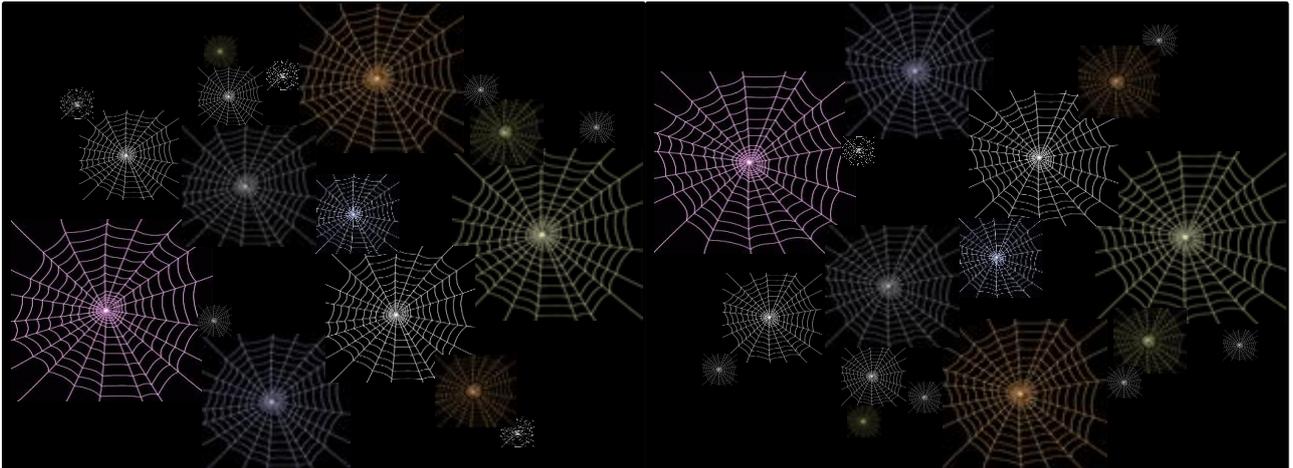


CONSULTATION WITH GRANTEES AND ADVISORS IN ASIA PACIFIC



UAF ASIA PACIFIC

11 JUNE 2017, CHIANGMAI, THAILAND

The consultation focused on collecting information that can be used to improve UAF's rapid response grant making, look into ways to expand the reach of the grants, and brainstorm on how to best adapt grants to local needs. Participants from eleven countries provided input on ways to strengthen the system of advisors, reviewing the process of engagement, roles and responsibilities, and identifying ways to expand the existing roles.

Consultation with Grantees and Advisors

ROLE AND STRUCTURE UAF AP IN RESOURCING RESILIENCE

Executive summary

Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights Asia Pacific (UAF AP) held a consultation with UAF's grantees and advisors in Asia Pacific on 11 June 2017 at the Ibis Styles Chiangmai Hotel, Chiangmai, Thailand. The information shared during the consultation revealed the need to assess women's human rights and the human rights movements in Asia Pacific across several dimensions. The region is complex and the issues are affected by local specificities in terms of current priorities, socio-political contexts, cultures, political, social and economic developments and access to technology.

This consultation focused on collecting information that can be used to improve UAF's rapid response grant making, look into ways to expand the reach of the grants, and brainstorm on how to best adapt grants to local needs. Participants brainstormed on ways to diversify resourcing including adopting work practices that integrate well-being and self-care, developing solidarity economy to broaden protection and support for defenders, establishing networks of both sympathetic professionals and women entrepreneurs from the region. This requires the fund to contextualise its approaches and thus assist the movements' actors at all levels in producing and sharing pertinent information. The hope is to deepen the fund's reach because women are part of diverse movements as well as facilitate connections within movements to be created and generate resources.

Participants also reviewed the current system of rapid-response grant making to identify ways to improve coverage, outreach, and access particularly of women human rights defenders in rural and remote areas or marginalized communities. Participants listed specific practical costs during crisis, highlighted the need to consider support after crisis, and offered ideas for new kind of grants such as a Well-Being grant, a Linking grant for organizations and a grant to develop social enterprises.

A strong argument was made in regards to documentation. Participants voiced the need for ensuring ownership of documentation, training, diversifying media to disseminate collected information, and shifting the weight of translation from the field to the fund.

Finally participants provided input on ways to strengthen the system of advisors, reviewing the process of engagement, roles and responsibilities, and identifying ways to expand the existing roles. Advisors' taking on a more active role was welcome - such as that of information provider to UAF and communities, showing solidarity - as long as it does not jeopardise the "objectivity of the advisor". Participants listed potential new advisors to help UAF respond to the diverse needs of the region.

Using the model of an ecosystem, UAF AP proposed for the participants to discuss how to address a definition of resourcing resilience that combines multiple forms such as funds, knowledge-building, and webs of care. The exploration was framed by feminist ethics of care and definitions of resilience. Although feminist ethics were one of the rare topics that remained unmentioned, the consultation and reflection processes were an illustration of a feminist perspective that builds on interconnection, embraces diversity, as well as inclusivity.

Resourcing resilience

Resourcing for the resilience of the activism for women's human rights needs to be diversified to be less dependent on international donors. Multiple strategies toward resourcing resilience have to be developed in order to sustain webs of security and care in ways that are linked integrally. Alike an ecosystem, a sustainable system to resource resilience functions both socially and economically: various elements work together to build assets together, including business collaborative ventures even. Participants stressed that it is crucial to remember to protect the ecosystem and every single part of it including the individual persons, a basic unit of the ecosystem. From the start, we must set out to keep the personal at the same level of importance as the social and political dimensions of the work of women human rights defenders.

Drawing from Komnas Perempuan's work in Aceh, only a spiritual ritual opened up a space for women victims to redirect their attention from looking out, to looking within and start to talk about their needs. Everyone agreed that this approach needs to be continued as integral to building resilience for women engaged in activists' struggles. Activities that enhance their well-being should be part of each organisation's work schedule and ways of working. Creating new ways of supporting our activism is a key element to resourcing the resilience of women activists and their organisations.

In order to understand priorities in developing ways to resource for women human rights defenders



Feminist ethics of care:

Resilience is socially constructed, it is relational and contextual.

It is personal, relational and political.



and their movements, participants made an inventory of their current practices of resourcing or generation and mobilization of resources:

Organizational

- Submission of proposals/grants to funders
- Expanding income generation and economic activities of the community (Loei women weavers collaboration with USA students) (<http://www.tammachat.com/2013/05/grandmother-power-in-rural-thailand.html>)
- Selecting collaboration with corporate sector that do not compromise the organisation's work, (e.g. receiving sponsorship from a mining company while the organisation is working on an anti-mining campaign)
- Grassroots and community organising
- Building the local economy of communities, not projects
- Knowledge building: reflect, write, publish and share knowledge
- Networking to share resources,
- Diversifying sources of funding: explore new ways of fundraising such as setting up community cooperatives, developing advocacy campaigns to initiate greater solidarity amongst communities and generate economic support
- Holding workshops and activities to re-empower activists such as capacity building and psychological support

Personal

- Live simply, share resources
- Sustain one's resilience by drawing from feeling of belonging, passion and knowledge
- Strive to strengthen one's courage to find ways to resource resilience
- Relying on individual strength

Relational

- Maintaining relationships with family, friends
- Learning to really listen to each other, being open, accepting reality, having the courage to let go of the things we cannot change

Participants defined the meaning of resilience at two levels.

Personal

- Knowing when to take time out and come back re-charged
- Recognizing that we don't have all answers and could be wrong makes us more resilient
- Being aware of one's positive energies, and how and where to expand this
- Being confident, brave and strong to speak out
- Never give up. Face each day, radiate energy and hope
- "Resilience is the outcome of courage, I have no other option than to be resilient otherwise my existence will be in crisis. Resilience is to survive"
- Courage is a personal decision to continuously go on fighting. It is necessary to constantly re-affirm this decision to fight, to be courageous

At an organisational/ relational level

- Survival can be a bit uncomfortable and suspicious in some contexts, for example, a government praises communities for their resilience while withholding donations for rehabilitation and reconstruction following disasters. Communities manage to survive on their own without changing contexts or pushing for deeper changes to make the government accountable
- Resilience comes from one's capacity to move on and progress in our work for the sake of individuals and communities. Sometimes committed women are unable or unwilling to let go and later leave the movement.
- Claiming spaces to work within our community when speaking out is not possible. Change takes time, sometimes knowledge is there but it cannot be applied yet due to the situation. Not all communities have the same knowledge to build resilience. Resilience comes from encouraging each other.
- Sustainability – of both people and movements – means persistence and the power to recover under pressure.
- Owning up to one's own power and privileges, and how these may or may not disempower our movements.
- Sharing emotions, songs, slogans of protest, and solidarity to sustain energy and commitment.
- Holding spiritual ceremonies and have real spaces for WHRDs to reflect and connect.
- Building networks of support, sharing our struggles
- Continuing collective conversations with everyone involved.

- Essentially the resilience of any social group, relationship, system, starts with and is sustained by the resilience of the individual parts- namely the individual, including the personal, internal well-being and care of each and every person

Shift culture of giving and grow cultures of resilience

Funding and webs of care and security are essential resources that sustain resilience. Thus, the UAF will seek to build alliances and partnerships in both fields. On one hand, UAF AP, through the Women of Courage for Asia Pacific network will reach out to women philanthropists for financial and other forms of support in an effort to transform the culture of giving in the region. Philanthropists will be encouraged to shift their support from traditional areas of giving such as education or health to support for social justice. On the other hand, UAF wants to grow the culture of resilience by bridging webs of care for well-being to sustain WHRDs and their movements.

Culture of Giving

In order for movements to reach out to potential supporters beyond their circles, new language and narratives or ways of communicating women's human rights activism have to be created in order to expand the pool of supporters, and change the existing culture of giving in Asia Pacific that is largely focused on charitable or "non-political" concerns. To reach out to women philanthropists in the region, UAF AP adopted UAF's reference to "women of courage" instead. Entrepreneurs respond to courage because they relate to the courage a woman needs to succeed in the business world.

Concept of WHRD

Participants felt that conservative donors have co-opted the word **WHRDs**. Participants felt that several words could be used instead of just one, depending on local contexts. In the Philippines, the President has demonized HRDs to such an extent that the Commission of Human Rights now uses "dignity" instead of the term "human rights". In this case, re-claiming as well as re-imagining words is necessary.

Asia Pacific is highly diverse, in linguistic, political and other contexts. Hence, in some places there is a need to reclaim the term **WHRDs**, and in other places to create new words as long as there is a coherent narrative regarding the reference to **WHRDs**.

Knowledge-building

To strengthen UAF AP as a "knowledge hub" that co-creates and co-disseminates tools and knowledge with grantees and advisors, participants suggested the following:

- Produce and brand products with a trade mark of "courage" similar to a "fair trade" trade mark. Maps can be produce to indicate which restaurants or shops sell local products to support the struggle in an area. This kind of information would contribute to knowledge building and include the promotion of an economy of exchanges (e.g. producing garlic for restaurants –linking producers to a market).
- It is important to explore different ways of publishing or disseminating women's stories, honouring them at their own terms, respecting their ownership of the stories in order for the storytelling to be a tool for empowerment
- Ensure that resources match the resilience
- Fund proper translation processes to share stories as there is a lot of information available in local languages which others cannot access

- Organise South-South exchanges for **WHRDs** to learn from each other
- Give out an **Enabling grant**, which could support country efforts to document cases by teaching documentation skills, and providing documentation equipment

Building the Webs of Security and Care

Recognizing the need to strengthen existing multi-level (e.g., local, national, regional, international) as well as formal and informal systems of protection and support for WHRDs at risk, participants suggested the following:

- Support thematic exchanges between **WHRDs** and communities at regional and international levels (e.g., the struggle for land rights, anti-mining campaigns, struggles of indigenous peoples and environmental activists)
- Set criteria for selecting potential philanthropists and partners so as not to compromise activists' interests
- Map out pockets of resilience (e.g., supportive professionals: doctors, teachers, journalists) and build networks across different types of activism. For example in Indonesia, some donors as well as Muslim activists are fighting the rise of fundamentalisms
- Organise practical workshops on how to deal with persecution (ie., when the Muslim cyber army goes to hunt people down, people have to evacuate but some know better than others how to evacuate safely)
- Conduct outreach visit to the grantee's community for monitoring, learning and showing support
- Mentoring or coaching on well-being, it could be titled "*It's ok to not be ok, and then...*"
- promoting second liners within organisations and intergenerational support across movements

Rapid Response Grant making

Participants made the following suggestions to improve UAF AP's rapid response grantmaking:

- Address women's loss of income: community or grassroots activists do not have salaries, and the struggle to claim their rights could take more than 2-3 years.
- Expand to include post – evacuation/ relocation support to **WHRDs** and their families.
- Include judicial harassment cases, with a "Legal aid crisis grants"
- Support for activists' activities after relocation so they can be productive while under protection
- Cover family units including children since they are also affected by relocation
- Have a local office, for extended but focused accessibility
Include phone credit costs among the support for activists in crisis so they can contact lawyers, media, and networks (e.g. a call from PNG to Australia costs 8AUD per minute).

About Security Grants

In the prevention phase, participants proposed the grants cover costs of having a physical space for WHRDs to gather together and take care of themselves since existing community spaces are mostly for men.

During crisis, participants enumerated costs, which included: Safe centres; medical care; digital and electronic security; legal counselling and support, legal assistance (lawyer, bail money, copying documents to access legal system), communication (internet, mobile phone number); re-location and rehabilitation. Although US \$5,000 dollars is sufficient in many cases, US \$8000 would be ideal particularly for expensive areas such as PNG.

Many participants commented about the need for after crisis support. A need for a **linking grant** after WHRDs are relocated to a safe place was highlighted. Linking grants could support the well-being of WHRDs, which could include a variety of support needed such as counselling, retreat, or activities that provide relief from pressure.

Also a **cost sharing grant** could be created to enable local NGOs to help WHRDs after the crisis. Organisations that support WHRDs do not have enough resources to support WHRDs after they have received rapid response grants.

A **well-being grant**, was also proposed to support for reflection, meditation, therapy and retreat for WHRDs. It was remarked that a well-being fund should not be limited to security fund, as burnt out activists become a source of vulnerability for WHRDs. The grant should be available for both individuals and organisations.

Grants could also consider supporting the development of solidarity economy, activities that can increase financial independence of WHRDs since it affects their well-being if they are unable to provide for the needs of their family. The last area that was listed as needing support was children's school fees so they are able to continue schooling when WHRDs are arrested or relocated.

Participants advised that UAF AP's outreach could be expanded locally by seeking individuals who are linked with specific movements. Grantees themselves could help spread information about these grants to marginalised communities. Participants suggested advisors in their areas that could help UAF AP expand gradually and build contacts amongst a wider range of advisors.

Language and ways of communications were raised as a challenge. Some suggested the written form could be filled in local languages, and workshops could be conducted for women to learn how to narrate their case in compliance with the application form. Having more advisors in countries such as PNG could help with language issues and outreach.

About Multiple grants

Participants did not object to repeated grants as long as it is truly an emergency, and that it does not preclude other grantees in similar situation from accessing the grants.

The use of a connecting organisation to channel funds to different groups has the advantage of creating a network and helps strengthen the movement. Although there are down side to the channelling system, it was agreed that since most funding for women's human rights are rigid, this one should remain flexible.

About Evaluation and Monitoring of Grants

Most participants agreed that there is a need to allow for diversity in reporting styles. Some suggested using multi languages, audio-visual and audio recording, highlighting that UAF AP should alleviate the burden of translation by finding translators or pay for them. A need for teaching documentation skills among grantees to improve reporting was raised.

Regarding the matter of who should conduct the monitoring and evaluation, there were mixed opinions. Some preferred that UAF AP staff visit communities and conduct monitoring and confidential assessment. Others felt that it should be included in the advisors’ role to report, but a participant remarked that the role of an advisor is to be objective, provide information to UAF AP in a confidential and impartial manner. In the context of movement-building, feedback from others in the network or movement could help assess grants. However, sometimes organisations within a movement have their own agendas, or are not fully informed.

About the Advisors’ System

There are 50 UAF advisors in the Asia Pacific region. According to UAF recent survey, over 19 respondents, several expressed interest in taking on additional roles. Twelve respondents have been advisors for three to 5 years, and have been contacted once every 3 to 6 months in a year. Generally their experience with UAF is positive. Advisors expressed that they did not want a contract with UAF and that being volunteers is part of their contribution to the women’s movement. Participants discussed their existing roles and responsibilities as UAF AP advisors, and below is an outline of their suggestions:

Minimal expectations of advisor’s roles	Additional roles	Comments
Grant review		
<p>To verify of whether the information received through the proposal is legitimate, within 72 hours.</p> <p>To be available to give information as urgently as possible, as it is for someone in urgent need.</p>	<p>When it is not possible to verify in 72 hours and cannot go physically to the area in the proposal, advisors can recommend another name of a person who could give information.</p> <p>Be referee and /or provide verification, recommendation to other friendly Human Rights donors</p>	<p>Advisors review only proposals about their field of expertise/ experience.</p> <p>Advisors review proposals dealing with their thematic issue of expertise.</p> <p>Advisors’ invisibility is important to avoid organisations approaching advisors, which would lead to an issue of conflict of interests.</p>
Outreach and expansion		
	<p>Being more proactive to identify defenders at risk</p> <p>Go beyond immediate circle to let activists know about UAF AP’s grants</p> <p>Refer WHRDs to other funds;</p> <p>Help WHRDs link with advocacy networks and other donors.</p>	<p>More advisors are needed with more diversity, from different constituencies.</p> <p>Solidarity visits when needed and opportune.</p>

Confidentiality		
Advisors' identities are confidential.		<p>Conflict of interests could arise if advisors are involved in monitoring grantees.</p> <p>The practice of opportune visiting was preferred to show solidarity with grantees when the advisor is in area. The advisor who approved the grant could go and see what happened after the grant was received.</p>
Information provider		
	Provide contextual analyses and contribute to strategic planning	Providing information about respective countries such as sharing national situations is a very important role.
UAF/ Advisor relationship and support		
When contacting potential new advisors, UAF formally follow up and explain what each advisor roles are	<p>Update advisors systematically about the grants they were consulted on.</p> <p>UAF to improve intensity of communication before crisis, on-going, and in a proactive way.</p> <p>Hold Skype seminars or other means of communication on different topics</p>	<p>Find spaces to bring together advisors face to face or using Skype.</p> <p>Define the type of information and frequency of information to be shared between advisors and UAF (e.g. how many grants were dispersed in the last 3 month or year on each field)</p>
Challenges		
There is a need to reflect on how the advisors' roles could be fulfilled in a trustworthy, fair manner to address the needs of grantees. UAF AP needs to be aware and open about the power of advisors as gatekeepers.		

General Recommendations

Participants made the following general recommendations:

- Continue to approach **WHRDs** in a holistic way
- Continue the dialogue to re-imagine cultures and language about **WHRDs**, and build a coherent narrative on **WHRDs** in the region that will facilitate access to other pools of resources for **WHRDs**
- Advocate for laws around philanthropy in the region to change the culture of giving
- Develop networks of sympathetic professionals in medical, legal, spiritual and artistic fields including teachers to support education of activists' children during and after crisis

- Develop a communication strategy, which includes documentation practices and information exchanges based on processes that uphold ownership and empowerment of communities.
- Build networks that cultivate local funding, whether it is by establishing consortiums or collaborations between organisations and entrepreneurs, professionals, community volunteers from the region or beyond, or by supporting organisations and communities generate their own well-being or crisis fund.

ANNEX

1. Consultation Participants

Lin Chew	Hong Kong	Iwe, UAF Advisor
Jing Xiong	China	Feminist Voices, Beijing
Gerifel Cerillo	Philippines	Tanggol Bayi
Judy Pasimio	Philippines	Lilak
Yuli Rustinawat	Indonesia	Arus Pelangi
Andy Yentrani	Indonesia	Asia Pacific Women Alliance on Peace and Security (APWAPS), UAF Advisor
Bondita Acharya	India	WING, UAF Advisor
Sara Hossain	Bangladesh	Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST)
Jaya Iuintel	Nepal	National Alliance of Women Human Rights Defenders, Nepal
Elizabeth Cox <sabet>	Australia/PNG	UAF Advisor
Ruby Mutane	Papua New Guinea	Grace Counselling, UAF Grantee
Waewrin Buanguen	Lampang, Thailand	Rak Ban Heng, UAF Grantee
Chutima Chaunhuajai	Lampang, Thailand	Rak Ban Heng, UAF Grantee
Phattraporn Kaengjumba	Loei, Thailand	KRBK, UAF Grantee
Choosri Olakig	The South of Thailand	Agriculture Federation of the South of Thailand, UAF Grantee

2. Recommendations from participants for potential new advisors

Name/country	email	Field of work
Thailand		
Ankhana Neelapajit		
East asia		
Phoebe So	Searc.phoebe@gmail.com	Member of Iwe, with knowledge and experience of the political and social situation in East asia, especially in China. Practitioner and facilitator of well-being, self-care and integrated security processes.
Nepal		
Dr. Renu Rajbhandari	bindupgautam@gmail.com	Disability
Tika Dahal	tikaafdng93@gmail.com	
Irida Parajuli		
Dr. Pooman Rishal		
PNG/Australia		
Lilly be Soer	lillybesoer@gmail.com	Voice for Change
Sarah Garp	smkgarap@gmail.com	Independent
Edwina Kotoisuva	Edwina.kotoisuva@gmail.com	DFAT
Agnes Thus	titusagnes@gmail.com	Nazarareth Centre
India		
Asha Kowtal-Aidam	Asha.kowtal@ncdhr.org.in Tel: +91 9560100442	Well known Dalit activist based in Pune.
Priya Pillai	vakilpriya@gmail.com	Green Peace, environment activist based in Delhi. Focuses on mining, extractive industries.
Kalyani Manon Sen	kmenonsen@gmail.com Tel: +91 9910306382	Women against Sexual Violence and State Repression (WSS). Woman activist, gender

		expert, extensive work in central India conflict affected areas
China		
Zheng Chran Guo Jing	solidkillian@gmail.com gzh.good@gmail.com	Experienced activists based in Gaungzhou, familiar and passionate with feminist activists in China
Lan Lan Peng Yujiao	xinaihome@gmail.com (will send later)	Experienced activist on the rights of sex workers Activist based in Beijing, leader of disabled women's group
Ou Xiaou Xiong Jing	(will send later) panpan1023@gmail.com	Based in Kunming, very active in Southeast China Feminist Voices, Beijing - Based in Beijing (self-recommendation)
Li Maizi	limaizijia@gmail.com	LGBT activist
Philippines		
Cristina Pulabay Bai Ali Indayla Vernie Diano Atty Virginia Suarez	crisrina.e.pulabay@gmail.com baiali.indayla@gmail.com verniediano@gmail.com virgiesuarez67@gmail.com	Mindano Moro women From the Cordilura Secretary general of Kilusang parsa Pambansang Demokrasya (KPD), founding member of KAISAKA- Unity of women for democracy. She is a labour lawyer/feminist/activist; has national scope with network all over the country; works on civil and political issues, anti-militarisation, anti-war but its member organisations work on environment and land issues.
Mabel Carumba	tubong.mindanao@gmail.com	Mindano Peoples' Peace Movement (MPPM); tri people: Lumad, Moro, Christian- women human rights activist working on land issues, peace and human rights. Both Mabel and Virgie are based locally but are part of national formation and work at regional and international levels.