165 countries in seven continents/ sub-continents and 15 regions of the world;**
2. In these diverse locations, **224,773,550 people gained a new awareness of women's rights**, including new messages and analyses about the roots of gender inequality and gender-based violence, and an understanding that advancing gender equality is everyone's responsibility, as well as an essential component of creating more just and equitable societies;
3. The above figure includes **65,558,977 grassroots women across the world who gained a new awareness of their rights**, and especially their right to freedom from violence, equality under law, equal right to private and public resources, and equal voice and participation in public and private decision-making;
4. In order to assert and claim these rights, **230,266 women were empowered, trained and provided with concrete tools, knowledge, skills, and support;**
5. Much of this was made possible because **105,304 women's organizations** – most of them small and grassroots-based – **were strengthened and provided with new and greater capacity tools** for their work;
6. These changes were further facilitated by the fact that **3,662 women's organizations** – again, most were small, community or grassroots-based and under-resourced – **were provided with more financial resources to strengthen or expand their work;**
7. **Local governments in 38 cities/towns/provinces were influenced** and newly capacitated to re-assess, **strengthen, and improve their gender equality programs and outcomes;**
8. **National governments of 46 countries were influenced and enabled to strengthen their gender equality policies and programs;**
9. **Fourteen different international norms, policies, and instruments were influenced to better advance women's rights**, including some of the "last-mile" work for ensuring the signing of the ILO Convention on Domestic Work adopted in 2011.

These indicators and the information used to assess them came from studying our survey data and the final reports of the survey participants. Let us examine each of these aggregate achievements in more detail.

## 1. Fund-supported initiatives reached 165 countries in seven continents/sub-continent and 15 regions of the world

Figure 4 provides a quick visual glimpse of the remarkable geographic coverage of the work supported by the MDG3 Fund – marked in pink – and a full list of countries reached is provided in Appendix (ii):

### Figure 4: Countries reached / worked In

Pink = Countries reached / worked In

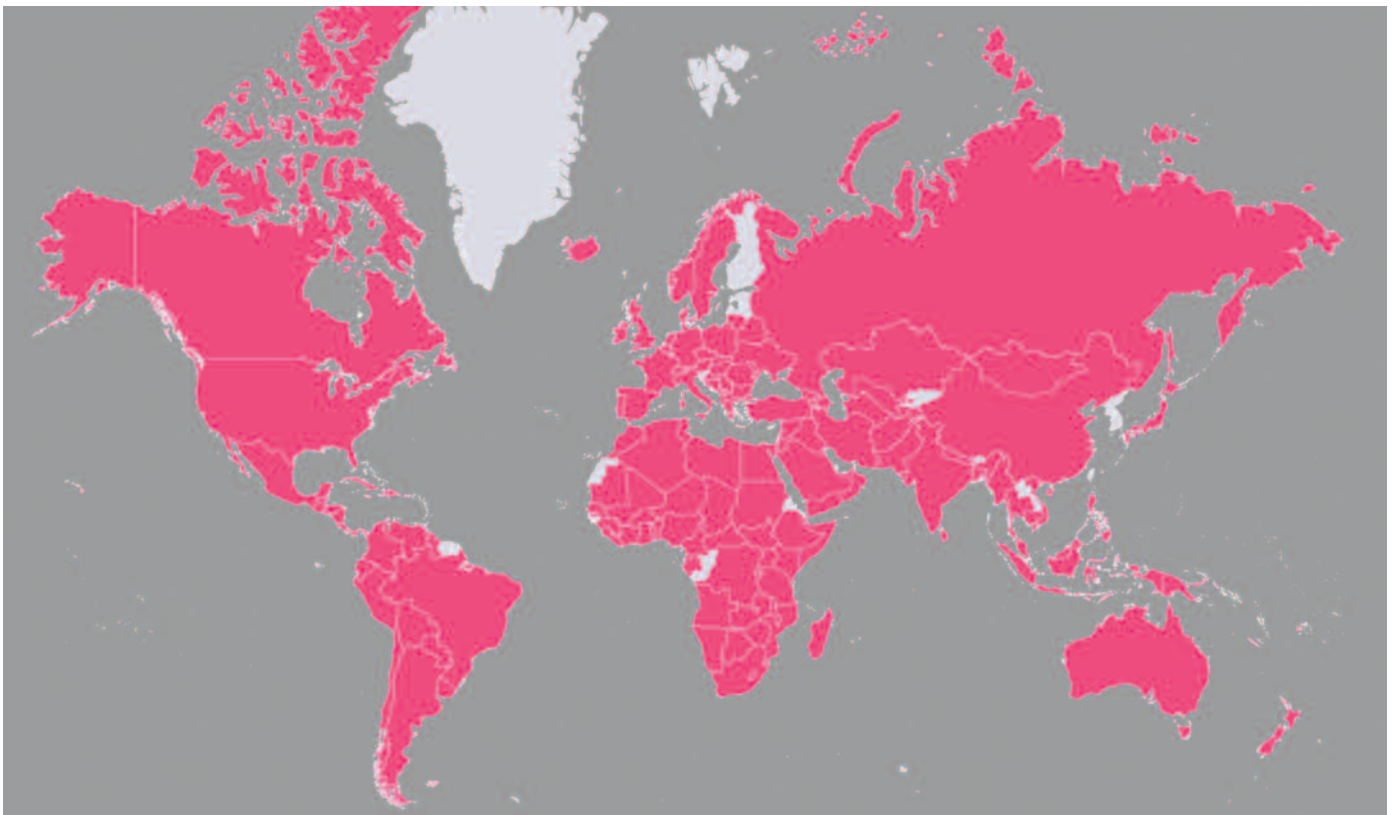
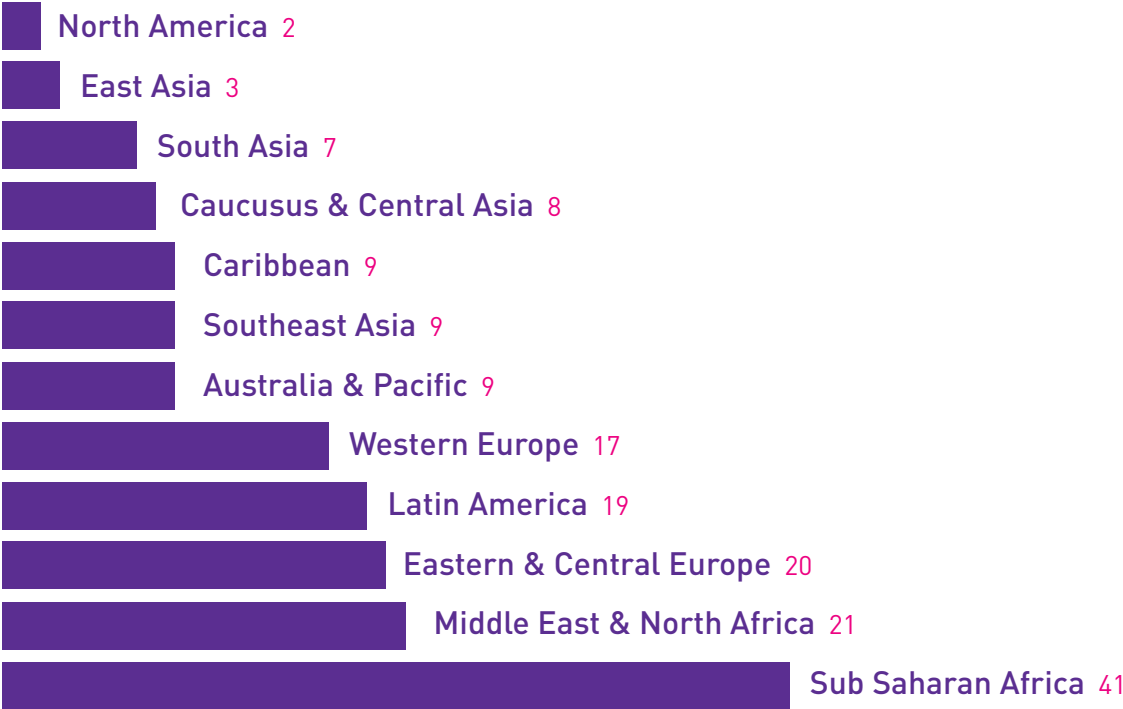


Figure 5 shows the number of countries reached in each region. The high proportion of countries reached in Europe can lead to incorrect conclusions if not explained. Two factors contribute to the place of both Western and Eastern and Central Europe in our regional distribution: the fact that global membership organizations like AWID have a large number of members across Europe – all of whom were reached by AWID’s fund-supported work such as: AWID’s women’s rights information bulletins and newsletters, the AWID Forum, and dissemination of a wide range of AWID’s publications. The work of other grantees like Kvinna till Kvinna and WIGJ among others, engaged marginalized women or allies and institutions (such as the International Court of Criminal Justice) within Europe. It must be clear, therefore, that the work in a region like Europe does not represent a diversion of Fund resources to affluent European women, but in fact went towards the larger movement-building agendas that the MDG3 Fund supported. It should also be noted that even if AWID’s data were to be omitted from the list of countries and regions, one would still have a remarkable number of 123 countries reached by the other MDG3 Fund grantees, and the continents, sub-continents, and regions reached would remain unaffected.

Figure 5: Number of countries reached by region

N=165



## 2. Millions of people gained a new awareness of women's rights


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The sheer size of the population reached through Fund-supported work – nearly 225 million people – was a result of the large number of projects that used either mass mobilization strategies or mass media to disseminate new messages about women's rights and gender equality, and to challenge popular stereotypes and gender-biased beliefs. Breakthrough, for example, trained thousands of community-based NGOs and volunteer activists for its “Bell Bajao”/“Ring the Bell” campaign, which used both mass mobilization and a multi-media strategy to reach over 130,000,000 people in India with new messages questioning the acceptance of domestic violence against women, and encouraging people to act whenever they heard or witnessed such violence. Similarly, Casa de la Mujer launched the multi-media campaign entitled “Violence Against Women Does Not Make You a Champion,” which played on the adulation of football players in Colombia. The campaign reached about 50 million people. Puntos de Encuentro reached millions across Central America through its controversial, yet popular TV shows such as “Contracorriente” and “Sexto Sentido,” and OWFI reached hundreds of thousands with its feminist radio station in Iraq. There was also a cascading effect in terms of awareness-building given that many Fund-supported organizations supported or partnered with hundreds of other organizations who would in turn reach thousands of people within their constituencies with new or stronger messages in relation to gender discrimination, violence against women, and women's rights to equality in all spheres of life. For example, the Global Fund for Women's partners involved in their “Breaking Through” project reached nearly half a million women, men, boys and girls.

## 3. Millions of grassroots women gained a greater awareness of their rights

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Fund-supported organizations raised the consciousness of over 65 million grassroots women to recognize their subordination and exclusion, through a myriad of strategies, including but not limited to the mass media and mobilization campaigns mentioned above. Some, like Casa de la Mujer, CREA, CLADEM, JASS, the Huairou Commission's members, MIFUMI, WILDAF, SAfAIDS, LAC, and FCAM, GFW, AWDF, and Trust Africa's partners worked with large groups of women in diverse locations, using intensive awareness-building methodologies, to question and challenge social



norms and the acceptance of cultural justifications for unacceptable violations of their rights. WLUML's "Violence is Not Our Culture" campaign, Casa de la Mujer's work with victims of violence in the context of the armed conflict in Colombia, and CREA's "Count Me In" campaign against son preference in India, symbolize some of the many different strategies that were used to help women question, challenge, and think about themselves as subjects and bearers of rights. A large number of these women have also been provided with leadership training and skills in order to transform their new-found awareness and become active agents who mobilize others around to change a specific agenda. In this manner, the newly gained awareness may have an increased lasting effect.

#### **4. Hundreds of thousands of women empowered to assert their rights**

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While awareness of one's rights is an important first step, it does not automatically enable women to claim or assert those rights. Awareness must be accompanied by the confidence, capacity, skills, resources, and most importantly, support systems that help women make safe and appropriate choices about how to claim rights or seek justice when those rights have been violated. It means gaining knowledge of legal provisions, of how to navigate the biases and even violence of duty bearers like the police, of customary institutions, and/or of the formal justice system. It may also mean choosing one's battles based on the opportunity costs involved in different routes to redress. The wide range of training, capacity-building, and support programs and services provided by many of our survey respondents are a recognition of these realities, and they have enabled hundreds of thousands of women – including women human rights defenders and women in conflict and post-conflict situations – to claim their rights and seek prosecution of offenders in different ways. Organizations like IAWJ, CALANDRIA, AWID, Casa de la Mujer, CREA, FIDA Kenya, Isis-WICCE, JASS, Kvinna till Kvinna, Puntos de Encuentro, SAfAIDS, Semillas' indigenous women partner organizations, WILDAF, and WIGJ have made significant contributions to this achievement, and have left a lasting legacy of empowered women who can defend their own and their sisters' rights.


## 5. Thousands of women's rights organizations strengthened

The long-term sustainability of women's empowerment work depends, to a great extent, on the existence and capacity of women's organizations dedicated to the gender equality agenda. Studies have shown that women's rights organizations make a difference when it comes to outcomes like reducing gender-based violence or advancing more gender-sensitive norms and policies at the national and international levels.<sup>9</sup> The work of most of the MDG3 Fund grantees has contributed precisely to this goal, and thus by proxy, to the longer-term sustainability of the women's rights agenda. Women's organizations have been strengthened either through direct capacity-building interventions, or through training and knowledge tools, and networking and alliance-building opportunities. As a result, over 100,000 women's organizations in almost every corner of the globe have improved their leadership, knowledge base, management systems, awareness of larger policies and their impacts. They have also gained access to new tools and skills in: analysis, communications, advocacy, and most of all, networking with others and participating in larger campaigns and processes that promote change. Organizations like Karama, AWANICH, AWID, BREAKTHROUGH, Casa de la Mujer, Calandria, FCAM, MIFUMI, WIGJ, JASS, WLP, Nobel Women's Initiative, Puntos de Encuentro, and Semillas have contributed enormously to this aggregate achievement – one which we believe will have an impact long after the Fund.

## 6. Thousands of women's rights organizations resourced

AWID's own path-breaking research on the declining resource base of women's rights organizations has credibly established the struggle faced by the vast majority of such organizations, and particularly by those that are small and grassroots-based.<sup>10</sup> Our research has also found that organizations using strategies that are less favourable in the eyes of donors - like awareness-raising, feminist popular education, and movement-building - are even less able to meet their resource needs. This is due to the fact that such approaches are considered too "slow," or don't deliver time-bound "results" or concrete, measurable "outputs" and "outcomes." As has been analyzed elsewhere,<sup>11</sup> there is an increasing focus on instrumental and "magic wand" approaches like micro-credit. However, there is growing evidence that these do not automatically lead to women's empowerment or more transformative





social changes.<sup>12</sup> Having said this, the MDG3 Fund is to be congratulated for supporting a wide variety of approaches that have attempted to deal with the roots of gender power – approaches which women’s movements have long known are the only way to achieve lasting changes in gender relations, and therefore, in gender equality. More importantly, by supporting a number of women’s funds, community foundations, human rights funds, and women’s organizations with re-granting functions, the Fund has helped to channel much needed resources to over 3,600 small, community-based women’s organizations. These organizations have in turn helped amplify the Fund’s impact through critical interventions for grassroots women’s awareness, empowerment, mobilization, and assertion of their rights. Needless to say, these resources must be replenished if the achieved results are to be sustained, intensified, and expanded over time.

## **7. Local and national governments influenced and capacitated to strengthen their gender equality policies, programs and services**


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While grassroots work by women’s rights organizations/movements and their allies is a critical component of achieving sustainable changes in the social, cultural, and economic conditions that perpetuate inequality, the role of the state as a duty-bearer in protecting and promoting women’s rights cannot be neglected. When women begin to claim their rights, when communities seek to shift cultural norms and practices that mitigate against those rights, backlash and aggressive re-assertion of patriarchal rules are inevitable - as many scholars and activists have noted.<sup>13</sup> Women need strong legal and constitutional frameworks that guarantee equality in order to fall back on. They need the support of institutional mechanisms mandated to protect and promote their search for equality and security. The state and its various agencies have a vital role to play in this context; elected representatives, government officials, and all members of the law enforcement machinery need sensitization alongside stronger and more appropriate tools and frameworks which will help them do their part in the struggle for gender equality. Recognizing this, many Fund grantees have actively collaborated with local bodies, provincial authorities, national governments, and legal machineries to strengthen their policies, programs, and services in support of gender equality. It is a matter of pride to acknowledge that 38 local governments in 36 countries,<sup>14</sup> and national governments in 48 countries have been actively engaged,<sup>15</sup> equipped, and influenced to advance gender equality goals.

These advocacy processes include many exciting examples: CALANDRIA's work with the local government authorities of the Huancavelica province of Peru to develop a gender equality diagnostic tool, baseline data on violence against women, and a province-level plan for promoting equal opportunity and reducing violence against women. The Huairou Commission's members in Peru, Uganda, Kenya, Nicaragua, India, Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, Nepal and Korea have worked to promote grassroots women's voices and participation in local planning and decision-making bodies. FIDA Kenya intervened successfully to integrate principles of affirmative action, equality, and non-discrimination in Kenya's 2010 Constitution, as well as drafting and reviewing a new set of Family Bills that would empower women, including the Matrimonial Property Bill, Marriage Bill, and Family Protection Bill. In Colombia, Casa de la Mujer, in collaboration with its allies, successfully enabled a national program of stronger measures for the protection of women leaders and human rights defenders facing violence from armed groups, and rehabilitation measures for their past victims. SAfAIDS trained traditional community leaders in Southern Africa on the need to address gender-based violence. Karama's advocacy and leadership capacity building work helped reform electoral law in Libya to ensure close to 20% assembly seats for women. It also helped its partners reform and/or pass at least 11 distinct laws and policies advancing women's rights in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Yemen, Egypt and Syria. And the Global Fund for Human Rights' grantees in the Democratic Republic of Congo worked with 50 women survivors to get the first-ever conviction by a military court for mass rape in Eastern DRC, and their partners in Tunisia helped lift several reservations on CEDAW that that government had.

## **8. Regional bodies and international norms, policies and rights instruments were influenced to better advance women's rights**

Given the number of our survey respondents who worked at the global or transnational level, it is not surprising that one of the major collective achievements of the MDG3 Fund projects was the large number of regional and international bodies and policy processes that were influenced in favour of gender equality. This outcome is again linked, to a great extent, to resources. Many of the early victories of the women's movement globally – such as the inclusion of violence against women as a human rights violation in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, recognizing sexual violence as a form of torture, providing for penalties for the special crimes



against women in war and conflict, advocating for international gender equality norm structures like CEDAW, and engendering the work of the International Criminal Court (ICC) – was partly the result of well-resourced and fairly lengthy engagements with a range of international institutions. Today, however, it is much more difficult to secure resources for such global advocacy work. But the aggregate analysis of the MDG3 Fund’s impact demonstrates why such work is crucial, even if it cannot immediately show the impact it has in the daily lives of women.

Some 14 international norms, policies, and rights instruments to advance gender equality and women’s rights have either been reformed or created through MDG3 Fund-supported work. WIEGO, FCAM’s Central American partners, and GFW’s Asia-Pacific partners used Fund resources to do the critical “last mile” work that ensured adoption of ILO Convention 189 on Domestic Work. This was a huge victory for the international domestic workers movement, which is led by, and comprises, millions of domestic workers from around the world, including migrant women workers in Northern countries. By ensuring the meaningful participation of feminist economists and women’s rights organizations in various economic policymaking forums and development aid discussions, AWID and its partners helped influence their analysis and ensured the inclusion of specific gender equality language in key international processes like the OECD DAC<sup>16</sup> aid effectiveness meetings, the Accra Agenda for Action and the Busan Joint Action Plan on Gender Equality and Development. WIGJ founder and director, Brigid Inder, was appointed Special Gender Advisor to the ICC thanks to WIGJ’s outstanding Fund-supported work in ensuring that the ICC brought gender-based charges in six (out of seven) conflict situations, and in 11 out of 15 cases that were brought to trial. This is the first time in history that gender crimes have been so consistently prosecuted by any international court.

In terms of regional bodies, CLADEM, in partnership with several other human rights organizations, successfully used the Inter American Court of Human Rights to obtain sanctions against the Government of Mexico for their failure to protect eight women who had been sexually tortured and found buried in a cotton field in Ciudad Juarez. They also ensured that the UN Special Rapporteur on Sex Education incorporated the equal educational rights of girls. Karama, in partnership with others, worked successfully with the League of Arab States to constitute an Expert Committee on CEDAW, and to convene the first regional NGO consultation on CEDAW in thirty years. Gender Links successfully influenced the Southern African Development Commission’s Protocol on Gender - the Protocol encompasses commitments made in all regional, global, and continental instruments for achieving gender equality and enhances these instruments by addressing gaps and setting specific measurable

targets where they do not already exist. Just Associates (JASS) worked with both the US State Department and the Inter-American Human Rights Commission to highlight the role of US policy and criminal networks in the increasing number of femicides and attacks on women’s human rights defenders across the Mesoamerican region. A wide range of our respondents also helped improve the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889 - all dealing with women, peace and security.

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- <sup>9</sup> Htun, Mala and S. Laurel Weldon, “The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence Against Women in Global Perspective 1975 – 2000”, in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 106, No. 3, August 2012
- <sup>10</sup> Kerr, Joanna. *The Second FundHer Report: Financial Sustainability for Women’s Movements Worldwide*, Toronto: AWID. 2007. Web. 12 November 2013 <http://www.awid.org/Library/Where-is-the-Money-for-Women-s-Rights>
- <sup>11</sup> See for instance Arutyanova, Angelika “Investing’ in Women’s Rights: Challenges and New Trends”, in *Development*, 2012, 55(3), pp. 305-310
- <sup>12</sup> Mayoux, Linda. “The Magic Ingredient? Microfinance & Women’s Empowerment”, Briefing paper for Micro Credit Summit, Washington DC, Feb. 1997
- <sup>13</sup> See, for instance, the recent analysis by Deniz Kandiyoti, “Fear and fury: women and post-revolutionary violence”, *openDemocracy 50:50*, 14 January 2013. Web. 30 October 2013 <http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/deniz-kandiyoti/fear-and-fury-women-and-post-revolutionary-violence>
- <sup>14</sup> 24 in Africa, 6 in Asia, 5 in Latin America, and 1 in the MENA region
- <sup>15</sup> 19 in Africa, 12 in Asia, 9 in the MENA region, and 8 in Latin America
- <sup>16</sup> The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the 34-member Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The OECD is a consortium of economically advanced countries whose mission is to “promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world.” Read more at <http://www.oecd.org/about/>

# III. Key Achievements

The “Big Picture” laid out in the previous section depicts the meta-image or global impact of the MDG3 Fund - an image we built from data embedded in the respondents’ survey forms and narrative reports. In this section, we present a different vision of the major changes wrought, as seen through the eyes of those who implemented the projects supported by the Fund. This section presents their view of the contributions they were able to make, and the impact they believe they had. We will also help place these achievements in context by analyzing why they matter and how they contribute to the advancement of gender equality and women’s rights. This will be done by building a brief case for how these achievements are connected to the vast body of learning of women’s movements which have taken place over the past four decades, and on how to make real and lasting changes in gender power structures.

It is vital to view the major achievements of the MDG3 Fund recipients presented in this section within the increasingly complex global, regional, and national contexts in which they were carried out. Some of these organizations had to struggle against the rising tides of religious fundamentalisms, war, ethnic conflict, and feudal cultures where the mention of gender equality or women’s rights is anathema, while others worked within political settings where the state is considered to be weak or collapsing – where the rule of law is absent, where there is little or no protection for civil rights, where narco-traffickers and criminal networks are in control. Virtually all the organizations had to deal with rising poverty, economic disparities, and political instability; conditions that inevitably affect women the hardest.

Above all, many of these organizations had to contend with the widespread crisis of femicide – the killing of women who challenge the status quo in any way, and even many who don’t – and particularly, the rising incidence of violence against women human rights defenders (WHRDs). WHRDs is a term coined to define women activists and advocates who work to defend and advance the rights of women and other marginalized groups. It is used to elevate them from being mere “community organizers” or “activists”, and to recognize the value of their roles as both leaders and defenders of human rights.<sup>17</sup> This trend of attacking women who work to defend their own and others’ rights has become so serious that the UN created a Declaration on Human Rights Defenders in 1998.<sup>18</sup> The UN appointed a Special Rapporteur to monitor and intervene in these cases. Thus, the business of working for women’s rights increasingly involves taking real risk and being subjected to danger.

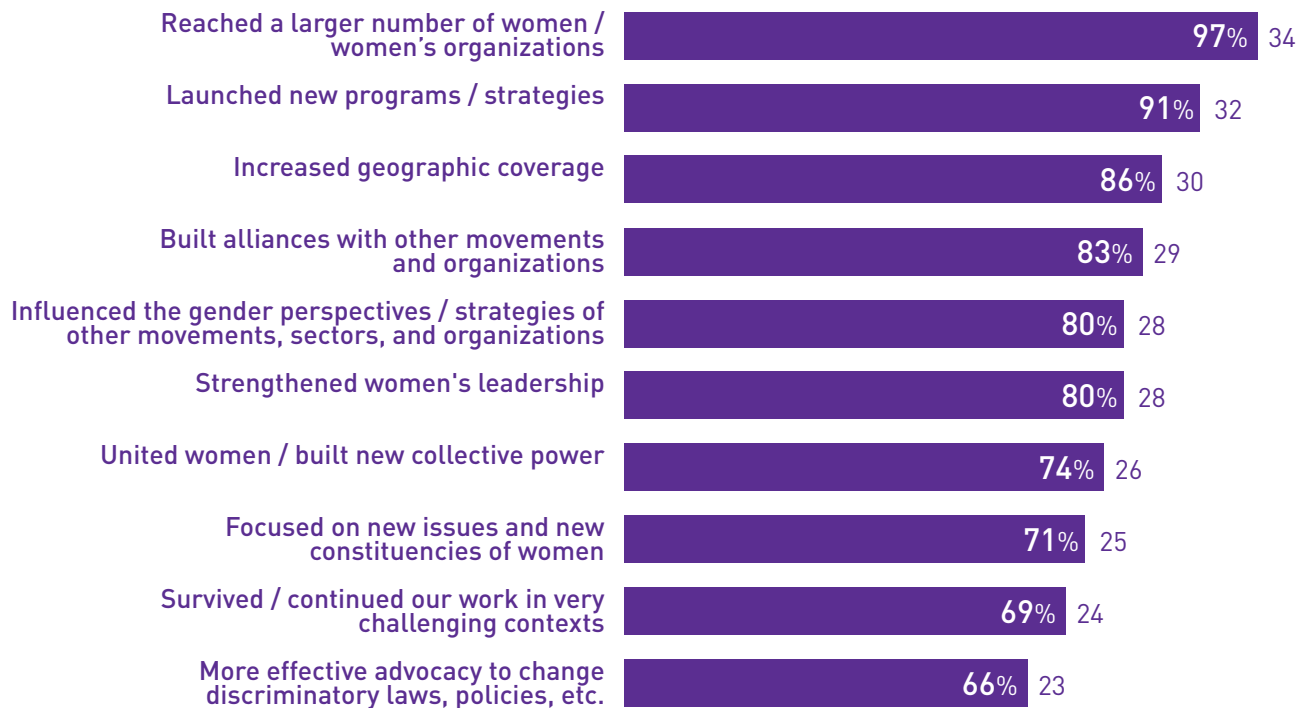
The key achievements made with MDG3 Fund grants must therefore be assessed in light of this incredibly challenging and daunting global context in which they worked. When set against this backdrop, what they achieved in the relatively short space of four years was nothing short of remarkable.


## Top Ten Achievements

Although the top achievements reported in the survey fell into over fifteen different categories, below, we present only those mentioned by at least 50% or more of all the respondents – i.e., the top ten achievements. These are depicted in Figure 6.

N=35

Figure 6: Top ten achievements





Examining this data, we can see that the top achievements reported by MDG3 Fund recipients in our survey fall into four broad categories:

- 1 **Expanded outreach and coverage of their work;**
- 2 **The launch of new programs, strategies, and initiatives;**
- 3 **Building / expanding / strengthening their movements and influencing the gender perspectives and strategies of other movements; and**
- 4 **Advocacy successes, including holding onto past gains and preventing the adoption of policies detrimental to women and other marginalized groups.**

Now, let us examine these achievements in greater detail.

## 1. Expanded outreach and coverage:

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As Figure 6 shows, three of the top ten achievements reported (one, three, and eight) are clearly related to the **scaling up and expanded outreach** that Fund support enabled. This contributed to the huge coverage that we saw in the previous section of this report. Almost all respondents – a staggering 97% – were able to reach a larger number of women, women’s organizations, and communities than in their past work. In addition, 86% increased their geographic coverage by launching programs in new areas, counties, countries and regions. Of the 19 respondents who provided us with more quantified data on the **expansion of their coverage**, 10 reported having increased their coverage/reach by 100% or more. A related achievement reported by 25 respondents, or 71%, was that the Fund enabled them to **reach new constituencies** of women, **work on new women’s rights issues**, and **infuse resources** into a new range of small and under-resourced grassroots women’s organizations – tasks which were not possible earlier. Some concrete examples of this cluster of achievements are demonstrated in Box 3.

These achievements testify to the fact that the *lack of adequate resources* – rather than lack of capacity to absorb and deploy more resources – has been one of the key factors preventing women’s rights organizations and movements from having a greater impact. This data shows that when adequately resourced, women’s organizations and NGOs with a commitment to gender equality can go to scale, mobilize, empower, and organize far more women and unreached constituencies of marginalized women.

### Box 3: Expanded reach and coverage

**AWDF:** Was able to scale up the innovative movement building programme of the African Feminist Forum (AFF).

**AWID:** Greatly increased the reach and use of its women's rights information materials. Subscribership to AWID's trilingual E-newsletters significantly increased by 37% during the MDG3 Fund grant period (from 29,400 in June 2008 to 40,243 in December 2011). Furthermore, page views to awid.org landing pages from June 2008 to December 2011 come to 5,887,016, and as over 90% of our readership shares our links with one or two more contacts, over the past four years, AWID has attained an exponential reach of at least 11,774,032 people throughout the world in English, French and Spanish.

**BREAKTHROUGH:** Partnered with over 100 CBOs/NGOs and trained over 100,000 volunteers at various levels to implement the domestic violence "Ring the Bell" project, which reached over 130 million people in India.

**Casa de la Mujer:** Worked in six difficult-to-reach Colombian provinces seriously affected by armed conflict, strengthened more than 200 grassroots women's organizations, and mobilized the participation of over 3000 Afro-mestizas<sup>19</sup> and indigenous women in their Fund-supported activities.

**Puntos de Encuentro:** The impact of our TV program "Sexto Sentido" and our educational materials went beyond Central America and reached countries like Bolivia, where a consortium of organizations adapted our strategy to put issues related to sexual and reproductive rights in public discussion and debate.

**Gender Links:** Reached 143 local councils and 100 media houses across 14 SADC<sup>20</sup> countries.

**Global Fund for Women:** [We] launched the Breakthrough Project across Asia and the Pacific.... a three-year investment to catalyze strategic, "breakthrough" actions to advance gender equality. In total, over \$2.2 million was awarded to 125 high-impact organizations and networks in 26 countries focused within three critical issues for women and girls: political participation, economic rights and opportunity, and ending violence.

**The Huairou Commission:** Increased awareness of the purpose of the MDG3 Goal amongst community members and local authorities in all communities that the 42 Fund-supported partners worked in.



**Legal Assistance Centre:** We distributed over 1 million cartoons [on legal rights] and have received sustained public feedback.

**Karama:** Built a regional network and broke the isolation of more than 150 national women's NGOs in 13 MENA countries, and succeeded in building a tradition of working together and sharing knowledge across national, regional and international boundaries. Not all of these NGOs were engaged in work to end VAW when we began and even fewer were using international instruments for advocacy. Networking at the regional level was infrequent or nonexistent for many of these NGOs.

**KVINNA:** [The grant] gave us an opportunity to focus on a very important issue we had wanted to address for some time, namely the security and well-being of human rights defenders and their organizations.

**MIFUMI:** Mobilized 107 women's saving groups across the 20 sub-counties in Tororo district of Uganda with a total of 3,910 members. Their savings accumulated to 184,824,100 Uganda Shillings (EUR 57,758).

**SafAIDS:** Used their culture dialogue model and through sharing of GBV information materials, training materials, and training of 34 masters trainers to train 161 other trainers who in turn trained 1,181 CBVs (community based volunteers) who reached close to 1,000,000 people over the duration of the project.

**WIGJ:** The MDG3 Fund grant significantly contributed to the increase in number of our country-based partners (now over 6,000). [Factors such as] persistent country-based partnerships, long term relationships with local groups, investing in offices and officers located within (and drawn from) conflict situations, regular localized strategic and capacity building events, producing resources and material in multiple languages, establishing focal points strategically located in conflict countries, etc.- contributed to this significant expansion in membership and direct partnerships across multiple armed conflicts - all of whom are grassroots women's rights and peace advocates and victims/survivors.

**WLP:** Trained over 6,000 women, men, youth and trainers in from the global South to become leaders who practice a participatory decision-making style, and trained more than 2,000 individuals in leadership skills and to confront violence against women in the home and at the community, national, and international level.

## Reaching New Constituencies

**Puntos de Encuentro:** The impact of our TV program “Sexto Sentido” and our educational materials went beyond Central America and reached countries like Bolivia, where a consortium of organizations adapted our strategy to put issues related to sexual and reproductive rights in public discussion and debate.

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## 2. New programs, strategies, and initiatives:

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The second most frequently reported achievement by some 32 or 91% of our respondents was that the MDG3 Fund grant enabled them to launch new initiatives and strategies for which they did not have the resources or strategic support prior to that. The Fund's encouragement of new, cutting-edge, and even risky and untested projects was a major contributor not only to the expanded outreach that so many grantees reported, but also to their ability to reach and mobilize many new groups and constituencies. These new initiatives and strategies ranged from building women's awareness of internet-based abuse, to studying violence against marginalized women, constructing new and gendered notions of citizenship, building networks of women human rights defenders to promote their safety and self-care, and using comic books to educate people about their rights! We counted some 43 distinct new tools, methods, and other innovations, and we are confident that the seeds of the innovations sown through MDG3 Fund-supported projects will bear fruit for a long time to come. Box 4 provides examples of some of these innovations.

### Box 4: Innovations

#### New Programs / Strategies

**APC:** Created new [ICT technology-based] opportunities for survivors of violence, including marginalized communities such as rural and indigenous women, sex workers, lesbian and transgender people, to document abuses, help in healing, share experiences and build connections.

**AWID:** [We launched the] Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRD) initiative in partnership with key allies (WHRD International Coalition and Mesoamerican WHRD Initiative), which has contributed to increase the visibility and awareness of violence against WHRDs; build knowledge and multilingual information about resources available to support WHRDs at risk, and the capacities of WHRDs in different regions, who are experiencing a stark increase in violence against them.

**Casa de la Mujer:** Pioneered a strategy of litigation based on rigorous assessments of the individual and collective damage borne by women and their communities due to the crimes perpetrated by armed actors against women, which helped to address specific reparations at the individual and community level.

**JASS:** Launched the Heart-Mind-Body Initiative in Zimbabwe - In response to the insecurity women and women activists experience on personal, professional and public levels and the lack of space to collectively strategize for action and safety, JASS developed the Heart—Mind—Body (HMB) approach. HMB puts women's wellbeing at the centre of women's organizing and movement building.

**Karama:** Co-launched the Think Tank for Arab Women, the Arab Women's Fund which sponsored the annual Mahfoutha Prize (and is being re-launched as the Dignity Fund), and the Libya Women's Platform for Peace which created a rapid-response NGO coalition for women's rights during and since the revolution in Libya.

### New Research for Action

**Casa de la Mujer:** Created a successful methodology to enable women's organizations to build rigorous research-based evidence on the individual and collective damage caused by crimes against women perpetrated by armed actors, and to use litigation to demand specific reparation measures for women victims and their communities.

**CREA:** Conducted a path-breaking research study on violence against uniquely marginalized women (lesbians, disabled women, trans people and sex workers) in South Asia, and organized a first-of-its-kind conference for these groups to meet and forge new alliances in the struggle to claim their human rights and social justice. In India, CREA also ran an innovative campaign to attract, engage and raise awareness amongst rural communities of the harmful effects of son preference.

**CLADEM:** Conducted research on sexual violence in the context of state terrorism during the military dictatorships in Argentina, paving the way for opening up hundreds of new cases of human rights violations committed in detention centres during the military regime.

### New Spaces

**FIDA-Kenya:** Together with other civil society organizations, hosted the first-ever national Gender Festival in 2009. The festival was an open forum that focused on issues of post-election violence, men's involvement in gender discourse and consolidating women's gains in the women's movement in Kenya.

## New Concepts

**IAWJ:** Developed the legal and analytical framework for addressing the new concept of “Sextortion<sup>21</sup>,” crafted a “Sextortion Toolkit”, and reached thousands of individuals and trained thousands of justice personnel with the message that corruption is corruption, whether the currency of a bribe is financial or sexual.

## New Campaigns

**Isis-WICCE:** Launched the PEAR Campaign (Peace, Empowerment, Accountability and Reclaiming), a movement of anti-rape campaigners who are committed to reclaiming the human rights of sexual violence survivors.

**WLP:** Contributed to the Claiming Equal Citizenship Campaign and family law reform in the Middle East and North Africa, and advanced the concept of the citizen in relationship to the state.

## Building New Capacities

**Puntos Encuentro:** Created the Gen-Gen course [so that] key organizations in the region can develop the skills and organizational will to incorporate a gender and generational perspective into their work, contributing to the creation of a critical mass of organizations with a similar perspective, crucial to turning the tide [in favour of] young women’s rights.

**WILDAF:** Trained paralegals and created community reconciliation committees... who were able to sensitize community members, as well as negotiate cases involving non-maintenance of children, marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc., peacefully, [and ensuring that the] settlements took into account women’s rights principles as laid out in legal instruments.

**WLUML:** Through their Women Reclaiming and Redefining Culture programme, helped strengthen women’s capacity to document, advocate and intervene to counter the use of ‘culture’ to deny women’s rights.

**Gender Links:** Embarked on a ten-stage gender mainstreaming process over a two-year period with local governance councils and media houses that included policy development, action plans, and implementation.

### 3. Built/expanded/strengthened their movements and influenced others:

Three of the ten top achievements (numbers four, five, and seven) relate to strengthening organizations' movements and influencing the perspectives and agendas of other movements in support of women's rights and gender equality. Of the organizations we consulted, 74% (26 organizations) reported effectively mobilizing and strengthening women's collective power, strengthening women's leadership both within their own organizations and movements and in other public and political spaces (80%), and building alliances with other movements and organizations (83%) to achieve greater collective impact. These are all critical achievements because they speak to creating strong, ground level or constituency-based movements that leverage women's collective power and leadership. They also speak to building strategic alliances with other pro-women forces, all of which are vital to sustaining transformations in gender power over time.<sup>22</sup> Some examples of these movement-building achievements are provided below in Box 5.

#### Box 5: Building and strengthening movements

**AWDF:** Was able to scale up the innovative movement building programme of the African Feminist Forum (AFF).

**AWANICH:** Strengthened the leadership and networking capabilities of over 2,324 women from 130 women civil society organizations in Africa. Also supported three male-headed peace organizations to develop gender policies for their organizations.

**AWID:** Has contributed to strengthening conceptual and strategic clarity on feminist movement building through the conceptual framework and movement case studies in its path-breaking document *Changing Their World: Concepts and Practices of Women's Movements*. AWID has further charted new ground by critiquing current M&E frameworks and re-positioning them from a feminist and movement-building perspective. These new tools and publications have been extensively used by women's rights organizations, donors, and other civil society organizations to strengthen, track, and communicate the impact of their work.

**APC:** Built connections and awareness of technology-related violence against women across different social movements.

**Calandria:** Women activists from the two Peruvian provinces of Huancavelica and Churcampa, formed a network that worked with the women of their districts to create a Gender Agenda, which was used as a tool to dialogue with the authorities. They also created three networks of promoters to prevent violence against women. Each of the aforementioned linked up with the local Women's Emergency Centers – a decentralized body of the Ministry of Women.

**Casa de la Mujer:** Strengthened more than 200 women's organizations in seven Colombian [provinces] and in Bogotá City. More than 1500 women victims of violence perpetrated by armed actors acquired tools to recognize themselves as subjects of rights and to take action.

**FCAM:** Created advancements in consolidating women's movements in the Central American region and in the active participation of youth organizations.

**FIDA-Kenya:** A total of 143 community action groups had their capacity enhanced on labour and property rights and gender-based violence. These groups [went on] to form networks and have contributed immensely to raising community awareness on women's rights and gender equality, as well as providing community policing [by] reporting violations of women rights to relevant government agencies and to FIDA Kenya.

**JASS:** Facilitated (with partners) the building, mobilizing and strengthening of flexible, responsive, inclusive and cross-cutting alliances, particularly in Mesoamerica, of diverse women activists working in increasingly violent and hostile contexts. JASS sought to leverage international, regional and national political influence and generate media attention for the attacks against these women human rights defenders, provided safety, and built extensive regional and international solidarity networks that include activists, academics, donors, journalists, and religious leaders.

**Karama:** Built a regional network and broke the isolation of more than 150 national women's NGOs in 13 MENA countries, and succeeded in building a tradition of working together and sharing knowledge across national and regional boundaries. Not all of these NGOs were working together, or engaged in work to end VAW, when we began and even fewer were using international instruments for advocacy. Networking at the regional level was infrequent or nonexistent for many of these

NGOs, and by holding 16 different multi-day regional consultations, trainings, and working seminars over the three years, Karama created a robust linkage, exchange, and cohort among NGOs from Arab and North African countries. Several legacies are the creation ... of new entities: Think Tank for Arab Women, the Dignity Fund, the New Arab Women Forum, and the Libyan Women's Platform for Peace.

**Kvinna till Kvinna:** Increased networking among the women human rights defenders within the MDG3-project. The increased possibilities for women human rights defenders in the Western Balkans to meet and share experiences have been very much appreciated. In total: 93 networking activities organized by partner organizations, reaching 2096 women human rights defenders and other women in public life; and eight networking activities organized by Kvinna till Kvinna, attended by 218 women human rights defenders from partner organizations.

**Nobel Women's Initiative:** Provided visibility for courageous activists at critical moments & garnered hard-to-secure media attention for women's rights violations and peace processes – such as for our International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women of Burma, held in New York City in March 2010.

**OWFI:** Played a critical role in mobilizing women, youth and CSO's and defending detained young protestors in Iraq's Tahrir Square demonstrations, which began in January 2011. OWFI was the only women's organization openly working on Tahrir Square mobilizations, and brought a number of marginalized constituencies to participate in the "Iraqi Spring".

**Puntos Encuentro:** Alliance and networking with more than 100 organizations in Central America that have enriched our program and [made] possible the collective building of our TV series "Contracorriente". We also facilitated the appropriation of this tool by other groups for public advocacy around gender equality and women's rights.

**Semillas:** In 2009, the movement in Mexico of indigenous women defending women's land property rights was practically non-existent. There were very few organizations supporting the land rights issue for rural or indigenous women. Throughout the MDG3 Fund-supported program, an integration process began with the grantees from different regions of Mexico, who met and shared their experiences. By the end of the program in 2011, the grantees formed a network called "Indigenous Women Defending Mother Earth", which aims to work on a common strategy at a national level. Without the MDG3 Funds, these leaders would not have met and there would be no collaboration among each other, which is an



essential factor for successful [movement-building], and for producing social change at a broader level.

**UAF-Africa:** Our rapid response grants enabled [us] to support women's organizations at critical times in their efforts for women's empowerment and equality.

**Trust Africa:** Created a network of women's organizations working on VAW in francophone West and Central Africa.

**WIEGO:** [and its project partner IUF] were able to successfully consolidate their long-standing mobilization work to establish the International Domestic Workers Network (IDWN); The Global General Assembly of the Working Poor Women [was also held] which enabled informal workers from different regions to network, share information, document their common needs, and plan for future work together.

#### 4. Advocacy Successes:

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Two of the top achievements (five and ten) relate to the respondents' advocacy successes. Not only did they positively influence the gender perspectives and strategies of other organizations and movements (which 80% reported), but 66% also reported successfully fighting discriminatory laws and policies, many of which would have rolled back past gains. Many respondents described how they – often in alliance with other social justice groups – successfully fought backlash, regressive laws, and policy shifts that would have seriously jeopardized the gender equality gains and/or sexual and reproductive rights that women's movements have fought for over the past many decades. Fund recipients played critical roles as policy watchdogs and defenders of past gains through advocacy, training, lobbying, and by mobilizing public opinion and exerting pressure on government at different levels to stand by their international and constitutional commitments to protecting the equal rights of women and other marginalized groups. Several organizations also made significant contributions to global policy processes, and the creation of new rights instruments and institutions at the global level. These will have positive reverberations for women worldwide in the years to come. Examples of these advocacy achievements are briefly described in Box 6 on the next page.

## Box 6: Advocacy achievements

### Recognizing Technology-Based Violence

**APC:** Engagement by our local partners with the cybercrime units of both the Philippine National Police and National Bureau of Investigation has ensured a recognition of technology-related VAW as a cybercrime and also attempts by both units to streamline and coordinate their responses to these violations in a way that considers women's specific experiences. Our partners are also being consulted by local government authorities for advice about how government can craft or amend local laws or ordinances and education programmes so they address technology-related VAW.

### Advancing Women's Rights in Peace and Conflict

**AWANICH:** Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire developed National Action Plans for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 with women playing significant roles.

### Resisting Discriminatory Legislation

**AWDF:** Mobilized public opinion to resist negative legislation such as the Anti-Homosexuality Bill in Uganda and the Indecent Dressing Bill in Nigeria.

**UAF-Africa:** The rapid response programme supported a legal and advocacy process aimed at raising public awareness and stopping the ongoing forced sterilization of HIV positive women in Namibia.

### Engendering Development Debates

**AWID:** Helped engender the Accra Agenda for Action (2008), and, working alongside a core group of women's organizations, APWLD, Coordinadora de la Mujer-Bolivia, FEMNET and WIDE, mobilized women's groups on the road to the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, Korea (2011). As a result, women's rights and gender equality concerns are now more integrated in key guiding frameworks and processes that are shaping development cooperation worldwide and more women's organizations are playing active roles in these processes.

## Gendering Law and Policy

**BREAKTHROUGH:** Launched advocacy programmes on strengthening the national (Indian) domestic violence law, the prevention of sex-selective elimination, early marriage, safe motherhood, and transforming broader gender power relations. Empowered by their participation in the “Ring the Bell” campaign, many grassroots women began demanding access to other basic services like clean water and sanitation.

**Huairou Commission:** HC’s partner/member Las Brumas in El Salvador is holding the government accountable to the equal opportunity laws by comparing the government’s actions with publically available plans.

**Isis-WICCE:** Along with the Totto-Chan Centre for Child Trauma (TCCT) hosted a Leadership Conference ‘Positioning Women’s Needs and Priorities in South Sudan’ in April, 2011 that helped identify the six women’s needs and priorities which became the advocacy themes for engaging policy makers.

**LAC:** Research on mental health was used to inform policymaking, including successful lobbying for revisions to the government’s draft Mental Health Bill.

**MIFUMI:** By investigating, documenting and reporting on violations of women’s property and inheritance rights, they succeeded in mobilizing support for the Domestic Violence Act (passed in Nov 2009), various land bill amendments, and stronger constitutional provisions for gender equality in Uganda. Also organized a national campaign using multimedia to raise awareness of the public on the contentious issues of the marriage and divorce bill in Uganda.

**OWFI:** Continuous campaigning against trafficking caused an anti-trafficking law to be passed towards the end of our grant, and also mobilized public opinion against the attempt to pass restrictive Shari’a-based personal code in Iraq.

## Strengthening Law and Action on Violence Against Women

**Casa de la Mujer:** Built public and women’s organizations’ pressure for the implementation of Colombia’s Law 1257 of 2008 – a law created to eradicate violence against women that Casa helped push for, and also successfully lobbied against restriction of women’s sexual and reproductive rights, and restitution of the property rights of women victims of violence.

**CLADEM:** Working in partnership with other human rights groups, CLADEM successfully obtained sanctions in fifteen countries<sup>23</sup> in Latin America and the Caribbean for violations of women's human rights and failure to protect women; and, the acceptance by the UN Human Rights Treaties Committees<sup>24</sup> of over 147 recommendations that would pressure Member States to improve implementation of policies, enact laws that favour women, and enable their justiciability.

**FCAM:** Grantees' advocacy efforts helped pass a law against femicide and other forms of VAW in Guatemala in 2009, the Special and Comprehensive Law for a Life Free of Violence for Women was approved in El Salvador in 2010, and a Comprehensive Law on Violence Against Women was approved in Nicaragua in January 2012.

**FGHR:** Mexican grantees successfully pressed the state governments of Guanajuato and Chihuahua to pass legislation that increases penalties for violence against women and allocates funding for public education and violence prevention efforts. Indian grantees trained single women, who then persuaded the state of Rajasthan to almost double pension support for poor widows, and helped thousands of widows secure \$877,000 in social security benefits and almost \$370,000 in labour contracts.

**FIDA-Kenya:** Contributed towards the adoption of the Sexual Offences Act in 2008 in Kenya. This Act harmonizes sexual violence legislation into a single law, provides a comprehensive definition of rape, introduces minimum sentences, criminalizes sexual harassment and expands sexual offenses to include: gang rape, deliberate infection with sexually transmitted diseases, trafficking for sexual exploitation and child pornography.

**Gender Links:** Worked with 143 local councils in ten SADC countries to develop and implement Gender Based Violence Action plans, which place prevention at the centre of all strategies and initiatives to address GBV.

**Nobel Women's Initiative:** The International Tribunal on Crimes against Women in Burma and related media coverage contributed to the global momentum for a UN Commission of Final Report 8 Inquiry on Burma (as of mid-2011, 16 countries were in favour of such a Commission).

## Advancing Women's Economic Rights

**Semillas:** Grantees began gaining recognition at indigenous and other community assemblies; [The] 518 women who have gained land ownership have set an important precedent for women's land rights under customary law in these areas.


**WIEGO:** Organizations of domestic workers, home-based workers and street vendors linked up and gained access to the policy bodies that affect their work and lives. They also lobbied other women's movements in support of ratification of ILO Convention 189 – such as KUDHEIHA Workers in Kenya – and partly as a result, the Kenyan government has committed to ratify the Convention.

**WILDAF:** National member networks used the results of Fund-supported research studies on women's access to land to collaborate with other stakeholders for strengthening their national legal frameworks for women's land rights; and through their participation in the pan-African Gender is My Agenda campaign (GIMAC), WILDAF highlighted the importance of empowering African women farmers and gained support for this issue from some key African Heads of States in the African Union.

**WLUML:** Women's Inheritance and Property Rights programme was expanded, which helped women in seven countries - Afghanistan, Indonesia, Pakistan, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sudan - to build capacity for documentation, advocacy and interventions to counter the use of 'culture' to deny women's rights, and target the policies and laws in place in their countries.

## Advancing Women's Civil and Political Rights

**WLP:** Major public pressure and media attention for the Women's Nationality Rights campaign led to a significant increase in Lebanese public support for women's nationality rights. WLP Egypt is countering anti-women extremists using WLP methodology & trainings; WLP Jordan provided the Jordanian constitutional reform committee with recommended amendments for women's rights; WLP Mauritania/AFCF successfully engaged in legislative advocacy promoting the criminalization of female genital mutilation – a religious fatwa against the practice was issued in January 2010; Morocco removed all reservations to CEDAW & signed the Optional Protocol (the Minister of Women's Affairs recognized WLP Morocco/ADFM's important role in this success by announcing the government's pending reform at an ADFM-hosted Equality Without Reservation regional meeting).



Finally, the one achievement that does not fit into any of the above areas, but that was nevertheless listed among the top ten, and which is probably the most poignant of all is that of the 24 respondents (69%) who felt that simply surviving and continuing their work under very difficult and challenging circumstances was a major achievement. This sentiment was eloquently expressed by Yanar Mohammed of the Organization for Women’s Freedom in Iraq (OWFI), who said, “One of our major achievements was the survival of our organization against the backlash from misogynist groups!”

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## Why These Achievements Matter

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To understand the true value of these achievements requires an understanding of some of the key lessons learnt by women’s movements over the past several decades. On the question of scale and coverage, for instance, we have realized that small, localized and grounded efforts are critical to change, but if these remain isolated (not only from one another, but from interventions at other levels), they can be quickly extinguished. Thus, connectivity with related or complementary efforts, and mobilizing and organizing a larger number of women and their communities against gender discrimination are critical for change to become sustainable and to make a larger difference. We know that we cannot rest content with small islands of change in a sea of oppressive patriarchal cultures. We also know that going to scale merely in terms of service delivery, or bringing millions of women in as program beneficiaries rather than agents of change, is also not a transformative strategy. Therefore, **conscious and systematic movement building** by empowering women to become conscious actors in a social change process is vital.

These struggles, though, without corresponding enabling conditions on the part of the governance and justice systems, can be futile. The state and its various institutions must do their part as duty bearers. Hence, advocacy for legal and policy reform is an important correlate. In the face of the growing worldwide backlash against women, especially empowered and organized women fighting for their rights, and against other marginalized communities who have begun to assert their rights, **holding on to our past gains and pushing back regressive laws and policies** is essential. Otherwise the hard work of the past century will be completely negated. Of course, merely **surviving under increasingly tough conditions** – continuing our work in the face of declining resources, growing attacks on women human rights defenders, and the range of forces aligned against our change agenda in many contexts – is a huge

and important achievement in and of itself. Consequently, the top ten achievements of our respondents, and indeed of the MDG3 Fund itself, must be placed against this backdrop and celebrated accordingly.

Above all, these achievements assume even greater significance when we place them against the backdrop of the complex and challenging global and local contexts in which this work was carried out, as we have outlined earlier. Accomplishing all this, in less than four years, in the face of backlash, fundamentalisms, conflict, and violence, is truly remarkable.

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<sup>17</sup> The UN's Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders definition is useful to share here: "Female human rights defenders, i.e. women who, individually or in association with others, act to promote or protect human rights, including women's rights... [and] also male human rights defenders working on women's rights as well as on gender issues."

<sup>18</sup> See <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SRHRDefenders/Pages/Declaration.aspx>

<sup>19</sup> The term used for women of African ancestry in Latin America

<sup>20</sup> SADC is the Southern African Development Community, comprising the following nations: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Seychelles.

<sup>21</sup> A form of corruption where sexual favours are demanded, usually from women, and generally by persons in positions of power, in exchange for some benefit or service, which should in fact be provided as a matter of right or duty.

<sup>22</sup> Batliwala, S. *Changing Their World: Concepts and Practices of Women's Movements*. Toronto: AWID. 2012. Web. 12 November 2013. <http://www.awid.org/Library/Changing-their-World-Concepts-and-practices-of-women-s-movements-2nd-Edition>

<sup>23</sup> Specifically, Argentina, Bolivia, Brasil, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, México, Nicaragua, Panamá, Paraguay, Perú, Puerto Rico, República Dominicana and Uruguay

<sup>24</sup> The human rights treaty bodies are committees of independent experts that monitor implementation of the core international human rights treaties. For more information on these, visit: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CoreInstruments.aspx> There are ten human rights treaty bodies composed of independent experts of recognized competence in human rights, who are nominated and elected for fixed renewable terms of four years by State parties. For more information, see <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/TreatyBodies.aspx>

## IV. Transforming Gender Power

The “Big Picture” and key achievements described in the previous sections are impressive, but their real contribution to advancing gender equality in the longer term has to be assessed in terms of the extent to which they addressed the roots of gender power,<sup>25</sup> and therefore gender inequality. This is not an easy task.

Women’s rights organizations, in addition to others working on gender equality objectives, have long struggled with the inadequacy and inappropriateness of the available methods/tools for assessing their impact. The majority of these methods tend to be rather linear, simplistic, or short-termed, thus failing to reflect the impact they generate at the systemic level, or even on the structures of gender power that have long been embedded in our societies. We have few instruments that can capture the complexity of the often “one-step-forward-and-two-steps-back” nature of women’s rights work. AWID’s study of these issues,<sup>26</sup> and our survey of the challenges faced by the MDG3 Fund grantees with the Fund’s own M&E system<sup>27</sup> affirmed this notion. When designing the aggregate assessment study of the organizations that received the MDG3 Fund we were squarely faced with the challenge of how could we better capture the extent to which the work of our survey respondents addressed and unraveled some of the deeper roots of gender power, and the forces that reproduce and sustain it.

Reviewing the handful of tools at our disposal, and based on previous positive experiences, we decided to adapt and use the Gender at Work Institutional Change Framework<sup>28</sup> depicted on page 49. The value of the Institutional Change framework<sup>29</sup> is that it precisely accommodates some of the incredible complexity of working on gender power structures. It enables us to examine and assess change both in the formal sphere of resources, rights and policies, and the informal sphere of individual consciousness (self esteem, sense of self worth), and socio-cultural rules and norms that perpetuate and justify gender discrimination. It also allows us to track change along a continuum from the individual to the collective/societal level.

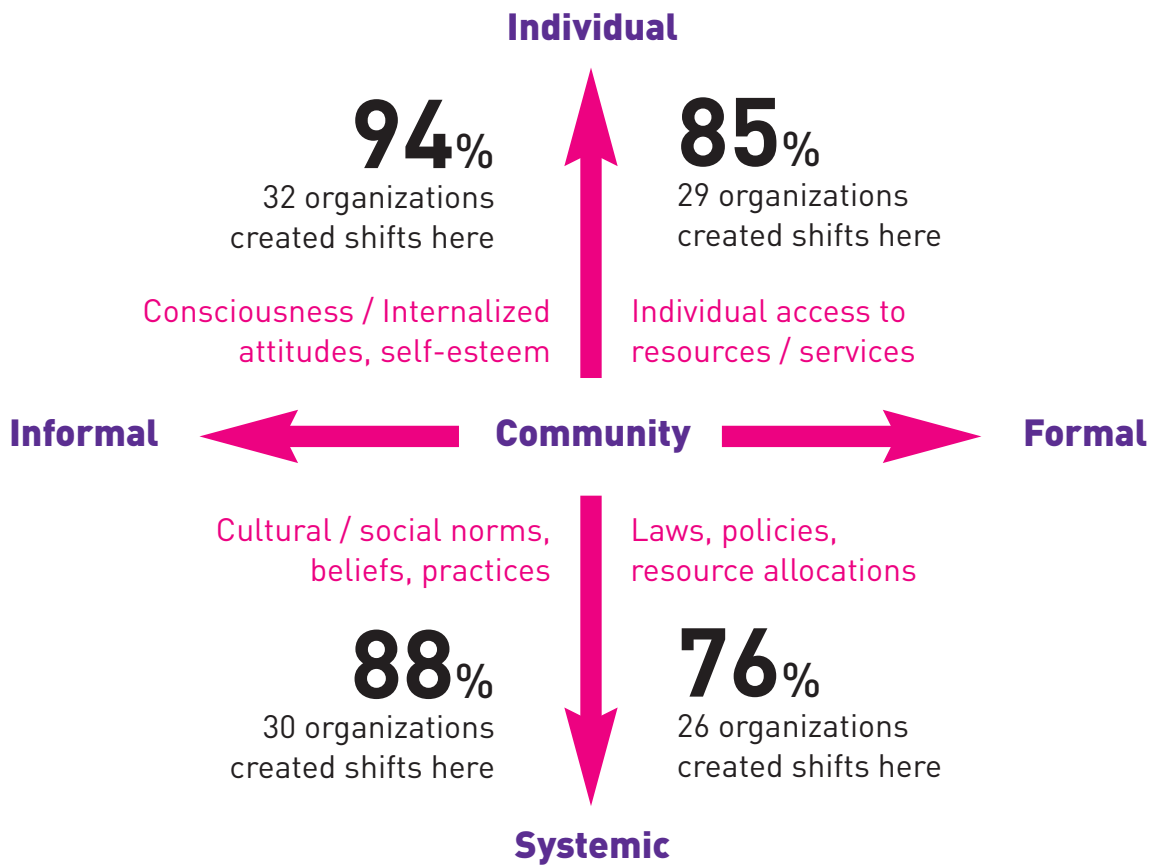
Applying this framework, we asked survey respondents whether or not their Fund-supported work had created shifts in any or several quadrants of the framework. Specifically, we asked if they could report having created perceivable shifts in the individual consciousness and self-image of women, in the cultural norms and practices that justify gender discrimination, in individual access to resources and rights, and in formal laws, policies, and resource allocations for advancing women’s rights and gender equality. We also asked them to offer some evidence for the shifts they reported in any quadrant. An overwhelming 34 out of our 35 respondents – or 97% of our total sample – provided detailed evidence on shifts they had tracked in




these fundamental roots of gender power. Coding and analyzing their responses to these complex questions (see the questionnaire in Appendix (i)) yielded the data depicted in Figure 7, and the precise nature of the shifts achieved in each quadrant is presented in Figures 8, 9, 10, and 11.

Figure 7: Shifts in key domains of gender inequality

N=34





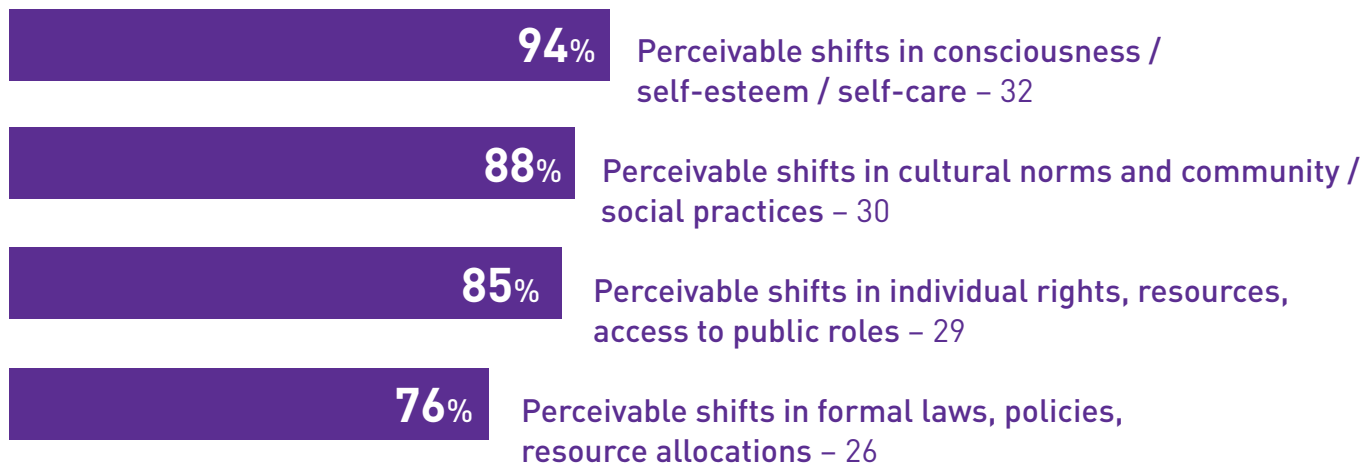
Experience shows that while changing laws and policies, and increasing women’s access to resources at both individual and aggregate levels require sustained advocacy and pressure for implementation, they are still easier to achieve than the shifts in the informal belief systems and gender-biased practices embedded in culture and societal norms. Changes at the level of consciousness – in women’s and men’s internalized sense of their roles, rights, and privileges – are the most difficult of all, particularly since they require a set of interventions that depend on particular psycho-social methods and skills (such as consciousness-raising and popular education techniques) which have fallen out of favour with donors because they don’t show “concrete results” in the short term.

In fact, these dimensions are as critical to transforming the roots of gender power as stronger laws and resource access. This is often the reason why violence against women persists even in countries that have tough laws and penalties for such crimes; unless women believe they have a right to live free of violence and that they should not be stigmatized if they are subjected to sexual violence, women will, more often than not, fail to report these crimes. Moreover, regardless of what the law stipulates, if duty bearers (like the police) continue to believe that women who report violence or sexual offences “asked for it” in some way, they will continue to fail in recording the crime(s) or carry out a proper investigation. They might even go as far as protecting the offender. Therefore, stronger domestic violence legislation and/or stricter penalties for sexual offenders tend to remain under-utilized because we, as women’s rights defenders, have not tackled the domains of individual consciousness and cultural norms.

This is why the contribution of the MDG3 Fund grantees becomes remarkable. It is extraordinary, for instance, that 94% (or 32) of the organizations that responded to this question reported having helped create shifts in women’s (and men’s) individual consciousness, attitudes, and self-esteem, and that 88% (or 30 organizations) reported shifts in cultural and social norms and practices. A significant percentage (76% or 26 organizations) reported having contributed towards more gender-equal laws, policies, and resource allocations, and 85% (or 29 organizations) reported changes in terms of the increased access to individual women to resources, rights, and services. Figure 8 sums up these achievements.

Figure 8: Perceivable shifts in gender inequality

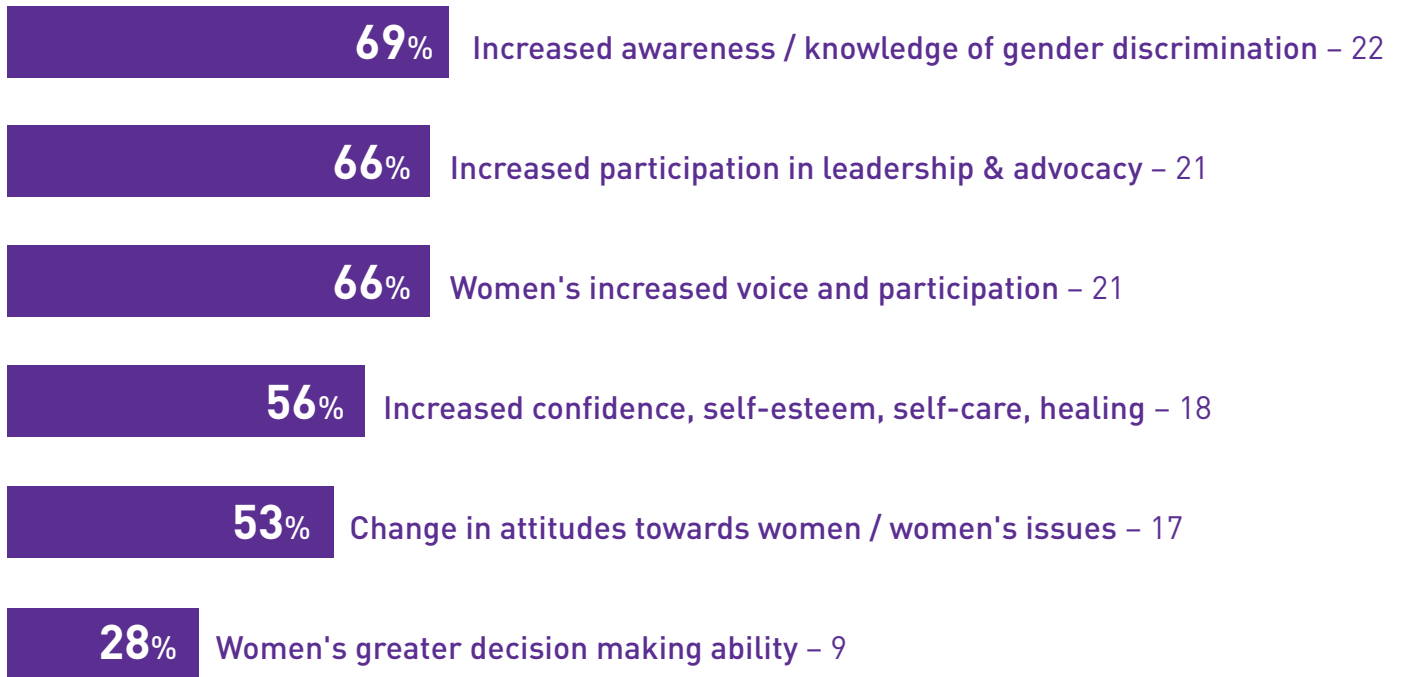
N=34



What kind of specific evidence went into each of these quadrants? We present below both the specific data for each quadrant, as well as a few illustrative examples of the kinds of changes that were observed. However, one should keep in mind that there were far more examples in the survey data, project evaluations, and narrative reports of the respondents than can be shared here.

N=32

Figure 9: Shifts in consciousness / self-esteem



## Box 7: Examples of shifts in consciousness / self-esteem / self-care

**AWANICH:** Women are now aware of the need and their power to be involved in peace process[es] from the family through community to national and international levels.

**Casa de la Mujer:** The project contributed to women's emotional and physical recovery, as declared by them in the process evaluation. Participants' recovery, along with the analytical and conceptual tools that they acquired, helped them in making changes at the individual level such as caring for themselves and their [... looks...], starting school again to finalize basic education, study[ing] to learn to read and write, working in a paid job. The work also related to changing processes at the collective level such as changing roles in their relationships with partners and transforming family relationships to set up boundaries on violence among couples.

**Gender Links:** As part of their "Healing through Writing" project, Gender Links conducted workshops in 10 SADC countries where about 600 women survivors documented their experiences of violence as a cathartic first step in their recovery.

**The Huairou Commission:** In Peru one participant spoke about how "grassroots women are now coming out of their homes and local leaders are asking them for their opinion on community development", going to community forums. [They] ... noted that women [had been] avoiding leadership roles because of the negative images associated with decision making ... being a bad mother, a prostitute, or someone who didn't care about their family or their community (Ntankah). Those interviewed had stated that "negative perceptions are now changing due to the MDG3AI work."<sup>30</sup>

**JASS:** The most striking example comes from Malawi. Many of the women [are using the JASS] power framework to describe themselves and their experiences in terms of power and ways to challenge power on multiple levels. For these women, the "personal is political", and they have taken their activism from the home and brought it to brokering with local chiefs and government representatives, and into organizing their own networks and organizations in constructing budgets and plans that address their needs.

**FIDA Kenya:** There were 589 women who represented themselves in court through the self representation programme with 140 of them succeeding, which was an indicator of awareness and understanding of their rights and the court system.

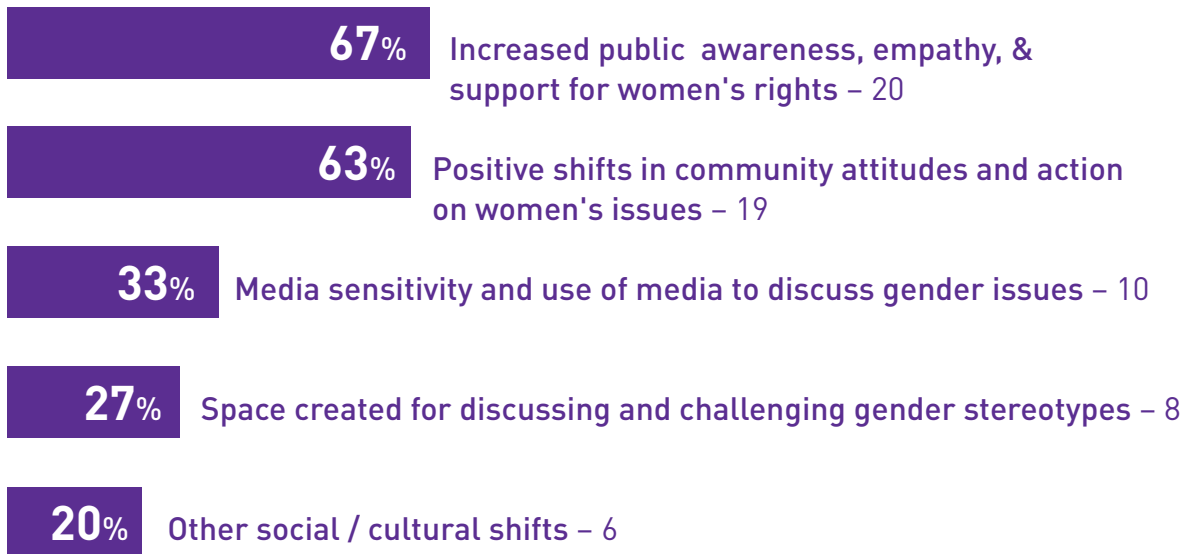
**Isis-WICCE:** [The VVF (vesicovaginal fistula) surgery and other medical care provided by the initiative for women conflict survivors in Liberia and South Sudan] enabled the community women leaders to understand that women had deeper issues beyond the surface, especially sexual, reproductive and psychological problems which they had been living with for a long period. This in a way had hampered their organizing, engagement in the rehabilitation of their lives, and participation in the [post-conflict] reconstruction initiatives. With a populace that is healthy their task of mobilization had been eased since they were now conscious in the way they handled and responded to women's issues. The attitudes of the care providers – doctors, nurses and others – also changed and became sensitized.

**PUNTOS:** [Our strategy evaluation revealed] the strengthening of individual and collective capacities in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala...Knowledge acquired in these spaces and the opportunity to share their own experiences of violence has allowed [women] to support other people that live in violent situations...In the family environment, [the project] has contributed to promot[ing] dialogue and more equal and non-violent relationships, as well as helped them to identify situations of violence, to sensitize their relatives about it, and to end violent situations.

**WILDAF:** After undergoing WILDAF's training, women have stood for elections and won – without fear and with confidence.

Figure 10: Shifts in socio-cultural norms & practices

N=30



## Box 8: Examples of shifts in cultural norms and social practices

**APC:** As a result of our FTX trainings on ICT-related safety and security issues for women, there are changes in online practice. Individuals who learned about privacy and security issues are more careful when using social networking tools and sharing personal information. Many shared their learning with family, friends and colleagues.

**GFW:** Grantee/partner Afghan Women Welfare Department, shared in its report that “there have been some concrete changes in its community...Shinwari elders from several districts signed a resolution this year outlawing several practices that harm girls and women. These included a ban on using girls to settle blood feuds.” (The tradition in this community held that when a man commits murder, he must hand over his daughter or sister as a bride for a man in the victim’s family. The marriage ostensibly “mixes blood to end the bloodshed.”)

**CREA:** The Central Asia component of Count Me In (“Work with Me”) has provided a platform for organizations there to link and learn from each other, [and resulted in changing] the scope of anti-violence services that these organizations provide. Whereas before “traditional” crisis centres had difficulty in handling cases involving sexual orientation and gender identity issues, now there is a greater likelihood that [they will] find a way to work with issues of this kind.

**OWFI:** Our staff and supporters had scores of informal [community] meetings about dealing with “honour” killings of women and LGBTs - when a sexual minority “cleansing” campaign was launched by some militant groups in Iraq, for example, OWFI was the only organization to openly condemn it as a form of genocide, and mentored young gay and lesbian activists to write their first statement of denunciation.<sup>31</sup> Our members and supporters became vigilant protectors of threatened individuals, and saved many lives, including by offering shelter in our centre.

**FGHR:** Fund grantees successfully pressured local chiefs to refer 150 Sexual and GBV cases to the judicial system in West Africa and 553 captive girls were released by militias in the DRC as a result of the efforts and interventions of Fund grantees.



**WLP:** WLP Nigeria/BAOBAB has conducted ongoing work with men in their communities, and held a men's march for 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women. Participating men demonstrated changed views, and the communities where they marched welcomed the effort – a major change in Nigerian society. BAOBAB's ongoing work with men and boys is demonstrating strong changes in their understandings of rights and gender roles.

**WLUML:** Men who were involved in the capacity building activities (some were leaders in the community) were influenced enough to make public statements in support of women's rights, showing somewhat of a change in attitude.

**WILDAF:** Traditional rulers have begun to take action in favour of women after they have benefited from legal literacy volunteers' services: they have changed customary practices and rules to ensure women will no more be deprived of their right to inherit land.

**SAfAIDS:** ..."widow cleansing"<sup>32</sup> [is now] done in a safer way that does not put women at risk of contracting HIV.

**MIFUMI:** Increased uptake of alternative dispute resolutions in the community on land and property rights pertaining to women's property rights with many cases being resolved in favour of the women.

**FIDA Kenya:** In one case, a traditional circumciser changed her attitude on circumcision of girls and is an agent of change through sensitization of community on the effects of female genital mutilation/cutting and reproductive health rights. In another case, a girl who dropped out of school because of her grandmother's harassment was taken back to school after the chief's intervention. The chief also managed to take back to school 10 girls who had dropped out to give birth. This was after intervening with their parents to take care of the babies. The chiefs have continued to give a lot of support to the community on issues of sexual and gender based violence.

N=29

Figure 11: Shifts in individual access to rights and resources



## Box 9: Examples of shifts in individual access to rights, resources and access to public roles

**AWID:** AWID's collaborative engagement in the aid effectiveness process through Better Aid, the CSO Forums and participation at the HLF in Accra and Busan, influenced the inclusion of specific language on gender equality and women's empowerment in the agreements of both the HLF in Accra and in Busan, with an entire paragraph dedicated to gender equality in the final Busan outcome document. This is an important step forward given the minimal inclusion of gender equality in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

**CREA:** The Count Me In research partner in India that works on domestic violence and provides counseling services to women, using their learning from the research, are now reaching out to lesbians, disabled women and sex workers specifically to include them in their services and cater to their needs.

**AWDF:** From the evaluation conducted, beneficiaries of the MDG3, women stated that they were able to meet their basic needs around food, clothing and shelter... Many stated that having an increased income made them more powerful in terms of decision-making within the home and in society. The project has enhanced women's quantitative and qualitative participation in decision-making – it is not just numbers of women [in public office] that have increased, but women who have an agenda to advance the rights of women. This has been evidenced in the activities that many of these women have undertaken since entering political office, [such as] seeking quotas for women's political representation and enacting gender violence legislation.

**BREAKTHROUGH:** [In India] tribal regions receive the least of the infrastructural resource pie and Gubiga village of Karnataka was no different; roads, electricity and drinking water were not available to the people who live here. Then...Savita....a widow...mobilized the entire village and the local government officials, and with the help of Breakthrough and a local community-based organization, her village now has roads and other infrastructure development work is under way.

**FGHR:** Fund grantees helped 2080 women receive marriage certificates, proper identification and other documentation that are prerequisites to equal treatment under the law; 401 favorable court rulings on inheritance rights and marriage certificates [were obtained for individual women].

**Casa de la Mujer:** Afro-mestiza women in the Chocó province of Colombia, who were victims of forced displacement, demanded that both local and national government authorities provide them legal assistance and their right to livelihood, resulting in some responses from these bodies. Their actions also had a positive impact on other displaced women who were encouraged by this success to frame similar demands in their areas.

**JASS:** By working together across diverse issues and movements, women activists are better able to address their needs and safety while defending and accessing their rights. Nowhere is this more striking than in Mesoamerica, where JASS in collaboration with the regional Women Human Rights Defenders Initiative has supported diverse women activists – many of whom had never identified as human rights defenders – to develop joint strategies for their own security, enabling them to continue their human rights work. By defining themselves as defenders and sharing information, they are better able to access and transform existing human rights, protection and safety mechanisms and instruments, such as the CEDAW. This innovative initiative spotlights the voices, situations and strategies of women human rights defenders on the frontlines of justice and activates emergency, legal and psychological resources, global visibility and solidarity in response to the escalating violence, including death, they face as reprisals for their work.

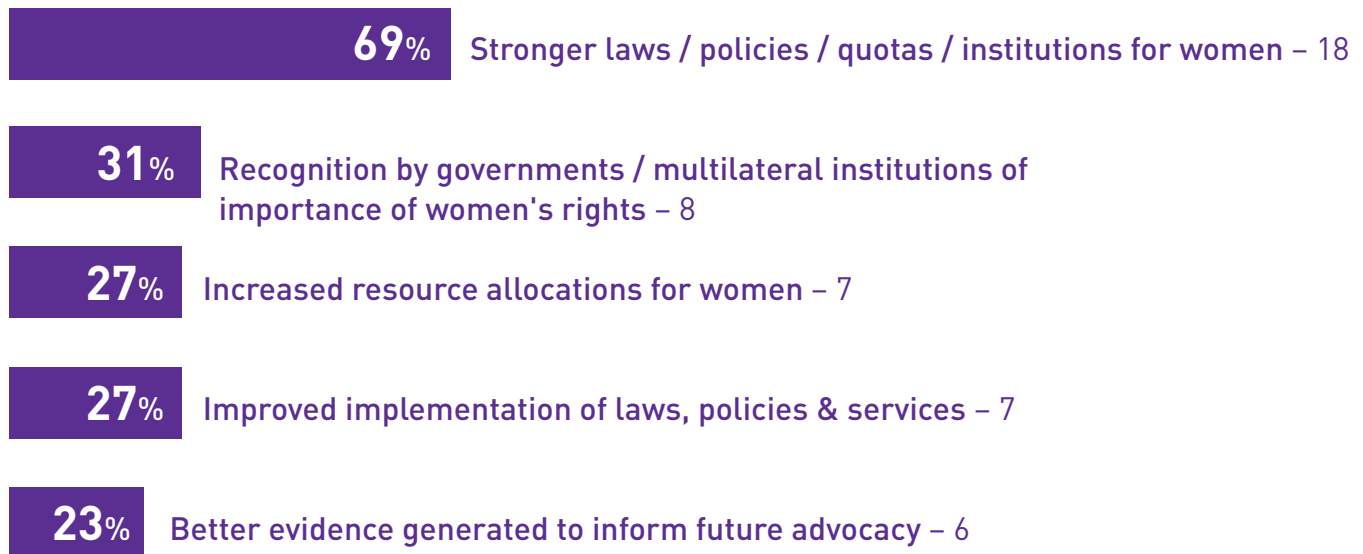
**MIFUMI:** Girls and women are now recognized in property allocation by families.

**Semillas:** A female maquila (sweatshop factory) worker, Susana García, began participating in workshops given by Colectivo Obreras Insumisas, a grantee organization. She then [organized] 64 women workers who went on strike as the employer refused to listen to their demands. They later filed a lawsuit against the company and are now working hand in hand with Colectivo Obreras Insumisas to construct a case in favour of women workers.

**Karama:** Karama partners ran for political office or party leadership in Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, and Libya. Two women who had been part of Karama delegations were named to Cabinets: Senator Haifa Abou Ghazaleh was named Minister of Transportation in Jordan in 2011 and Siham Barghouti became the Minister for Culture and Tourism in Palestine in 2009, which she remains [till] today.

Figure 12: Shifts in laws, policies, resource allocations for women

N=26



## Box 10: Examples of shifts in formal laws, policies and resource allocations

**AWID:** Increased resources available for women's rights organizing through the contribution of AWID's "Where is the Money (WITM)" research and donor advocacy, which was instrumental in the Dutch government's decision to extend the MDG3Fund and the launch of the FLOW Fund (2012-2015) for women's rights. AWID's WITM research also inspired the creation of the Rita Fund (USA, 2010), and contributed to the case made by women's rights allies in several agencies including Oxfam Canada, HIVOS, Oxfam Novib to expand their women's rights funding. Finally, AWID and the Central American Women's Fund were instrumental in creating FRIDA – the Young Feminist Fund, following strong interest on the part of young feminists from around the world at the AWID 2008 Forum.

**Casa de la Mujer:** As a result of their advocacy with other women's organizations and groups, the Colombian government has developed specific policies and programs for the protection of women victims of armed actors, who have gone on to become leaders and human rights defenders. For example, Casa de la Mujer was involved in formulating one of the most important laws in armed conflict – Law 1448/2011 (the "Victims' Law") – participating in the debates about it in the Colombian National Congress and working with other women organizations to submit common proposals for the framing of the law.

**FCAM:** Grantee-partners successfully lobbied for the maternity health law, an important step towards preventing teenage pregnancies in Guatemala.

**Gender Links:** Local councils were successfully persuaded to allocate a budget for gender mainstreaming and to put in place M&E to track the implementation of their Gender and Gender-Based Violence action plans.

**Huairou Commission:** HC member FEMUM-ALC Peru developed a gender equality plan which was approved by the local government with involvement from grassroots women. El Salvador has now approved the Equal Opportunity Plan as a direct result of FEMUM-ALC's advocacy.

**Karama:** In Libya, policy briefs, multi-partisan coalition, fast action, public protests, and leveraging contacts made in the NTC and media were key to the success of our partner, the Libya Women's Platform for Peace (LWPP), to win revision of the draft electoral law. LWPP's proposed 'zipper list' was adopted, alternating men's and women's names on candidate lists which ensured that women won 32 of the 80 seats reserved for political parties, 16.5% of the total 200 seats.

**WLP:** Morocco removed all reservations to CEDAW. The Moroccan government recognized WLP Morocco/ADFM's role in this success when the Moroccan Minister of Women's Affairs came to WLP Morocco/ADFM's "Equality without Reservation" meeting to announce the removal of reservations.

**WIGJ:** Access by grassroots women to the judges of domestic war crimes courts, in addition to advocacy and technical reviews by us, created a shift in awareness by the prosecutors and judges regarding justice for gender-based crimes. More resources [were also] allocated by the ICC for integrating women in the process of justice.

**WIEGO:** Contributed to the final stage of advocacy that led to the adoption of ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers. In Thailand, which passed the Homeworkers Protection Act, WIEGO partner Homenet Thailand effectively negotiated a policy whereby the government agreed to provide a 30% co-payment for social security to all informal workers [there], which is estimated to benefit some 24 million informal workers in that country. It has also meant access to OHS<sup>33</sup> protection, and greater access to resources such as vending space, secure market areas, and rehabilitation activities after the 2011 floods.

Gender resolution [that WIEGO helped draft] was discussed and approved by the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) at their last general meeting in Mombasa, Kenya (May 2011).

**MIFUMI:** Policy makers are now more sensitive on issues of budget allocations to women's needs. For example, the 9<sup>th</sup> Ugandan Parliament which took office in 2011 declined approval of the 2012-2013 National Budget before enough funds were allocated towards maternal health.

**Nobel Women's Initiative:** [Engaged] the corporate world in our issues. [Our laureates] played an active role in working with Nokia Siemens to encourage the corporation to stop providing the Iranian government communications monitoring technology that was used in 2009 to track human rights defenders following the election. In October 2010, Nokia Siemens announced its decision to close its monitoring centre operations and divest from Iran.

**LAC:** [Our] research briefs on sections of the Child Care and Protection Bill [in Namibia] were vital for the conceptualization of the provisions in the bill. The quality of the bill, including its recognition of gender equality, has been acclaimed internationally.

**OWFI:** Continuous [advocacy] work throughout the grant period pressured the Iraqi parliament into passing an anti-trafficking law (February 2012), which recognizes trafficked women as victims and not perpetrators.

**UAF-Africa:** The LGBTI movement and its allies in Uganda succeeded in increasing international awareness and mounted pressure on the government to drop the proposed Bahati bill that aimed at further criminalizing gays and lesbians.

Thus, there is considerable and irrefutable evidence that the vast majority of MDG3 Fund recipients' projects and interventions did indeed impact on all four of these critical domains of gender discrimination and inequality. It is particularly noteworthy that such a huge proportion of our respondents report having created perceivable changes in the very difficult realms of individual consciousness and cultural norms and practices. As stated previously, these are the sites of gender power that have proved hardest to dislodge or change, but real transformation has only been possible when the "demand" for gender equality comes from here – from changes in women's and men's consciousness, beliefs, and practices - both individual and societal - rather than the improved "supply" of enabling conditions through more gender-equitable laws and policies and enhanced access to rights and resources for individual women. The domains of the self and of social norms and rules are also increasingly neglected areas of intervention. This is due to the fact that many donors don't support work here, on the grounds that impact is too slow or hard to quantify, which is ironic given that unless we make a serious impact on the discriminatory beliefs, attitudes, and norms that legitimize gender differentiation, the ideology and practice of gender equality cannot become a reality in either the private or the public space... in which



women must live their lives. The MDG3 Fund is therefore to be lauded for recognizing the importance of such work, and enabling its grantees to deploy strategies that directly addressed these crucial dimensions of injustice.

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<sup>25</sup> The huge body of feminist research and theory of the past century has clearly established that gender power is rooted in and reproduced through the access and control over resources, through social norms and rules (such as the gender division of labour, gender norms and expectations, etc.) that are taught and enforced by the family, clan, and other customary structures, and through the biases embedded in formal systems like laws and policies.

<sup>26</sup> Batliwala, S and A. Pittman, 2010, "Capturing Change in Women's Realities", and " Learning More from the MDG3 Fund Experience" Toronto: AWID. 2010. Web. 1 November, 2013. [www.awid.org/publications/feminist-monitoring-and-evaluation](http://www.awid.org/publications/feminist-monitoring-and-evaluation)

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*

<sup>28</sup> For a fuller discussion of why this framework is particularly useful for tracking the nature of gender inequality in a given context, and for assessing changes in this, please see *Changing Their World*, Second Edition, 2012, *op.cit*, p.9

<sup>29</sup> Rao , Aruna & David Kelleher, "Is There Life After Gender Mainstreaming?", *Gender and Development*, Vol.13, No.2, July 2005, pp.57 – 69, P.60

<sup>30</sup> See the *Huairou Commission Midterm Review of MDG3 Accountability Initiative*

<sup>31</sup> See <http://equalityiniraq.com/press-release/150-campaign-of-iraqi-gay-killings-by-smashing-skulls-with-concrete-blocks>

<sup>32</sup> Widow cleansing is a form of sexual exorcism, and practiced across several countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, requiring the newly widowed woman to have sex with or marry another man before she can inherit her husband's property. Such "cleansing" generally involves a widow having sex either with a designated village "cleanser" or with a relative of her late husband. In real terms, it is a way for the husband's family to continue control over the deceased husband's property, including his wife, and prevents widows from inheriting the husband's property. In many instances, women themselves have internalized these beliefs and voluntarily seek "cleansing"; but in others, the custom amounts to ritualized rape or forced remarriage. The implications of the practice are huge given the spread of HIV/AIDS. Widow cleansing rituals often result in fresh infections: an HIV-negative widow faces the risk of infection from a positive man who "cleanses" her; or a positive widow who was infected by her late husband can transmit the disease to the man who "inherits" her. In the context of polygamous marriages, this could result in a whole chain of infections. For more details, see: <http://www.unfpa.org/hiv/women/report/chapter7.html>; <http://isiria.wordpress.com/2009/04/13/the-appalling-practice-of-widow-cleansing/>.

<sup>33</sup> Occupational Health and Safety

## V. Why the MDG3 Fund was Effective

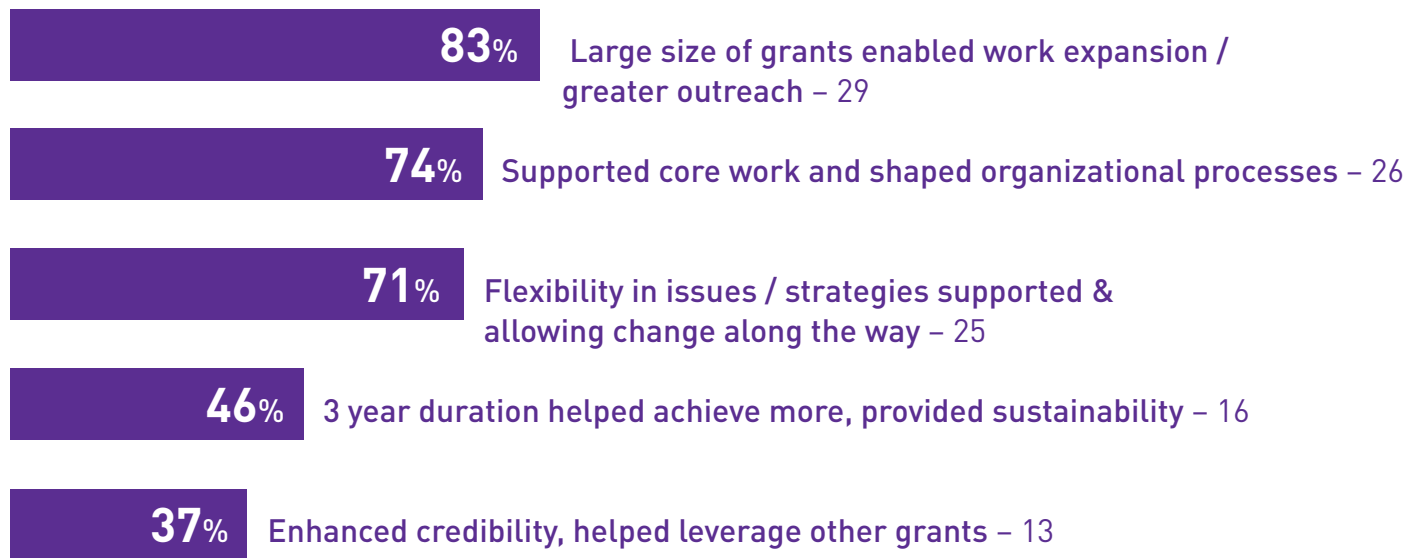
In the previous sections, we saw some of the remarkable achievements enabled by the MDG3 Fund. What made the Fund so effective? It is important to unpack the role of the Fund's design, mode of implementation, and ongoing relationship with its grantees in making this level of achievement possible. This does not mean that the Fund's design and implementation were flawless from the outset – in fact, many grantees were initially quite frustrated at the somewhat rigid systems and reporting requirements, at the lack of awareness and sensitivity to the unpredictability of women's rights work, and at the reversals that tend to occur. But when these issues were raised, particularly at the dialogue organized by AWID and the Ministry with a large subset of Fund recipients in June 2010, both the Ministry representatives and the Fund managers were open and ready to make changes that were more responsive to the grantees' realities. As mentioned previously, this also helped transform the relationship between Fund managers and grantee organizations, fostering a great deal of understanding and support.

This is perhaps why we believe that the same amount of resources given to a similar group of organizations or even to the same organizations, but delivered through a less flexible, open, and supportive mechanism, would probably not have yielded the same results. In this section of the report, we examine the factors that made the Fund uniquely effective by looking at how the grantees themselves analyzed its difference and value as a funding modality. Their opinions on this issue are valuable because they are highly informed respondents, experienced in fundraising with a diverse set of donor relationships and knowledge of the funding landscape – and many of them are veterans of the struggle to raise resources for women's rights work.

The largest number of respondents – 29 or 83% – identified the size and scale of the grants that were awarded as the most unique aspect of the Fund. In an environment where the vast majority of women's rights organizations (and development NGOs with major gender equality programs) meet their annual budgets with a patchwork of small grants, each tied to particular projects or "outputs," the Fund's awards were unusually large – its smallest grant was several hundred thousand Euros. This freed its recipients from the significant time and staff investments which are usually spent on fundraising – and meeting the disparate reporting requirements – while giving them an unusual degree of financial stability that allowed them to focus their energies more effectively on programmatic work. The provision of support for the organization's core mission and work, untied to specific projects or approaches, was highly appreciated by over three-fourths of our respondents, who felt that this helped shape organizational processes in ways that enhanced their effectiveness.

Figure 13: Unique advantages of the MDG3 fund

N=35



A closely related feature of the Fund was the diversity of issues and strategies it was willing to support, and most importantly, the flexibility to allow strategic shifts when they became necessary. Here are some illustrations of why this flexibility and diversity mattered:

### Box 11: The power of flexible funding

**Karama:** [T]he substantial [size of the grant] helped us [to] sustain the vision, be confident, flexible and responsive as our partners' needs changed and shifted during and after the Arab uprisings.

**Casa de la Mujer:** [T]he openness and solidarity of the people at the MDG3 Fund and the Ministry let us make the necessary adjustments to take care of risky and emergency situations to protect women's lives and integrity.


**Gender Links:** The MDG3 funding laid the foundation to scale up Gender Links' local government and media programmes, enabling us to work in 143 councils and set the platform to expand to 300 councils in total.

**The Huairou Commission:** [I]t allowed our members to focus on aspects of women's empowerment and gender equality which they prioritized – leadership, collective organizing, resource sovereignty, accountability and responsiveness of government and institutions.

**FGHR:** [T]here were fewer conditions attached to this grant [as compared to others]; the administrators understood the need for flexibility, particularly when supporting advocacy work.

**OWFI:** [T]he Fund's support of our core work gave us a break from continuous and exhausting fund-raising. According to OWFI's Director, Yanar Mohammed, "When part of our premises was bombed, and our radio station could not function for a while, we knew we would be able to mobilize the resources needed to replace the equipment from our growing number of local and global supporters. We also knew that the Fund managers in the Ministry would understand and support our recovery plan".<sup>34</sup>

**AWID:** [W]ith the flexible support from the MDG3 Fund, and after our board and staff concluded our Midterm Strategic Plan Review, we were able to launch a completely new program to respond to the clear trend of increased violence against women human rights defenders."



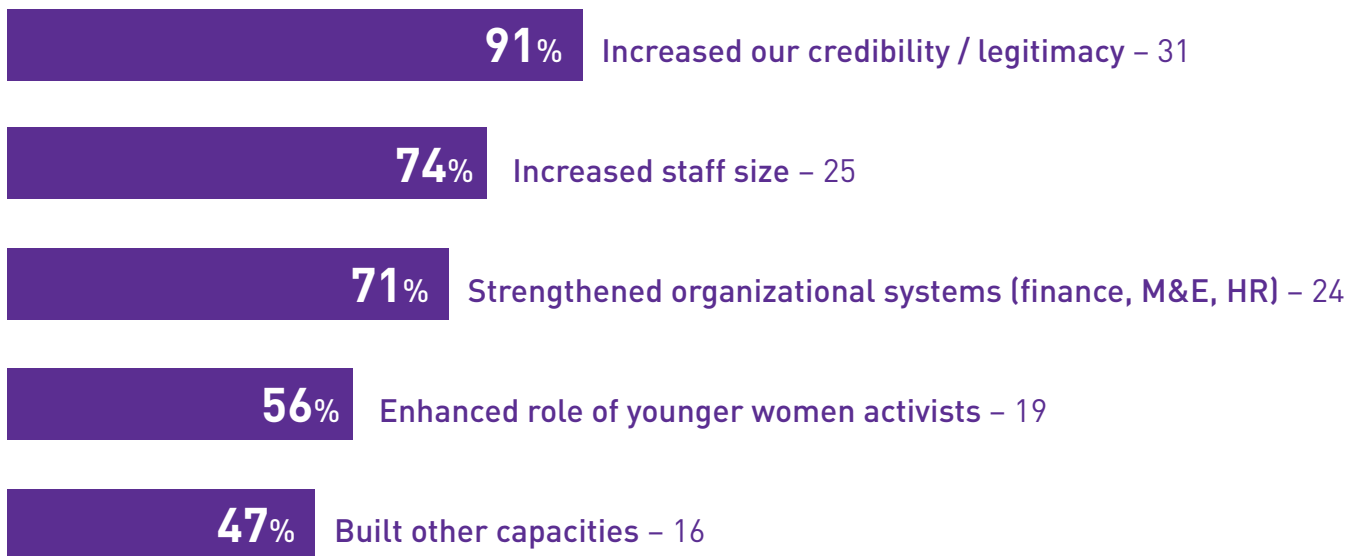
Another harsh reality that most women's rights work must contend with is the shortened timescale of most grants – often just one year or less. Given the complexity of women's rights work – especially the importance of focusing on the informal dimensions of culture and social norms – these timescales are simply unrealistic. On the other hand, it doesn't take decades to make an impact on the systemic roots of gender discrimination, as the Fund-supported organizations have demonstrated. The MDG3 Fund's three year grants later extended to almost four years, thus enabling grantees to achieve more, and to consolidate their work to make it more sustainable.

Here are some examples of why this longer time frame made a difference. The Association for Progressive Communication said, *"We were able to work deeply with a set of core partners over a sustained period of time. This depth allowed us to build the institutional capacity of our partners and their partners in turn, contributing to long-term impact."* Isis-WICCE reported that *"[T]he grant period of three years was good enough to measure progress and impact, [since we] had enough time to interact, implement activities, reflect and act on developments. The grant removed itself from projectising community lives."*

Another important aspect of the Fund – and an "unintended consequence" – was the ways in which it built the organizational capacity of its recipients. Almost all the respondents who answered this question in the survey (34 out of 35) reported that their organizational capacity and credibility had been enhanced in various ways, as depicted in Figure 14: increasing their legitimacy and credibility as an organization (74%), strengthening their organizational systems (71%), building their human resource base (71%), enhancing the role of young women activists in their organizations and movements, and strengthening a range of other capacities. Of those who reported increased legitimacy and credibility (26 organizations) as one of the enhancing effects of the Fund, it is interesting to note that all (100%) stated that the key audience with whom their credibility rose as a result of receiving the MDG3 Fund grant was other donors, which will hopefully enable them to leverage other resources to continue their Fund-initiated strategies and projects. But several also reported greater respect in the eyes of policy makers and government officials at the local and national levels (81%), other NGOs (88%), and other women's organizations (92%).


N=34

Figure 14: How the fund built organizational capacity



The organizational capacity and credibility built by receiving the Fund grants has important long-term implications – they may well be able to leverage this new status to increase their future resource mobilization, and thus their sustainability over time.

Clearly, many elements critical to the effectiveness of the MDG3 Fund were an integral part of its design. However, perhaps equally important was the willingness of Fund administrators to engage with grantees regarding challenges they faced with Fund requirements, and to make some responsive changes and adjustments along the way. In fact, during the first year of MDG3 Fund implementation, many grantees exchanged concerns and frustrations with the incredibly onerous reporting and M&E systems that were difficult to align with existing systems in grantee organizations. Indeed, these challenges were a major impetus for the convening that AWID proposed to the Dutch MFA in mid-2010 which brought together grantees to discuss more appropriate and realistic approaches to the monitoring and evaluation of women’s rights work. In addition to a focus on M&E, grantees were able to share challenges they faced with some dimensions of the Fund’s administrative requirements. The Fund was responsive in revising these, where viable.



This “MDG3 Fund Dialogue”, held in June 2010, was groundbreaking in many ways: some grantees present had not thought it possible to engage with donors in such an open and honest way to negotiate the terms of the funding relationship, particularly around financial reporting and M&E. As a result of this meeting, a commitment to review the reporting format was made by the Fund managers, and enacted within a few weeks. It was also a valuable opportunity for exchange and relationship-building - for Fund administrators to hear and better understand the challenges that some of their requirements imposed on grantees, as well as for grantees to hear the constraints and challenges that the Ministry was facing within the Dutch political context to maintain strong support for both the MDG3 Fund and more broadly for the Dutch development cooperation.

Grantees also made an agreement to support the Dutch feminist lobby (WO=MEN), and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs with concrete evidence related to the kind of results that the MDG3 Fund grants had generated so far. This data was then used very effectively by the Ministry to make the case to their government for the replenishment of the MDG3 Fund. The success of this collective effort was the creation of the MDG3 Fund’s successor; the new *Fund for Leadership and Opportunities for Women* (FLOW), launched in 2011 with a budget of EU 70 million, which increased to EU 80 million in 2012. This was no mean achievement at a time when most of Western Europe is in economic recession, and when there were strong political pressures in the Netherlands to halve the budget for overseas development assistance.

Among the grantees, the Dialogue was a valuable space in which to discover potential for collective exchange and learning, to build relationships with new organizations grantees had not worked with in the past, and to envision the kind of process that this document reflects: a joint effort to understand our complementary, aggregate impact (how the whole of our efforts is indeed greater than the sum of its parts).


## Conclusions:

This report contains a significant amount of evidence – both quantitative and qualitative – demonstrating how organizations with a strong focus on women’s rights and gender equality can “move mountains” in a relatively short space of time. But it is also important to draw out some lessons and insights about why this was possible – what was it about the MDG3 Fund and its funding modality that catalyzed changes on such a large scale and at such depth?

Our analysis suggests that there were several critical elements that made this level of achievement possible:

- The MDG3 Fund – and those responsible for its creation – had the vision and courage to invest a serious amount of resources in this work over a longer period of time. It is clear that the scale and size of the funding was a key factor in the scale and size of its impact.
- The Fund invested adequate time and effort in the selection process, and chose, to a large extent, partners with a strong track record in women’s rights work.
- The Fund’s approach was to trust and support the missions and strategies of its partners across a diverse set of issues, rather than imposing its own theories and formulas for change.
- The Fund’s investment was not limited to a small number of countries, but supported organizations that work in most regions of the world, and therefore had a significantly broader impact in advancing women’s rights and gender equality in regions where current donor support is very limited but sorely needed.
- The selected organizations and initiatives were supported for a reasonable period of time, and were thus able to show some impact.
- Fund leadership and managers were open to dialogue, to supporting and responding to grantees’ initiatives to come together, to learn together, and to make adjustments in its own systems.
- This resulted in creating the flexibility that allowed Fund recipients to respond appropriately to the emerging issues and challenges, which also contributed to stronger results.





We are glad that some of these critical strengths of the Fund have carried forward into the FLOW Fund, but we hope donors from other funding sectors – such as bilateral and multilateral agencies, foundations, INGOs, and others - will emulate them. They are especially useful lessons for the growing number of private sector donors, particularly those interested in supporting work with women and girls. The data in this report is sending a signal to the donor community worldwide that we hope they will take to heart: any donor or philanthropist committed to advancing gender equality, or any other human rights or social justice agenda, would do well to study the characteristics and practices that enabled the MDG3 Fund – and the legion of women (and men) it helped mobilize – to move mountains.

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<sup>34</sup> Personal communication of Yanar Mohammed with Srilatha Battiwala and Lydia Alpizar of AWID at the MDG3 Fund final meeting held in Den Haag, Netherlands, 20 November 2012.

## Assessing the aggregate effect of the MDG3 Fund

— an AWID initiative

Through this quick survey, AWID hopes to further assess how the MDG3 Fund grants helped advance women’s rights / gender equality overall, across the various organizations and regions in which the grants were made. Such an analysis will help us all to make a case to other donors to make similar large-scale investments in women’s rights organizations. For this reason, please note that we are consciously looking for the positive effects of the grant, though we know there may have been drawbacks as well. We are not asking for any identification details to preserve your confidentiality. However, if you would like to share information about your organization, please feel free to do so in the section provided at the end of the questionnaire. The analysis of the results of the survey will be shared with each of you when ready. Filling in this questionnaire should not take more than half an hour of your time. Please support this initiative by answering the following questions:

1. If you were to name five key achievements of your MDG3 Fund-supported work, what would they be?

(Please describe briefly)

- a. ....  
.....
- b. ....  
.....
- c. ....  
.....
- d. ....  
.....
- e. ....  
.....

2. What were the main advantages of the MDG3 Fund type of grant compared to other grants / funds you have received for your work? (e.g. *It supported our core work rather than a specific project, it gave us a larger amount of money than most other grants, there were fewer conditions attached to the grant, etc.*)

- a. ....  
.....
- b. ....  
.....
- c. ....  
.....
- d. ....  
.....
- e. ....  
.....

3. How did the MDG3 Fund impact your organization's work for advancing women's rights / gender equality?  
(tick as many as you think apply to your organization)

- We were able to reach / serve / support / empower a larger number of women / women's organizations
- We were able to increase our geographic coverage or reach or work in new communities / areas / provinces / countries / regions
- We were able to strengthen the number of women in leadership roles / quality of women's leadership at different levels
- We were able to launch new initiatives, programs or strategies to increase our effectiveness
- We were able to focus on new issues or new constituencies of women, or reach / involve a more diverse range of women (e.g. indigenous women, young women, etc.)
- We were able to bring women / women's organizations together across various divides and build collective power and identity
- We were able to build alliances with other movements and organizations
- We were able to influence the gender perspectives / strategies of other movements, sectors, and organizations
- We were able to do more effective advocacy to change discriminatory laws, policies, etc.
- We were able to prevent the rolling back / reversal of past gender equality gains or achievements
- We were able to track reversals, backlash, and challenges to change more effectively
- We were able to survive / continue our work in very challenging contexts
- Other impacts on our organization's work not listed above (please describe briefly):

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4. Please help us by quantifying some of these impacts as accurately as possible:

BEFORE		AFTER	
Before receiving the MDG3 Fund grant, we reached (approx.) this many women:	(e.g., 10,000)	After receiving the MDG3 Fund grant, we reached (approx.) this many women:	(e.g. 17,000)
[If you are a women's fund or network] Before receiving the MDG3 Fund grant, we reached approximately this many organizations:	(e.g., 47)	After receiving the MDG3 Fund grant, we reached approximately this many organizations:	(e.g. 75)
Before receiving the MDG3 Fund grant, our total staff strength was:	(e.g. 23)	After receiving the MDG3 Fund grant, our total staff strength was:	(e.g. 40)
Our geographic coverage before the MDG3 Fund grant: (use whatever measure is most relevant to your work: provinces, cities, states, countries, regions)	(e.g. 7 provinces / 8 countries)	Our geographic coverage after the MDG3 Fund grant:	(e.g. 10 provinces / 14 countries)



5. If the MDG3 Fund grant enabled you to launch new programs or strategies, or to deepen, strengthen, or expand existing programs or strategies, please describe these briefly or share links / attach reports where we could find this information:

- a. ....  
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- b. ....  
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- c. ....  
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- d. ....  
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- e. ....  
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6. If the grant enabled you to do more effective advocacy to change discriminatory laws, policies, etc., please describe these efforts briefly below:

- a. ....  
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- b. ....  
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- c. ....  
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- d. ....  
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- e. ....  
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7. If the grant helped you prevent the rolling back / reversal of past gender equality gains or achievements, please describe these briefly, or insert links to / attach relevant reports that discuss this:

- a. ....  
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- b. ....  
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- c. ....  
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- d. ....  
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- e. ....  
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8. Many MDG3 Fund recipients reported, in our interviews with them late last year, that the grant enhanced the capacity of their organizations in different ways. Please tell us if the grant has enhanced your organizational capacity in any of the following ways (tick as many as apply):

- Increased participation and role of younger women activists in the organization
- Allowed us to increase staff size
- Allowed us to invest in developing stronger organizational systems (finance, M&E, human resources, etc.)

Increased our credibility / legitimacy as an organization with (tick as many as apply):

- Other donors
- Policy makers / government officials
- Other NGOs / civil society organizations
- Other women's organizations
- Others (specify): .....

Other ways in which our organizational capacity has been strengthened:

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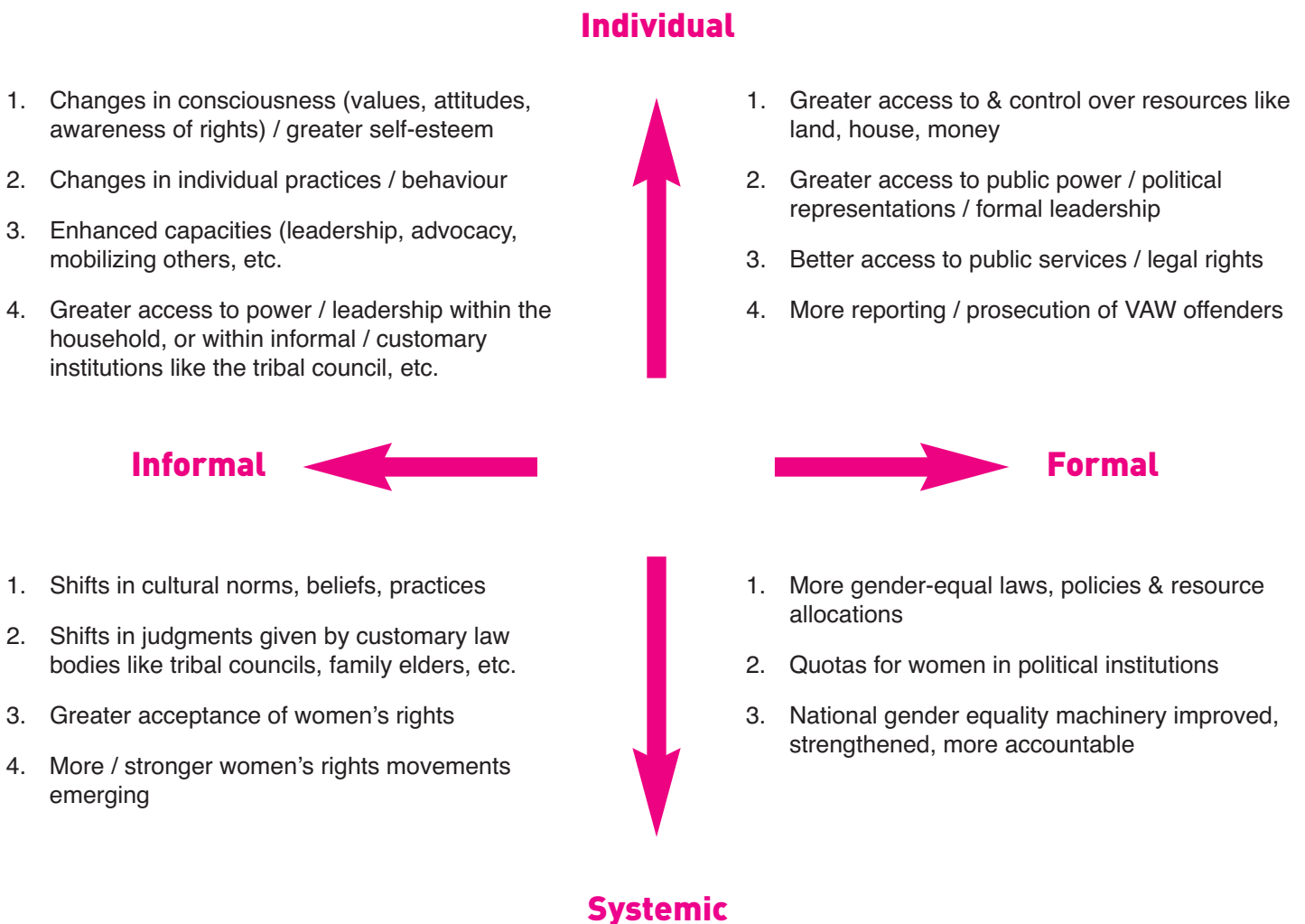
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9. We know that advancing women’s rights and gender equality involves changes at individual, community and societal levels, and in both the formal domain of law and policy as well as the informal arena of culture, beliefs, norms, and practices. The Gender at Work framework<sup>35</sup> provides a way of looking at and analyzing changes in all these. Some of these changes would obviously take years or decades to achieve – especially at the informal level. Nevertheless, we request you to share with us, briefly, even small shifts or changes that the MDG3 Fund grant helped you advance or accelerate, in each of these gender equality domains (the examples in each quadrant may help you think of what your work has helped shift):

### Tracking Change in Gender Power Relations / Structures (G@Wframework):





After studying this diagram and the examples within it, please share with us any such shifts or changes you have observed that fall into the various sections:

a. Perceivable shifts / changes, if any, at the level of consciousness / attitudes / awareness of rights at the individual level, including among women themselves, during the grant period:

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b. Perceivable shifts / changes, if any, at the level of cultural norms, attitudes, practices, within the community / society during the grant period:

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c. Perceivable shifts / changes, if any, at the level of individual rights, access to resources, or access to public decision-making or leadership roles:

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d. Perceivable shifts / changes, if any, at the level of formal laws, policies, or resource allocations:

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e. Please describe any other ways expected or unexpected outcomes of your MDG3 Fund-supported work that are not reflected in the answers to the previous questions:

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## Thank you very much for your valuable time and information!

Name of organization: .....

Location: .....

Name and email address of the person who filled this questionnaire  
(in case of the need for any follow-up or clarifications):

Name: .....

Email: .....

Please email the completed questionnaire to: **[sbatliwala@awid.org](mailto:sbatliwala@awid.org)**

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<sup>35</sup> See Rao, Aruna & David Kelleher, "Is there life after gender mainstreaming?", *Gender and Development*, 13.2, (2005): 57 – 69. Web. 13 November 2013. [http://www.genderatwork.org/sites/genderatwork.org/files/resources/gaw\\_is\\_there\\_life\\_after\\_gender\\_mainstreaming.pdf](http://www.genderatwork.org/sites/genderatwork.org/files/resources/gaw_is_there_life_after_gender_mainstreaming.pdf)

# Appendix (ii)

## List of Countries Reached / Worked In:

Afghanistan	Czech Republic	Jamaica	Niger	Tanzania
Albania	Dem. Rep. of Congo	Japan	Nigeria	Thailand
Algeria	Denmark	Jordan	North Sudan	The Gambia
Angola	Djibouti	Kazakhstan	Norway	Timor-Leste
Argentina	Dominican Republic	Kenya	Oman	Togo
Armenia	Ecuador	Kosovo	Pakistan	Tonga
Australia	Egypt	Kuwait	Palestine	Trinidad
Austria	El Salvador	Kyrgyzstan	Panama	Tunisia
Azerbaijan	Equatorial Guinea	Lebanon	Papua New Guinea	Turkey
Bahrain	Ethiopia	Lesotho	Paraguay	Turkmenistan
Bangladesh	Falkland Islands	Liberia	Peru	Tuvalu
Belarus	Fiji	Libya	Philippines	Uganda
Belgium	France	Lithuania	Poland	Ukraine
Belize	Gabon	Macedonia	Portugal	United Arab Emirates
Benin	Georgia	Madagascar	Puerto Rico	United Kingdom
Bolivia	Germany	Malawi	Romania	United States
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Ghana	Malaysia	Russian Federation	Uruguay
Botswana	Greece	Maldives	Rwanda	Uzbekistan
Brazil	Grenada	Mali	Saint Lucia	Venezuela
Bulgaria	Guam	Marshall Islands	Saudi Arabia	Vietnam
Burkina Faso	Guatemala	Mauritania	Senegal	Virgin Islands, British
Burma	Guinea	Mauritius	Serbia	Yemen
Burundi	Guyana	Mexico	Sierra Leone	Zambia
Cambodia	Haiti	Moldova	Singapore	Zimbabwe
Cameroon	Honduras	Monaco	Slovakia	
Canada	Hong Kong	Mongolia	Somalia	
Cent. Afr. Republic	Hungary	Montenegro	South Africa	
Chad	Iceland	Morocco	South Sudan	
Chile	India	Mozambique	Spain	
China	Indonesia	Namibia	Sri Lanka	
Colombia	Iran	Nepal	Swaziland	
Costa Rica	Iraq	Netherlands	Sweden	
Cote d'Ivoire	Ireland	New Caledonia	Switzerland	
Croatia	Israel	New Zealand	Syria	
Cuba	Italy	Nicaragua	Tajikistan	

# List of Acronyms

<b>APC</b>	Association for Progressive Communications
<b>AWANICH</b>	African Women’s Active Nonviolence Initiatives for Social Change
<b>AWDF</b>	African Women’s Development Fund
<b>AWID</b>	Association for Women’s Rights in Development
<b>CEDAW</b>	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
<b>CLADEM</b>	Comité de América Latina y el Caribe para la Defensa de los derechos de las Mujeres
<b>CREA</b>	Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action
<b>FCAM</b>	Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres / Central American Women’s Fund
<b>FGHR</b>	Fund for Global Human Rights
<b>FIDA Kenya</b>	Federation of Women Lawyers
<b>FLOW</b>	Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women
<b>IAWJ</b>	International Association of Women Judges
<b>ICC</b>	International Criminal Court
<b>ICPD</b>	Cairo International Conference on Population Development 1994
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IPS</b>	Inter Press Service
<b>Isis-WICCE</b>	Isis- Women’s International Cross Cultural Exchange
<b>JASS</b>	Just Associates
<b>LAC</b>	Legal Assistance Centre
<b>LGBTI</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MIFUMI</b>	The MIFUMI Project
<b>OECD DAC</b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
<b>OWFI</b>	Organization for Women’s Freedom in Iraq
<b>SAfAIDS</b>	Southern Africa HIV and AIDS Information Dissemination Service
<b>Semillas</b>	Sociedad Mexicana Pro Derechos de la Mujer / Mexican Women’s Rights Fund
<b>SMART</b>	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound (project-management criteria)
<b>UAF Africa</b>	Urgent Action Fund Africa
<b>WIEGO</b>	Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing & Organizing
<b>WIGJ</b>	Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice
<b>WILDAF</b>	Women in Law and Development in Africa
<b>WLP</b>	Women’s Learning Partnership
<b>WLUML</b>	Women Living Under Muslim Laws
<b>WO=MEN</b>	WO=Men: Dutch Gender Platform

