

Annual Learning Report 2022



# Stirrings of the Earth

Voyaging Across the  
Seas of Feminist Crises



## Stirrings of the Earth: Voyaging Across the Seas of Crises

is an annual learning report of Urgent Action Fund, Asia & Pacific. It is a feminist visual storytelling of human rights defense by women, trans, and non-binary activists in Asia and the Pacific. It borrows cultural symbols, nomenclatures, terminologies, and wisdom from indigenous cultures and Pacific women navigators who leaned into ancestral knowledge to navigate ocean currents and storms, and tries to represent the close relationship between, people, land, identity, culture, and history.

This visual report sails through the rising currents of participatory feminist grantmaking that laid out maps of warning signs across the regions and prepared the grounds for human rights defense even in inhospitable terrains. It shows that, much like the rhythm of the ocean, feminist movements in Asia and the Pacific embody collective care and sisterhood through their lands, bodies, and waters to sustain their resistance and resilience. The insights, voices, and tremendous power of these movements act as a star compass to navigate through the mountains of strife in the regions, while the strong *vakas* (canoes) help withstand the roughest waters of crises to reach islands of hope.

## Credits

### Co-Leads

Virisila Buadromo &  
Vinita Sahasranaman

### Written By

Deepthy Menon &  
Ila Reddy

### Contributors

Elvira Colobong,  
Fareen Jalal &  
Noelene Powell

### Titles, Concept and Art Direction by

Twisha Mehta

### Illustrated and Designed by

Nadya Noor

### Title Typeface 'Coconat' Designed by

Sara Lavazza

### Nadya Noor

Nadya Noor is a full-time graphic designer at an online news outlet based in Jakarta. She is also a freelance illustrator who takes on projects related to artwork, merchandise, comics, product design, murals, etc. She specialises in editorial illustrations and has been featured on VICE Indonesia & BBC Indonesia. Active on voicing gender equality with her touch on illustrations, you can check out more of her artwork on [instagram.com/nadya.noor](https://www.instagram.com/nadya.noor)

# Table of Contents

6

**The Ocean and Its Rhythms**  
Reflections from the outgoing  
Board Chair

10

**Our Place Within**  
Leaning into the ways and wisdom of  
our indigenous cultures

18

**Tsunamis From The Mountains**  
Continuing conflict, strife and  
humanitarian crises in Asia & the Pacific

24

**Knowledge of The Currents**  
Harvesting Valuable  
Lessons From 2022

46

**The Ocean in Us**  
Our Grantmaking  
at a Glance

54

**Curved Sticks and Cowrie Shells**  
2022 in Numbers





...When the depths try to swallow her / whole  
she remembers how far her roots go  
entwined with others just like hers,  
she knows she is never alone.  
She has persisted through lifetimes  
In her resistance, she is free  
Ask me about resilience,  
I will tell you, resilience is  
She.

Excerpt from a powerful poem composed by  
Fijian artist Camari Serau during one of our  
Shifting Narratives workshops



# The Ocean and its Rhythms

## Reflections from the Outgoing Board Chair

Firstly, thank you to the UAF A&P team for giving me space to make a written sign-off as I end my term as member and chair of the Regional Board. I leave with confidence that UAF A&P's new and continuing Board members will provide strong leadership and meaningful support for the Co-Leads as the organization charts its course for the years to come.

It has been an engrossing journey that began a few years before this regional feminist fund was established. I was among the midwives within the board of UAF in the USA that facilitated the birth of this sister fund.

Allow me to take this opportunity as a way to make sense of our work so far and to share some reflections for the way forward.

Defenders of human rights in Asia and the Pacific rely on the movements they are a part for support and protection in the face of gross human rights violations and unending political, economic, social and ecological crises. We do not have the advantage of defenders in other regions of the world, which is access to a regional human rights mechanism that binds its member states to comply with their human rights obligations. If the definition of impunity is the impossibility of bringing perpetrators of human rights violations to account, then this is the stark reality for defenders in Asia and the Pacific who are dependent on flawed national mechanisms and on a far-away international human rights mechanism based in the other side of the globe. No wonder many violations, conflicts, crises go unresolved and unaccounted for over long stretches of time. This reality takes a specific toll on human rights defenders.

Our geopolitical terrain became even more complex this past decade, with growing authoritarianism, towering oligarchs, and the spectre of war involving the world's political and economic giants. It has been a personal privilege for me to be a part of building a regional system of support and protection for women and non-binary human rights defenders in Asia and the Pacific. From the beginning, it was very clear to us founders that UAF A&P needed to be solidly grounded in our movements and that, given the challenges of our time, our role had to be both responsive and visionary. Responsive in terms of being timely in meeting the needs of defenders at risk, and visionary in terms of providing space to co-create pathways for long-term resilience as integral to the survival and thriving of our movements.

Being a feminist fund in a part of the world where such a thing is rare, we understood the push to break new ground in order to obtain and grow resources from within Asia and the Pacific. As we continued to be beneficiaries of crucial support from global sources, we also began exploring a framework that could speak to those who want to build our economic system anew based on solidarity and mutual care in our corner of the world. Conventional donors and donations would continue to be necessary for UAF A&P's sustainability, but we also want to be part of a larger and visionary goal that aims at creating a different socio-economic world for the future. The hope is to find new partners for resource mobilization within our regions among an emerging community of bold visionaries.



As my time in the UAF A&P Board was reaching its end, I reflected on the role of narrative – not just responsive grants – as a means of support and protection for women and non-binary defenders. Could the right narrative have protective impact for defenders at risk particularly in contexts where no effective law exists for their protection?

**Imagine public narratives that give recognition and legitimacy to defenders' stories and that generate a sense of common mission to support them in their struggles.**

Imagine a public body of knowledge that builds a shared understanding of the risks and challenges faced by defenders in their diversity and across multiple contexts. Imagine creating public spaces that celebrate and regenerate the collective energy inspired by Asia and the Pacific's women and non-binary defenders. For such narratives to be able to speak to the public, there is the question of language. In our part of the world, where cultural references and symbols are vibrant and abundant, could we redefine and remake them to help us communicate our message?

**Maybe this could be called 'cultural advocacy'. How would cultural advocacy complement political and legal advocacy for the support and protection of women and non-binary defenders at risk?**

As a young feminist fund born out of a two-decade legacy of the UAF Sister Funds, UAF A&P has spent its early years establishing its place among the ecosystem of social movements defending human rights in Asia and the Pacific. In so doing, it has also made its unique mark within the global sisterhood of UAFs. It still has much room to grow. What a gift it has been for me to be able to see how far our team has come in making the fund relevant in such a challenging historical moment. I would like to close by expressing my deep gratitude for those who have shared the journey with me, through all its highs and lows, struggling to stay true to our purpose and values with boldness and creativity. May the path forward be as meaningful and enriching.

**Kamala  
Chandrakirana**



# Our Place Within

Leaning into the ways and wisdom  
of our indigenous cultures  
Note from the Co-leads

“We have no need  
For scientists to  
Tell us things  
we already  
know  
like the  
sea is  
rising  
and the  
water is  
getting warm.”  
- Julian Aguon

Aguon’s evocative words from his book -  
[No Country for Eight Spot Butterflies](#)  
- underline the need for trusting the wisdom  
of indigenous communities as we tackle rising  
sea levels. It is a testament to the lives of Pacific  
Islanders and their rage at the world for not  
moving fast enough to save their ancestral homes  
and land, by continuing to seek more ‘scientific  
evidence’ as sea levels continue to rise.



Indigenous wisdom underpins feminist movements and actions. Generations of women have relied on each other and ancestral knowledge passed down the ages generations to understand their bodies, lands, healing and much more.

**UAF A&P has intentionally woven indigenous wisdom into all aspects of our work and in how we respond to crises.**


In embodying “urgent action” grounded in care, often our first port-of-call is to dip into this wisdom - reaching out and listening to movement builders of sub-regions and countries - to understand the early signs of crises unfolding and root our actions in their reading of the situation. One shining example of this for us was the wisdom shared by our board member from the Pacific, [Ofa Louise Guttenbeil-Likiliki](#) of her experiences that are strongly rooted and anchored in the land and ocean *moana* of Tonga.

**“We saw the nuances and warning signs that could enmesh an economic and political crises into one major mess.”**

We noticed a pattern across 2022 of the insights and tremendous feminist power that grounded us in 2022. Women and gender non-binary defenders in Sri Lanka knew that a crisis of epic proportions was upon them much before it was widely reported or known to those outside the island. Our Sri Lankan advisors guided UAF A&P to set in motion an early response to the looming crisis. We saw the nuances and warning signs that could enmesh an economic and political crises into one major mess.

As Sri Lankan activists mobilised like never before, the agitations that spread across the country also served up moments to engage in the herstories of movement building that formed the rich tapestry of human rights work done in the past. We would like to acknowledge the power of oral histories that have passed on indigenous wisdom from one generation to another!






Feminist and queer movements also continue to teach us how it takes global action to change the world, and this can only happen when there are collaborators to participate in the radical act of passing on the baton. While Asia and the Pacific were battling multiple 'new' crises, the Afghanistan crisis was intensifying by mid 2022 – with few means left for those wanting to leave the country. Women, who were being shunned from public spaces, had to pay the price for public protests, by facing violence, abuse and/or having to flee the country illegally.

The compounding economic crisis made survival too an uphill battle, especially for women and LGBTQI people. Amid depleting resources and exacerbating crisis, we recognised that it was time to pivot and rethink our crisis response. A key lesson for us was also to take note of the immense impact (and secondary trauma) borne by our team - especially those who were responding to requests from Afghan defenders. This shift in our response also gave us an opportunity to prioritise and ground care of our team.

We were also curious to explore how collective care is embodied and practised within movements that we work alongside and support. In 2022, we sowed the seeds for two pieces of work that will enrich our soils to reap a harvest to nurture and nourish in the coming years. One maps the diverse resilience and respite support available to social justice movements led by women and non-binary human rights defenders and identifies gaps that we need to support as a feminist fund. The second is more inward facing, looking

at how we as a feminist funder can practise collective care and share our learnings with the UAF sisterhood, in the hope that we evolve and transform our internal sisterhood culture. Both these pathways recognise that learning is power: the power to define what changes are sought, what data is seen as valid, who shapes the story the data tells us, and what lessons will be acted upon. This political [r]evolutionary process and the insights that emerge will help nuance our current and future collective care agenda.





2023 is already proving to be a watershed year for UAF A&P. We are in the midst of exciting changes that our outgoing Board Chair alluded to in her farewell note.

A journey of Board transition that we began in 2022 was concluded before the ink dries on this annual report. The successful transition was the result of a rigorous process led by our governance team to diversify intersectional representation of activists and defenders, with specific skills and commitment to the feminist movement of our regions. As we bid farewell to our founding members, we are looking forward to working with our new board members.

**Interestingly, the position of the Board Chair will also be jointly held as Co-Chairs by Devi Leiper O'Malley and Ivy Josiah.**

For our full Board and team members list, please refer to [www.uafanp.org](http://www.uafanp.org)

We collectively dream of setting an example of feminist governance and leadership that is inter-generational and transformational.

In the spirit of embodying the rich indigenous cultures of sharing in our regions, we continue to reflect, learn and evolve our co-leadership practice where vision, decisions and creations are distributed within our team, the UAF A&P sisterhood and our collaborators and women's funds of Asia and Pacific.



# Tsunamis from the Mountains

Continuing conflict, strife and humanitarian crises in Asia & Pacific

To understand the current state of human rights in the region, UAF A&P tracked the impact of various dimensions of the continuing conflicts and crises impacting Asia and the Pacific, such as the decline of democratic institutions and continuing militarisation to suppress ongoing subnational conflicts, growing gender gap and gender-based violence, and increasing incidences of natural disasters, to name

a few. Two key reports that we tracked for 2022 offered ominous warnings: [Freedom in the World 2023](#) report noted that global freedom declined for the 17th consecutive year, and infringement on basic liberties such as freedom of expression was an indicator of global democratic decline; media freedom was reported to be under pressure in at least 157 countries in 2022.

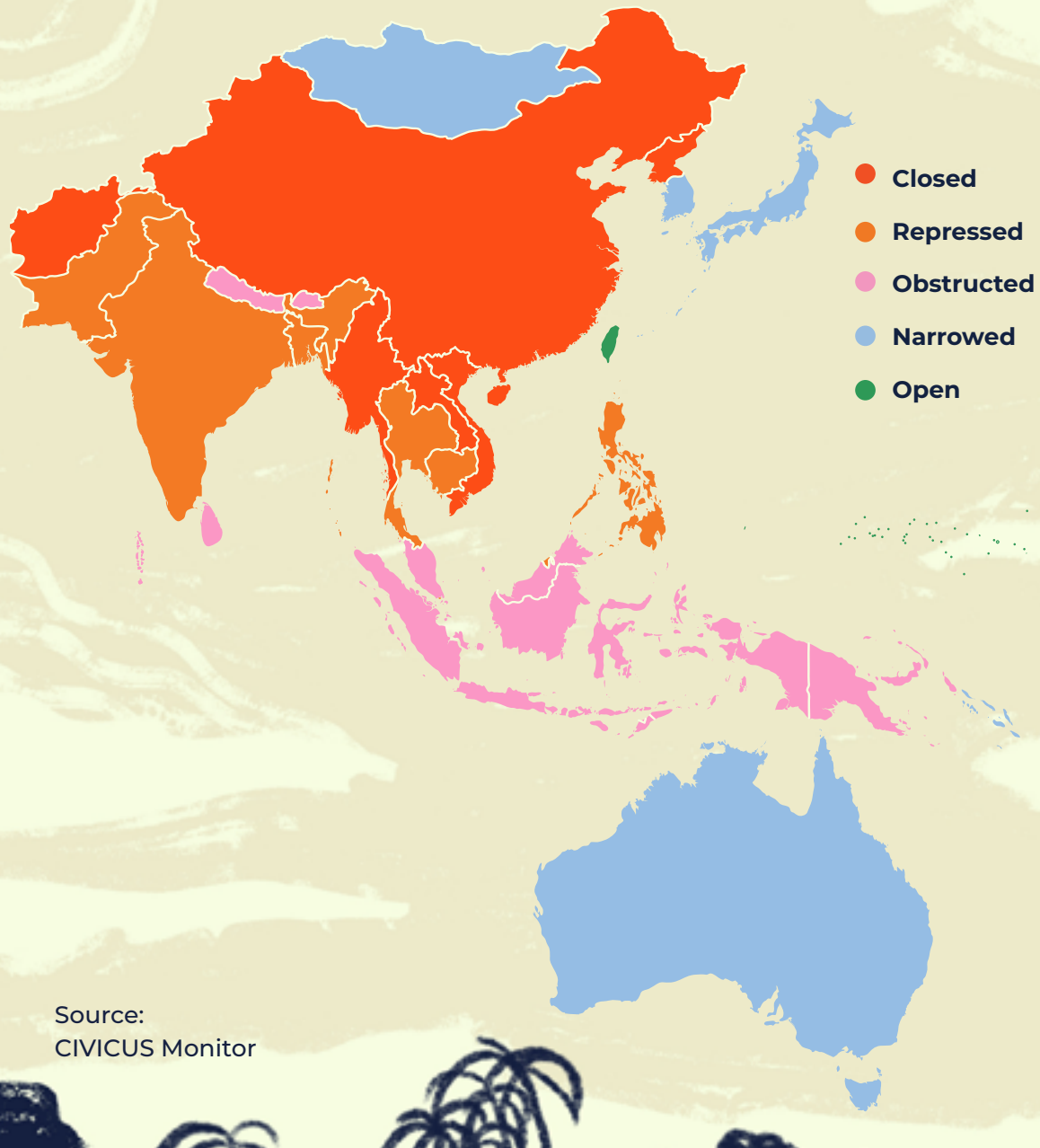
The [CIVICUS Monitor 2023](#) found that 2022 had the highest number of people living in countries rated as 'closed,' while the number of countries where human rights defenders were harassed rose from 65 in 2018 to 106 in 2022.

Human rights violations have also increased in countries rated as 'narrowed' and 'open' as well. 28% of the world's activists faced extreme forms of repression because of their activism.

Gender and sexuality remain at the centre of cultural repression by state and non-state actors, with increasing popularity of anti-feminist, anti-gender, and anti-rights movements.

At the current pace, the gender gap in East Asia and the Pacific is likely to close only in 2190 and in South Asia in 2219 according to the Global Gender Gap Report 2022. This prediction is based on economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment.





Death threats were the most common human rights violation against defenders in Asia according to [Frontline Defenders' Global Analysis 2022](#), while other threats and risks include arbitrary arrests and detention, restrictions on freedom of expression, harassment and raids, and other forms of intimidation.

Source:  
CIVICUS Monitor

## South Asia

The Taliban takeover of **Afghanistan** aggravated the situation for women and girls - secondary school education was banned for girls, as was working in non-governmental organizations. Targeting of human rights defenders, journalists, and activists, especially women and LGBTQIA+ people, through abductions, beatings, threats, and attacks remain key threats. In **Sri Lanka**, protesters overthrew the Rajapaksa-government despite widespread police violence and deployment of the army to quell protests. In **Bangladesh** too, intimidation and harassment of journalists and activists continued and the government cancelled the registration of Odhikar, a human rights group.

Democratic rights and institutions in **India** remain under pressure, particularly for marginalized communities like the Muslims and Dalits. The government continues to target and arrest activists and human rights defenders by using repressive laws, and civil society organizations and media houses are consistently being silenced.

## Southeast Asia

In **Indonesia**, the Sexual Violence Bill was passed that criminalised forced marriage and sexual abuse and enhanced protections for victims after years of advocacy by women and non-binary activists. However, 2022 also witnessed the passing of a regressive law that criminalized pre-marital sex. Politically, Indonesian authorities continue to criminalize activists and suppress protests around **West Papua**. Hundreds of activists were arrested in **Vietnam**, and persecuted under restrictive laws in the pretext of 'abusing democratic freedoms' and 'spreading materials against the State.' In **Myanmar**, activists and human rights defenders faced arbitrary arrests and detention, psychological harassments and threats, defamation campaigns, stigmatization, raids, intimidation, surveillance, restrictions on freedom of expression, and travel restrictions.

## East Asia

In **Mongolia**, the government has used economic factors and interventions to curb civic spaces and human rights activism. Civil society organizations are struggling for financial support to stay afloat. Women and LGBTQIA+ activists face discrimination and remain invisible to decision-makers and arrests have been on the rise. **China** continues to be a sophisticated surveillance state with widespread abuse of political rights and civil liberties. Hundreds of protestors and student activists were arbitrarily arrested under the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act in 2022, even as the persecution and censorship of Uyghurs and activists continues to persist.


## Pacific

In **Papua Guinea**, freedom of press was adversely affected with sustained attacks and restrictions on journalists, while the volcano eruption in **Tonga** shifted government priorities at the national and regional level. In **Vanuatu**, there was an increase in sorcery-related accusations and violence linked to COVID infections. This had an enormous impact on rural women and their access to healthcare. In **Fiji**, the government channelled most of its resources to COVID response and traditional recipients, and in the process, neglected mental health.

In spite of all these challenges, dissent against authoritarian rule continues to persist in even the most repressed countries.







# Knowledge of the Currents

Harvesting Valuable  
Lessons From 2022

## Meandering Trajectories

Five Stories that speak to  
our feminist values

*This section is a compilation of five stories that best showcase how we continue to uphold our feminist values in all areas of our work, expanding the intersectionality and depth of our work over the past year. There are multiple facets to every story, which represent other feminists values that we uphold and practise. Each convening, crises, or opportunity that we encountered in the past year offered us rich learnings and has influenced how we shape our work.*



# The (Un)certainty of Navigation

Learning from  
Setbacks to Improve  
and Improve

Pivoting our  
Afghanistan  
Response

2022 was largely devoted to better supporting Afghan women and non-binary defenders as they engaged with new realities - as explained in the previous chapter and in the accompanying infographics, we sensed the nature of crisis shifting. By June 2022, we realised that the support we could provide as a rapid response feminist fund was inadequate by itself. Grantees we supported to relocate and shift to safer countries told us that the bigger need for those who have stayed back in Afghanistan and those who were forced out of their jobs (and activism) by the Taliban, need options for livelihood

and survival. For over a year, we had stretched our personnel and grantmaking resources to support as many women and non-binary persons as possible by expanding the definition of human rights defenders to recognize that the mere act of survival in Afghanistan was an act of political resistance by these most affected populations. However, as the crisis metamorphosed, and applications for living support increased, we realised that Afghanistan now needs a collaborative global effort, beyond the scope of rapid response. Our learnings and reflections that led to this decision are elaborated [here](#).

We rolled out the decision with care, by first consulting our Afghan advisors and other grantees that we supported. With their guidance and advice, we focused on processing the backlog of applications before accepting new applications. We recruited women defenders from Afghanistan as our crisis support facilitators, who better understood the context and the needs, and could liaise better in Dari and Pashto with applicants. This will now continue to be the blueprint of our crisis response.



# One year of Response in Afghanistan

Disbursed grants to Afghanistan in 2022

US\$1.77mn (384 grants)

US\$1.18mn (242 grants)  
The first 6 months of 2022 alone

## Changing needs:

While in the initial months of grantmaking in Afghanistan in 2021, requests for safe relocation formed the majority of requests, by April 2022, request for living expenses formed nearly 50% of the grant requests we received.

## Approved grants:

77%  
Relocation

Medical care/treatment, action to establish plan, and wellness & self-care

22%  
Living Expenses

As part of long-term resilience thinking, a group from Afghanistan also received a Webs of Safety and Care grant to begin a holistic assessment of their security and care needs.

## Our denials largely comprised of...



Groups seeking support that exceeded our capacity and/or mandate



Fraudulent applications



Repeated applications seeking support to respond to the same risks



Applicants who had left Afghanistan or had already received support for their needs from peer donors



Applicants with unverified references



Cis-male defenders

## 2 Traces of Storms

Flexibility to understand contexts of activists and defenders, and the support they require

Adapting Our Feminist Crisis Response Blueprint to Multiple Intersectional Crises

The constant in our feminist crisis response blueprint has been our commitment to centering the needs and rights of activists and defenders, and moving money and resources directly into their hands with speed and efficiency, even when financial services are disrupted or suspended. Across 2022, the crises we have responded to have been intersectional and multi-dimensional.

Recognising that in most major crisis, it is difficult to separate humanitarian needs from basic human rights, we moulded our response to not only support civil and political activism, but also the struggle for economic and social justice. Our crisis blueprint recognised the multiple shades of risks that threatened human rights activists and defenders across major humanitarian crises of 2022, such as the economic collapse and political turmoil in Sri Lanka, and the massive flooding that engulfed huge swathes of Pakistan.



We fashioned bespoke solutions -- for instance supporting activists targeted for being on the frontlines of political resistance in Sri Lanka with legal aid and relocation grants, as well as ensuring that defender communities had resources to access food and fuel supplies during the economic crisis. In Pakistan, we relied on our advisors and partner organisations to reach out to marginalised communities in Pakistan that received little to no government relief, when floods engulfed massive swathes of the country.

One of our grantees, a trans rights organisation that supported over five hundred community members, which included trans, non-binary persons and women and children displaced from their homes, reported that the grant not only helped reduce the loss and hardship faced by the population, but getting aid and relief materials across to them also helped them realise the hardships faced by remote and cut-off communities, especially in times of unexpected loss and damage. They were also able to connect with several human rights defenders working on voluntary basis in these marginalised and remote communities, and ensure connections and support during times of need.

These grants were short-term and context-specific, and demonstrate the flexibility we offer to accommodate needs expressed by activists' groups and defender communities we are connected to. Every short-term context-specific grant that we have fashioned have reaped us rich learnings that we have then used to improve our crisis responsiveness and understanding of issues in these countries.



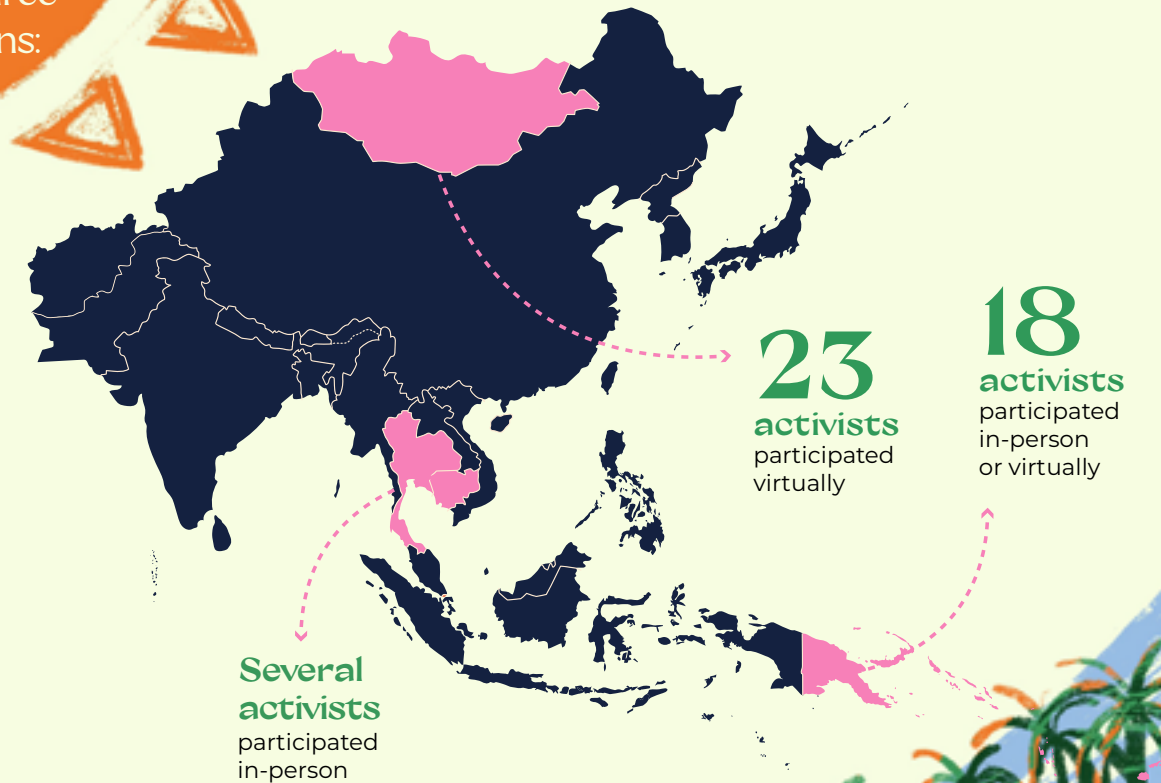
In 2022, we organised convenings across three key regions:

## 3 Islands of Hope


### Relationship-building and nurturing trust

Treading Ground for Proactive Support Beyond Crisis Response

Investing time to better understand contexts, cultures, collective care, and networking practices of human rights defender communities has been our preferred way of relationship building and nurturing trust. As we tackled crises, old and new, our facilitators were also engaging in expanding our knowledge of what is happening across the various regions of Asia and the Pacific. Over the year, we facilitated in person, virtual and hybrid events to learn from activists, organisations and networks.







In these convenings, a few advisors recommended allocating resources for them to better access, in person or virtually, far-flung communities and organisations to hasten the pace of verifying applications and getting more applications from more communities. We are exploring other ways of supporting advisors to expand our footprint across the vast and diverse regions of Asia and the Pacific. Our convenings in all these countries also drove home the importance of co-organising with organisations rooted in the specific national and regional contexts. We could mutually expand potential opportunities for deeper conversations and collaborations. More importantly, it eased the introduction of UAF A&P as a fund and our rapid response model among marginalised and/or non-English speaking defenders and activists.

We also noticed the merit of one-on-one outreach that elicited not just interest in our work as a feminist fund but also in the increased number of applicants that reached out to us for crisis support. For instance, meeting with displaced ethnic communities of Myanmar, and organisations and activists supporting human rights activism there while being based out of Thailand led to an increase in the number of applications we received from them.

With each passing year, UAF A&P has been growing its footprint - staff, board and advisor strength to be more informed and in step with the regions that we work in. This expanding spread of feminists have helped us respond faster and with more empathy to crises, and in building trust and expanding our networks. Situations that our staff, and advisors have encountered and the measures we put into place have also been adapted into our crisis response blueprint too.





# 4 The Rising of the Sea

Intentionally acknowledging our position as a funder to shift power and redistribute privilege

Fostering New Collaborations and Partnerships for Resource Justice

Across 2022, our resource mobilization mantra, individually as a fund, and as part of the UAF sisterhood and Prospera Asia and Pacific network, was to increase ways in which our networked ecosystem can collectively show up to claim more resources and opportunities for feminist movements and organisations across Asia and the Pacific. We successfully managed to engage with big bilateral funders, such as Australia's Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (D-FAT)

via the Amplify-Invest-Reach (AIR) partnership, amounting to A\$10million for four years, and the Dutch government's Sustaining Defenders through Feminist Holistic Security funding initiative in collaboration with other women's funds and UAF sisterfunds totalling 10mn euros for five years. These new collaborations have been possible due to our mutual alignment on feminist values and goals, and the commitment to better resource feminist organisations and movement building.

Over 2022, the Urgent Action Funds (which includes UAF WHR, UAF Africa and UAF Latin America & the Caribbean) have successfully mobilised funds as a collective to advance diverse approaches that best fit their regional contexts around diverse themes, such as environmental and climate justice, collective care practices, disability rights and justice advancement among others.

All the women's funds (Women's Fund Asia, Women's Fund Fiji and UAF A&P) that are part of the AIR partnership, along with D-FAT have been instrumental in the setting

up of the Pacific Feminist Fund, the latest regional fund to support feminist movement building for the Pacific region. While a scoping report commissioned by UAF A&P and WFF was the genesis for the advocacy for a separate fund for the Pacific, Women's Fund Asia and UAF A&P collectively mobilized bilateral donors to catalyse the establishing of this fund. These partnerships and collaborations speak to the feminist values of collaboration over competition, and expanding the access to global resources for feminist movements of Asia and the Pacific.



# 5 Voices of the River

Fore-fronting lived experiences of defenders and activists

Examining Existing Narratives on Resilience

In 2022, we launched our Shifting Narratives programme to catalyse art as the medium to examine and disrupt existing narratives that are harmful to furthering gender rights and human rights globally. Our first foray – the **Realms of Kintsugi** – was a year-long effort where we dreamed of bringing to reality these words by Toni Cade Bambara - “the role of the artist is to make the revolution irresistible.”

From using art as our language to communicate our work beyond the barriers of contexts and languages of our diverse regions, we realised that artists from within defender communities can best bring to life the narratives of resistance and resilience that motivate and inspire communities.

Our Shifting Narratives programme hopes to champion indigenous knowledge and practices existing within our communities to shift narratives around human rights defence and to diversify our understanding of philanthropic resources.



We began our pilot in early 2022 with an open call to bring together feminist artists from countries across Asia and the Pacific to examine and engage with narratives of resistance and resilience from their contexts and regions. Seven artists were selected from countries as diverse as Cambodia, Fiji, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and

Thailand. We collaborated with Closer Than You Think to accompany these artists to explore narrative building and look at ways to use art as a tool for amplifying and fore-fronting the lived experiences of human rights defenders and marginalised communities from their contexts.

We offered them funding to produce multimedia art, ranging from illustrations to short films and poetry, in multiple languages along with English. This was curated in a virtual experiential gallery that was dedicated to women and non-binary human rights defenders as a virtual gallery of their activism and contributions on 29 November, International Women Human Rights Defenders' Day.



# The Ocean in Us

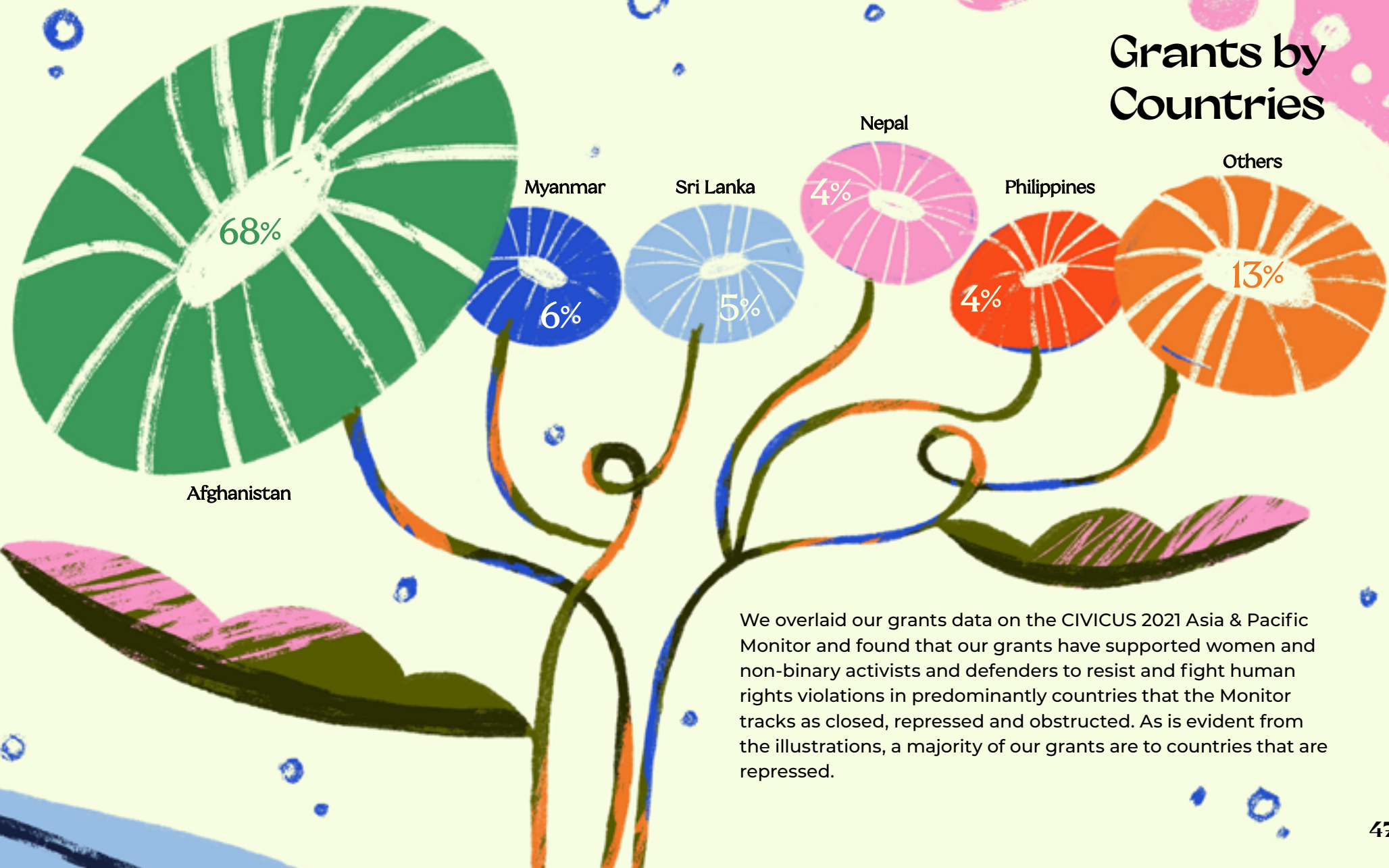
## Our Grantmaking at a Glance

Amplifiers and facilitators for feminist movements to be seen and heard

**Applications Received**  
1614 (34/week)

**Grants Disbursed**  
566 (USD2,675,495)

**Countries**  
19



## Grants by Countries

We overlaid our grants data on the CIVICUS 2021 Asia & Pacific Monitor and found that our grants have supported women and non-binary activists and defenders to resist and fight human rights violations in predominantly countries that the Monitor tracks as closed, repressed and obstructed. As is evident from the illustrations, a majority of our grants are to countries that are repressed.



In 2022, we supported human rights activists and defenders with 566 grants, totalling USD 2.67mn across 19 countries of Asia and Pacific.

Grants by Categories

Resilience X (Res X)



38  
Grants  
100,900  
Total \$ (USD)

Security & wellbeing (SWB)



462  
Grants  
2,218,731  
Total \$ (USD)

Webs of Safety and Care



20  
Grants  
134,150  
Total \$ (USD)

Resourcing Resilience (RR)



37  
Grants  
175,611  
Total \$ (USD)

Short term grants



10  
Grants  
46,103  
Total \$ (USD)

Grants by key thematic areas

Security & wellbeing (no theme)



409  
Grants  
1,969,237  
Total \$ (USD)

LBTQI



42  
Grants  
214,481  
Total \$ (USD)

Disability



8  
Grants  
37,195  
Total \$ (USD)

Resourcing Resilience (no theme)



32  
Grants  
151,959  
Total \$ (USD)

Security and Care long-term (WSC)



14  
Grants  
84,650  
Total \$ (USD)

Covid Crisis Grants



5  
Grants  
21,103  
Total \$ (USD)

Resilience X (no theme)



30  
Grants  
65,000  
Total \$ (USD)

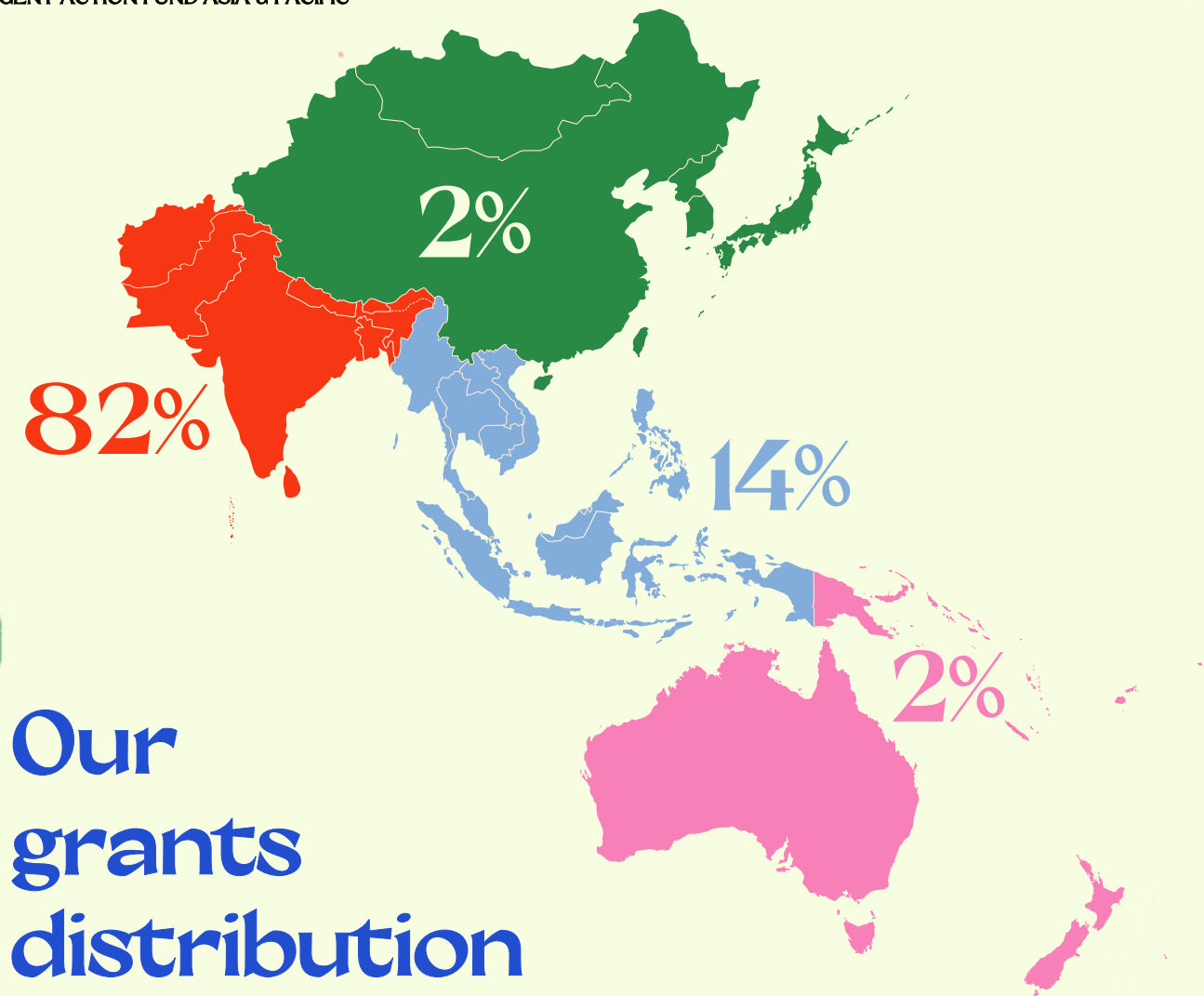
Environmental and Climate Justice



26  
Grants  
131,870  
Total \$ (USD)

Our grant amounts averaged US\$4,730 and the increase in total grant numbers as compared to 2021 was 32%. This speaks to the increase in different kinds of crises across our regions, including environmental upheavals that created severe loss and damage repercussions across the regions (Pakistan floods, Tonga volcanic eruption and hurricane) and worsening political turmoil (Afghanistan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka).

Compared to 2021, our grants in 2022 reflect the focus placed on increasing our grantmaking for marginalized groups, including LBTQI, environmental defenders and disability activists. Our revised long-term grants under Webs of Safety and Care also shows a steep climb. *A sub-analysis of grants offered under Webs of Safety and Care grants is offered under Recasting Webs of Safety and Care section.*



## Our grants distribution

The continued destabilizing of Afghanistan and the deepening crisis for women and non-binary defenders there, combined with the political turmoil in Sri Lanka and the floods in Pakistan contributed to a majority of our grantmaking going to South Asia. Myanmar was among the biggest recipients of grants in Southeast Asia, due to human rights movements and defenders continuing to be targeted – harassed and incarcerated without trial.

## Recasting Webs of Safety and Care grants to enable defenders

Learning and unlearning as a way to collaboratively thrive and flourish

In 2022, after three years of piloting the Webs of Safety and Care grants with select groups and communities, and intensive accompaniment that resulted in 3 grants, we reflected on the lessons learnt to figure out how to scale these grants. A key lesson that emerged was that few organisations were able to understand the model or theory of change underlying the grant mechanism in its existing form. To enable more communities and networks to

access resources to make their movements more resilient, we decided to unlearn our processes and recast our grantmaking. We simplified the grant call, offered examples for the various initiatives that could be resourced through this annual grant call, and also offered financial support and accompaniment workshops, as needed for organisations to undertake a holistic assessments of their security needs.



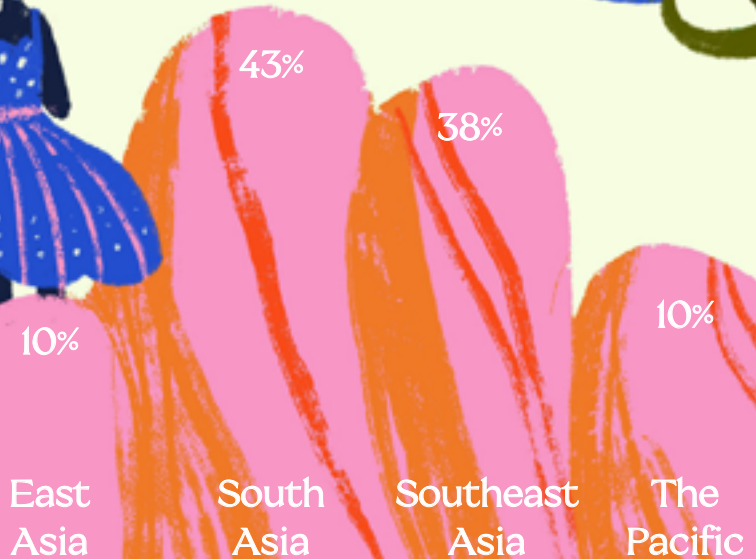
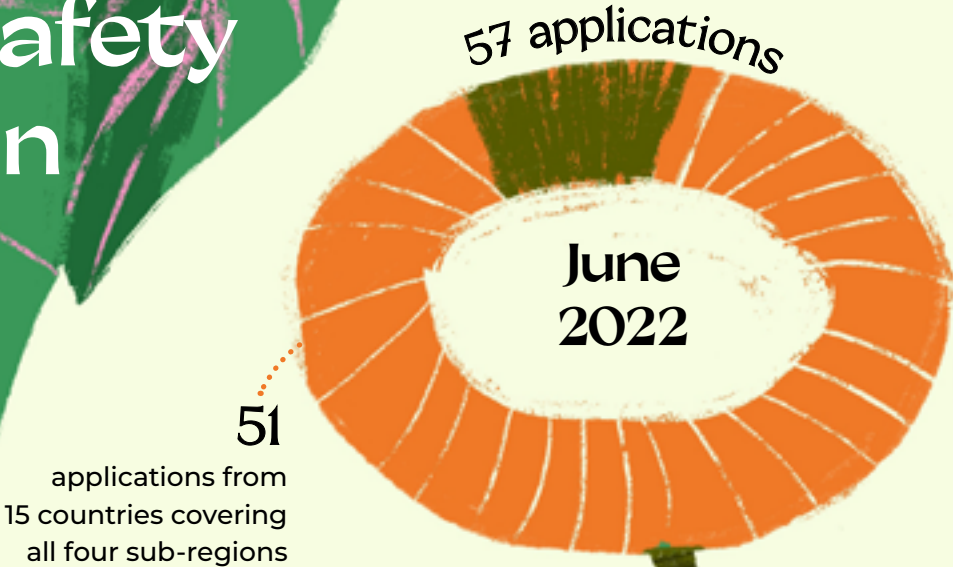
# Webs of Safety and Care in Numbers

Open Call for Proposals

20 grants

were made to organisations from 12 countries comprising of all sub-regions, totalling over

US\$134,000



## Types of initiatives across categories



29% of total budget (US\$40,000) will support assessing the needs of women and non-binary HRDs/activists, including persons with disabilities, tea garden workers, and sex workers.

The proposals we received in 2022 demonstrated that while there is widespread fatigue and an inability to think of resilience while battling intersectional crises, several defender communities were keen to try out new initiatives, as is also evident in a majority of the grantees requesting for support and accompaniment to aid them in their experiments.

# Curved Sticks and Cowrie Shells

## 2022 in Numbers

### Our revenue and expenditure

The focus of 2022 was responding rapidly to activists and defenders in crisis - mainly in Myanmar and Afghanistan.

Total income received for the year was US\$5,380,287.

This total includes US\$1,046,648 which was specifically raised for responding to the continuing Afghanistan crisis. Funds received in advance in 2022 for use in 2023 total \$1,132,893.

We received funds directly from these organisations:



The Urgent Action Funds collective continues to be our strongest global coalition – interdependent but independent sister funds that collectively mobilise resources for feminist movements globally. 2022 was a year of showing up together to advocate for more resources for centering care and promoting collective care practices across our various regions. The Sister funds also succeeded in raising resources to support specific needs of marginalized communities struggling with various forms of discrimination amid natural and political crises, such as loss and damage induced by the global climate crisis too. The sister funds developed and released the principles of philanthropy in 2022 that will guide our collective actions for global fundraising and advocacy.

The organisations that supported the sister funds collective include:



## How we spent the resources mobilized

We supported our Rapid Response Grantmaking efforts by organising online consultations and convenings with the support of facilitators and translators. The UAF A&P team aided by short-term contractors, supported women and non-binary human rights defenders to apply for and receive funding and other resources to make their lives and communities safer; we achieved this via 566 grants totalling USD\$2,675,495. In response to the extended Afghanistan crisis, we approved 384 grants totalling

US\$1,778,074 and for Myanmar 34 grants totalling US\$157,862. We launched our Shifting Narratives programme, through which we offered funding to artists from activists and defender communities from across 7 countries, which included Cambodia, Fiji, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

**These grant making & resilience programmes cost US\$4,272,041 which represents 81% of our total budget.**

We also continued our work towards increasing resource mobilization from our regions, especially in Australia. Work towards understanding the philanthropy landscape and giving patterns in Australia. We also contributed to setting up the Pacific Feminist Fund with peer funders and the support of donors. Our [feminist approach to Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning](#) is an ongoing experiment that is supported by short-term contractors and facilitators who support reflection and sensemaking processes annually.

**These experiments and our learning processes cost US\$693,925 which attributed to 13% of our total budget.**

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

**The total spend was US\$294,196 which was 6% of our overall budget.**

Urgent Action  
Fund for Women’s  
Human Rights,  
Asia and Pacific

Financial Summary (USD)

1 January 2022 to  
31 December 2022

Income & Expenditure Statement			2022
Income		5,380,287	
Expenditure			
Grant-Making & Resilience Programmes	4,272,014		81%
Other Programmes	693,925		13%
Administration	294,196		6%
Surplus (Deficit)		120,152	
Statement of Financial Position			
Assets			
Bank Accounts	2,658,616		
Current Assets	12,783		
Fixed Assets	9,901	2,681,300	
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities	770,661		
Donations in Advance for 2023	1,132,893		
Non-Current Liabilities	2,712	1,906,266	
Net Assets		775,034	
Equity			
Accumulated surplus (losses)		285,738	
Reserve - Surplus funds transferred to Reserves		489,296	
		775,034	



 @uaf\_anp

 @uaf\_anp

 /uafasiapacific

[www.uafanp.org](http://www.uafanp.org)



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