

# Partnering for People Power

The Philanthropy Support  
Ecosystem for Social Movements  
in **Africa** and **Latin America**



W I N G S  
ELEVATING PHILANTHROPY

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# Foreword – Philanthropy Support Ecosystems for Social Movements

- **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:  
MAIN FINDINGS  
BY REGION**



It happens quickly, *like a storm*, so there is no time to put in HR and accounting.



Interviewee, Africa

People-powered, democratic movements are crucial for transformative social change. They are a powerful representation of people's agency and ability to be at the centre of systemic change. Some of the biggest systemic transformations in the world have had social movements at their core. Among the many are movements for racial, gender and sexual orientation equality, from the suffragettes, #MeToo and the Green Wave to the anti-apartheid movement, Black Lives Matter and numerous LGBTQIA+ advocacy groups. Additionally, movements for peace, democracy and climate justice continue to proliferate.

Support from philanthropy is crucial for social movements and grassroots organisations to flourish, offering them resources for growth, leadership development, and institutional strengthening. However, such initiatives are often underfunded, especially those in the Global South. Research published in 2023 by the Human Rights Funders Network (HRFN) found that 99% of human rights funding from foundations is granted by funders in the Global North, and 88% of that funding remains there. Limited funding impedes movements leading change in the Global South.

To address the scarce and uneven distribution of funding for social movements, this study makes the case that philanthropic actors not only need to increase resources, but also transform their approaches by being more flexible and responsive to the needs and realities of the communities they serve. Furthermore, there is growing recognition among philanthropists that they cannot address deeply interconnected, systemic issues on their own and need to work together to have true impact. **Philanthropy support ecosystems**, the community of interacting organisations, functions and activities that assists and enables the achievement of philanthropy's potential by

nurturing and growing its capacity, capability and credibility, enable funders to more effectively support social movements. They help grow the cultures and volume of giving through giving campaigns, online donation platforms, and philanthropic advisory services. They are also able to distribute resources directly to communities through community funds, collaboration networks, and activist-led grantmaking vehicles.

Just like social movements are broad-based coalitions of actors working together through a multitude of tactics and strategies, philanthropy support ecosystems consist of many parts with diverse functions. They can include affinity groups, philanthropic advisors, academic research hubs, giving platforms, non-profits, financial institutions, foundations networks, collaborative funds, wealth management firms, and others. However, philanthropy support ecosystems in many places are in their nascent stages and often lack support. Funders who are genuinely interested in supporting people-powered movements effectively and without causing harm should invest in building and strengthening these ecosystems, which allow connection to the key nodes that exist around social movements.

With this research, we aim to understand what philanthropic and giving support ecosystems are already in place, and what is needed at domestic, regional and international levels to support the financial sustainability and resilience of social movements. Mapping the philanthropy support ecosystems for social movements is critical to understanding existing gaps and opportunities in the sector. In turn, this is crucial to strengthening philanthropic resourcing for social movements in ways that are truly flexible and responsive, protecting movements' integrity and approaches to organising.

The following study maps a sample of 223 philanthropic actors active in Africa and Latin America.

The study deepens our understanding of the funding ecosystems available to NVSMs today and analyses what movements and their supporters need. This work intends to help direct resources into existing mechanisms, collaborations and ecosystems that support social movements. It also hopes to ensure that increased and more sustainable funding can be leveraged through a stronger and better connected web of movement funders.

We aim to highlight the critical role of an ecosystemic approach to movement funding, which includes domestic and international philanthropy, individual giving platforms and, crucially, the support organisations that create the connective tissue between these actors. When all parts of this system act collaboratively, informed by the needs and strategies of those they support, people-powered movements are truly able to carry out their important work.

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## Executive Summary: Main Findings by Region

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This study mapped 174 domestic and international actors in the philanthropic support ecosystem for social movements in **Latin America**. Among these, 58 are local activist, socio-economic, women's and community funds – regranting organisations created by civil society in the region to provide support to often-overlooked communities and activists.

This 'intermediary' layer of the ecosystem is critical for social movements in the region, and the number of regranting, joint and community funds has been increasing in Latin America over the past 20 years.<sup>1</sup> They are a key source of funding to social movements – 71% of local social justice funds in Brazil support movements, as opposed

to 20% of other types of foundations, totalling around 147.7 million US dollars per year (Comuá Network, 2022).

International philanthropy is still key to financing human rights and social justice in the region, totalling about \$223 million in 2020, of which about \$16.5 million went to grassroots organising. Domestic corporate and family foundations are growing but still tend to invest in less 'controversial' areas like education, whereas domestic individual giving tends to be allocated to welfare causes. Among funders who are actively supporting communities and grassroots organisations are Fundación Bolívar Davivienda in Bolivia, Fundación Tichi Muñoz in Mexico, and Instituto MOL and Instituto ACP in Brazil.

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<sup>1</sup> Intermediary, joint and community funds refer to organisations that bring together, maintain and administer financial resources of multiple donors to support specific causes, populations or regional communities. These definitions are explored further later in this section.



In Brazil in 2022, 2 billion Brazilian reais (approximately \$350 million) was directed to education by Brazilian foundations, whereas the protection of rights, peace and democracy received R\$245 million (\$42 million) and institutional development of civil society organisations (CSOs) and social movements received R\$172 million (\$30 million). Between 3% and 13% of the funders tracked donated to territories for environmental preservation, quilombolas (descendants of runaway African slaves), Indigenous populations, and land reform (Comuá Network, 2024). In Colombia, foundations give an estimated 619,800 million Colombian pesos (approximately \$150 million), with the top priority being education, followed by entrepreneurship and social enterprises, and then early childhood development. Only 10% of foundations give to minority communities, 6% to Indigenous groups, and 4% to grassroots communities (AFE 2018).

There is therefore significant room for the expansion of domestic philanthropic giving in support of social justice, which could be unlocked with investments in local philanthropic ecosystems such as giving campaigns, crowdfunding platforms, and reinforcement of local intermediaries and their capacities to fundraise locally. There is also great potential for individual giving: Donations to CSOs totalled approximately \$2.2 billion in Brazil (IDIS 2022) and \$1 billion in Mexico (CEMEFI 2023).

The 2000s saw a boom in the creation of community development and social justice intermediary funds, as well as joint and community funds in Latin America: 44 of the 58 regranteeing organisations mapped were founded from 2000 onwards. This partly reflects a tale of two countries with the most developed regranteeing sectors – Brazil and Mexico – where 40 of the organisations are based. However, funds have emerged across the region, in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras and Peru. The two most well-established groups in the region are funds dedicated to gender and the environment. These funds build on long histories of social activism and were largely founded by grassroots activists.

The study shows the importance of philanthropy support organisations who work collaboratively and interconnectively to grow the sector, accelerate the establishment of

new funds, and transform funding practices through peer learning and capacity strengthening. In Latin America, there is a trend towards building larger and more diversified networks at different levels, which support social justice intermediary funds and social movements. These networks are key actors and capacity builders in the philanthropy support ecosystem. It is not by accident that Brazil and Mexico have the most developed community funding sectors in the region, with two key networks present in those countries that work to strengthen and build community philanthropy and social justice funds (Comunalía and Comuá). The impact of networks in strengthening the work of the philanthropic sector is evident. This corroborates findings from WINGS' research (WINGS 2014) showing that where there is an infrastructure organisation supporting community philanthropy, nine times more community foundations are created than where there is none. And new actors are emerging: The Alianza Socioambiental Fondos del Sur, or Socio-Environmental Funds of the Global South, brings together a group of 16 funds in Latin America, Africa and Southeast Asia, and also helps to seed new ones, which to date have collectively made grants totalling close to \$84 million in 50 countries.

In both Latin America and Africa, philanthropy support organisations are critical in leading philanthropic transformations. They facilitate the rise of trust-based and participatory grantmaking practices, the use of fiscal sponsorships, and the establishment of rapid response and emergency funds – all critical to ensuring that people-powered movements are supported in responsive and flexible ways.

In **Africa**, the study mapped 49 domestic and international funders in the philanthropic support ecosystem for social movements, most of whom are active in East, West and Southern Africa.

As in Latin America, Africa's reliance on international funding for social movements remains predominant. International funders contributed a total of \$328.6 million in human rights funding to the continent in 2020, of which approximately \$12 million was allocated to grassroots organising activities (HRFN 2020).

At the same time, increased formal philanthropy has emerged in Africa, the continent with half of the world's fastest-growing economies. There was a marked rise in large gifts from African philanthropists in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, jumping from \$103 million between 2010 and 2019 to \$269 million in 2020 alone (Bridgespan 2020). In 2023, it was reported that Nigerian philanthropists had given a total of \$434.17 million in the preceding five years, with a focus on health, education and poverty alleviation (African Philanthropy Network 2023). In South Africa, 31 domestic foundations donated \$454 million in funding between 2013 and 2018, with 75% coming from corporate foundations and 25% from family foundations. Domestic philanthropy across Africa primarily focuses on education, which accounts for 62% of all funding from 2016 to 2019 (OECD 2021).

Outside of institutional philanthropy, individual giving through digital fundraising platforms has in recent years become increasingly important for movements and communities, with providers like M-Changa in Africa playing key roles in mobilising funds for the 2024 youth protest movement, for example, facilitating 40,000 donations totalling close to 30 million Kenyan shillings (approx. \$230,000). These kinds of mobile giving platforms will continue to grow in importance for the regional philanthropy support ecosystem, simplifying donations and broadening the base of givers to NVSMs. These findings are in line with two wider trends observed: Domestic philanthropy in the Global South and East is growing and is also becoming more invested in supporting local human rights movements. Between 2017 and 2020, the 11 largest funders in the Global South and East more than tripled their grantmaking to human rights causes and social movements (HRFN, 2023).

Our research in both regions found that activist, community and intermediary funds, based in both the

Global North and South, play key and increasingly vital roles in enabling support for social movements. This is achieved through their proximity and deep embeddedness in the movements, as well as their intentional grantmaking strategies and responsiveness to shifting contexts. This intermediary layer in the ecosystem shifts power in its practices, centring trust and participation, and prioritising flexible and rapid response to emergencies. The often unrestricted funding provided by local intermediaries helps support the resilience and sustainability of movement activity: By absorbing risk and fulfilling due diligence needs of back-end funders, these funds ensure that movements are able to carry out their important work without being caught up in undue bureaucracy. Finally, and importantly, these funds often foster local cultures of giving by tapping into crowdfunding, community philanthropy and domestic corporations and foundations.

The research in both regions found that strong support ecosystems need to be in place for philanthropy to continue the trend of becoming truly people-focused and responsive to the needs of social movements. The good news is that in both regions there are key philanthropy support ecosystem actors in place. While Latin America has a more mature sector, with key networks representing a vast diversity of philanthropy and many exciting examples of collaboration, there are promising networks and initiatives emerging in Africa, too. For these ecosystems to effectively implement increased, sustainable and resilient funding to social movements, more investment into cross-regional exchange between domestic and international philanthropic bodies is needed. In addition, resources need to be channelled more intentionally into the building and strengthening of philanthropy support ecosystems and their catalysts and networks, which are working on transforming philanthropic practices.



## A note on language

- One of our key learnings is that talking about language is a crucial step to helping domestic and international funders collaborate and fund social movements. For instance, the term '**intermediary**' can carry strong implications of unequal power distribution and does not adequately reflect all that this layer of the funding ecosystem does. For this study, we find it useful to refer to the definition coined by WINGS of intermediary, joint and community funds as organisations that bring together, maintain and administer financial resources of multiple donors to support specific causes, populations or regional communities. These organisations come in various forms, such as activist funds, donor advised funds, giving circles, pooled funds, community foundations, and fiscal sponsorship funds. For the most part, they are transformational entities, with power-shifting as a core function. However, if intermediaries do not challenge existing power dynamics and systems, they cannot automatically be assumed to be better interlocutors.
- The general term '**fund**' is commonly used by organisations in Latin America that would traditionally fall under the intermediary, community or regrantee category, with '**local activist fund**' understood as funds created by activists and embedded in movements. Another important term in the Latin American context is '**territorial foundation**', used in lieu of 'community foundation', where the term 'community' may be connected to a historical position of vulnerability instead of power.
- **Philanthropy support organisations**, also known as infrastructure organisations, build the philanthropy support ecosystem through their functions and interactions. Their main goal is to provide leadership and services that support, strengthen and transform philanthropy. These organisations have a wide range of formats, including networks and associations, intermediary and community funds, fundraising and online giving platforms, academic institutions and think tanks, consulting firms, and advocacy platforms (WINGS, 2023a).
- A critical challenge in this work was defining **social movements**. This study understands social movements as people sharing a common cause and identity, aiming for justice. Social movements respond to perceived injustices, aiming to create change by challenging power structures and mobilising collective action. They can be local, national or global, involving various actors, and can include formally registered grassroots-based organisations.

# Methodology

The methodology for the research in both regions is based on a two-pronged approach: (1) a desk-based review of existing reports and literature on the philanthropic support ecosystem and the role of intermediaries in supporting social movements, and (2), carrying out consultations and structured and semi-structured interviews with actors and organisations operating in the philanthropy support ecosystem for social movements. Leveraging WINGS membership and networks in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa (see Annex 1) enabled connections with key ecosystem actors, as well as tapping into the perspectives of local, regional and global giving platforms and support networks operating in this space. The framework of analysis for the research was inspired by the 4Cs framework developed by WINGS (2017).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> 4Cs is an evaluation tool that assesses the work of support organisations through a multi-dimensional lens.



### Primary research questions:

1. Who are the key actors and what domestic resourcing is available? What strategies are they using to support social movements, particularly in terms of securing local versus international funding?
2. What mechanisms are available to support activists and social movements? (How are movements resourcing themselves and how are funds being distributed?)
3. How are philanthropy support organisations – in particular, local intermediaries – collaborating, networking and connecting with each other and with other philanthropy ecosystem actors?
4. What conditions are needed to scale existing giving mechanisms? What are the gaps and opportunities to ensure that movement funding is sustainable and resilient to changes in funding strategies?
5. How much funding is reaching intermediaries regionally and in target geographies?

One of the key research limitations for this project in both regions was the lack of comprehensive data on the volume of giving to social movements from both international and domestic funders. This can be largely attributed to the uncertainty of the contexts in which the sector operates, as well as limited country - and regional-level data collection efforts. For the Latin American section, financial information on the total donations made by a sample of nine funds in Colombia, Argentina, Ecuador and Mexico was collected in order to bypass this limitation. It is not a perfect sample, as the available data covers different years between 2021 and 2023; however, it does give us an estimate of these organisations' giving. We also used available aggregate financial data for funds based in Brazil and Mexico. For Africa, the study references and infers meaning from global data, in an effort to mitigate data gaps around funding flows (specifically related to the volume of funding).



Photo credit: 350.org on Flickr



# Resourcing Social Justice Movements – Challenges and Opportunities

- CHALLENGES
- OPPORTUNITIES





# Challenges



**Lack of trust:** Across both regions, there are many challenges to financing social movements, with many of these affecting local regranteeing organisations. At the crux of the problem lies a deep-seated lack of trust. Trust plays a key role in the funding of CSOs and is even more pressing when it comes to funding social movements. The trust gap, which centres on the question of who is considered capable, trustworthy and accountable, partially explains the disparity in global philanthropic flows (even when accounting for the impact of laws and regulations). This impacts grant recipients in a variety of ways, determining who receives funding, how large the amounts will be, whether funds are given directly, their level of dispensing flexibility, the strictness of reporting requirements, and the potential micromanagement of activities they fund (Human Rights Funders Network, 2023).

**Adapting compliance systems:** There is a need to experiment with different ways of funding, monitoring and reporting on funding – the tyranny of compliance is a significant barrier for social movement actors. Given the fluidity of social movements, they are often not formally registered as other collectives are, and funders are largely inflexible on this issue. A lot of funding is not long term, placing undue demand on social movements to demonstrate the longevity of their strategies by submitting strategic plans, which they do not necessarily have on hand. Some movements do not have a singular leader, which challenges accepted norms, and may impact youth-led and participatory initiatives' ability to secure funding.

**Shrinking civic spaces:** As nonviolent social movements gain support, they also gain increasing opposition – and in many countries with shrinking civic spaces, this results

in a range of restrictions being placed on them. These include bureaucratic hurdles, public stigmatisation, the halting of foreign funding, organisations being closed, and the imprisonment or even murder of movement actors – impeding outcomes around the world. Data from the CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS) Monitor shows that civil society is under serious attack in 116 countries. For example, anti-money laundering laws, sometimes deployed as a tool for government control, have been used to undermine CSOs' ability to open bank accounts or receive money in general. This is an even bigger problem for regional funds that need to move money across borders and consequently find themselves added to lists of 'high-risk' organisations.

This constitutes a significant bottleneck and hindrance, particularly for domestic actors who wish to support social movements but are afraid of reprisal.

*"... if you see [a large foundation] being branded and it has a big name, what would happen with a small foundation? It would make you hesitant if you feel the heat of the state coming for you as a family-owned or small organisation."*<sup>3</sup>

In many countries, "legislation and the criminal justice system have been used to quash dissent, demobilise and criminalise activists. In particular, stigmatising discourses and terminology referring to criminals, terrorists and communists have been used to delegitimise activists and justify the repression of social movements and protests" (Cavalcanti, R. P., Celi, I., and Gomes, S. D. S. R, 2023).

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3 Interviewee, Africa.

**The danger of movement capture:** The language of 'movement building' is laden with implications of unequal power and reduced agency, and needs further interrogation to avoid risks of movement capture. *"Best practice would be allowing the social movement to set the agenda on what they want funded – it should not be dictated by those who hold the purse strings."*<sup>4</sup>

**Internal constraints:** Social movements face internal challenges related to formalisation and organisational capacity. Funding groups that are not legally incorporated and/or individual activists present a host of legal and bureaucratic challenges for donors. But movements and grassroots groups often cannot or do not want to

become formal organisations. By formalising, a movement may face accusations of 'NGOisation', i.e. losing their roots and independence, and subjecting themselves to increased scrutiny through burdensome and restrictive registration/compliance regimes. Receiving institutional philanthropic funding that comes with increased accountability requirements is not always desirable for movements who prioritise non-financial resources like access and spaces to organise and prefer individual donations and crowdfunding. Most small or informal groups and movements who do want to fundraise have a need for capacity building and access to information, including internet access. They also need technical knowledge and support to navigate bureaucratic processes for fundraising and formalisation where relevant.

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4 Interviewee, Africa.

## Opportunities



**Philanthropy transformation:** To be a truly effective supporter, the funding community must see itself as auxiliary to movements - supporting them and their agendas by undoing some of the funding practices that make it so challenging. Thanks to the #ShiftThePower movement that emerged out of the community philanthropy space, and the Philanthropy Transformation Initiative, these conversations have moved into the mainstream of philanthropy. There are many examples of shifting funder practices, as well as the establishment of peer-learning spaces that help foster these necessary internal changes. The work on transforming philanthropy is also critical to addressing one of the biggest existing

barriers to increased domestic philanthropic giving to social movements – philanthropists' reluctance to give to social justice and human rights causes at the same scale as less controversial areas such as education, health and social welfare.

*"The idea is that we want to challenge traditional narratives and practices, particularly when it comes to money and funding and grantmaking, and how that often determines and defines relationships with communities who are struggling for their dignity."*<sup>5</sup>

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5 Interviewee, Africa.



### **The rise of trust-based and participatory grantmaking**

**practices:** Many intermediary, joint and community funds aim to address the above challenges and provide funding that directly responds to the needs of communities and movements on the ground, mostly by testing and implementing different forms of grantmaking. The frameworks provided by trust-based and participatory approaches to philanthropy are key to understanding their giving – grant-making builds on the knowledge, culture and approach of each grantee (Hopstein, G., 2023). A central feature of the organisations studied is a focus on systemic equity and shifting power structures, with strategies to strengthen democratic processes and empower marginalised groups and communities through social transformation. It is common for these organisations to work on several intersecting issues hindering social development in a specific territory, for instance, an environmental organisation applying a gender lens to its projects.

**The use of fiscal sponsorship:** Fiscal sponsorship (or fiscal hosting) is a model that has been increasingly used by funds in Latin America and Africa, allowing them to help unincorporated movements and groups receive resources directly. There are many types of fiscal sponsorship, but it generally means local funds receive and manage resources on behalf of a specific project, in a sort of grant relationship. This ensures that unincorporated groups can lead and implement projects, while donors are reassured that funds are being administered by a well-established organisation (Fiscal Sponsorship,

2024). This not only gives movements access to funding, but also to a "built-in network for physical, intellectual and emotional support" (Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy, 2024). When regranteeing organisations are not fiscal sponsors themselves, they allow informal groups to use a third organisation as a fiscal sponsor.

**Rapid response and emergency funds:** There are many examples of well-functioning rapid response funds that can both meet urgent needs of activists and allow movements to quickly respond to emerging opportunities in their campaigns. This includes the Urgent Action Fund, Fondo Semillas (Semillas Fund), CIVICUS Crisis Response Fund, Lifeline Embattled CSO Assistance Fund, and Dignity For All: LGBTQI+ Assistance Program.<sup>6</sup>

**Growing domestic giving to social justice and people movements:** In both regions there is much potential for domestic giving to movements – both institutional and individual. Individual giving is particularly driven by younger generations who are scaling up their philanthropic generosity and showing greater trust in organised and unorganised civil society, including through digital giving platforms, such as Donar Online and Donare in Latin America and M-Changa in Africa. As community and intermediary philanthropy becomes stronger and more organised, there is much opportunity for peer learning and exchange towards growing giving to social justice causes. For this to be successful, a strong and well-resourced philanthropy support ecosystem is essential.

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6 The Urgent Action Fund gives Rapid Response Grants that cover protection and security, but also collective care strategies. The organisation highlights the need for legal guidance and support for women threatened in electoral campaigns. Two of the main areas supported by the fund in 2022 related to the criminalisation of social protest, in response to a repressive human rights context in several countries, and environmental justice, specifically concerning the resistance of defenders who are facing the dangers posed by extractivism, organised crime and large-scale agribusiness projects. Semillas Fund gives small, short-term grants so that activists can: attend events that promote and strengthen the feminist movement (such as international conferences); respond to both natural and socio-political emergencies (from earthquakes to migrant caravans); and help activists under threat (with the support of partner organisations with more experience on providing support to individuals at risk).

# The Philanthropy Support Ecosystem for Social Movements in Latin America

- HISTORICAL CONTEXT
- THE CURRENT STATE OF THE PHILANTHROPY SUPPORT ECOSYSTEM FOR SOCIAL MOVEMENTS
- ANALYSIS OF FUNDING FLOWS
- THE POTENTIAL TO GROW DOMESTIC PHILANTHROPY FOR SOCIAL MOVEMENTS



# Historical Context

Latin America has a long history of civil society action. The 1970s and 80s saw an expansion of grassroots social movements, during a time when many of its countries were ruled by or recently emerging from military dictatorships. It was a political scenario marked by a representation crisis, in which society needed alternative channels to express and advance its interests. This was a catalyst for the formation of resistance and democratic movements and social organising in response to historical social issues exacerbated by detrimental or lacking public policies. Famously, many agrarian movements were formed by peasants (campesinos) in several countries to advance land reform and the rights of agrarian workers and small farmers. Strong social movements were formed to advance the rights of specific groups, such as Indigenous Peoples, women, Black populations, and quilombolas. Movements also formed around different topics, such as the environment, community development and human rights.

Social movements in Latin America are marked by their plurality, and it is important to highlight their two distinguishable characteristics. The first is intersectionality. It is common for environmental groups to actively support Indigenous rights and local development, or women's rights, with a socio-environmental approach. Movements focusing on land rights, such as La Via Campesina, have had youth and women's groups for decades. Another important intersection is between gender and racial justice movements for instance, when it comes to understanding the reproductive rights of Black women.

The second distinguishing characteristic of Latin American social movements is articulation. This means connecting with other movements within the same country, but also internationally. Through international action movements can increase their ability to pressure their own governments. A good example is the World Social Forum, an annual gathering of civil society (movements, CSOs and individuals) rooted in Latin American activism and headquartered in Porto Alegre, Brazil.





# The Current State of the Philanthropy Support Ecosystem for Social Movements



This section is based on an analysis of 174 domestic and international actors of the philanthropic support ecosystem for social movements in Latin America that were identified in this study ([list of organisations](#)), as well as in previous WINGS research (WINGS 2018). The

organisations were classified according to the taxonomy developed by WINGS (2021) for the philanthropy support ecosystem: support organisations, funders and organisations that enable philanthropy.



107

◦ out of which 58  
are domestic  
intermediary, joint and  
community funds

**Philanthropy support  
organisations**



50

**Funders**



17

**Enablers**

We mapped 107 philanthropy support organisations, which "usually do not directly fund or implement philanthropic programmes themselves, but rather provide services to support those that do" (*Ibid.*, p.4). Domestic intermediary, joint and community funds, are a type of support organisation and represent 54% of the total. By domestic, we mean funds that were created and are based in Latin America, and whose funding comes from both international and home-grown sources. The next section provides an in-depth analysis of these organisations, which aim to support often overlooked local communities and activists.

In addition to domestic funds, 12 international intermediary funds were identified as an important source of support to both their Latin American counterparts and movements

directly. These are mostly women's funds from the Global North created to strengthen feminist activism and improve the resilience of other women's funds. They include Fenomenal Funds, the Global Fund for Women, FRIDA: Young Feminist Fund, Mama Cash, and the Equality Fund. Two funds support Black women – VidaAfrolatina and the Black Feminist Fund – and the AYNÍ Fund supports Indigenous women. Several international funds analysed support Indigenous Peoples and land rights, as well as broader environmental and climate justice. These include the Pawanka Fund and The Community Land Rights and Conservation Finance Initiative (CLARIFI). In addition to providing funding and support, these funds produce a wealth of knowledge, mapping the current state of resourcing for social movements and making recommendations on how to improve it.

The other types of support organisations mapped for this study exemplify the rich infrastructure for philanthropy in the region, including networks and associations, non-profits, academic institutions, consulting firms, and fundraising and online giving platforms. Networks at different levels support social justice intermediary funds and social movements in Latin America. For example, the Comuá Network, whose members are social justice funds in Brazil, and Comunalia, an association of community foundations in Mexico, operate at the local level. At the regional level, Alianza Socioambiental Fondos del Sur (the Socio-Environmental Funds of the Global South) is a network that brings together existing activist funds and helps to seed new ones. Its members are in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru, as well as in Africa and Southeast Asia. At the global level, the feminist networks Prospera and Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) provide support to movements worldwide and have women's funds as an integral part of their work. Academic institutions, such as the Centre for Philanthropy and Social Investment (CEFIS) of Adolfo Ibáñez in Chile, provide invaluable data to help us understand the strengths and needs of local philanthropic sectors and can take a leading role in the introduction and adaptation of new concepts to local realities.

When discussing the resourcing of social movements, it is important to recognise the work of fundraising and online giving platforms. Digital tools, such as Donar Online (which works across the region) and Donare in Brazil, provide fundraising support, help movements set up online giving pages and host crowdfunding campaigns. Some even offer donation management platforms for CSOs.

There is no need to provide definition for 'funders of the ecosystem', except to offer the caveat that some funders also provide support services. For our purposes, organisations were classified according to their main function. Fifty funders to domestic intermediary, joint and community funds and social movements were mapped. The funders of the ecosystem were divided into three main groups:

- The first group comprises actors from *government and development cooperation*, and these include:

International cooperation agencies from the United States (US), Spain, Catalonia, Switzerland and Norway; the governments of France, the Netherlands and Norway, mediated through their ministries and embassies; the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UNTF); and the Inter-American Foundation (IAF).

- The second group is made up of large *international non-profits* that provide funding through local regranting organisations, as well directly to movements. These are Hivos, Thousand Currents, Both ENDS, Global Greengrants Fund, the Climate and Land Use Alliance (CLUA), and Freedom House, especially their Dignity for All: LGBTQI+ Assistance Program.
- The third group contains private *institutional donors*, who represent over 70% of the funders in the ecosystem. Currently only 20% of these donors are from the region. Among these organisations are Fundación Bolívar Davivienda (Bolívar Davivienda Foundation) in Bolivia, the Fundación Tichi Muñoz (Tichi Muñoz Foundation) in Mexico, and the ACP and MOL institutes in Brazil.

The historic importance of international philanthropy for the financing of social justice issues in Latin America cannot be overstated. Foundations such as the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Mott Foundation, both based in the US, were fundamental to the strengthening of Latin American civil society. The latter, alongside the Inter-American Foundation, has been a great sponsor of community philanthropy in the region. Private institutional funders finance a number of intermediary, joint and community funds, including seeding resources for the creation of new organisations. They also provide learning and sharing spaces that help advance the sector's development.

Lastly, a group of 17 CSOs, networks and information and technology providers, such as Civic House, play the important role of enabling a stronger philanthropic ecosystem. They do this by building the necessary capacity among activists and other civil society actors, and providing them information on issues they face on the ground.

## Latin American intermediary, joint and community funds

Domestic intermediary, joint and community funds are organisations created locally to provide funding and other types of support to specific causes, populations or regional communities, fundraising from both international and domestic sources. Domestic intermediary funds are crucial actors for shifting power in philanthropy by expanding marginalised groups' access to resources, having structures to respond to emergencies, addressing needs on the ground through co-creation and collaboration, and focusing on capacity building and institutional strengthening. These funds are recognised by activists, as well as international cooperation and civil society actors, as powerful mechanisms to fund social movements.

**Local funds are a key source of funding to social movements: 71% of local social justice funds in Brazil support movements, as opposed to 20% of other types of foundations (Comuá Network, 2024).**

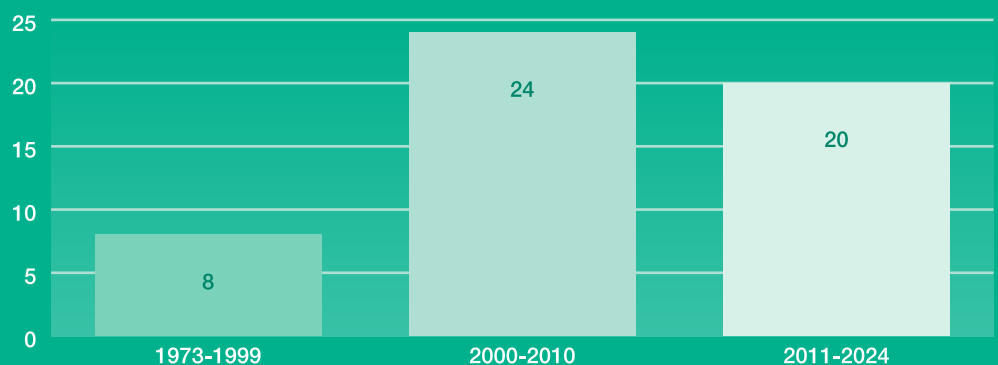
There is no available data on exactly how much intermediary, joint and community funds grant in Latin America,

but a few data points help us start to put the pieces together. In 2021, 14 social justice fund members of the Comuá Network (2023) had a budget of R\$254.7 million (approximately \$45 million), and the organisation estimates that the sector in Brazil represents between \$50–60 million. According to Alternativas y Capacidades (2019), 21 community foundations in Mexico had an income of around \$32 million in 2014. Data collected for this research through the websites of nine local funds in Colombia, Argentina, Ecuador and Mexico put their total donations at over \$10.7 million in 2022. Fundo Casa Socioambiental (the Casa Socio-Environmental Fund) provided overall support in 2021 that totalled more than \$3 million for 462 projects, of which 73% directly supported 285 projects of institutionalised associations and 23% directly funded 93 informal groups and movements. (WINGS, 2023b, p.5).

Forty-four of the 58 organisations mapped were founded from 2000 onwards. Brazil and Mexico are home to the majority of the community development and social justice intermediary funds in Latin America, with 40 of the organisations based in these two countries. However, funds have emerged across the region, establishing a presence in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras and Peru.

### Creation date of intermediary, joint and community funds

\*Creation date for 52 of the 58 organisations analysed.





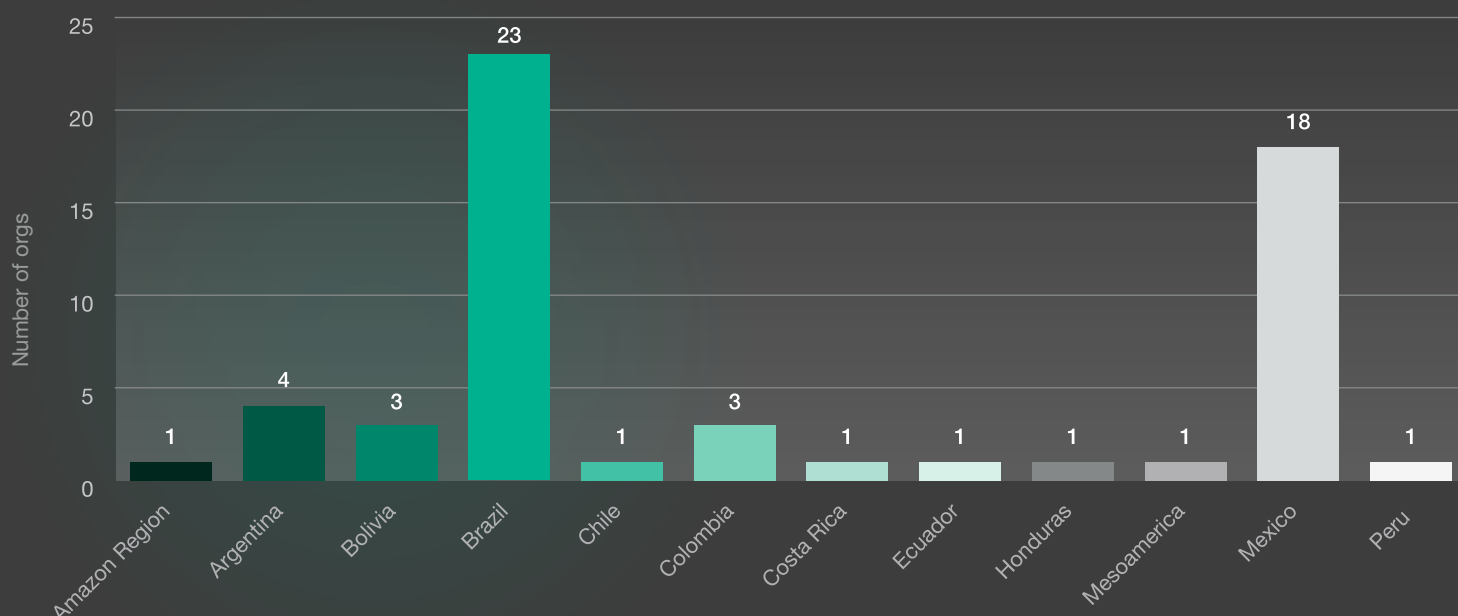
Mexico is home to two of the largest and most established funds in the region, the Semillas Fund, created in 1990, and Fondo Acción Solidaria (Solidarity Action Fund) (FASOL), created in 2007. However, most of the organisations mapped in the country are community foundations, and Mexico hosts the largest number of these foundations in Latin America (16 were included in this study). The first Mexican community foundations were created in the late 1980s and early '90s by businesses that wanted to give back to their communities. Indeed, businesses are still a major source of income for several foundations. Today, Mexico has one of the most developed community philanthropy sectors globally and a dedicated network, Comunalia.

Two other countries with interesting developments in community philanthropy are Colombia and Chile, where these types of organisations are referred to as 'territorial foundations', connoting their connection to territories. In 2019, two social businesses in Colombia, Evaluar Consultores and Azaí Consultores, began a learning process on how community philanthropy could address

local needs in the country, receiving support from the Mott Foundation. Seven groups in different regions of Colombia showed interest in moving forward with the idea, and an organisation called TerritoriA was established to support the development of the field. Three territorial foundations have already been founded and another six are in the process of being created (TerritoriA, 2024).

In Chile, a programme to develop community philanthropy was created (Programa Sembrando Fundaciones Comunitarias en Chile) to counter the centralisation of donations in the country, which mostly go to the Santiago Metropolitan Region. CEFIS at the Adolfo Ibáñez University coordinated the initiative, which was supported by the Mott Foundation with the participation of 19 CSOs and companies. In addition to decentralisation, the organisations were interested in bringing a philanthropic model to Chile that could foment local giving to empower communities, offer flexible funds that responded directly to community needs, and articulate different actors – including public and private – working for community development (CEFIS UAI, 2021).

Where intermediary, joint and community funds are located

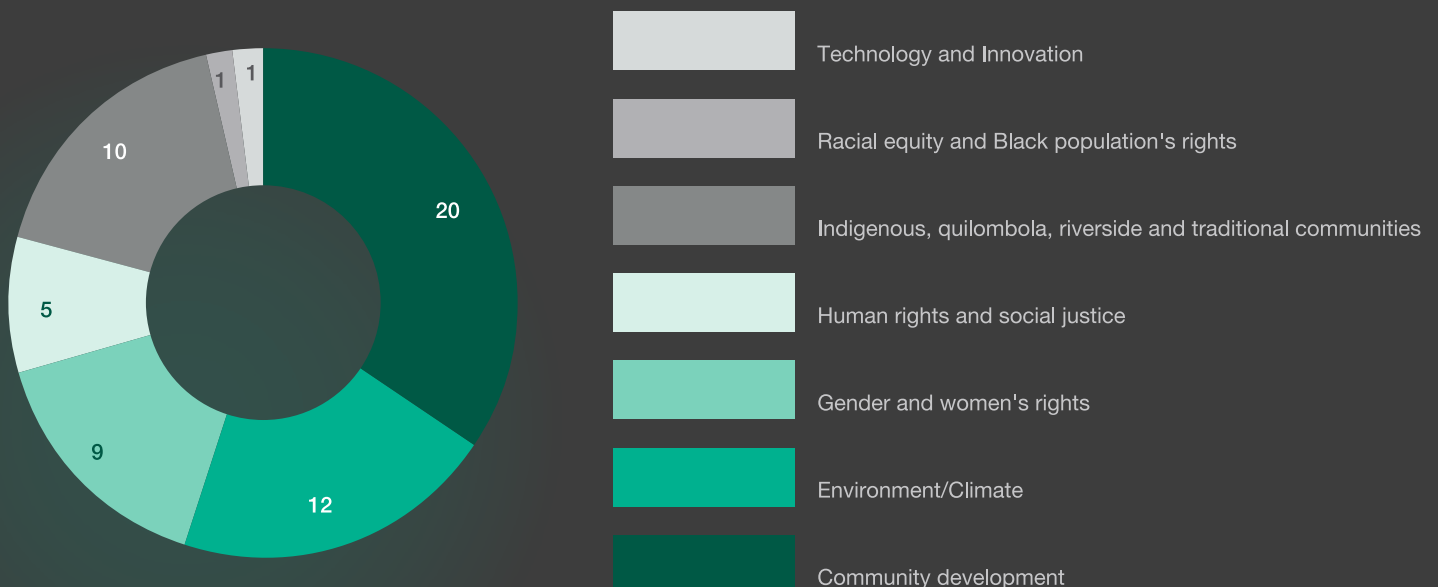


In Brazil, the early 2000s saw a sharp decrease in international philanthropy and cooperation, due to the global perception that the country was in a well-established position as an emerging economy. In a process that resembles an exit strategy, international philanthropic organisations financed the creation of most funds, leaving behind regranteeing organisations who would have to fundraise from dwindling sources to support social justice initiatives in the country. This process of withdrawal of international actors created a huge vacuum in funding. Despite some considerable growth in the giving by domestic private institutional funders to CSOs – from slightly over \$89 million in 2018 to nearly \$147 million in 2023 (GIFE, 2024)<sup>7</sup> – these funders still tend to focus on what are considered less 'controversial' areas, such as education. However, the international withdrawal process also led to further development of the philanthropic field in the country, bringing more independence to civil society leaderships and shifting a lot of the decision-making power to local actors.

<sup>7</sup> Respectively, R\$ 511.3 million and R\$ 838 million.

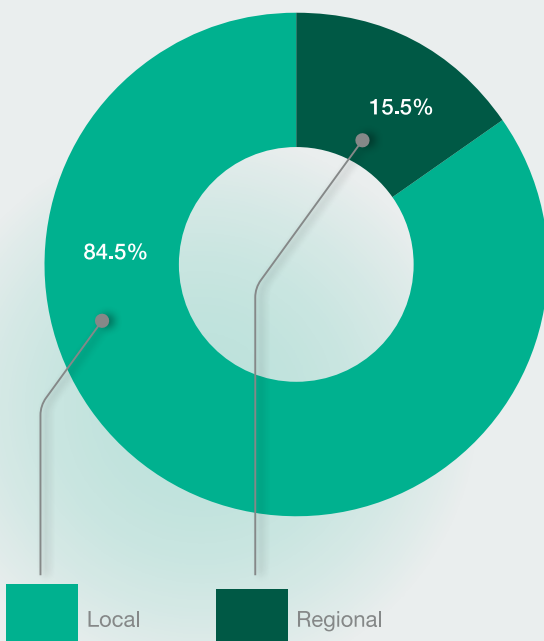
The two most well-established groups in the region are funds dedicated to gender and the environment. These funds build on long histories of social activism and were largely founded by grassroots activists. They are also part of networks at the local, regional and global levels. Women's funds are among the most mature and developed. The Semillas Fund in Mexico, for instance, has existed for over 30 years. According to the HRFN (2023, p.5), "among funders based in the Global South and East, women's funds... provide more flexible funding than any other funder type". They are followed by long-standing environmental funds created in the early 2000s, including the Casa Socio-Environmental Fund in Brazil, the Solidarity Action Fund (FASOL) in Mexico, and newly created funds, including Fondo Socioambiental Emerger (the Emerger Fund) in Colombia and Fondo Ñeque (Ñeque Fund) in Ecuador. As is characteristic of Latin American movements, most funds are socio-environmental, working on the intersection between environmental and social justice issues. FASOL (2022), for instance, makes a point of being an organisation that works for socio-environmental justice while incorporating a transversal gender lens to its practices.

#### Thematic areas of intermediary, joint and community funds



Most domestic regranting funds have a local focus, but nine of them have a broader geographic focus. The main target populations of these organisations are Indigenous Peoples – as with the Mesoamerican Territorial Fund (FTM), the Amazon for Life Fund, and Kolom No'ooj (FILAC) – and women and gender minorities, as seen in Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres (the Central American Women's Fund), the Urgent Action Fund Latin America and The Caribbean, and Fondo de Mujeres del Sur (the Southern Women's Fund). Fondo Tierra Viva and the Casa Fund are organisations who work on environmental issues, and Civic House focuses on using technology for social and civic impact. The geographic coverage of the organisations varies, with a few working in Latin America and the Caribbean and others in South, Central and Mesoamerica, and the Amazon Region.

**Geographic focus of intermediary, joint and community funds**



Lastly, while some funds in the region have created structures that are similar to those of international foundations, many others have emerged from and are embedded in the movements they serve, providing deep local knowledge and connections. Creating funds that draw resources from individual local supporters was the route many activists took in resourcing their movements whilst maintaining their independence. This is important in contexts where governments oppose these movements' existence, where international funding is unpredictable, and where domestic institutional funders for social justice remain few and far between (more on this below). This logic is fuelling the growth of intermediary, joint and community funds in the region.

Many funds have emerged from and are embedded in the movements they serve, opting not to replicate structures of international foundations



The Mesoamerican Territorial Fund (2024), for instance, was created to facilitate and promote direct investment in support of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, as a response to the fact that little global funding reaches these constituents. Members of the Amazon Community Funds network have pointed out that community funds provide resources that adapt to the needs and realities of local populations, as opposed to other funding sources that hinder access by imposing rigid rules (Podáali Fund, 2023). Changes in how the domestic resourcing for social justice is viewed also drove the conversion of a foundation into a fund. In 2024, the Plurales Foundation in Argentina became the Plurales Socio-Environmental Fund, moving from being an implementing to a grantmaking foundation, as part of a change in strategy aimed at providing better tools and solutions to strengthen rural and Indigenous community organisations.



## "Las redes salvan – Networks Save Lives": The Importance of Collaboration and the Philanthropy Support Ecosystem<sup>8</sup>



Social movements in Latin America learned the importance of collaboration in the fight against violence and injustice long ago – intermediary, joint and community funds reflect these lessons. Organisations have a deep understanding of the benefits of being part of networks, associations and other types of partnerships.

An example of this is the collaboration between funds and movements to finance and strengthen causes. This is seen in the Mesoamerican Initiative of Women Human Rights Initiative (IM-Defensoras);<sup>9</sup> Leading from the South, a feminist alliance supporting organisations, groups and movements working on women and girls' rights;<sup>10</sup> the Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA), one of the main initiatives in the world today working on the intersection of gender and environmental issues;<sup>11</sup> and the On the Right Track Initiative, an interregional alliance

of women's funds in Latin America and Europe aimed at strengthening the feminist, LGBTIQNB+<sup>12</sup> and human rights movements.<sup>13</sup>

"Networks create a sense of solidarity, that we are not alone."<sup>14</sup>

Networks provide an ideal space for **learning and sharing best practices**, so that organisations do not have to reinvent the wheel and can adapt good practices and strategies to local contexts. Networks are key capacity builders in the philanthropy support ecosystem. Comunalía, for instance, has an initiative to develop community philanthropy leaderships in Mexico, and TerritoriA has developed a platform to support the administrative, financial and legal processes of territorial foundations in Colombia.<sup>15</sup>

8 Mesoamerican Initiative of Women Human Rights Defenders, 2024.

9 A partnership between Central American Women's Fund (FCAM), Just Associates (JASS) Mesoamerica, Consorcio Oaxaca (Mexico), Unit for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Guatemala (UDEFEQUA, Guatemala), La Colectiva Feminista (El Salvador), and Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID).

10 It was conceptualised and is managed by four women's funds from the Global South: the African Women's Development Fund, Fondo de Mujeres del Sur (which works in Latin America), the Women's Fund Asia (WFA), and the International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI) / AYNÍ Fund (AYNÍ), which covers the three regions. The initiative is financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and it started with a four-year donation of €42 million in 2017. This was then increased to €80 million over five years in 2020 (the second phase additionally received the support of the Fondation CHANEL).

11 It was led by The Central American Women's Fund (FCAM), in collaboration with Mama Cash and Both ENDS. Since 2016, GAGGA has provided over €12.04 million in 1,742 grants to mainly women-led community-based organisations. It also offers non-financial support, such as mutual capacity strengthening, joint lobby and advocacy, and the facilitation of connections.

12 Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer or questioning, and non-binary.

13 In its first phase, 156 organisations and networks were supported, 53 of which were in 14 Latin American countries. In the initiative's second phase, this number increased to 251 grants, including 118 groups in Latin America. The women's funds prioritised the security and care of the groups in their grantmaking, adapting to local contexts such as the war in Ukraine and migratory flows in Latin America.

14 Interview with FCAM.

15 Interview with Comunalía.

By creating networks and infrastructures, organisations can also **increase the visibility of the work done by funds and foment a culture of giving**. The Amazon Community Funds network (Podáali Fund, 2023) was established to coordinate the efforts of seven social justice funds in the Amazon Region.<sup>16</sup> As well as a space for learning and sharing with each other and different social movements in other regions and countries, the funds also see the network as a tool to help them put a spotlight on the challenges they face. Arrecife, in Mexico, is a coalition of nine intermediary, joint and community funds.<sup>17</sup> It aims to create a philanthropic culture in the country by increasing the levels of financing to and the long-term sustainability of grassroots organisations with a focus on social, environmental and economic justice, as well as gender equality. One of the coalition's tools is the hosting of workshops where grassroots groups and activists can discuss how to mobilise resources for their projects and communities.

Although the number of intermediary, joint and community funds has been increasing in Latin America in the past 20 years, there is still a lot of room for growth. Just like donors from the Global North face challenges reaching grassroots groups and communities, regional funds or larger national ones may face similar limitations. Local funds may deliberately choose to remain small to ensure they are close to the populations and communities they serve. The establishment of new funds fills that gap in the philanthropy ecosystem. Through all of the above functions (funding, peer learning, capacity strengthening, etc.), networks help grow the sector and accelerate the establishment of new funds. WINGS research shows that

where there is an infrastructure organisation supporting community philanthropy, nine times more community foundations are created than where there is none (WINGS 2014).

With that in mind, the Casa Fund in Brazil systemised and documented its principles, methodologies and practices to help other budding groups and activists interested in creating socio-environmental funds. There was an appetite for that kind of support, and four groups quickly established local funds, demonstrating the replicability of the model: Fundación Socioambiental Semilla (the Semilla Foundation) in Bolivia, the Socio-Environmental Fund of Peru, the Emerger Fund in Colombia, and the Ñeque Fund in Ecuador. The the Alliance of Socio-Environmental Funds of the Global South was born out of this experience. It brings together a group of 15 funds in Latin America, Africa and Asia, with a mix of long-standing and newer funds. The Alliance "acts as a bridge between large donors that see the value in resourcing grassroots organisations but cannot do it themselves... [and] as a buffer, protecting local inexperienced community groups and associations from having to prematurely deal with the ordeals of receiving grants in international currencies" (WINGS, 2023b, p.6).

*"The process of promoting the funds, especially in Latin America, was stronger due to the emphasis placed by the Casa Fund a few years back and, in some way, when Amália came to us with the story of the [Casa] Fund, it was something we had been thinking about for a long time."*<sup>18</sup>

16 Dema Fund, Podáali, Indigenous Fund of the River Negro (FIRN), Fundo Luzia Dorothy do Espírito Santo, Mizzi Dudu Fund, Puxirum Fund, and Babaçu Fund.

17 Fundación ADO, Fundación Comunitaria del Bajío, Comunalía, FASOL, Fundación Comunitaria Oaxaca, Fondo Semillas, Fondo Oaxaqueño para la Conservación de la Naturaleza, Fundación Tichi-Muñoz and Fundación Merced.

18 Interview with Emerger Fund.

# Analysis of Funding Flows



There is no existing comprehensive analysis on funding flows to social movements in any part of the world, and many challenges persist around how to accurately assess the amount of funding reaching social movements through direct and indirect ('intermediary') channels.

In 2019, international philanthropic funding for human rights issues in Latin America was 4% of total funding (\$212 million) and less than 1% in the Caribbean (\$11 million). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) funding for human rights issues in these regions totalled 9% and 1% respectively (\$697.5 million and \$110.8 million) (Advancing Human Rights, 2020). While the data does not clearly differentiate the funding flows to NGOs, grassroots groups and social movements as defined for this research, 7% of foundation funding in Latin America (\$14,982,642) and 13% of foundation funding in the Caribbean (\$1,476,488) went to "grassroots organising", defined as "building popular support for, encouraging activism around, and helping to organise individuals and communities to mobilise in support of particular issues." This can be assumed to refer primarily to direct funding for social movements.

LGBTQIA+ funding represents 0.39% of global foundation funding. In Latin America and the Caribbean, LGBTQIA+ funding totalled \$54,816,685 in 2021–2022, of which less than 7% was awarded for regranting – a proxy we can use to infer the small amount of funding channelled directly to communities. Moreover, only 7% of funding came from organisations based or headquartered in the region (Global Philanthropy Project, 2024). Similarly, between 2016 and 2020, 0.6% of global philanthropic funding benefited Indigenous Peoples, totalling \$4.5 billion. Out of that, 4.1% was directed to Central/South America and the Caribbean, and only around one-fifth of that went to

Indigenous Governments and Autonomous Regions, and organisations that primarily serve Indigenous Peoples (International Funders for Indigenous Peoples, 2024).

Even when funding does reach local organisations in the Global South, it tends to go to the larger and most established ones. Research by RACI (2022), the Argentine Network for International Cooperation, covering 33 Latin American countries, found a division in civil society across the region: Small, specialised CSOs in large urban centres absorb large amounts of resources, while most local organisations and social movements are informal, volunteer-based and financially unstable. Smaller organisations are more likely to coordinate with social movements, while larger, professional organisations struggle to connect with grassroots movements. All organisations' work is important, but this dynamic stops resources from reaching the majority of the population.

The study "Resourcing Black Feminist Organizing in Latin America and the Caribbean" (Foundation for a Just Society and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, 2023), led by a group of Black feminist researchers and funded by the Foundation for a Just Society and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, found that although there are many activist groups doing powerful work across multiple movements – ranging from human rights and social justice to climate, democracy and gender justice – it is rare for Black women-led organising to receive direct investment. "Black women contend with racialized and gendered inequalities in the movements they are part of. What results is the marginalization of Black women's concerns across movements and the erasure of their leadership – something intensely felt when seeking funding, resources, and support" (Foundation for a Just Society, 2023).



# The Potential to Grow Domestic Philanthropy for Social Movements



One consistent outcome of the research for this study is that social justice and human rights activism still heavily relies on international funding. For instance, 87% of the members of the Comuá, a network of social justice funds in Brazil, say their main source of funding is international philanthropic organisations (Comuá Network, 2022).<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, where there is a challenge, there is potential. Following international philanthropy, the two most frequent funding sources mentioned by Comuá's members were donations from national philanthropic organisations, mentioned by 70% of members, and donations from individuals, mentioned by 67% of members (*ibid.*).

Even though there is a strong tradition of giving in the region, it is generally connected to religious institutions, which give directly to those in need or in response to emergencies. According to the World Giving Index, in 2023, 26% of Brazilians reported donating money, followed by 22% of Mexicans and Argentinians, and 16% of Colombians (Charities Aid Foundation, 2024). According to a 2022 survey carried out by the Institute for the Development of Social Investment (IDIS), a philanthropy support organisation in Brazil, individual donations to CSOs in the country totalled R\$12.8 billion

(\$2.2 billion) that year. This compares to corporate philanthropy donations to CSOs in 2021 totalling R\$4.1 billion (\$700 million). Most giving was directed toward causes connected to children, health, hunger and emergencies. In Mexico, according to the 2023 Study of the Nonprofit Sector by the Mexican Center for Philanthropy (CEMEFI), CSOs raised more than MX\$56 billion (\$3.3 billion), 63% of which came from private foundations and companies, 30% from individuals, and 7% from the public sector. This means individuals donated nearly \$1 billion. However, over half of the overall donations were allocated to welfare causes, an umbrella category that includes support to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

There is potential for social movements to increase donations by individuals, especially members of Generation Z, who show more trust in CSOs than older generations (IDIS, 2022). Research in Brazil *ibid* also shows the potential of online avenues to attract donors through social media and giving platforms. GivingTuesday is now present in almost 20 Latin American countries, providing an infrastructure for donors to help strengthen the culture of giving in the region.

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<sup>19</sup> This data point does not give us numbers on how much that is, as Comuá's study did not ask for financial volumes for data protection reasons, a testament to the challenges of collecting data in unstable and/or unsafe contexts (Comuá Network, 2022).

Since the 1990s, institutional philanthropy has grown in Latin America and is now well-established in several countries, mostly in the form of corporate philanthropy. Corporate philanthropy has strong networks in the region, including the Group of Institutes, Foundations and Enterprises (GIFE) in Brazil, Association of Family and Corporate Foundations (AFE) in Colombia, CEMEFI in Mexico, Group of Foundations and Enterprises (GDFE) in Argentina, and the Jamaica Network of Corporate Foundations (JNCF). But corporate foundations are primarily still running their own programmes as opposed to engaging in grantmaking. They are also largely focused on interventions that are connected to market logic and deemed to be less risky, such as education and entrepreneurship, rather than social justice, which is seen as potentially controversial.

According to a census carried out by GIFE – one of the main associations of philanthropic organisations in Brazil, composed mostly of corporate and family foundations – in 2022, Brazilian foundations donated R\$2 billion (approximately \$350 million) to education, whereas the

protection of rights, peace and democracy received R\$245 million (\$42 million) and institutional development of CSOs and social movements received R\$172 million (\$30 million) (Comuá Network, 2024). Only 20% of GIFE's members supported social movements directly. Between 3% and 13% of the organisations donated to territories for environmental preservation, quilombolas, Indigenous populations and land reform.

A similar situation is portrayed by AFE from Colombia (2018). Foundations give an estimated COL\$619,800 million (approximately \$150 million), but the top priority is education, followed by entrepreneurship and social enterprises, and then early childhood development. Only 10% of foundations give to minority communities, 6% to Indigenous groups, and 4% to grassroots communities. At the time of AFE's study, no foundation focused on the LGBTQIA+ community. Corporate foundations also focused on territories where they were present – only 14% worked in communities where they do not operate.



## Best Practice Examples – Domestic Models of Sustainable Funding for Movements



Getting funding for work related to community development and social justice can be a Herculean task, which, as we have seen, becomes even more challenging when procuring domestic sources of funding. But there are many opportunities to scale up homegrown resources and funding practices, and a strong philanthropy support ecosystem is critical for strengthening cultures and models of giving. Intermediary, joint and community funds are always looking for different ways to diversify their donor base and are key allies in increasing domestic institutional and individual donors. Below, we outline cases that highlight different domestic fundraising strategies and tools that funds can use for their long-term sustainability and partnership with homegrown philanthropy.

### Digital campaigns: Brazil Human Rights Fund

The Brazil Human Rights Fund launched five digital campaigns in 2022, reaching 24.6 million people and increasing individual donations by 18%. The fund's strategy includes an annual online meeting of donors to thank them and promote a deeper connection with human rights issues, for instance, with volunteer activists telling donors how grants from the fund supported their work. It is noteworthy that two of the campaigns were also accompanied by 'offline' actions: A campaign focused on women's rights included partnerships with restaurants led by women, in which part of the customers' bills were donated to the fund, and a digital campaign against hunger was further promoted by sending physical informational letters to the organisation's contact base.

### Fundraising for emergencies: Semillas Fund

The Semillas Fund in Mexico has a "response protocol for crises and emergencies", created to allow the organisation

to offer support to communities when major disasters happen. When the protocol is triggered, it initiates a fundraising campaign that includes calls to action aimed at individual donors. Mexican society is very sensitive to the need to support those affected by disasters, and these campaigns tend to get a lot of traction.<sup>20</sup> The most recent example is a fundraising campaign to support the "Women Rebuilding Guerrero" programme, to benefit a Mexican state deeply affected by Hurricane Otis in October 2023. The programme selected 19 organisations that apply a gender lens to work on reconstruction projects, as well as to provide economic and emotional support (Semillas Fund, 2024b).

### Partnerships with institutional donors: Casa Socio-Environmental Fund

In August 2024, the Casa Fund announced a partnership with CAIXA, one of the largest banks in Brazil, to coordinate the 'Socio-Biodiversity Web' initiative. The bank's socio-environmental fund will donate R\$53 million (almost \$10 million) to the initiative – its largest investment to date. Four hundred organisations across the country will be selected to run projects focused on the environment and food security. One of the bank's directors pointed out that it would have been impossible for most community-based groups to access the bank's funding without the Casa Fund partnership, which uniquely enabled connection to small, grassroots organisations in different parts of the country and provided them with direct financial and technical support.

20 Interview with Semillas Fund.



# The Philanthropy Support Ecosystem for Social Movements in Africa

- HISTORICAL CONTEXT
- THE CURRENT STATE OF THE PHILANTHROPY SUPPORT ECOSYSTEM FOR SOCIAL MOVEMENTS
- ANALYSIS OF FUNDING FLOWS
- THE POTENTIAL TO GROW DOMESTIC PHILANTHROPY FOR SOCIAL MOVEMENTS



# Historical Context



African philanthropy is regarded by many as an integral part of the African identity and an inherent characteristic of African family life and community. Many different English words are used to describe this act, including 'giving', 'charity', or 'help', while Indigenous terms include ubuntu, harambee, ajo, ujamaa, ilima and susu, reflecting a variety of traditions and practices. This includes giving time, expertise and skills, but importantly, these acts are "underpinned by the ideas of solidarity, mutuality and reciprocity"<sup>21</sup> and understood to mean the "love for humanity."<sup>22</sup> Philanthropy can be formal or informal, and both forms have been well documented by key actors in the African philanthropy sector, including Southern Africa Trust,<sup>23</sup> TrustAfrica,<sup>24</sup> and the African Philanthropy Network (APN), amongst others.

It is these ideas of solidarity and "love for humanity" that are perhaps the most critical when thinking about funding social movements. On the African continent, social movements have a long history, including anti-colonial movements in the 1940s and '50s which fought for self-determination and to overthrow exploitative colonial states responsible for social and racial hierarchies that deeply fragmented African societies. A second wave

in the 1980s focused on strengthening democracies, and moving away from single-party states. Following this period, in which multi-party systems were introduced, many CSOs that had pushed for democracy became NGOs or development agencies. Some call this process the 'NGO-ification' of the opposition, who often became focused on providing social services – funded by Western donors – that privatising African states were unable or unwilling to provide.<sup>25</sup>

A third wave in the mid-2000s, had a clear urban character, reflecting a shift to more urban-based populations without ties to the state or political parties. There is a sense that two forces propelled this third phase of protests on the continent: 'Political grievances' among the middle class and 'material grievances' among the poor, with the former determining when protests would occur and the latter, who was likely to take part.<sup>26</sup> In the past four years particularly, social movements globally have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, either by an acceleration of existing issues or new issues, like changes in public politics, funding cuts, loss of livelihoods, and increased inequality and discrimination.<sup>27</sup>

21 Julien, L. A; Mahomed, H; Samuels, S (2014) [Africa's Wealthy Give Back: A Perspective on Philanthropic Giving by Wealthy Africans in sub-Saharan Africa, with a focus on Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa](#). UBS and TrustAfrica. P 34 Accessed 17 June 2024.

22 Moyo, B (2011), [Transformative Innovations in African Philanthropy](#), The Bellagio Initiative, Commissioned paper.

23 *Ibid.*

24 Mahomed, H, (2014), [Of Narratives, Networks and New Spaces: A Baseline Mapping of the African Philanthropy Infrastructure Sector](#).

25 Aidi, H (2018), [Africa's New Social Movements: A Continental Approach](#) (Policy Brief). OCP Policy Center. Accessed 3 July 2024.

26 *Ibid.*

27 Zajak, S (2022), 'COVID-19 and the Reconfiguration of the Social Movements Landscape' in Bringel, B and Pleyers, G (eds) *Social Movements and Politics During COVID-19: Crisis, Solidarity and Change in a Global Pandemic*. P 134–140.

# The Current State of the Philanthropy Support Ecosystem for Social Movements

This section is based on an analysis of 49 domestic and international actors of the philanthropic support ecosystem for social movements in Africa that were identified in this study ([list of organisations](#)). The organisations

were classified according to the taxonomy developed by WINGS (2021) for the philanthropy support ecosystem – support organisations, funders and organisations that enable philanthropy.

49

° out of which 30  
are domestic  
intermediary, joint and  
community funds

**Philanthropy support  
organisations**

9

**Funders**

10

**Enablers**

Most funders specifically supporting social movements on the continent are based or working in the East, West and Southern African regions.

**No. of countries that can access social  
movement funding/support per region**

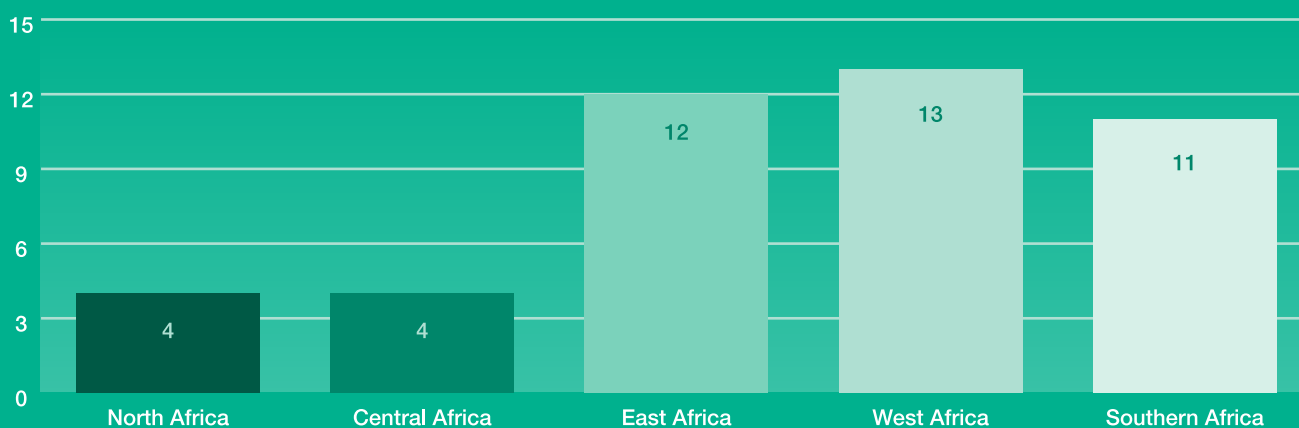






Photo credit: Asokeretope on Wikimedia Commons

- In **East Africa**, the infrastructure tends to be located within the East African Community (comprising Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania) which constitutes an economic bloc.<sup>28</sup> Funders in the region are supported by the East Africa Philanthropy Network (EAPN), which seeks to provide a collaborative platform to champion, connect and co-create innovative solutions to advance philanthropy in East Africa. This includes review of the resource base, capacity, credibility and practices of various development actors and the extent to which the operational context supports local giving and effective grantmaking.<sup>29</sup> In a study carried out in 2023, the EAPN and WINGS found a total of 264 philanthropy support organisations across Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, as well as 57 regional or global philanthropy support organisations active in the sub-region (Kenya Association of Fundraising Professionals, 2023).
- In **West Africa**, there is a sense of being at the forefront of a transformative shift in philanthropy, with its contributions to national development in many countries gaining attention in recent years.

Favourable policy changes and democratisation have created opportunities to establish philanthropic institutions. Furthermore, the support of international donors and organisations has led to the emergence of philanthropic support organisations that provide services to support and strengthen philanthropy through their promoting, coordinating and accelerating roles. Within the region, Nigeria and Senegal have more established philanthropy support ecosystems. This is due to dedicated organisations that strengthen the ecosystem, as well as the long-established presence of external funding and partnerships by donors and international NGOs that use both countries as their bases to work across the region. Research by TrustAfrica and WINGS in 2023 found 176 philanthropy support organisations whose primary audience is philanthropy across Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Senegal (Travaille, 2023).<sup>30</sup> However, the regulatory frameworks of West African governments and shrinking civic space are not conducive to the growth of philanthropy support ecosystems, and there is low donor interest and investment in supporting the growth of the philanthropic ecosystem.<sup>31</sup>

28 Julien, L. A Mahomed, H; Samuels, S (2014), [Africa's Wealthy Give Back: A Perspective on Philanthropic Giving by Wealthy Africans in sub-Saharan Africa, with a focus on Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa](#). UBS and TrustAfrica. Accessed 17 June 2024.

29 See: [East Africa Philanthropy Network](#)

30 As opposed to those that enable philanthropy as a subset of their functions or fund the ecosystem.

31 TrustAfrica and WINGS (2024) [Strengthening the West African Philanthropy Support Ecosystem](#) (Policy Brief), P 6. Accessed 17 June 2024.

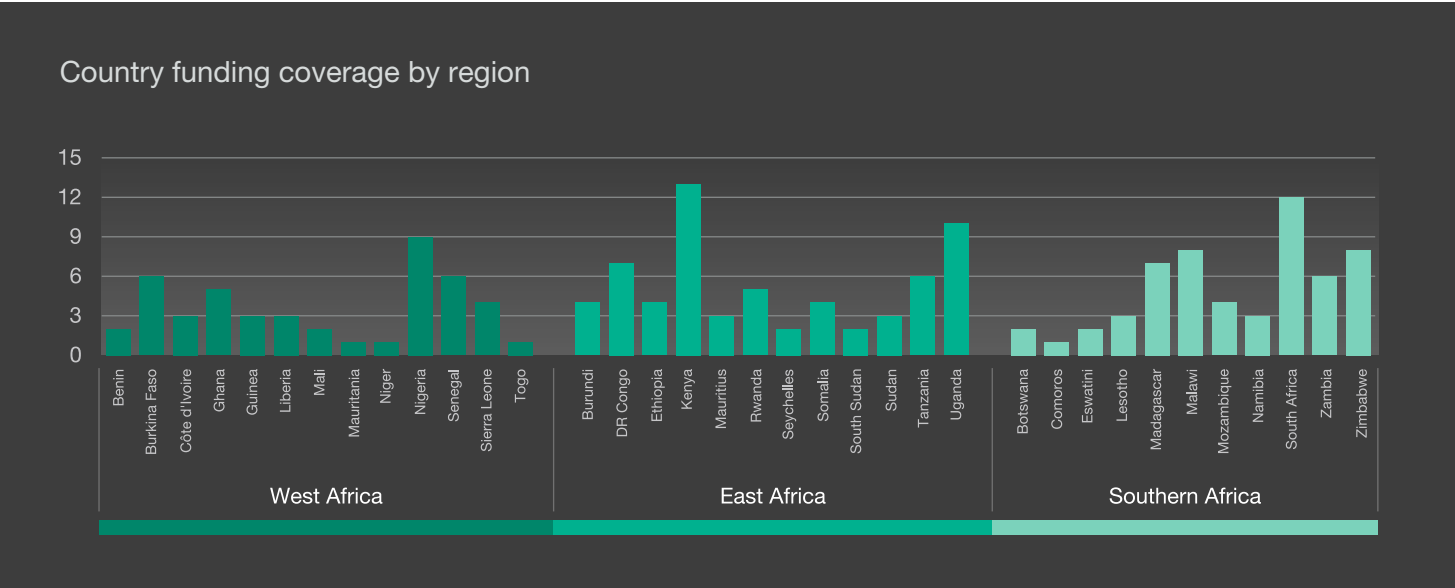
- In **Southern Africa**, institutional philanthropy is most visible in South Africa and guided by the Independent Philanthropy Association of South Africa (IPASA), who shares a common agenda with networks such as the APN and its regional offshoots in East and West Africa to explore establishing a Southern Africa network. This has emerged most starkly since the COVID-19 pandemic, where IPASA found itself in a unique position, facilitating much-needed connections among funders. There has been a notable shift since then, towards prioritising funder collaboration and multi-sector partnerships, reflecting evolving needs within the region's philanthropic sector. Some of the challenges in supporting the emergent philanthropy support ecosystem include the diversity of member interests and the difficulty in providing offerings that appeal to all stakeholders. There is also limited capacity, both in terms of human resources and financial resources, which pose sustainability challenges for IPASA.

The lack of recognition from the Government was noted as a significant hurdle, impacting the organisation's advocacy efforts and independent philanthropic work in South Africa and the region. These experiences provide valuable lessons for the emerging Southern Africa Philanthropy Network, emphasising the importance of understanding member needs, fostering collaboration, and advocating for sector recognition and support.<sup>32</sup> From a legislative perspective, recent changes to banking legislation by the Reserve Bank in South Africa – affecting the way payments are made across country borders within the region – will have a significant impact on the philanthropy support ecosystem.<sup>33</sup>

The figure below depicts the span of coverage in terms of funding or support opportunities available for social movements within the three main focus regions of this review.

32 Moolman, A (2024), Communique for the African Philanthropy Network meeting to discuss the potential for the creation of a Southern African Philanthropy Network.

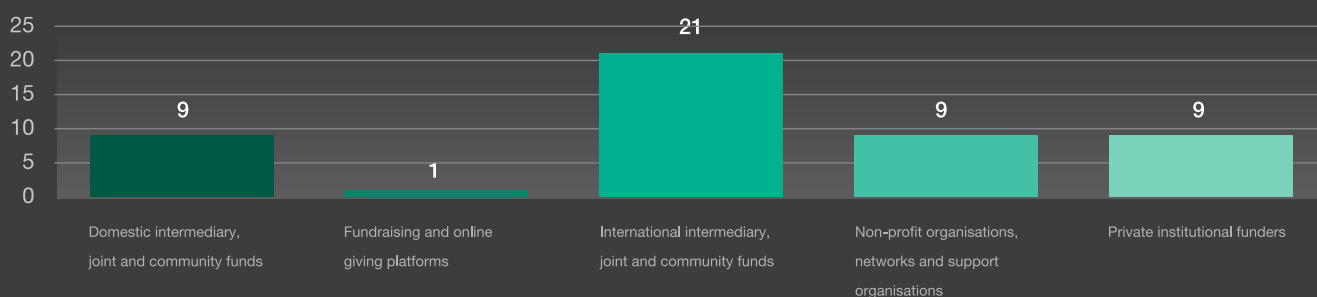
33 See: [South African Reserve Bank](#)



The countries correlate with the mapping undertaken by WINGS for East and West Africa, which found that Nigeria and Senegal in West Africa, and Kenya and Uganda in East Africa had the most developed philanthropy support

ecosystems. It is not surprising that South Africa rated so highly for coverage in Southern Africa, followed by Zimbabwe and Malawi.

## Types of organisations that fund or support social movements

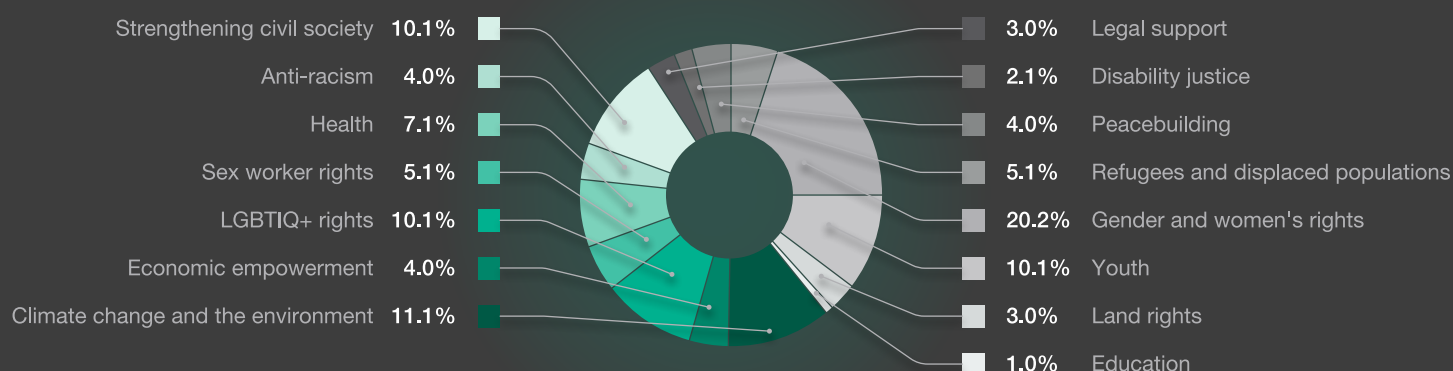


The types of funders featured within this snapshot are predominantly Global North funds, and include basket funds created specifically for social movement support. They also include those who provide fellowships, rapid response funds, membership alliances (who may have a dedicated fund), activist-led funds, and giving platforms for the Global North public to pool and then allocate funds to countries in the Global South. Many of the funders here have multiple types of funding opportunities, ranging from specific social movement strengthening grants, research, and rapid or emergency response, to fellowships that educate and upskill activists and provide important points of connection across different issue areas, countries and regions. Others fund convening spaces and learning

exchanges, or are geared towards emergency response for human rights defenders.

The most supported thematic areas in this sample are illustrated below. While a specific focus of the research was on environmental and women's rights funds, the data found a range of other critical focus areas for African movements and funders, including strengthening civil society (which spans civic engagement and accountable democracy), access to basic services, sex worker and LGBTQIA+ rights, disability justice, peacebuilding, and land rights, among others. Many of these themes intersect across grant areas.

## Thematic areas for social movement funding support





## The Importance of the Philanthropy Support Ecosystem

Philanthropy support organisations on the continent are grappling with their practices and are collaboratively and individually generating useful knowledge to build and strengthen the ecosystem. Through this study alone, several research initiatives have been uncovered, as well as many promising practices. Below are some examples of current conversations in the region that are advancing the philanthropy support ecosystem for social movements in Africa.

*"In my view, as philanthropists we need to find ways to be better organised and deliberately work together in a way that we are able to map the ecosystems: Where are the gaps? Where are we over-committed in certain areas? Etc."*<sup>34</sup>

**Strengthening ecosystems:** The **Southern Africa Trust (SAT)** focuses on strengthening ecosystems in Southern Africa by implementing a holistic, intersectional approach to funding and related issues. They aim to create linkages and coordinate collectively, enhancing capacity across various sectors. They consider themselves a resourcing organisation, mobilising resources and working with governance institutions and inter-governmental bodies. They contribute to knowledge generation, inform advocacy, and co-mobilise resources, including acting as a fiscal host for a number of NGOs and entities.

**Challenging how we understand and support social movements:** The **Ford Foundation** and **Open Society Foundation**, through their Africa regional offices, have consistently been key players in trying to support social movements across the continent, formally and informally. This has included investing in the philanthropy support ecosystem and philanthropy support organisations like the **EAPN** and **TrustAfrica**, who, supported by the Ford Foundation and Wallace Global Fund, are driving efforts

to facilitate donor collaboration in creating facilities of support towards social organising, including convening a meeting of funders and social movement leaders to reflect on ways of unlocking more and better support for social movements.

**ActionAid International** have developed extensive guidance on working with social movements, from understanding their form to determining how best to support them at each stage of their life cycles.<sup>35</sup>

### Key principles for supporting social movements:

Several feminist organisations and formations across the continent have been key in lobbying around elevating the role of the collective over the individual, and a number have called for rethinking the ways social movements are supported. There is a significant body of research emerging from organisations like **FRIDA**,<sup>36</sup> **Global Greengrants Fund**<sup>37</sup> and **Mama Cash**<sup>38</sup> championing key principles and practices for supporting social movements.

### Supporting innovation and growing cultures of giving:

**Changa Labs**, sister organisation to the crowdfunding platform M-Changa based in Kenya, works with the Busara Center for Behavioral Economics to research the drivers of fundraising behaviour, identify strategies to increase donations on the platform, and encourage uptake of digital payments.<sup>39</sup> Having traditionally had a primary urban clientele, in 2015 M-Changa began a project supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to redesign the platform to become more relevant and user-friendly for lower income populations, both as fundraisers and donors.

<sup>35</sup> See: [ActionAid International](#)

<sup>36</sup> See: [FRIDA](#)

<sup>37</sup> See: [Global Greengrants Fund](#)

<sup>38</sup> See: [Mama Cash](#)

<sup>39</sup> Kusimba, S and Changa Labs, M-Changa, Busara Center for Behavioral Economics (2019), [Understanding Digital Fundraising in Kenya A Case Study with M-Changa](#). Accessed November 2024.

<sup>34</sup> Interviewee, Africa.

**Accompanying:** CivFund acknowledges people's voices and wants, creating a platform to support them. They accompany individuals seeking support, by listening

and asking questions to understand the bigger picture. Investment in support and funding ensures accountability without causing harm or burdening communities.

## Analysis of Funding Flows



Finding cohesive data about funding volume and flows was challenging. Some funders disclose data online, sharing partner names, projects, locations and amounts, while others only share funding by thematic/priority area and/or a geographic region. A number of funders are unable to provide details of their funding to protect their partners and activists, due to safety and security issues of closed civic spaces.

Work is ongoing to build the evidence base. EPIC-Africa in Senegal was co-founded to fill two gaps: 1) the lack of data and knowledge about the sector and funding; and 2) limited organisational capacity. EPIC-Africa found that organisations were both open to sharing information about themselves and learning but needed visibility and credibility in order to do so. To that end, EPIC-Africa continues to develop a database of CSOs (recently shared at the African Philanthropy Conference in August 2024) which indicates that one of the primary sources of CSO funding on the continent is individual giving. Another recent example is [KujaLink](#), an initiative of the African Development Solutions Organisation (Adeso) that connects local and national NGOs with global funders and increases organisations' visibility to improve the work they are doing in their communities.

International philanthropic funding to human rights issues in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2020 made up 7% of total funding (\$328.6 million) and 48% of OECD DAC funding (\$3.8 billion) (Advancing Human Rights, 2020). While the data does not differentiate between the funding

flows to NGOs and unregistered social movements as defined for this research, 4% of foundation funding in the region (\$12,234,518) went to "grassroots organising", defined as "building popular support for, encouraging activism around, and helping to organise individuals and communities to mobilise in support of particular issues." This can be assumed to primarily include direct funding to social movements: 3% (\$8,299,383) reached Indigenous Peoples and their organisations and 8% (\$27,056,116) reached LGBTQIA+ communities and their organisations. Funding to organisations working with women and girls constituted 56% of the total (\$184,656,554).

Domestic philanthropy across Africa primarily focuses on education, accounting for 62% of all funding from 2016–2019 (approximately \$104 million), followed by funding for "business and other services" (13%), health and reproductive health (12%), "other social infrastructure and services" (8%), and "unallocated/unspecified" (5%) (OECD netFWD 2023 and OECD 2021).

An illustrative snapshot of examples from movement-funding entities who do disclose is shared below. This is either from grant information on their website reflecting available funding or from partner/grant information shared to indicate allocated funding.

### International Foundation: Mott Foundation

A snapshot of their funding portfolio for recent years shows around \$900,000 allocated for movement-supporting actors including the Defenders Coalition in Kenya.

### **Global Civil Society Network: CIVICUS**

The CIVICUS Crisis Response Fund offers funding to civil society actors facing crises related to freedom of assembly and association, and for proactive advocacy or resiliency activities. Grants range from \$10,000 to \$20,000. The Solidarity Fund supports CIVICUS members struggling to access resources due to civic space restrictions or organisational characteristics (unregistered, recently established organisations, or simply organisations whose identity and purpose cause their exclusion from civic spaces). Grants range from \$1,000 to \$10,000.

### **Global North-based Intermediary Fund: Mama Cash**

The Resilience Fund supports feminist groups and initiatives led by community members, aiming to advance

their political and social agendas and to strengthen social justice movements. Prioritising smaller, emerging groups with limited funding, the fund also supports informal or unregistered activists, networks and coalitions. The average grant size is 35,000 euros. Mama Cash provides accompanying support, including financial and non-financial resources to grantee-partners.

### **Domestic Intermediary: The Other Foundation**

In 2024, this South African foundation provided a number of grants to movements and movement-supporting actors totalling around 1.8 million South African rand (approx. \$100,000) including to the Namibia Diverse Women's Association and Iranti.

## The Potential to Grow Domestic Philanthropy for Social Movements



Half of the world's fastest growing economies are African, which means the number of wealthy Africans is increasing.<sup>40</sup> As of 2023, Africa's private wealth was estimated at \$2.5 trillion, with 21 billionaires and 135,200 millionaires.<sup>41</sup> The past 30 years have seen the emergence of more formal philanthropy in Africa, with some of Africa's high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs) engaging in large, structured giving, often through institutional foundations. As Bridgespan found, there was a marked increase in

large gifts (\$1 million or more) from African philanthropists in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, jumping from \$103 million in the period of 2010–2019 to \$269 million in 2020 alone, growing from 6.4 donations to 45.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, the research found that the majority of gifts were used to meet basic needs and limited funding reached local NGOs, let alone unregistered social movements.

40 The Bridgespan Group (2020), [Research Brief: The Landscape of Large-Scale Giving by African Philanthropists from 2010 to 2019](#).

41 Henley & Partners, [The Africa Wealth Report 2024](#).

42 Bridgespan 2020.



It is worth highlighting that remittances into these countries totalled nearly \$7 billion, illustrating that there is huge potential for individual generosity that is largely unexplored in the conversation around domestic giving (Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, 2023). There is also not enough investment in building support organisations that can harness diaspora giving, few of which were identified in this research.

Disaggregated by sub-region, the picture of domestic philanthropic funding or support for social movements varies significantly:

- In East Africa, individual philanthropy remains largely unstructured, with a limited number of family foundations in the region. Non-profit organisations are seeking more local capital and more sustainable operating models, as international grant funding declines. According to research by WINGS and the EAPN, institutional philanthropy is becoming more vibrant as a result of the strengthening of networks and philanthropy forums. Corporate foundations are driving the social investment space, establishing partnerships with other social investors to deliver sustainability programmes. The guiding framework for social investments and philanthropy remains fragmented, with multiple laws and authorities governing the sector.<sup>43</sup> At the same time, according to the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) World Giving Index, 56% of Kenyans donated money in 2024, and the widespread adoption of technology has

become a key agent for giving in the sub-region.<sup>44</sup> M-Changa, founded in 2011, has become a key digital platform for a variety of causes, ranging from emergencies to weddings, school fees and sports clubs. Since 2012, the platform has raised over \$5 million through 28,000 fundraisers. In 2018 alone, M-Changa received more than 155,000 donations. This reflects the overall trend in people shifting from traditional fundraising methods to digital fundraising platforms.<sup>45</sup> Increasingly, this includes giving to social movements: In 2024, 40,000 individuals donated just under KES30 million (approx. \$230,000) in a matter of days to support those injured in the youth movement protest against a proposed finance bill, labelled the "Gen Z protests".<sup>46</sup>

- In West Africa, religious and corporate foundations are very active across the Francophone countries of Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal, due to the backdrop of religious giving and corporate social responsibility. Community philanthropy is established in Burkina Faso, with much work geared towards alleviating the plight of Internally Displaced Persons. In Nigeria, there is a large concentration of HNWLs, and a liberal approach in the announcement of big gifts. According to a report published in 2023 by the African Philanthropy Forum, Nigerian philanthropists gave a total of \$434.17 million over the previous five years, with a focus on health, education and poverty alleviation.<sup>47</sup>

43 Kenya Association of Fundraising Professionals (2023), [Philanthropy Support Ecosystem in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, & Rwanda](#). Prepared for WINGS and the East Africa Philanthropy Network. Accessed 7 June 2024.

44 Charities Aid Foundation, [World Giving Index 2024](#).

45 Kusimba et al, 2019.

46 The Star, [How over Sh29 million raised for protest victims is being utilised](#).

47 African Philanthropy Forum (2023), [Scanning the Philanthropy Ecosystem in Nigeria](#).

- In Southern Africa, there has been an increase in institutionalised forms of giving across the region through foundations led by HNWI, individual generosity, and intermediaries engaged in regranting. South Africa has the highest density of institutional philanthropic actors, and giving by foundations is estimated to be in the range of ZAR7 billion (approximately \$379.1 million) annually (Nedbank Private Wealth, 2018). In 2021, South African HNWI donated roughly ZAR4.2 billion (approximately \$227.5 million) (IPASA, 2023) and around four in five (78%) people donated money in 2021 (CAF, 2021). Between 2013 and 2018, the OECD reported \$454 million in funding from 31 domestic foundations in South Africa, with 75% coming from corporate foundations and 25% from family foundations. Over 50% of domestic funding is directed towards education, with governance and civil society the third most targeted areas by domestic foundations in South Africa, receiving \$39 million between 2013 and 2018 (OECD 2021).

These figures show the potential for greater domestic funding for social movements, but there are clear barriers, with funders across the region tending to focus on meeting basic needs and essential services (OECD 2021). There

is promise in individual giving, both by HNWI and the general public, bolstered by crowdfunding and digital fundraising campaigns.<sup>48</sup> New research from EPIC-Africa found that "individual giving is a significant source of funding for CSOs. A very considerable 65% of organizations surveyed receive some form of financial support from individuals." Critically, the study shows that these donors "contribute not only to traditional charitable causes but also to broad advocacy, human rights, social justice and environmental efforts, contradicting the prevailing myth that African individual giving is principally informal and predominantly localized."<sup>49</sup>

To scale up these models and build on these promising trends to develop them into sustainable funding practices, African philanthropy support organisations need to continue to foster exchanges between philanthropic actors, by working across continents and including the different stakeholders of the ecosystem.

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48 GivingTuesday and East Africa Philanthropy Network, [GivingTuesday East Africa 2021 Impact Report](#).

49 EPIC-Africa (2024), [Challenging the Myths - Individual Giving for African Civil Society Organizations](#). Accessed December 2024.





# Key Recommendations



The following recommendations highlight ways in which donors – domestic and international – can grow resourcing and support the existing philanthropy support ecosystem for social movements in Africa and Latin America:

- **Do not reinvent the wheel:** Tap into the existing grantmaking infrastructures represented by intermediary, joint and community funds to get funding straight into the hands of activists and community leaders.
- **Support the organic creation of new funds emerging from and focused on social justice and movements:** Learn from experiences such as the expansion of socio-environmental funds. There is a need to move away from old models of funding and to engage in more experimentation and innovation to fit the form, function and timing of movements' needs. Amongst those who work with movements, there are ongoing discussions around how to fund unregistered organisations, as well as considering alternative models of measurement to reduce the burden on activists (particularly those engaged in active struggles).
- **Support initiatives to change and grow cultures of giving:** There is a lot of room, especially among youth, to unlock domestic funding sources to social movements. Digital platforms, in particular, are promising tools to grow the pool of donors to social movements and social justice and to invest in research to understand and foster giving behaviours.
- **Invest in philanthropy support ecosystems:** These ecosystems work to build and strengthen cultures and infrastructures of giving, and are crucial for the domestic and international resourcing of movements.
- **Foster and promote learning and collaboration in the philanthropy support ecosystem for**

**social movements:** Networks, associations and other types of shared spaces help finance and give visibility to social justice issues. Learn and share best practices, support each other, and foster the development, transformation and growth of the field. It is only through exchange that domestic and international funders can align strategies, leverage their investments and ultimately ensure philanthropy transforms to be its most effective and responsive.

Domestic philanthropy, as shown, by and large does not yet invest in social movements and grassroots actors, while international philanthropy is increasingly looking for ways to do so – there is much that can be learned from each other about risk management, due diligence needs, and strategic approaches.

- **Fund knowledge generation efforts:** The data on giving to social movements is still very sparse, hindering evidence-based decision-making. Efforts such as GivingTuesday's Data Commons,<sup>50</sup> the Comuá Network's mapping of social justice funds in Brazil, TrustAfrica's research with social movements about their support needs, and CivSource's fiscal host mapping must be funded and encouraged.

50 See: [GivingTuesday's Data Commons](#)



# Annex – Research Participants and Sources

- RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS
- SOURCES



# Research Participants



We would like to thank the following civil society leaders for making the time to provide us with invaluable information for this study:

| ORGANISATION   | INTERVIEWEE           |
|--|-----------------------|
| ACT Ubumbano, Southern Africa                                      | Ashley Green-Thompson |
| ActionAid Asia   | Amish Shrestha        |
| ActionAid International, global and Africa                         | Anne Louise Carstens  |
| ActionAid International, global and Africa                         | Ed Watkiss            |
| ActionAid International, global and Africa                         | Pascaline Kangethe    |
| ActionAid Kenya  | Susan Otieno          |
| Africans Rising, West Africa                                       | Harrison Owusu        |
| Alianza Socioambiental Fondos del Sur                              | Clara Daré            |
| Alianza Socioambiental Fondos del Sur                              | Juliana Tinoco        |
| Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment, South Africa | Jacob Mati            |
| Central American Women's Fund - FCAM                               | Claudia Samcam        |
| CivFund, Uganda  | Lillian Tamale        |
| CIVICUS, global and Africa   | Clara Bosco           |
| CivSource-Africa, South Africa                                     | Jackie Asiimwe        |
| Comuá  | Graciela Hopstein     |
| Comunalia  | Daniella Undreiner    |



| ORGANISATION   | INTERVIEWEE   |
|--|---|
| Comunalia  | Pamela Cruz   |
| Comunalia  | Minerva Zamora  |
| EPIC-Africa, Senegal                                       | Rose Maruru   |
| Fondo Semillas   | Gabriela Toledo   |
| Fondo Socioambiental Emerger                               | Juan Mira   |
| Fondo Socioambiental Emerger                               | Lina María Reyes Corral   |
| Fundo Casa Socioambiental                                  | Maria Amália Souza  |
| GivingTuesday  | Asha Curran   |
| GivingTuesday  | Chris Worman  |
| GivingTuesday  | Samir Khan  |
| GivingTuesday  | Woodrow Rosenbaum   |
| SIVIO Institute, Zimbabwe                                  | Shelly Satuku   |
| SIVIO Institute, Zimbabwe                                  | Tendai Murisa   |
| Social movement funding research consultants, South Africa | Halima Mohamed and Nicolette Naylor (contracted to TrustAfrica) |
| Southern Africa Trust, South Africa                        | Alice Kanengoni   |
| TerritoriA   | Felipe Bogotá   |
| WINGS  | Antonio Bweme   |
| WINGS  | Benjamin Bellegry   |
| WINGS  | María Eugenia Paez  |
| WINGS  | Rachad Bani Samari  |

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These publications are best-in-class examples on resourcing movements and the key role local regranting funds play:

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- [If Not Now, When? A Feasibility Study for a Caribbean Fund for Women's and LGBTQI+ Rights](#), Equality Fund
- [Funding Our Future: Resourcing the Feminist Movements Driving Climate Action](#), Equality Fund and Mama Cash
- [Kaleidoscope: Findings and Reflections on LGBTQI+ Movements in Mexico](#), Semillas Fund
- [Mapping Highlights of the Independent Grantmaking Organizations for Social Justice and Community Development in Brazil](#), Comuá Network
- [Resourcing Black Feminist Organizing in Latin America and the Caribbean](#), Foundation for a Just Society and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund
- [Toward a Feminist Funding Ecosystem](#), AWID
- [Understanding the Regranting Ecosystem in the Global South: Environment, Gender, Social Justice & Human Rights in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean](#), Philanthropy Dialogues (with support from the Oak Foundation and Ruta Civica)
- Upcoming: [Comuá Network's](#) study on financing social movements in Brazil.

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