



URGENT ACTION
FUND FOR WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS
ASIA & PACIFIC



UAF A&P ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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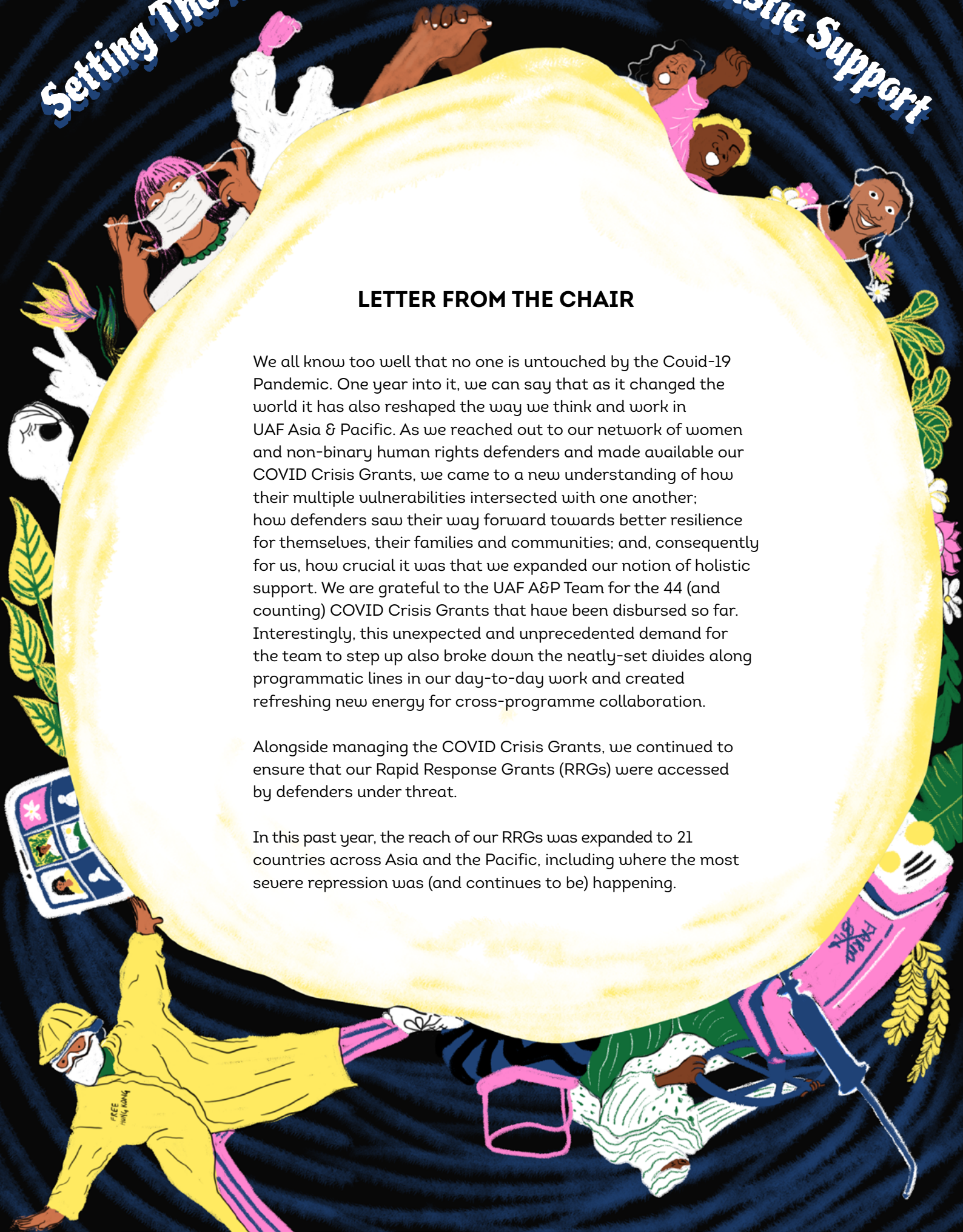
Setting The North Star And Expanding Holistic Support

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

We all know too well that no one is untouched by the Covid-19 Pandemic. One year into it, we can say that as it changed the world it has also reshaped the way we think and work in UAF Asia & Pacific. As we reached out to our network of women and non-binary human rights defenders and made available our COVID Crisis Grants, we came to a new understanding of how their multiple vulnerabilities intersected with one another; how defenders saw their way forward towards better resilience for themselves, their families and communities; and, consequently for us, how crucial it was that we expanded our notion of holistic support. We are grateful to the UAF A&P Team for the 44 (and counting) COVID Crisis Grants that have been disbursed so far. Interestingly, this unexpected and unprecedented demand for the team to step up also broke down the neatly-set divides along programmatic lines in our day-to-day work and created refreshing new energy for cross-programme collaboration.

Alongside managing the COVID Crisis Grants, we continued to ensure that our Rapid Response Grants (RRGs) were accessed by defenders under threat.

In this past year, the reach of our RRGs was expanded to 21 countries across Asia and the Pacific, including where the most severe repression was (and continues to be) happening.



It is a mark of the deteriorating conditions for defending human rights around our two regions, Asia and the Pacific, but also an indication of the growing accessibility of UAF A&P to women and non-binary defenders on the ground.

Through all this, it has been clear just how we, as an organisation, carry the burden of risk alongside the defenders we support. It is unsurprising, of course, as we see ourselves serving the regions' movements from within and as we share the same volatile geopolitical environment. This situation calls upon us to stay vigilant in reviewing our own safety and well-being, including with regard to the choices we make on where to base the organisation, socially and legally. This year we will be deciding on a third country in which to be officially registered while also assessing our state of being in the countries where we are currently registered. As activists ourselves, we never take our safety and well-being for granted.

In spite of the shock and disruption of this past year, we managed to sustain our forward-looking spirit and set our North Star for our feminist journey. Mindfully accompanied by our dear and committed sisters, Michel Friedman, Pramada Menon and Shawna Wakefield, who worked with us from South Africa, India and USA respectively, our Team was able to come up with a strategic plan for 2021-2023.

In the process, we heard from our advisors and from defenders on the ground on their reflections in collaborating with us. It was a privilege for me to be part of these conversations, along with other members of the Regional Board.

This past year will also be remembered as the final year for the Jane-Viri duo at the helm of UAF A&P. Even before UAF A&P was born, it was Jane who carried out the consultation with defenders in Asia and the Pacific, in 2015, for our US-based Sister Fund as part of its effort to better understand the need and interest for a self-standing sister fund here. Since then, as the Co-Lead for Programmes and Innovation, Jane has continued to give us her best and thereby achieved our aspired "seamless transition" in terms of these regions' defender access to the UAF Rapid Response Grants. Now, Jane's other life priorities need her attention. She leaves us with a solid foundation constructed collaboratively during our crucial first three years. We thank her for all this. Meanwhile, we are encouraged by the significant interest among our sisters in Asia in our call for applications to take over from Jane. We take the next step in our journey forward with confidence.

Just as we were preparing this annual report, we received the sad news about the passing of our sister, Executive Director of UAF Latin America & Caribbean, Tatiana Cordero Velasquez. I had the privilege of meeting Tatiana in Zanzibar (2016) when we both attended the Sister Funds' gathering of all its Boards and Directors. I remember Tatiana touching my heart with her feminist spirituality. May her light always inspire us. Rest in peace, Tatiana.

Kamala Chandrakirana
Jakarta, April 2021



Charting Course While Steering Through A Pandemic

NOTES FROM THE CO-LEADS

To call 2020 an unprecedented year of crises and changes, would be an understatement. Already immersed in a politically volatile environment with the tightening reign of authoritarian governments in many countries in Asia and the Pacific, the pandemic compounded the crises, and women and non-binary activists were struggling to cope.

As we came to terms with the uncertainty brought about by these crises, we relied on deepening our framework of resilience. We drew on the wisdom from the activists we conferred with, “We can't really change the world from becoming worse, but we can control how we respond to it. So, when the opportunity comes to act, we are able to grab it.” So at UAF A&P, we got to work, re-creating our annual workplan, and launching the Covid Crisis Fund.

And as we contemplated on the lessons, we realised that resilience is a continuum: we move from survival, to thriving, then regeneration. A new crisis could again see us back in survival mode.

So it was essential that as a feminist fund, we not only support activists to survive, but support them to thrive and regenerate too. We were heartened when a reflective review we commissioned in 2020 to look at our journey so far, recognised our effort “...to role model the long-term thinking and practice of cultivating a feminist culture of giving and sharing that it is encouraging among its constituency.” The report also identified **four key resilience strategies at the heart of how we work: centring peoples' dignity; forging webs of safety and care; valuing diversity in feminist governance; and learning to work with emergence.**

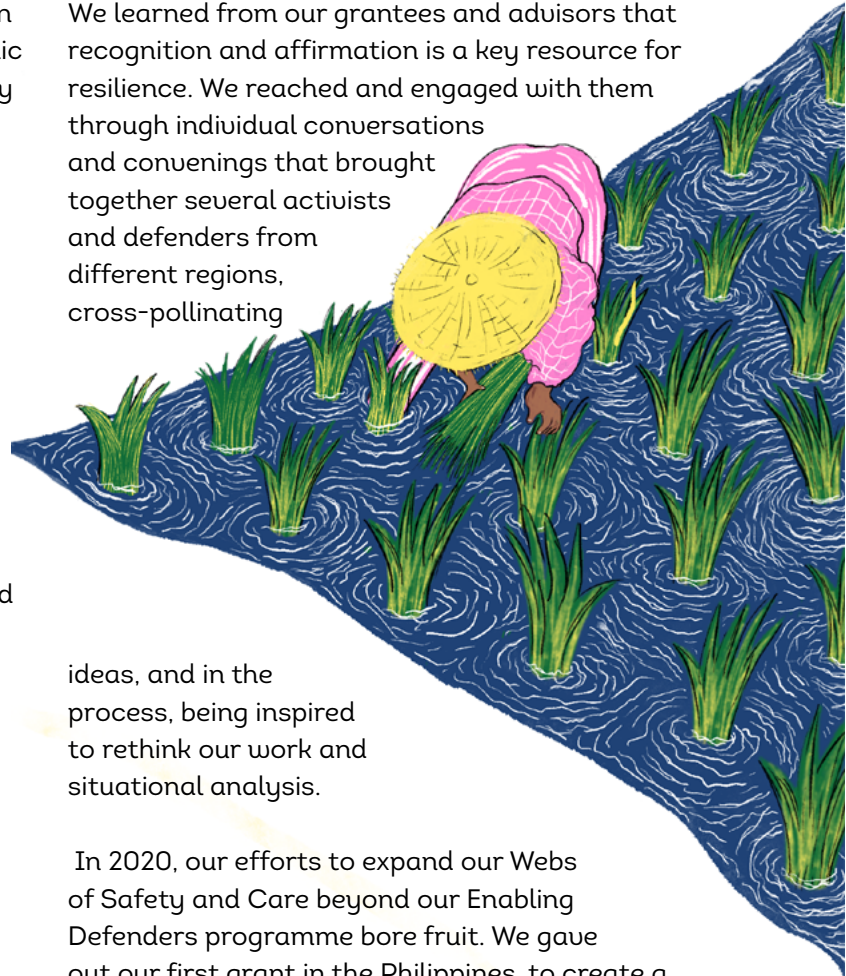
These were also the four pillars on which we built our organisational strategic plan for 2021-23.

We learned from our grantees and advisors that recognition and affirmation is a key resource for resilience. We reached and engaged with them through individual conversations and convenings that brought together several activists and defenders from different regions, cross-pollinating

ideas, and in the process, being inspired to rethink our work and situational analysis.

In 2020, our efforts to expand our Webs of Safety and Care beyond our Enabling Defenders programme bore fruit. We gave out our first grant in the Philippines, to create a quick reaction team of peer counsellors, along with lawyers and other personnel for an activists' network under increasing attack for their critical anti-government stance. We also documented the support systems available to an incarcerated defender, facing a spurious lawsuit for her activism as a community worker. We now better understand systemic responses that need to be developed to holistically support grantee needs, pre-, during, and post crisis.

In countries where we were receiving a significant number of grant applications, we innovated with a peer donors' network, to work in tandem with others providing urgent assistance to activists at risk. We tested this in the Philippines, but it has since expanded to grantmaking across several other countries of South and Southeast Asia.





Our web of advisors has expanded significantly in the last 3 years to 150 feminists and activists from across Asia and the Pacific -- another strong example of our sustained support system for women and non-binary activists in the regions. These advisors, who work on a voluntary basis form the

frontline of our outreach to defenders including providing direct assistance such as completing application forms, facilitating fiscal sponsorships, providing translation services, recommending service providers, support organisations and other resources that could improve the safety and security of the defenders at risk.

Another strong ecosystem which matured in this period was the UAF sisterhood. The intentional and deep work which we collectively named and negotiated during our face-to-face meetings, including our last one in March 2020 just days before the world went into lockdown, helped create a strong and flexible container of trust. Together, we were able to collectively mobilise more than US\$200,000 to resource our Covid Crisis Grants, to not just support activist communities, but also the well-being of our teams and help them brace with the overwhelm created by working through the pandemic. We recruited more support members, and upskilled ourselves in virtual facilitation to adapt to new ways of communing. We also proactively sought professional coaching support and counselling, particularly when extended lockdowns began impacting mental health.

Hearing different perspectives from within our ecosystem during the pandemic proved pivotal. During our review, strategic planning, and online thematic consultations, we heard stories of survival, regeneration, hope, gratitude, and caution. These were narrated to us by frontline defenders, advisors, board members, sister fund staff, donors, and other funds. We heard their insights, sought clarity and integrated these lessons into our current practice to hone our three year strategic vision.

Through this tumultuous year, what shone through was that emergent learning was no longer a theory, but our scaffolding for work in progress. It helped us develop and institutionalise an organisational mitigation plan for work during the pandemic. We reviewed and revised the plan weekly, to capture changing environments we lived and worked in, and tracked our sense of safety and well-being. We realised that when we experience empathy and urgency to our needs, we pass on the chains of kindness to those we work with and work for.

We mark 2020 as also the final year of our journey together as Co-Leads of UAF A&P.


WHAT I LEARNT FROM JANE

Jane, thank you for a memorable co-leadership journey, being by your side - as co-architects that built this amazing team, has been life changing. You always encouraged me to think outside of my comfort zone, making me laugh and believing in myself even when I chased 'mad ideas'. As we experimented with feminist co-leadership, you showed me how the best ones were centered around shared feminist values. We always co-led by centering collective care in everything we do. It was being intentional and following through with action, it was direct communication and being kind to ourselves and others. It was also about respecting each other's boundaries, and also giving each other space to learn to set boundaries. Thank you for sharing this journey with me. I know you have reached your stop and have new paths to explore. I am sure our paths will cross again.

Onwards and upwards,
Mary Jane N Real & Virisila Buadromo
Co-Leads

Protests For Democracy And Justice

THROUGH THE PANDEMIC LENS



As the COVID-19 pandemic spreads rapidly, many countries across Asia went into lockdown. The pace and severity of these restrictions precipitated a barrage of rights violations. Jobs and livelihoods were lost, and access to food, medicines, and essential relief material was inequitable. Women and non-binary persons, including informal and migrant workers suffered the brunt of lack of access. With the pandemic and ill-planned government responses deepening existing disadvantages across Asia and the Pacific nations, citizens and worker collectives improvised to fill some gaps through tireless volunteer work and crowdfunding.

Tropical cyclones caused devastation in Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, directly risking the safety and well-being of women, children and marginalised communities. Reports showed that Papua New Guinea's COVID response was marred by police corruption, misinformation, and an unprepared health system. Women's groups identified the spread of disease and the destruction of health facilities as immediate concerns, particularly within the context of closed borders reducing the supply of aid. There has also been an evident increase in women's unpaid labour caring for relatives migrating or returning from urban areas, both voluntary and forced.

In Solomon Islands the government enforced repatriation of urban workers to home provinces while in Tuvalu it was recommended as a means to lower the risk of infection in the case of an outbreak.

Civic protests were disrupted as the pandemic spread, and authoritarian governments across the regions banned public gatherings. Surveillance, both real life and digital, became widespread, bringing into its ambit social media sites, chat applications, and email services. Women and non-binary human rights defenders found it challenging to find safe virtual avenues to move their activism online, with even a tweet, a protest placard, or online post leading to an arrest warrant in many countries.

The murders and assassination attempts on women human rights defenders working in the regions increased significantly during the year, with frequent attacks reported against indigenous land rights defenders in the Philippines, and human rights defenders in Afghanistan. On the government radar were also journalists and media-persons, queer rights, anti-caste, and environmental justice activists.

Retributive and punitive laws – such as the Anti-Terror Act of 2020 in the Philippines, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in India, and the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region – came into force in many countries, paving the way for defenders and anti-government activists to be legally tagged as 'terrorists' and be subjected to long incarceration with little legal recourse.

Financial clampdowns also ensued in the form of surveillance and blocking of foreign funds, grants, and transfers, epitomised by the amended Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010, of India.

Many countries across Asia saw pro-democracy rallies (Thailand, Malaysia and Hong Kong), the youth and worker unions' protests in Indonesia, and the farmers' protests in India. Protests in Bangladesh demanded better laws to protect women against sexual crimes. There were solidarity rallies around the Black Lives Matter movement in many Asian countries, and in Australia, where there were demands for justice for custodial deaths of Aboriginal Australians. Interestingly, protests across many countries were intergenerational, youth-led, and mobilised by iconic symbols and innovative 'guerilla' methods with strong online mobilisation.

Grassroots feminist and LGBTQIA+ movements, and groups mobilised money and resources to address community needs, as the funders opened new COVID-specific grant mechanisms. Collective action took the form of seed farms, community farming, door-to-door volunteering,

cash donation collections, awareness-building in local languages – demonstrating that community action was a powerful antidote to governmental apathy. Activism adapted swiftly to digital platforms and virtual organising. Feminist movements, positioned to understand the 'crisis of care' spiralling in the year, responded with mental health care support circles and grants, organisational changes to build internal resilience, and advocated to highlight the scale of the crisis that was building.

As concerns about the pandemic grew early in the year, the 64th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW64) and Beijing+25, planned from March 9-20, 2020, was scaled back significantly, and the general debate and all side events were cancelled. The AWID Board announced the cancellation of the 14th AWID International Forum, scheduled from September 20-23, 2021, in Taipei, in light of safety concerns.

The governments in many Asian and Pacific countries continue to curtail human rights work through 'legal' and coercive means. With the odds mounting, many NGOs and activist groups have had to stall or pause operations to remain safe. The future for them remains uncertain.





Lessons In Framing Resilience

STORIES FROM OUR ACTIVITIES
AND MILESTONES

In 2020, we focused on collective well-being and being intentional about building relationships based on trust within our ecosystem – to piece together a flexible scaffolding for our work during the pandemic. As soon as lockdowns and restrictions were announced across several countries, we responded by planning, reviewing and revising how to support communities we worked with, while also caring for ourselves and our families, and safeguarding our health and well-being.

WORKING WITH EXPANSIVENESS AND EMPATHY

Our plan captured the different ways in which our team members could individually take initiative to stop the spread of the virus in their living spaces and communities. It also documented how we navigated the pandemic as an organisation. In this COVID mitigation plan -- some practices were recommended, while others were in the must-be-practised category. The team in Philippines, the first to go into a strict lockdown, organised well-being workshops for themselves online. We prioritised the plan because we recognised that if we felt unsafe and out of control, we cannot fulfil our commitment to support courageous women and non-binary human rights defenders.

WHAT WE LEARNED

As weekly review calls progressed, we began using our experiences and feelings as a guide to revise our priorities – living through oppressive lockdowns and uncertainties around access to health and essentials helped us to practice empathy within the team and with our ecosystem. Staff members also took the time and space to reflect on current practices and renegotiate our understanding of productivity, which valorised high productivity under all conditions. We were mindful to do it without judgement or consequences, while ensuring that work that was in collaboration with others (and not just team members) was adjusted through dialogue and deliberations. We used kindness and grace to overcome the emotional and physical toll that the pandemic was taking, which was increasing the cost of being human and humane.



REFLECTING ON PAST YEARS TO PLAN AHEAD

Three years into setting up the only feminist fund that is women-led and focused only on women and non-binary defenders of Asia and the Pacific, we commissioned a review that traced our journey and milestones and reflected on the outcomes. This was the first step towards building a strategic plan for the next three years. The pandemic, global lockdowns and travel bans in 2020 necessitated multiple relooks and re-design. Both the review and the strategic plan for 2021-23 were facilitated and finalised virtually, across multiple remote sessions, with the help of different facilitators, and involved multiple stakeholders over varied time zones.

WHAT WE LEARNED

We navigated the uncertainties by keeping our sight firmly on our identified north star – developing a set of feminist principles and values to guide us over the next 3 years through pandemic and post-pandemic phases. We were committed to honour and support the needs of the activists and their communities we work with, along with that of our team too. We realised that our goals need to be mounted on a flexible scaffolding that allows us to read changing contexts in real time and respond suitably.

CENTERING OUR HUMANITY AND DIGNITY

We practiced collective care and well-being, making it an essential part of all our interactions within our ecosystem. We intentionally made resources available for everyone to be heard and seen, in all their identities. For some, this meant having funds and freedom to hire co-working spaces instead of working from home, or hiring translators to communicate their thoughts and passion that were lost in translation to English. We also planned our convenings and the duration, such that it was convenient for all participants. For instance, finding supportive time zones for Board, staff members, advisors and grantees to convene was often a major challenge, but being intentional about it, led us to figure out different ways of working.

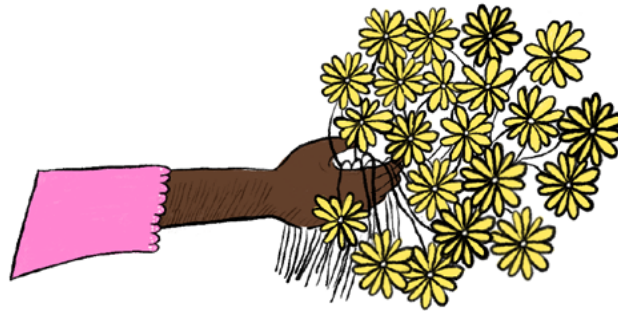
WHAT WE LEARNED

Expanding convenings to bring in diverse voices, and conceptualising safe spaces to ideate and reflect, encourage defenders and activists to bring their authentic selves to conversations. It not only enriches conversations, but also allows for expanding our understanding of feminist governance models and how to share power and voice equitably. We also learnt that in-person consultations and virtual convenings need to follow different rhythms and methods of facilitation for best results. For instance, the review and planning and the several changes to the initial plan to factor in the uncertainties of the time that we were working in, taught us that being intentional about the spaces we convene, and clear about outcomes sought, can result in the desired result, and better participation and contributions from the UAF A&P ecosystem.



Our Grantmaking In Numbers

126% INCREASE OVER 2019



2019

53 grants totalling US\$ 219,473



2020

116 grants totalling

US\$495,024

Security & Well Being Grants



2019
S&WB Grants: 44
Grants totalled
US\$ 180,412



2020

S&WB Grants: 66

Grants totalled

US\$ 286,319

Resourcing Resilience Grants

2019

9 Grants



2020

5 Grants



Covid Crisis Grants



2019
0 Covid Crisis



2020

44 Covid Crisis Grants

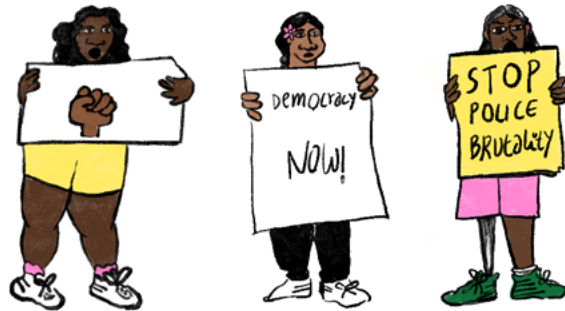
totalling US\$ 188,916



Webs of Safety & Care Grant

2019


Preparatory Consultations And Workshops



2020

1 Grant





South Asia and Southeast Asia disproportionately affected by pandemic & political upheavals

Increased geographic footprint, more marginalised groups supported



Region	2020 Grants	2020 Regional %	2019 Grants	2019 Regional %
South Asia	53	46%	18	34%
Southeast Asia	45	39%	20	38%
East Asia	11	9%	9	17%
Pacific	7	6%	6	11%

Thirteen environmental defender organisations and **five** Disabled Peoples Organisations joined our list of grantees this year, for the first time.

As a result of increased outreach, in 2020 grantees from five new countries and territories were added to our portfolio, namely: Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Laos, Taiwan and the Federated States of Micronesia, expanding our geographic span of access across the regions to 21 countries.

We also gave our first Webs of Safety and Care grant to a network in the Philippines and moved forward on work on a second grant for a Nepal network.



Covid 19 Crisis Fund



Early during the pandemic, we found that urgent needs of activists and defenders were largely to support food, shelter and sanitation needs and loss of livelihoods. We set aside US\$120,000 from the [Rapid Response Grantmaking](#) budget to seed a new Covid-19 Crisis Fund, to support activists and defenders through pandemic-induced restrictions and lockdowns. The sister funds consortium swung into action too, mobilising over US\$205,000 specifically towards supporting pandemic-related needs. [And by December 2020, we disbursed 44 grants, amounting to over 38% of our total grantmaking for 2020.](#)

WHAT WE LEARNED

In a pandemic, survival represents a political act of resistance for activists and defenders. Since it was essential that we offered assistance for their immediate needs, we broadened our grant criteria to respond to emerging needs. Of the 44 Covid grants, a majority were given for ensuring food rations, hygiene kits procurement, paying for accommodation and basic utilities. Others applied to find alternative ways of livelihood support or to ensure economic sustainability. Due to the continued impact of the pandemic on most countries across Asia and the Pacific, these special grants are open till the next scheduled review in June 2021.



Special Focus



RESILIENCE AS A CONTINUUM - GRANTMAKING REFLECTIONS

Resilience manifests in multiple ways along a spectrum where survival occupies one end, while thriving and regenerating constitutes on the other end. The pandemic showed us that the journey from survival to thriving and regenerating is not linear, but along a continuum. Activists and defenders in our ecosystem need our urgent support as well as resources and handholding to be more resilient long-term. Apart from sustaining their resistance and resilience through grants, we also offered a bouquet of support such as, convening spaces that enabled activists to congregate, learn and share; and being point of access for engaging with various global practices and new experiments in sustainable activism.

ORGANISING THE RESILIENCE ROUNDTABLE

We tested our assumption of viewing resilience as a continuum at a roundtable organised with our advisors and grantees from across Asia and the Pacific to better understand how they understood the term and how it manifested in their activism. The exchange was rich, and cross-pollinated methods and practices that inspired participants, affirmed their activism, and they reported feeling seen and heard.

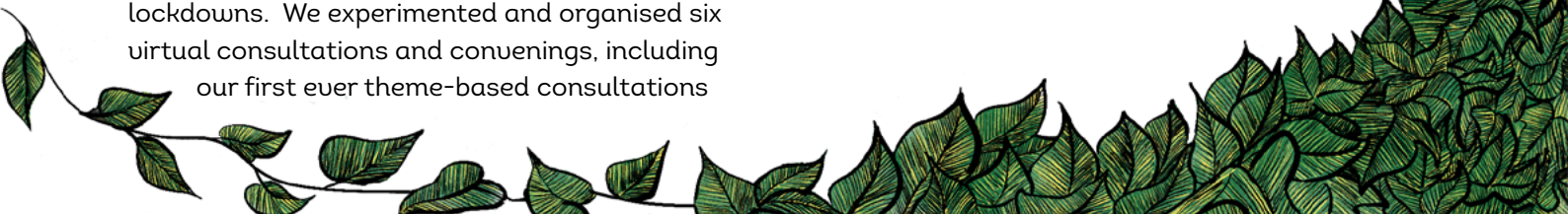
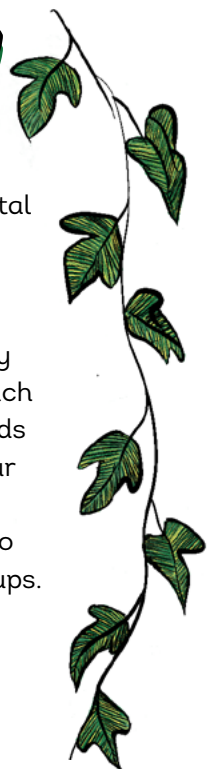
INITIATING ISSUE-BASED AND FOCUSED CONSULTATIONS

After organising consultations in Bangladesh with various activist groups, NGOs and CSOs in January 2020, we had to figure new ways of engaging with activists and groups in pandemic lockdowns. We experimented and organised six virtual consultations and convenings, including our first ever theme-based consultations

focused on disability justice and environmental justice. The disability justice consultation connected us to participants from 13 groups spread across Asia and the Pacific. It was preceded by an organisational-level disability inclusion audit that advised us to conduct such consultations to better understand their needs and support required. Lessons learnt from our sister funds in Africa and Latin America also confirm the need for focused consultations to increase applications from marginalised groups.

WHAT WE LEARNED

These consultations translated into increased number of applications for grants, including for resourcing resilience grants. For instance, this year, there were several grantees from Bangladesh following our consultations there. Over 60% of grants given to activists with disabilities followed the consultations in October. We need to expand our working definitions of human rights defense and who can be termed a defender? To better resource intersectional work, and identity-based activism. Expanding our definitions is critical in times of global crises, such as this pandemic, as it blurs lines between what is popularly differentiated as urgent support for human rights defense and humanitarian support. We also learnt that flexibility is the prism to use for requests to support the resistance and resilience of human rights defenders.



ESTABLISHING PEER DONOR NETWORKS

We started this experiment in the Philippines in 2020, soon after the passing of the Anti-Terror Bill, which led to a steep rise in requests for support and protection. We led a loose cobbling of a group of funders that offer urgent support for human rights activism, into a peer donor network. These networks support vetting or verifying grant applications; exploring possibilities for joint funding among the donors; and for speedy referral of applications that do not fall under the UAF A&P mandate.

WHAT WE LEARNED

As we continued to support the needs of activists and defender communities, we realised that the collective is stronger – we were able to offer more holistic support, often beyond our mandates, and/or to plug the increasing needs of one country or a specific region. The success of these peer donors' networks is in its informality: where the roles were voluntarily assumed, and there were few obligations to fulfil beyond what was volunteered. The informality offered agility and flexibility in grantmaking, which has now resulted in similar networks being activated in several other countries in crisis, such as Myanmar and Vietnam.



RE-IMAGINING THE ENABLING DEFENDERS PROGRAMME

In 2020, we focused on working with defender networks to identify and articulate their needs and strategic responses to threats faced due to their activism. Our focus was on identifying and building at least three models of Webs of Safety and Care (WSC). While we focused on models, we realised that several groups had specific components integral to building holistic systems of care already in place. They needed support and funding to elevate these activities from ad-hoc to intentional practices. Groups were keen to build capacity and receive technical support to design systems that addressed their safety and care needs.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Enabling Defenders programme was conceptualized as a gateway to building WSC. However, the work of convening spaces and facilitating conversations began to throw up unintended outcomes that were equally or more beneficial to activists and defenders than just developing WSC. We recognised that work done to organise spaces remained largely invisible, until it culminated in a new WSC pilot. We realised that there was value in repetitive engagement with activists and defender communities, to provide them space and time to ideate on their notion of care and collective well-being. This, we find, builds trust and fosters sharing, and building concepts in bits

and pieces, at the pace set by activists and defenders.

For instance, the needs assessment tool we developed as a precursor to building a WSC model, was used as an organisational and/or movement planning tool by a network, clearly showing us that the Enabling Defenders programme needs to have a life and set of activities of its own, apart from initiating WSC models.



LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR A PACIFIC FEMINIST FUND

In February 2020, UAF A&P and Fiji Women's Fund launched a one-of-its-kind scoping report to uncover *Where is the Money for Women and Girls in the Pacific?* Though the pandemic and related lockdowns led to few forums to introduce the scoping report, there was considerable interest in the findings of the report. Several bilateral donors and private and public funds expressed interest in collaborating to better resource work around gender justice in the Pacific. Together with Women's Fund Asia and the Fiji Women's Fund, we are supporting the creation of the Pacific Feminist Fund as the fiscal sponsor for incubating this entity, to resource feminist networks and movements in the region.

WHAT WE LEARNED

By leveraging the power and privilege that we hold as established funds and voices in the Pacific region, we realised we can lift and amplify the needs and struggles of grassroots organisations that are not seen or heard at regional or international levels. Using our access and networks, we are shifting power to them to show up and speak for themselves, and mobilise resources for the Pacific. By initiating the bold step towards forming a new Pacific fund, **we are also turning international donor attention towards redirecting more funding to underfunded regions, issues and communities.**



SHARING POWER AND RESPONSIBILITY AS SISTER FUNDS

The strength of a powerful feminist coalition -- the Urgent Action Funds -- supported and sustained us over the disruptions caused by the pandemic. Together, the sister funds raised more than \$20 million. We also developed a lean system by which we shared resources and funding opportunities among Sister Funds, and brainstormed and developed collective proposals in a relatively short time-frame. We secured a \$20-million gift from Mackenzie Scott, landed a new funding partner (Dreilinden Foundation), and came together to negotiate with our funding partners for additional resources, and for flexibility to extend project timelines. We also successfully negotiated redirecting some of our funding to Covid Crisis Grants to better respond to the increased and urgent needs.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Creating spaces across Sister Funds' working groups led to several instances of organic sharing of information and learning. Collective learning sessions on Covid Crisis Grants and on disability justice grantmaking helped situate our work distinctly within our sister funds collective. Each sister fund is also using the other as a resource for their own work and operations - from sharing practices on hiring consultants, to policies on sabbaticals, staff medical leaves, and job descriptions. We are also actively exploring how to express solidarity with activists and with Sister Funds beyond issuing joint statements.



Prioritising Flexibility Over Outputs In A Pandemic

We began 2020 by attempting to align our Activating Philanthropy and Sustainable Livelihoods experiments by initiating work with a network in Fiji. Since the experiment envisioned outcomes that aligned with WSC, we hoped to explore the interconnectedness too through consultation. However, with the pandemic affecting lives of most defenders, we deprioritised our experiments to focus on urgent support that these communities and others required. We did this by organising consultations, and leading on work around disability inclusion. Since movement was restricted, we used the time to reflect on what we heard and design new approaches to better resource constituencies we support.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Practising flexibility to respect the experiences and circumstances of activists and defenders requires us to deprioritise our programme goals and shift focus. *Work towards building resilience cannot be carried out when urgent needs are mounting. Therefore, the moment required us to shift our resource mobilisation for resilience building to strengthening resistance.*

For many defenders, survival is resistance and by prioritising activists and defender communities' immediate needs, we invested in building relationships of trust with them. We hypothesise that with time, it will help us co-ideate what sustainability manifests as in a post-pandemic scenario.



Our Financial Milestones For 2020

The pandemic forced us to move all our consultations for grantmaking and resilience programmes online post April. We revised our budgetary allocations for consultations to support costs for translators and facilitators, and other digital needs of the team and invited participants.

The team and short-term contractors, partnered with women and non-binary human rights defenders to make their lives and communities safer by offering 116 grants totalling US\$495,024. We continued to co-develop our Enabling Defenders Programme and our Webs of Safety & Care framework with consultations and research in Nepal, and the Philippines. These have been classified as our activities under Resilience programmes. The Grant Making & Resilience Programmes cost US\$978,977 which attributed to 45% of our total organisational budget.

We began work towards a sustainable livelihoods pilot in Fiji and are the fiscal sponsor for the work towards establishing a Pacific Feminist Fund. Our innovative Emergent Learning framework for our monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning system was also expanded with regular adjustments of our strategies via learning questions and hypotheses. This culminated in our new 3-year Strategic Plan 2021-2023. These activities under our other programmes' costs, included activities for Resource Mobilisation and Knowledge sharing, which totalled US\$437,037, about 20% of our total budget.

Our Administration costs included overheads, such as insurance, rent, and board costs, as well as accounting and legal fees associated with governance and compliance in Australia and the Philippines.

The total spend was US\$287,414 which was 13% of our overall budget.



UAF A&P Financial Summary

Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights, Asia and Pacific
1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020

Financial Summary - For Use in Annual Report
United States Dollar

Income & Expenditure Statement		2020
Income	3,483,959	
Less Donor Income for use in 2021	<u>1,330,702</u>	
	2,153,257	
Expenditure		
Grant-Making & Resilience Programmes	978,977	45%
Other Programmes	437,037	20%
Administration	287,414	13%
Surplus (Deficit)	1,780,532	

Statement of Financial Position

Assets		
Bank Accounts	2,013,202	
Current Assets	12,066	
Fixed Assets	1,328	2,026,596
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities	140,430	
Donations In Advance	70,000	
Non-Current Liabilities	711	211,141
Net Assets		1,815,456
Equity		
Accumulated surplus/ (losses)	234,754	
Reserve - Donor funds for 2021	1,330,702	
Reserve - Surplus funds transferred to Reserves	<u>250,000</u>	
	1,815,456	

We received a total income of US\$3,483,959. Donor Income received was US\$3,342,290 of which US\$1,330,702 was received in advance for use in 2021.

Due to a change in the tax legislation governing charities in Australia, we had to change the way we account for Donor Income, which is markedly different from previous years.

We need to now recognise Donor Income received at the end of 2020 (which are effectively prepayments of Grant Contracts dated in 2021) as Income for 2020 even though these funds are for use in 2021. This has "over-estimated" our Donor Income by \$1,330,702 and shows as a "Surplus" in the financial statements



UAF A&P Is Grateful To:

American Jewish World Service

Channel Foundation

Dreilinden Foundation

Dutch Government's "Count me in Consortium"

Fund for Global Human Rights

Ford Foundation

Foundation for a Just Society

MacKenzie Scott

Merrill Black

NoVo Foundation

OAK Foundation

Open Society Policy Centre

Peter Schattner

Swedish International
Development Agency

Wellspring Philanthropic Fund

