

A CALL TO ACTION: INSIGHTS INTO THE STATUS OF FUNDING FOR INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S GROUPS

A JOINT AWID-FIMI-IFIP REPORT
APRIL 2016



PREFACE

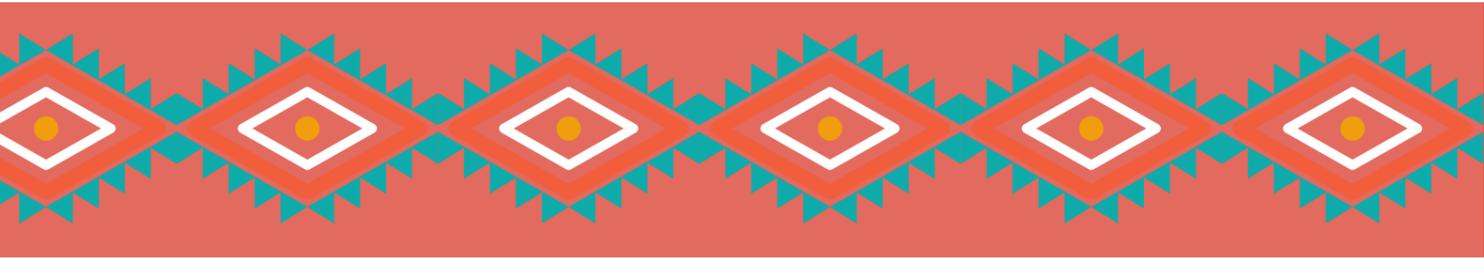
This report is the first-of-its kind snapshot of the funding landscape for Indigenous women's organizing. It uses this history and research to provide an essential resource that shares lessons learned, highlights key findings, and outlines recommendations on how to build stronger bridges between funders and Indigenous women's groups.

This report is also timely, written at a moment when donor interest in funding Indigenous communities is on the rise. Initial research from the Foundation Center shows that from 2007 to 2012, funding for Indigenous peoples skyrocketed from \$41.4 million to \$83.2 million. Indigenous knowledge and sustainable practices are pivotal antidotes to solving some of the world's most crucial problems such as climate change, conservation, and sustainable management of natural resources. Women, who make up half of the Indigenous population, are vital in transmitting and preserving this invaluable knowledge through their relationships with family, community and the environment.

Although Indigenous women are proven agents of positive change, they continue to fight against the barriers of discrimination and marginalization. Hence, it is critical that donors are effective in breaking down these barriers while also bolstering Indigenous women's efforts as movement builders.

It is our hope that this report will provide actionable guidance in how funding trends and donor recommendations can support Indigenous Women's Organizations in a meaningful and effective way, ensuring a sustainable planet for our future generations.

Respectfully,
AWID, IFIP and FIMI



CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. FINDINGS AT A GLANCE	7
3. THE INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCE	9
Complex Challenges	9
Indigenous Women Rise Up	10
The Indigenous Worldview	10
4. QUANTITATIVE RESULTS	13
Data Sources/Methodology	13
Findings & Analysis	14
Size and Scope	14
What Share of Funding are Indigenous Women's Groups Receiving?	14
Funding Sources and Grant Size	15
Funding Length and Quality	17
Where is the Funding Going?	17
Thematic Focus	19
Beneficiary Groups	19
5. OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND FUNDING REALITIES FOR INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S GROUPS:	
INTERVIEW FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS	21
Why Fund Indigenous Women's Rights Groups?	21
Who are the Grantees?	23
Programs that Support Indigenous Women's Rights	25
Priority issues & Strategies for Indigenous Women's Groups	27
Issues	27
Under-Supported Issue Areas	32
Strategies	33
Donor Approaches & Strategies of Support	33
Approaches	33
Strategies	34
Barriers to Funding	36
6. DONOR SPOTLIGHTS	39
Ford Foundation: Being there for the Long Haul Towards Change, Equality, and Justice	39
A Powerful Partnership:	40
Channel Foundation and CAWF/FCAM Seeding & Nurturing Grassroots Change	40
The Tamalpais Trust: Intercultural Philanthropy in Action	41
7. LOOKING FORWARD	44
1. Recommendations for Funders	44
2. Opportunities for Further Research	44
3. Putting Ideas into Action	45
8. APPENDIX 1: SIZE & SCOPE OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S GROUPS (COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS)	47
9. METHODOLOGY & RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	47



1. INTRODUCTION

Twenty years after the [Fourth United Nations Conference on Women](#) in Beijing, and almost 10 years after the adoption of the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), it seems fitting to pause and take stock of the financial support available for Indigenous women's groups. This report shares findings from a collaborative study that tells a new story around resourcing Indigenous women's rights—one where the critical work being carried out by its leaders is brought into the spotlight. This Report also tells a second story about the growing and steadfast community of grant makers who are partnering with Indigenous women's groups, and the considerations that need to be in place to promote the full exercise of the rights of Indigenous women. But, let's start from the beginning.

With the [Association for Women's Rights in Development's \(AWID\)](#) long history of research around resources available for women's rights organizing, a partnership was formed with the [International Indigenous Women's Forum \(FIMI\)](#) and the [International Funders for Indigenous Peoples \(IFIP\)](#) to embark on a research initiative mapping characteristics of the funding landscape for Indigenous women's rights work. The **purpose** of the research project was to fill an existing knowledge gap since, to date; no global study has been conducted on the status of funding for Indigenous women's rights.

The overarching **goals** driving the project were fourfold, to:

- Influence donor discourses and practices in funding Indigenous women's rights organizing;
- Increase the quality and quantity of funding directed to diverse Indigenous women's rights groups;
- Foster deeper alliances between donors and Indigenous women's groups in order to strengthen advocacy and amplify the call for greater resources for Indigenous women's rights organizing;
- Frame collective resource mobilization as part of the political agenda of Indigenous Women's rights organizing.

For the development of this study, independent researchers were hired to lead the research effort in close collaboration with AWID, FIMI and IFIP. At the onset of the project, the team began to frame **guiding research questions**, defining the parameters of the study.

- What do we know about the quality and quantity of funding currently being channelled to Indigenous women's groups?
- What are the trends that are driving Indigenous philanthropy, and giving to women-led groups in particular?
- What are the issues and priorities that matter most to Indigenous women's rights groups?
- How do funders from diverse sectors understand the social change process as it relates to Indigenous women?

It should be noted that this study is by no means an exhaustive account of the ‘financial state’ of Indigenous women’s rights groups globally. As noted later, there are significant gaps challenges in this avenue of research. Rather, the analysis shared is an initial snapshot into the more visible funding trends impacting Indigenous women’s groups, along with offering important considerations for how to build meaningful partnerships with Indigenous women’s groups.

Who are Indigenous Peoples?

The most common description of Indigenous Peoples was set out by the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, an advisory board headed by indigenous experts establish as a subsidiary organ of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

It is estimated that there are more than 370 million Indigenous people spread across 70 countries worldwide. Practicing unique traditions, they retain social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live. Spread across the world from the Arctic to the South Pacific, they are the descendants - according to a common definition - of those who inhabited a country or a geographical region at the time when people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived. The new arrivals later became dominant through conquest, occupation, settlement or other means.²

While no UN-system body has adopted any official definition of “Indigenous”, a modern understanding of the term is based on the following:³

- Self-identification as Indigenous Peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member;
- Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies;
- Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources;
- Distinct social, economic or political systems;
- Distinct language, culture and beliefs from dominant groups of society; and
- Resolved to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities.

The definitional uncertainty surrounding the word “Indigenous” creates specific challenges for research at the aggregate level. Self-identification is a widely accepted criteria in the human rights arena, but aggregate statistics are generally collected by governments which may base

² UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Fact Sheet, Who are Indigenous Peoples?

³ For more information on definitions of Indigenous Peoples, see the ILO Convention no. 169, which provides a widely accepted definition of Indigenous Peoples. This guide may be useful for funders to assess how their grant making affects Indigenous Peoples’ lives and communities in specific geographic areas. International Labour Office, Indigenous and Tribal Peoples’ Rights in Practice: A Guide to ILO Convention, No. 169, 2009

Indigenous status on other characteristics, such as parentage, language or presence on ancestral lands. Definitions vary by country and region. This creates uncertainty about aggregate population estimates and geographic distributions, which in turn affects the certainty of conclusions related to whether Indigenous women’s funding is proportional. Nonetheless, with this limitation in mind, we accept the UN estimate of approximately 370 million Indigenous people worldwide as well as the view that at least one half if not more of these Indigenous peoples are located in South and Southeast Asia.⁴

This report is intended for a broad audience, including Indigenous women’s rights activists and advocates as well as donors from different funding sectors—both newly interested in partnering with Indigenous women’s groups, as well as long-term collaborators.



⁴ Barsh, Russel. “The World’s Indigenous Peoples.” Department of Native American Studies at University of Lethbridge, Canada (Paper submitted to Calvert Group by First Nations Development Institute/First Peoples Worldwide) P.2

2. FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

We deserve high quality funding because we are a group of young Indigenous women with a clear vision to advance the rights of women and the environment. We are defenders of Mother Earth, and lead critical debates on extractivism and patriarchy, and know first-hand the impacts of mining. We are activists with principles and values that are revolutionary, which are not cooptable. We have shown great strength and we are training young people to be current leaders, and in essence the future defenders of women's rights in Bolivia.

Red Nacional de Mujeres en Defensa de la Madre Tierra - RENAMAT Bolivia).

While separate studies have been conducted on funding available for Indigenous peoples, and funding for women's rights organizations, until now no global study has focused at the intersection between the two.⁵ *What is the status of funding available for Indigenous women's groups worldwide?* This report shares a first-of-its kind high-level analysis of the current funding landscape, and highlights possibilities for sustainable support and solidarity between funders and Indigenous women's groups.

This report's main findings indicate that despite the fact that Indigenous women's groups are fighting for the survival of their communities, their traditional knowledge, their land natural resources, and to live free from violence, they face significant barriers to accessing the resources they need. At the same time, progressive grant-makers who participated in the research give visibility to the many opportunities that exist for building meaningful collaboration with Indigenous women's groups – crucial allies for protecting the human, environmental, and women's rights.

The report's main findings show that:

Overall State of Funding

- **Indigenous women's groups are receiving less funding than might be expected** based on their population. Foundation Center/IHRFG data shows that Indigenous women received 0.7% of all recorded human rights funding between 2010 and 2013, or less than one-third of their proportion in the population. A look at the evolution of funding over the three years, highlights a pattern of growth underway, whereby both number of grants and the percentage of all funding in the Foundation Center / IHRFG dataset roughly doubled.
- When compared to women human rights groups and young feminist groups, Indigenous women's groups are **not markedly different in size and profile** e.g. in terms of size, income, age, or assets, though they do tend to work with **smaller populations** (especially in Latin America).
- Regional analysis of groups being funded, points to a **potential under-representation of Indigenous groups** located in Asia, and Africa (the majority of groups receiving funding are located in Latin America).
- Indigenous women's groups face **three major barriers** to accessing long-term funding for their work: Lack of administrative and budgeting capacity, lack of legal status as a registered NGO, and the prominence of **"traditional philanthropy"** by diverse funding sectors—an approach rooted in the philosophy of providing charity and aid, instead of funding social change.⁶

⁵ See Arutyunova, A., and Clark, C. *Watering the Leaves, Starving the Roots: the Status of Financing for Women's Rights Organizing and Gender Equality*. Toronto: AWID, 2013. http://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/WTL_Starving_Roots.pdf; "Grantmaker's Guide: Strengthening International Indigenous Philanthropy." San Francisco: International Funders for Indigenous Peoples, 2014. <http://internationalfunders.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Grantmakers-Guide-updated-2014.pdf> ;

⁶ See "Traditional Philanthropy" Resource by the Edge Fund at <https://edgefund.org.uk/resources/traditional-philanthropy/>

3. THE INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCE

Indigenous Women are the transmitters of indigenous cultures, their knowledge, and their traditions. They must be part of the solution, and have the resources, recognition and support to enable them to take charge of their destinies as actors and decision-makers.

Angela Davis, Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.⁸



⁸ United Nations Permanent Professor Forum Indigenous Issues, "Statement on the International Women's Day", March 8, 2016. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2016/03/Statement-by-the-Chair-of-the-Permanent-Forum-on-Indigenous-Issues-on-8-March-2016.pdf>

Complex Challenges

Centuries of colonization and discrimination have profoundly impacted the health, rights, and well being of Indigenous communities in all regions of the world. Indigenous peoples suffer from higher rates of poverty, landlessness, malnutrition and displacement than the rest of society. Indigenous territories are estimated to cover 24 percent of the world's land surface and contain 80 percent of the earth's remaining healthy ecosystems. As the stewards of some of the most biologically and culturally diverse regions of the world, Indigenous movements also face an array of climate change impacts that are undermining ways of life that have persisted for thousands of years. From loss of traditional knowledge, to relocation from historic homelands, to increased food insecurity, the impacts are no longer a prediction but a reality for Indigenous communities.^{9 10 11}

Despite continuous economic and social exclusion, Indigenous peoples have demonstrated extraordinary resilience and movement building power. For centuries, and since the time of their occupation and colonization, Indigenous peoples have fought to maintain their land and sovereign identities. International political advocacy by Indigenous movements culminated in having Indigenous Peoples' human rights enshrined and adopted in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous women were pivotal actors in this process, and their work also gave rise to other UN mechanisms that secure critical opportunities and spaces for Indigenous women to engage in debates on gender issues.¹²

Indigenous women take up key roles and responsibilities in their communities and households as drivers of rural economies, and as transmitters of cultural and spiritual knowledge. They have independently formed organizations and networks around the world to fight for the rights of women and girls. Despite such contributions, Indigenous women suffer multiple forms of discrimination. Issues such as race, ethnicity and gender combine to create a range of rights violations such as lack of participation in decision-making processes, lack of control of income, lack of land rights, lack of access to education, harmful traditional practices, domestic violence and gender based violence in situations of armed conflicts and militarization.¹³ [Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, describes below how Indigenous women are some of the most marginalized groups in the world.

⁹ *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples*, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Division for Social Policy and Development Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 2009. http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/SOWIP/en/SOWIP_web.pdf "Who are Indigenous Peoples?" http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/5session_factsheet1.pdf. International Working Groups on Indigenous Peoples;

¹⁰ Lynn, K., J. Daigle, J. Hoffman, F. Lake, N. Michelle, D. Ranco, C. Viles, G. Voggesser, and P. Williams, 2013: The impacts of climate change on tribal traditional foods. *Climatic Change*, 120, 545-556, doi:10.1007/s10584-013-0736-1.

¹¹ *Funding Indigenous peoples: Strategies of Support*. Foundation Centre, in collaboration with the International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (FIP) 2015. http://www.grantcraft.org/assets/content/resources/Indigenous_People_web_%282%29.pdf

¹² Including the establishment of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous peoples and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

¹³ http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/SOWIP/en/SOWIP_web.pdf



Indigenous women experience a broad, multifaceted and complex spectrum of mutually reinforcing human rights abuses. That spectrum is influenced by multiple and intersecting forms of vulnerability, including patriarchal power structures; multiple forms of discrimination and marginalization, based on gender, class, ethnic origin and socioeconomic circumstances; and historical and current violations of the right to self-determination and control of resources.¹³

In the face of structural vulnerability and violence, Indigenous women organize, and rise up.

Indigenous Women Rise Up

Indigenous women's groups have been key movement builders around the issues that matter most to indigenous communities. They have fought and won battles for legal recognition of collective ancestral territories, reclaimed cultural and spiritual identity, and have toppled corporate giants at the helm of destructive resource extraction projects. Author Nancy Moreno of a recently published [Six Indigenous Women at the Heart of Fracking Resistance in Argentina](#) beautifully describes how a case of local struggle for a group of Indigenous women can have strong resonance for social justice movements worldwide.



¹⁴ Paris Climate change Conference & Indigenous Women's Leadership? Women's Earth & Climate Action Network, International 2015. <http://wecaninternational.org/pages/wecan-cop21> Nov 24th, Declaration and messages of Action from ECMA VII. Ind http://www.iwgia.org/news/search-news?news_id=1289

¹⁵ See the recent coverage by the Guardian [Why is Honduras the world's deadliest country for environmentalists?](http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/apr/07/honduras-environment-killing-human-rights-bertha-caceres-flores-murder) <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/apr/07/honduras-environment-killing-human-rights-bertha-caceres-flores-murder>; "How Many More?" Global Witness. <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/how-many-more/>

The Indigenous Worldview¹⁶

Indigenous communities have a different concept of wealth than non-Indigenous peoples. They do not understand wealth as the accumulation of money, but see wealth as a harmonious relationship with nature and having the resources to survive. – Myrna Cunningham.¹⁷

Respectful collaboration with Indigenous women's groups requires a foundational understanding of Indigenous peoples' way of seeing life – their Worldview or *Cosmovision*. Core elements are described below to ground and contextualize the research findings.

Indigenous cosmovision is defined by the ability of every human being and every nation, society, people and group to have its own singular way of thinking and of seeing life. Indigenous peoples hold a particular perception that the universe contains complementary, interacting spheres that govern the social and cultural order, as well as nature, politics and thoughts. The interrelation and balance between these elements ensures survival as individuals and communities. Indigenous peoples have a rich and diverse cultural heritage that includes knowledge and know-how, language, values, traditions, customs, symbolisms, spiritual beliefs, organization and coexistence norms, worldviews and development concepts. Their worldview is additionally expressed through the set of spiritual, cultural, social and productive practices that involve the spirits, the stars, nature, human beings, and that respond to a logic of elements that complement each other. Each activity presents occasions to transfer ancient knowledge, be it through making and repairing fishing equipment or through farming, hunting and forest harvesting/use techniques. The role and rights of women within this cosmovision is area of continued exploration for Indigenous women, some of whom are giving new meaning to cosmogenic precepts within their own contexts, and within more mainstream women's rights movements:¹⁸

We cannot work for changes in gender inequality in our communities if we do not incorporate the dual vision of Indigenous cosmovision, where men and women are complementary...As Indigenous women are recognized in our communities as the basis for preserving the cultural and social patrimony of our peoples, it is important that our demands to improve our situation take on the cultural aspects which give meaning to our collective identity.

–International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI), 2005 AWID Bangkok Forum.

¹⁶ Content and analysis related from this section of the report was drawn from a short reflection paper generously provided by Ford Foundation entitled "Our Journey with Indigenous Peoples," 2015.

¹⁷ Interview with Myrna Cunningham by UN Women on International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples in 2011. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2011/8/we-need-to-strengthen-women-s-self-esteem-and-make-them-feel-valued-for-their-identity-and-culture>

¹⁸ The relationship between gender and cosmovision has been particularly developed in Macleod, M., Sieder, R. "Maya women in Guatemala Gender, Law and Mayan Cosmology in Guatemala." *Descatos* 31: 51-72.

4. QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Key findings from the quantitative analysis component of this research are clustered by theme in section two of this chapter, drawing from the 6 different datasets as relevant. Below is a summary describing the data sources used and the methodological approach taken.

Data Sources/Methodology

No comprehensive source of information exists regarding funding for Indigenous women's groups. Indeed, there is no reliable way even to estimate the number of Indigenous women's groups in the world. To understand the profile and circumstances of these groups we must rely on samples drawn from funder databases and from survey data. Each of these sources provides valuable insight, but neither is demonstrably representative of the full picture of Indigenous women's experience. Funder data is generally limited to those who apply for or receive funding. Surveys are limited to those who the researchers are able to reach and those who are subsequently able to respond. Language and technology limitations to surveys are real and are even more likely to affect Indigenous groups. Thus, even those Indigenous women's groups we know about are likely to be among the better organized and most connected. Finally, without reliable knowledge of the overall number and distribution of Indigenous women's groups, we cannot verify the degree to which funder databases and surveys reflect the entire population. We note, for example, that Asia appears to be significantly underrepresented in all our data sources.

Despite these significant limitations, the information available from funders and surveys does provide a basis upon which to cautiously draw an initial profile in the sector, especially when multiple sources agree. This section of the report draws on the results of two surveys and databases of grants and/or applications kindly made available by a number of organizations.

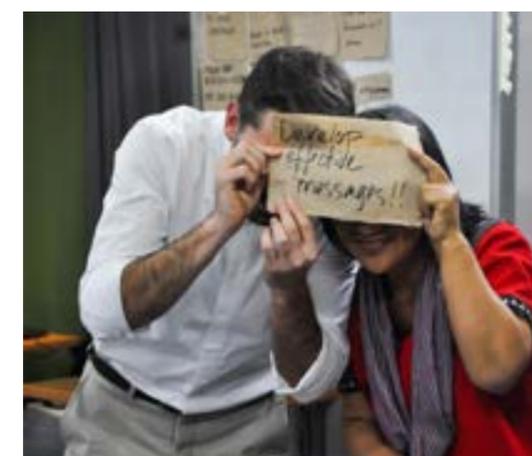
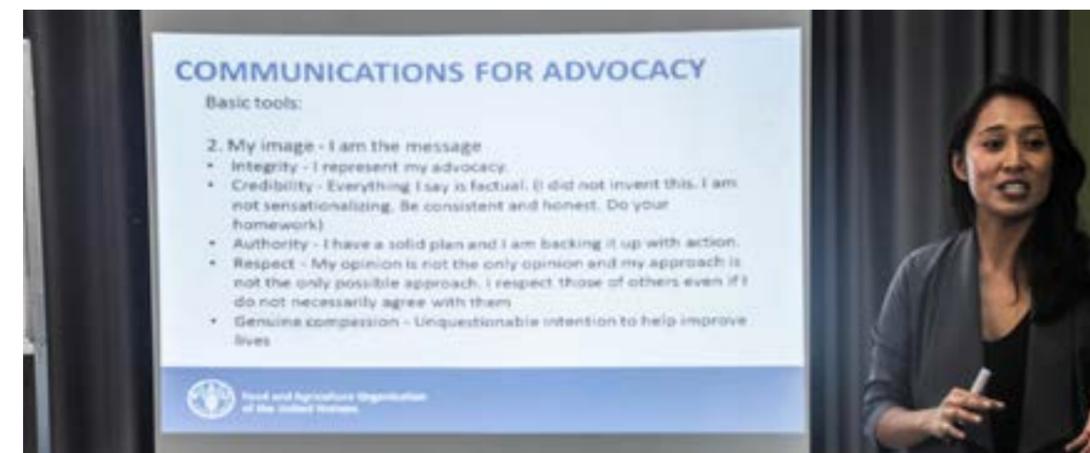
- 872 Foundation Center (FC)/ International Human Rights Funders Group (IHRFG) Grants Database (2010-2013)
- 1,150 proposals to Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF) 2011-2015
- 127 Grants to Indigenous groups by International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) (2011-2012 and 2015 Grants)
- 181 proposals received by the International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI)'s AYNi Fund (2013)
- 289 Indigenous Grants by Global Fund for Women 1989 – 2015. Also, 495 grants to all grantees in 2015
- Survey responses from 74 Young Feminist Organizations serving Indigenous groups with Indigenous leadership (from FRIDA/AWID's 2015 "Mapping Young Feminist Organizing")
- Survey responses from 237 Women Human Rights Organizations serving Indigenous groups (but not necessarily Indigenous-led) from AWID's 2011 "Where is the Money for Women's Rights" Research.

All these primary data sources were examined at the case level using statistical software.

5. OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND FUNDING REALITIES: INTERVIEW FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

We formed an organization with members who self-identify as young Indigenous rural women. We started from nothing putting our money away and looking for spaces, and information. We ended up discovering feminism and fell in love with the philosophy and set on path to help empower women. We get resources from the Central American Women's Fund (FCAM) and learned to how to budget our money each month, doing the right thing with honesty, love, conviction and consistency. This has allowed us to have other opportunities and enjoy the confidence of young women and donors. Young Indigenouswomen can make a difference, we must show that our work is valuable, we plan and execute our activities thinking about giving the best for our beneficiaries –all young women.

–Grupo de Mujeres XITLALI, 2015 Mapping Young Feminist Organizing Survey Respondent.



This section of the Report summarizes main qualitative findings from twelve semi-structured interviews held with a selection of donors known to have a strong track record of funding and supporting Indigenous women, their communities, and organizations. Interviews were held with six Women's Funds plus the International Network of Women's Funds (INWF), four private foundations, and one environmental fund.¹⁹ 60-90 minute interviews were designed to advance the following three of the four major research objectives:

- Gain deeper insight into the challenges and opportunities that exist for Indigenous women's groups seeking resources for their work
- Highlight examples of powerful partnerships between funders from diverse sectors and Indigenous women's groups.
- Profile some of the cutting edge work being carried out by Indigenous women's groups.

Interview themes provide a snapshot of funding trends, challenges and opportunities for influencing support for Indigenous women's rights.

Why Fund Indigenous Women's Rights Groups?

Our interviewees represent a constellation of funders who see Indigenous women's groups as invaluable partners to achieve their multiple goals: advancing women's human rights, environmental justice, preserving traditional knowledge, and strengthening social movements. Perhaps Global Greengrants Director of Programs put it best when he described their organizational motivation for supporting Indigenous women "We fund Indigenous women who are at the forefront of movements, at intersections of global environmental sustainability and social justice...Indigenous women are very often leaders in these struggles, and it is urgent to get funds directly to them."

A core objective of this research project is to make visible some of the most effective collaborations between funders and Indigenous women's groups. Interviewees referenced a multitude of Indigenous women-led groups who are claiming their rights and using innovative strategies such as art and technology for change, international advocacy and campaigns, leadership building through connection to nature, mobilizations, and collective knowledge production. We highlight a few such examples below, in the hope that they might inspire new connections, and perhaps most importantly highlight the work that is being carried out.

¹⁹ SWIFT Foundation, Ford Foundation, Channel Foundation, Mama Cash, Global Fund for Women, Bolivian Women's Fund, Urgent Action Fund of Latin America, Semillas, the International Network of Women's Funds, The Central American Women's Fund (CAWF), Global Greengrants Fund, Tamalpais Trust. Interviews were also held with four indigenous women's rights activists to provide insight into the grantee and indigenous women's perspective, the results of which have used to add depth and texture to the analysis. The interviewed activists were: Rosalee Gonzalez, Joan Carling, and Teresa Zapeta, and Myrna Cunningham.

National Network of Indigenous Women Weaving Rights for Mother Earth and Land (RENAMITT) -Partner of Semillas. RENAMITT brings together Indigenous women working on legal land rights from different communities of Oaxaca, Chiapas, Veracruz, Guerrero, Jalisco, Chihuahua, and other states in Mexico. This initiative seeks to diminish inequalities through influencing public policy, so as to promote the rights that Indigenous women have to access and tend land as is promised in national laws and international treaties. With support from Semillas, they created a network that works on national policy and provides gendered analysis to land rights issues. This case demonstrates the strategic role that Semillas was able to play in to help bring individuals together to build movements united in their effort to change an unjust and patriarchal system.

Innabuyog, Inc. A network of Indigenous Women's Organizations in the Philippines Partner of Global Fund for Women. Leaders from 20 Indigenous women's organizations in the mountainous Cordillera region of the Philippines formed Innabuyog because they saw a need for a regional alliance to serve as a voice for Indigenous women's struggles and challenges regarding ancestral land, self-determination, resources, and dignity. Today, Innabuyog includes over a 140 women's organizations addressing the devastating environmental, cultural and food-sovereignty effects of mining and cash cropping, as well as violence against Indigenous women resulting from militarization and state repression. With support from Global Fund for Women, Innabuyog led leadership and organizational capacity building campaigns and mobilizations for Indigenous women's to claim their land, food and rights, and engage in local political processes.



Who are the Grantees?

Interviewees represent a diverse range of funding sectors and institutional visions for enacting social, human rights, and environmental change. But what kinds of organizations and groups are they reaching in their grantmaking? What do we know about their leadership structures? An interviewee from Swift Foundation reminded us that setting out to define Indigenous women's work is more complex than it appears:

Swift Foundation doesn't have specific Indigenous women's program areas or organizations, but we fund women in leadership in many arenas. For example, groups in British Columbia (Canada), where there is matrilineal society (historical and cultural traditions) they tend to have more Indigenouswomen-led projects, whereas groups in the Andes Amazon (where "machismo" tends to take hold) do not. Our approach is to start where organizations are at and encourage broad participation from different populations (women, youth, elders etc.).

Jen Astone, Swift Foundation, 2014 Interview.

When we asked funders about their responsibility to funding Indigenous women's groups, we were made aware of three distinct types of grantees:

- 1) Indigenous women-specific organizations, groups or communities (ie. Both led by and serving Indigenous women)
- 2) Mixed organizations/groups of indigenous or tribal peoples where Indigenous women are the main beneficiaries of their program
- 3) Broader organizations, groups of Indigenous or tribal peoples led by Indigenous women (ie: Indigenous women are holding the leadership positions, but implementing a broad program of work on a range of Indigenous issues)

Overall, Women's Funds we spoke with are committed to supporting Indigenous women-specific groups, whereas private foundations and the environmental funds are resourcing all three. A funder's decision to support a mixed Indigenous-led organization or an Indigenous women's group is often a question of complementarity of work and mission, but it is also a political choice. Sensitive and knowledgeable donors are conscious of some of the barriers Indigenous women face within their own communities. Indigenous women leaders report for example, that they can suffer discrimination within mixed organizations, and have limited opportunities to participate in decision-making. Moreover, Indigenous women are underrepresented both within the membership and in leadership positions.²⁰ One Indigenous women's rights activist we spoke with provided the following critique highlighting the lack of recognition of Indigenous women's contributions.

The problem with Indigenous mixed organizations is that their commitment to Indigenous women is very artificial. They experience pressure by their donors to include Indigenous women in their work, and so they include them without having a substantive strategy. Another issue is that women inside those organizations have had hard time being recognized. At the same time we see Indigenous women specific organizations becoming more visible but still not respected. For example, in the recent negotiations for climate change women's organisations found it very hard to be considered...men's organizations came in and took the space. Investing in strengthening Indigenous women's groups is an opportunity for funders who are interested in supporting the most progressive agendas on all issues impacting women, including climate change.--

Indigenous women's rights activist, 2014 interview.

In order to mitigate the leadership issue as well as tensions that can arise around larger NGOs entering into Indigenous communities in un-thoughtful ways, different funds have created practices to maintain Indigenous leadership, self-determination and participation among grant applicants. Naming "Indigenous self-determination" as FIMI's first guiding principle, for example, requires that grantees of the AYNi Fund "must be a community of Indigenous or tribal peoples, or organization / association / group of Indigenous women. In case of a mixed organization of Indigenous or tribal peoples, the proposal must be submitted by a section, a secretariat, or a group of Indigenous women."²¹



A number of funders we spoke with have earmarked funds to support **global or international advocacy work** being led by Indigenous women from around the world (Channel Foundation, Tamalpais Trust, and Global Fund for Women). These funds are dedicated to support travel and expenses associated with Indigenous women's participation in global conferences such as the 2015 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), UN Climate Change Conference etc. While some progressive donors recognize international advocacy as a critical area of support, current resources available are not adequately supporting the international advocacy needs of Indigenous women's movement. There is **a continuous cycle of work** that needs to be funded ranging from attending treaty bodies to reviewing country level inputs.



We [Indigenous Women] struggle with limited funds for gathering and exchanges for Indigenous Women across borders. There is a great need to do more that within our sub region in North America, Central America, South America to prepare for continent gatherings. The reason we don't do this is because of funding, not because we don't have an agenda
Rosalee Gonzalez, Activist Interview 2015.

Indigenous women have fought to secure their roles and representation within global and regional networks and organizations, culminating with great visibility at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995.²⁴ Continued investment in regional networks (such as the Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas), as well individual leaders will ensure meaningful participation of Indigenous women and their agendas are adequately represented in key advocacy spaces.



Priority issues & Strategies for Indigenous Women's Groups

What we are starting to see in our applications is on corporate encroachment on land and resources and working to not just reclaim or hold on to those resources and also to ensure that food and seed sovereignty, Indigenous rights of knowing and wisdom are retained to fight those larger battles.

Global Fund for Women, 2014 Interview.

Analysis of grant applications provide funders a window into the most pressing issues facing Indigenous women's groups and the strategies they are using to respond. This section of the report is dedicated to providing insight into the priority issue areas, gaps and strategies for Indigenous women's groups.

Issues

Indigenous women's groups seek resources to address a wide range of thematic (and often interconnected) issues ranging from food security, to environmental protection, to freedom from violence. Many interviewees describe intersectionality between issues as profound. Violence, environment, and human rights are inextricably linked and this is essential to informing their grant-making approaches and decision-making. Despite the wide range of issues Indigenous women's groups are tackling, three in particular rose to the top:

A. Right to Lands, Territories and Resources

The cultural, economic and spiritual significance of land, territories and resources lie at the very heart of what it means to be an Indigenous person. At a collective level it is also what distinguishes Indigenous communities from dominant societies. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 13, 2007) recognizes individual and collective rights to land, however in practice Indigenous communities around the world continue to suffer loss of control over lands, territories and resources.²⁵

SRHR (sexual and reproductive health and rights)

CULTURAL FOOD SECURITY/SEED SOVEREIGNTY

PRESERVATION HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES

FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE/WHRDS

FIGHTING EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES **CONFLICT AND MILITARISM**

MIGRANT POLITICAL, ECONOMIC JUSTICE

RIGHTS YW'S RIGHTS & LEADERSHIP

SOVEREIGNTY ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

& LAND RIGHTS LABOR/MAQUILA/DOMESTIC

B. Freedom from all Forms of Violence

We do not want to focus the discussion on violence against indigenous women only on domestic violence because we see that violence is related to globalization, to colonization, to racism, to structural changes that need to be improved in different countries. Because of that, there are conditions that increase violence against women – economic measures, militarization, lack of security, ecological problems, contamination – a lot of these affect indigenous women, and these increase violence.

Myma Cunningham, 2012.²⁸

Much has been written, especially in the international arena, about the structural nature of the violence faced by Indigenous women and girls.²⁹ The Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples describes the violence as “**endemic violations of collective, civil and political, and economic, social and cultural rights as a form of structural violence against indigenous women and girls.**” Data from the same report suggests that Indigenous women are significantly more likely to be victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, militarized violence resulting from conflict, are highly vulnerable to trafficking, and are also vulnerable to gender based killings, and in some communities violence in the name of tradition.³⁰

Activist Rosalee Gonzalez described in her interview how the multiple forms of violence being perpetrated against Indigenous women makes their experience distinct, and as a result “a more complex understanding of violence is required.” She expands upon this by saying that when violence against Indigenous women manifests as physical violence through targeted corporate takeover or militarized conflict the violence goes beyond the individual. Lack of sovereignty over Indigenous women’s bodies becomes an infringement on the spiritual space that allows for protection for their cultural traditions and collective rights. Indigenous women have been expressing this as **all forms of violence.**³¹



Support to Indigenous women to live lives free of all forms of violence is vital, and interviewees discussed the need for the donor community to create new and better opportunities for support in this area. Interviewees were unanimously concerned about the current level of violence Indigenous Women Human Rights Defenders are experiencing in Meso-America in particular, but also around the world. The international community grieved and demanded justice after the March 3rd 2016 assassination of Berta Caceres, the Lenca warrior who co-founded and lead the National Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH). COPINH was a long-term grantee of the Global Greengrants Fund, who supported their fight to protect Indigenous homelands in Honduras from the extreme threat of hydroelectric dams for two decades. Terry Odendahl, President and CEO of Global Greengrants Fund described Berta’s death as “**a horrible example of the violence that is being committed against environmental activists and particularly women and Indigenous peoples, around the world who are fighting to protect human and environmental rights.**”

Progressive funders like Urgent Action Fund LAC have been playing key roles dispersing rapid response grants to Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs), many of whom are Indigenous women’s rights activists.

Women Human Rights Defenders working to protect their ecosystems are highly vulnerable to violence targeted by states and industries. In response, UAF Women supports initiatives to strengthen women who promote respect for the healthy environment, defend the ecosystems and wildlife, safeguard their ethnic territories and oppose large-scale mining and other extractive industries. UAF also supported initiatives to prevent violence against this group of women, as well as actions to make visible the effects of environmental degradation in their bodies, health and welfare.

UAF further shared how Indigenous women's groups are playing a key role developing proposals on their own to guarantee their rights, and give visibility to different forms of violence indigenous women and girls are enduring-- namely physical, psychological and sexual. UAF goes on to describe and advocate for a much-needed shift in International cooperation whereby attention is given to building knowledge around the current reality for Indigenous women. Concretely, this presents an opportunity to shift investments away from government institutions towards Indigenous communities themselves, as a way to build new leadership and protect human rights.



3. Indigenous Women's Leadership

The Interviews all circled to back to the urgent need to invest in Indigenous women's leadership. Semillas described the current moment as one of opportunity. For example, at local and international levels, a critical mass of Indigenous women's leadership is being built up to intervene at level of multilateral agencies and the United Nations (UN). This was particularly notable at the 2015 UN Forum in September, where Indigenous women were negotiating around the [Green Climate Fund](#) which has the capacity to give large scale resources to women's funds and NGOs. At present it is set up to grant monies to governments, but due to the strong presence of Indigenous women's leadership, there is a push to get this kind of money into funds that work directly with leadership of Indigenous women and communities.

Funders and activists alike discussed the importance of funding intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge, investing in organizational growth and capacity, and political participation. As a key issue area of support for the Bolivian Women's Fund, grantees use capacity building strategies to support women growth in leadership positions in their communities and to have their voices heard in decision-making processes. Such programs also serve to educate and inform Indigenous women on political issues in their own communities and cities. In contrast, the Central American Women's Fund (FCAM) offers an integrated approach to supporting Indigenous leadership – as one of many identities in struggle across the region. FCAM has been a consistent supporter young women's leadership, reaching many Indigenous women from communities all over Meso-America through their Ola Joven (Young Wave) program. The main strategy used to reach Indigenous and other minority communities has been through implementing training camps designed to strengthen young women's leadership and movement building across the region.

Camps organized by FCAM have been spaces for exchange and intensive training on focus areas and central themes for individual and collective development of young women, and they favor the creation of national and regional connections. Diverse women converge in the camps, which bring together grantee groups and organizations from throughout the region. The combination of experiential and educational methodologies favors changes at a personal level and contributes to the development of new leadership.

Nourishing young women's leadership through **capacity building and training** is especially important because of the social, environmental and territorial threats Indigenous peoples are facing—both physically and culturally. Ford Foundation, a key ally and long-term funder of Indigenous peoples reported that by investing in the intergenerational transmission of knowledge, funders are meaningfully contributing to the growth of an ecosystem of young Indigenous leaders engaged in decision-making on issues impacting their communities.

APPENDIX 1: SIZE & SCOPE OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S GROUPS (COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS)

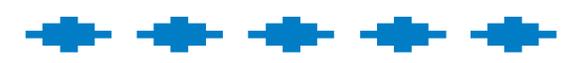
Comparison of women's groups with and without indigenous constituencies

Comparative Results from 2011 "Where is the Money for Women's Rights?" Survey Association of Women in Development (AWID)	Indigenous Constituency* (N=733)	No Indigenous Constituency (N=833)
Median Income 2011 (US\$)	\$15,000	\$20,000
Median Income 2012 (US\$)	\$32,500	\$34,000
Budget shortfall in 2010	30%	35%
Median expected survival with no further funding	5 months	6 months
Percentage receiving multyear funding (2011)	18%	22%
Percent core support (2011)	25%	30%
Has ever received funding	79%	83%
Provides grants to others	14%	19%
Has assets	42%	47%
Median value of assets	\$10,000	\$10,200
Median amount of savings and reserves	\$510	\$505
Have no savings or reserves	29%	31%
Founded after 2000	57%	59%
Region		
SS Africa	35.0%	38.1%
Latin America	19.8%	13.4%
Caucasus and Central Asia	11.4%	5.4%
S SE Asia	11.4%	10.3%
S C E Europe	8.8%	9.2%
North America	6.3%	4.0%
MENA	3.4%	7.9%
Western Europe	2.5%	4.4%
Eastern Asia	2.1%	4.4%
Caribbean	.4%	1.5%
Pacific	.4%	1.0%

- Women's rights organizations with indigenous constituencies report slightly lower income and are less likely to have assets.
- Overall, however, these groups are not markedly different from other women's right organizations.

* Indicated in the survey that indigenous people were a target population of their work. Does not necessarily mean that the organization comprises indigenous people.
 ** Medians are used to avoid potential distorting effects of a few very large organizations in the sample.

25 Base: 1,119 women's organizations who responded to AWID's 2011 "Where is the Money for Women's Rights?" survey.



APPENDIX 2: INDIGENOUS WOMEN LIFE EXPERIENCES

Latin America

Petrona Fernandez Osco: Derechos Economicos / Economical Rights /Bolivia



My name is Petrona Fernandez Osco, I'm 34 years old and I belong to the community of Yanari, Suyi Ingavi of Markas, Ayllus and the community of DZAdz of the 4th Zone section of Desaguadera, La Paz, Bolivia. My mother tongue is Aymara and Spanish is my second language. I graduated from the career of Educational Sciences of the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés. I currently live in my community where I work collaborating with the managing of the traditional authorities of the community and at the same time I devote myself to the work of agriculture along with my parents.

I am a teacher and a farmer, and I also give myself to the children, perhaps because I do not have any children and I see in children the future of our people, that's why I think that they have to revitalize agriculture, education, and the values. In my culture, the elders are in charge of the children's education. The elders stay at home and the children from the age of 12 and up go work in the crops, farming, while the grandparents are teaching the smallest children how to "learn by doing". The first thing we learn is to weave, this is taught by our grandmothers and our grandfathers teach us the agriculture, so that we can understand and have a direct contact with the soil.

A CALL TO ACTION: INSIGHTS INTO THE STATUS OF FUNDING FOR INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S GROUPS

A JOINT AWID-FIMI-IFIP REPORT - APRIL 2016

