

In 2022, AWID celebrates 40 years since our founding.

As we move through cycles of progress and pushback, we know that struggles for women's rights and gender justice are iterative and non-linear. In the scrapbook below, we highlight a handful of snapshots from AWID's last four decades of feminist movement support. We have not done all this on our own. We share this with deep appreciation for the constellation of feminist activists and groups that have made this work possible.

We're using this moment to reflect on our past and learn from the road traveled as we prepare to look forward, and to forge the journey ahead.

In this context of so many converging crises, we embrace the opportunity to celebrate the power and resilience of feminist movements around the world...



1. 40 years of gathering and unleashing possibilities:

the AWID Forum
as a space of our
own



The Power of Movements (2008)

No change for women's rights or gender justice has been possible without women themselves (in all their diversity) organizing to make it happen.

On the cusp of global financial crisis, 2000 feminists gathered in Cape Town to reflect, strategize, and learn from a multiplicity of collective action led by emerging movements - and questioning the NGO-ization of many struggles¹. Participants were asked: *are we tinkering with the symptoms without pushing through to the roots of fundamental systems change?*

Intergenerational organizing and the leadership of young feminists was a central theme. We ran a campaign where we sent a pink scarf to participants who shared their experiences with multigenerational organizing. These conversations underscored the significance of simply getting to know each other's experiences - across generations and identities - and how personal conversations can build political power. One year later, the spark for [Frida](#), the Young Feminist Fund, caught fire and continues to burn bright today.

1. [Changing Their World: Concepts and practices of women's movements.](#)

No safe place for Feminist Realities (2020)

We bounced around Asia, looking for the right place to host 2000 loud and proud feminists, and we came up against the sobering reality of the incredibly challenging context for women's rights and gender justice activism - and not only in Asia.

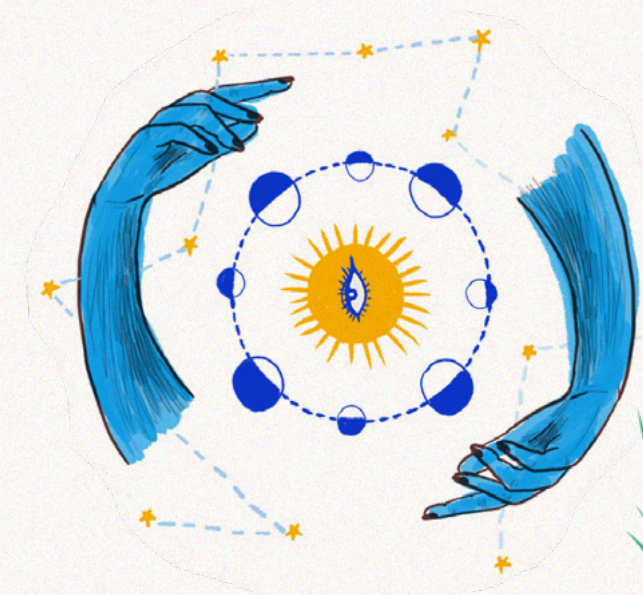
We landed on the possibility of Taiwan as our Forum location. It would be an oasis for sharing feminist propositions and solutions for a world in crisis, alongside a unique opportunity for bridge-building with feminist activists from East Asia.

Due to the global health pandemic, for the first time in its history, AWID had to [cancel a Forum](#). As we look forward, it's not just the pandemic, but also the reality of the climate crisis that requires us to imagine a different kind of Forum - one that will be led by and for feminist movements to refuel, reconnect and restrategize for the years ahead.

Beyond Beijing from Words to Actions (1996)

Feminists were on a high from the mobilization and commitments around the Beijing World Conference on Women. A year later, little progress had been made, and feminists at the AWID Forum called for major economic shifts to fulfill the promises from Beijing.

While gender budgets offered a ray of hope, alarms were raised around the impacts of a financial system concentrated on growth and the way international financial institutions were imposing economic models that depend on the exploitation of women. These debates were a prelude to feminist engagement in anti-globalization mobilizing in the following years...



2. Expanding The “WE”



The world 40 years ago was very different, and so was AWID (1982)

With momentum picking up around women in development, AWID was founded as a 500-member, US-centric national association created for dialogue among academics, policy makers, and practitioners (understood as staff in large development agencies) - with the ultimate aim of having more women fully participate in (and benefit from) development processes.



Challenging notions of center and margin (2016)

The AWID Forum in Bahia Brazil, “**Feminist Futures: Building Collective Power for Rights and Justice**” is celebrated for the many ways it reflected the diversities of feminist movements and possibilities of cross-movement space and leadership - also bringing global solidarity to Brazilian feminists in the wake of the recent coup.

More than 1800 participants from 120 countries were infused with the energy emerging from the preceding **Black Feminisms Forum (BFF)**. BFF aimed to contribute to strengthening the transnational and intergenerational movement of Black feminists, and ultimately nurtured the launch of the new Black Feminist Fund.

The Forum included a DASPU **fashion show** organised by sex worker activists to raise visibility for their movement, and sex work as work.

Women with Disabilities had their strongest presence yet at an AWID Forum. As one activist expressed, “the substantial number of participants changes your relationship to a place. I participated in previous AWID Forums and it was a presence that we [people with disabilities] never had before. I wasn’t expecting to feel so engaged.”²

2. Sheena Magenya’s reflections



We cannot change the world without changing ourselves (2005)

We spent years intentionally working towards becoming a more global organization: through the Board, staff and the membership, now close to 7,000 strong.

The Forum and other AWID spaces helped activists forge conceptual and practical connections across sectors, issues, identities and geographies. For example, an indigenous group in Guatemala was so moved by what they heard at the Bangkok forum on HIV/AIDS that the first thing they did when they returned home was research the situation of HIV/AIDS in their country. As a result of this work, their organization went on to develop a programme aimed at educating young indigenous women about HIV prevention.

Challenging the gender binary was another important aspect of this Forum, which centered transgender identities and rights. And, for the first time, a significant number of women with disabilities participated. situation of HIV/AIDS in their country. As a result of this work, their organization went on to develop a programme aimed at educating young indigenous women about HIV prevention.





Together, we understand the problem better and build sharper strategies (2006)

- Nearly 10 years after Beijing, the momentum around women's rights agendas had slowed significantly with many activists feeling the impacts of religious fundamentalisms of all stripes. Dominant responses to fundamentalisms were failing women and perpetuating injustice (and feminist intervention was needed).
- After consulting with partners, AWID launched our Resisting and Challenging Religious Fundamentalisms initiative. We heard from over 1600 activists about the impacts of this trend and together we contributed to groundbreaking cross-regional, cross-religion analysis.³

3. Shared Insights: Women's rights activists define religious fundamentalisms
 Religious Fundamentalisms on the Rise: A case for action
 Exposed: Ten myths about religious fundamentalisms
 Feminists on the Frontline: Summaries of Case Studies on Resisting and Challenging Fundamentalisms

3. Challenging Fundamentalisms & Anti-Rights Agendas



They're imperfect, but we're fighting for the global spaces that we have (2016)

The **Observatory on the Universality of Rights (OURS)** emerged from regular global strategy meetings spearheaded by AWID with interested groups since 2007.

OURS monitors, analyzes, and shares information on anti-rights initiatives, understood as both fundamentalist and fascist forces, threatening international and regional human rights systems.



Two steps forward, one step back -

Feminist resistance for the long term (2021)

These days, the threats posed by anti-rights actors are recognized far beyond feminist circles. OURs continues to provide both **important analysis** on the tactics of anti-rights actors and a celebration of feminist wins, along with **tips for recognizing and countering anti-rights arguments**.



“It was through the research of AWID that we saw there was a decreased amount of money available for women’s organizations... When we saw that trend, we discussed it with the Minister and we proposed a fund, because we knew a lot of organizations were suffering.”

- Ineke van de Pol on how AWID helped inspire the Netherlands MDG3 Fund in 2008

4. Resourcing Feminist Movements

Naming and documenting the gap between funder rhetoric and reality (2002)

AWID members were identifying funding constraints as a major challenge in their work so we set out to hold aid and philanthropic institutions accountable to their stated commitments to women’s rights and gender equality.

Periodic surveys and research⁴ have provided crucial insights into the state of feminist resourcing. One of the most significant findings from our 2005 global survey was that 51% of women’s organizations were receiving less funding compared to five years prior.

4. Watering the Leaves, Starving the Roots; Where is the Money for Feminist Organizing



Centering money in feminist agendas and advocacy (2006)

The global Money and Movements meeting, co-organized by AWID and [Fondo Semillas](#), gathered 300 feminist activists and progressive funders for a groundbreaking exchange on funding trends and needed shifts, breaking through the common discomfort in talking about money.

The global and subsequent regional meetings co-convened with women’s funds, engaged young feminists and diverse sectors of feminists movements in collective strategizing to transform the discussion and practice around money and movements.



Shifting funder practice to better support feminist movements (2021)

Over the years, we’ve seen individual funders respond with important new resources and shifts in their practice and we’ve distilled some of the key [elements of good practice](#).

Now, the [Global Alliance for Sustainable Feminist Movements](#) is taking shape as a unique space that brings together different funders with feminist organizations in a co-led space to coordinate, strategize and advocate to increase and improve financial and political support. .



Bringing feminist analysis and experience to transform economic power (2012)

The 2008 global financial crisis exposed once again the failures of the mainstream economic system signaling the need for systemic change. AWID commissioned a series of regional briefs to document the **impacts of the 2008 crisis on women**; and later resources to unpack financial capitalism from a feminist perspective⁵.

This analysis shaped our **2012 Forum** on “transforming economic power to advance women’s rights and justice.”

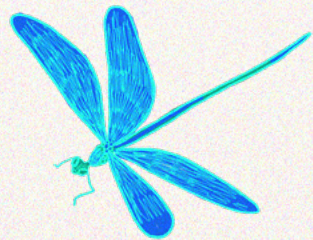
5. Illicit financial flows: Why we should claim these resources for gender
Financial Flows are a feminist issue: Workshop facilitation guide



Understanding the impacts of corporate power and pushing for TNC to comply(2016)

AWID and the Solidarity Center organized a gathering of feminist and labor movements in Sao Paulo in 2016 to understand the depths of the **impacts of corporate power on gender and economic justice** and learn from each others resistance struggles.

Corporations kept gaining political influence in UN processes, without accountability for **human rights violations** and crimes against communities and the environment. AWID helped create the **Feminists for Binding Treaty**, that, together with broader civil society, advocates in support of an international legally binding instrument to regulate activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises.



5. Towards Feminist Economies

Calling attention to Feminist Economic Realities (2020)

Feminist movements have been at the forefront of those resisting narratives that there is no alternative to mainstream economic systems that exploit and devalue women’s labor. **Feminist Propositions for a Just Economy** offered space to share, document, analyze, critique and expand alternative economic practices such as **buen vivir**, **food sovereignty** and **agroecology**.

The pandemic further drew attention to the urgency of building the **feminist economies we need**, systems based in self-determination, mutual aid and reciprocity. We identified principles and actions critical to move toward a **global feminist economic recovery**.

