



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023



# EDITO

In 2023, Europe faced various challenges, including climate disasters, intensifying conflicts, the cost-of-living crisis, growing political polarisation, and emerging threats to democracy. Another alarming trend was the continuing influence of the anti-gender movement throughout Europe, leveraging toxic narratives and substantial financial backing to undermine LGBTQIA+ rights and restrict access to reproductive healthcare. The stakes felt high, as these overlapping crises took a toll on women, transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people, especially those at the intersections of race, poverty, disability, and other marginalised identities.

Yet even in the face of adversity, the feminist movement was on the frontlines in every corner of Europe. We saw organisations countering bias and misinformation, providing much-needed services, nurturing safe spaces, forging new alliances, and building resilience against poverty and hostility. Drawing from their lived experiences of discrimination, pay disparity, and violence, these groups continued to address the root causes of inequality. From supporting workers to advocating for legal change, they paved the way towards lasting change on their own terms.

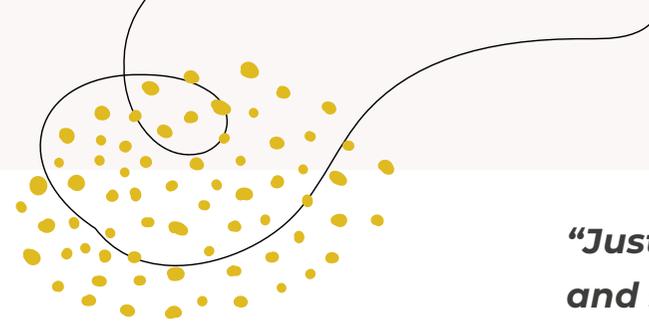
It is this type of collective action that brought groundbreaking legal victories over the past year. We celebrated new gender recognition laws in Finland and Spain, along with the European Union's

adoption of pay transparency measures and accession to the Istanbul Convention on combating violence against women and domestic violence.

These achievements were the culmination of decades of advocacy by organisations, which remain chronically underfunded. Just imagine the speed and scale of progress that could be unlocked with the necessary financial support. It's clearer than ever that systems change work requires sufficient funding that reaches those who are directly affected by gender oppression and who understand the issues best. We know that they are best positioned to develop the solutions.

In 2023, new and existing members of the Alliance distributed 3.5 million euros through our new economic opportunities fund to small, frontline gender equality organisations that often don't have access to traditional funding. We are immensely proud of this six-fold increase compared to our first funding round in 2021.

But we didn't just increase the size of our giving. We offered more long-term, flexible and core funding with streamlined processes to make it easier for smaller organisations to participate. Moving towards trust-based grant-making, we continued building mutually accountable relationships between grantees and funders to foster a truly collaborative spirit and more strategic, participatory decision-making.



***“Just imagine the speed and scale of progress that could be unlocked with the necessary financial support.”***

We carefully selected inspiring initiatives that blend individual support with efforts to challenge structures that underpin gender inequality. We believe this is one of the most impactful ways to advance equality and inclusion. We are both proud and delighted that our diverse grantee partners are already organising, uplifting, and changing lives around Europe.

Yet despite our best efforts, we could only support a small fraction of applications. There are still many deserving organisations doing extraordinary work without the financial support they need. Last year, we received 364 applications amounting to a total request of 48 million euros but were only able to fund 26 organisations, covering approximately 7% of the total funding need.

This is why our efforts to raise awareness about the importance of resourcing gender equality work among donors will be key in the coming years. We are more committed than ever to help bridge the huge funding gap and ensure the movement's incredible potential is realised.

**Marion Schaefer**  
Fondation CHANEL - Chair of the Alliance for Gender Equality in Europe



# OUR MISSION AND VISION

## VISION

**Our vision is a just and fair European society** where gender equality is achieved for all people, especially women, girls, boys, men, and those who identify as LGBTQIA+ living in vulnerable situations.

## MISSION

The Alliance supports the strengthening of small, frontline organisations working on gender equality in Europe that are working to improve the lives of individuals, ensure that they have equal access to opportunities and help them to live free from violence while also addressing the underlying structures and power dynamics that uphold inequality and exclusion. We believe in a holistic approach where improving the lives of individuals goes hand-in-hand with pushing for systemic changes.



© Per Esemplio

# OUR OBJECTIVES AND WORK APPROACHES

## OBJECTIVES

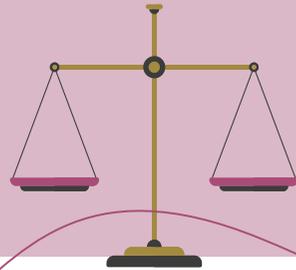
- **Provide financial support and capacity-building** for small, frontline organisations working on gender equality across Europe that support people living in the most vulnerable situations.
- **Build collaborations** with and between funders and grantee organisations that accelerate their learning and inform more effective gender equality work.
- **Establish a robust donor collaborative** on gender equality in Europe, deepening our understanding of the most impactful ways to support the gender equality ecosystem.
- **Mobilise** the philanthropic community to support gender equality in Europe.

## GENDER APPROACH

The Alliance adopts an intersectional gender approach which recognises that women and other marginalised groups, such as youth, poor people, migrants, refugees, people with disabilities, and LGBTQIA+ people have multiple layered identities and are thus affected differently by gender inequality. This increases our understanding of the specific needs and interests of targeted populations and helps us to address complex challenges. The Alliance is committed to leaving no one behind.

## IN OUR WORK, WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

**Supporting long-term structural issues of gender equality in Europe** such as gender-based violence, access to economic resources, access to education and training and **listening to the field to identify emerging issues.**



Ensuring a **balanced geographic distribution of grants across Europe** to underscore that there is a need to improve gender equality in all regions while responding to specific geographic needs.



Focusing on **small, frontline organisations working on gender equality**, led by people with lived experiences who are acknowledged experts in the field. We believe this approach helps us to engage with previously overlooked actors who are close to the problems they seek to address.



Where needed, providing **unrestricted core support** to increase organisational development, resilience and sustainability.



Using **streamlined and flexible processes** to adapt to the capacity of small organisations and to reduce barriers to participation.



Enabling **opportunities for peer-learning, networking and capacity strengthening** for our grantee partners and foundation members.



**Raising the voices of our grantee partners** and promoting their work in donor and institutional spaces.

**Being a learning organisation** that engages with the sector to strengthen our impact.



# OUR GOVERNANCE

## STEERING COMMITTEE

The steering committee provides the strategic orientation and approves final grant decisions. Chaired by the Fondation CHANEL, the current members are the Bodossaki Foundation, Fondation de France, Fondation Raja-Danièle Marcovici, JP Morgan, King Baudouin Foundation and L'Oréal Fund for Women.



FONDATION  
**CHANEL**

J.P.Morgan



L'ORÉAL  
FUND FOR WOMEN

## ADVISORY BODIES

The Alliance integrates the perspectives of gender equality experts from diverse backgrounds, including civil society representatives through advisory bodies.

The Advisory Committee advises the Steering Committee on strategic decisions. The members for the period between November 2022 and December 2025 are:

- Caroline Brac de la Perrière, Director of Mediterranean Women's Fund
- Debora Guidetti, Senior European Program Manager at Ariadne
- Sana Afouaiz, Founder and CEO of Womenpreneur-Initiative
- Sotiris Laganopoulos, Sector Officer for Civil Society at EEA & Norway Grants
- Xenia Kellner, Cofounder of Young Feminist Europe

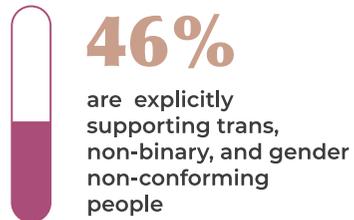
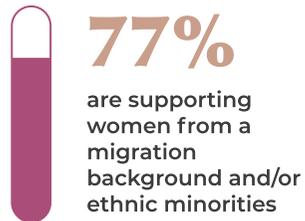
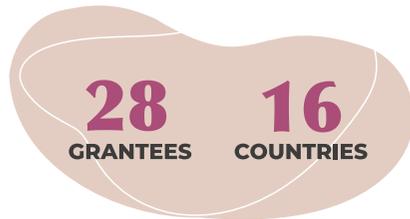
Selection committees are created ad-hoc for each call for proposals, gathering experts relevant to the focus of every call, to provide the steering committee with grant recommendations.

## OPERATIONS

Established under the auspices of the [Network of European Foundations \(NEF\)](#), the Alliance is coordinated by a Program team, which supports the steering committee in its strategic decisions and manages day-to-day operations.

# SNAPSHOT OF 2023

## KEY FIGURES:



**3.605.131 €**  
of committed grants among which

**2.427.468 €**  
disbursed during the year

AVERAGE GRANT AMOUNT:  
**128.755 €**



# MAP OF GRANTEE PARTNERS

● Project funding  
● Core funding



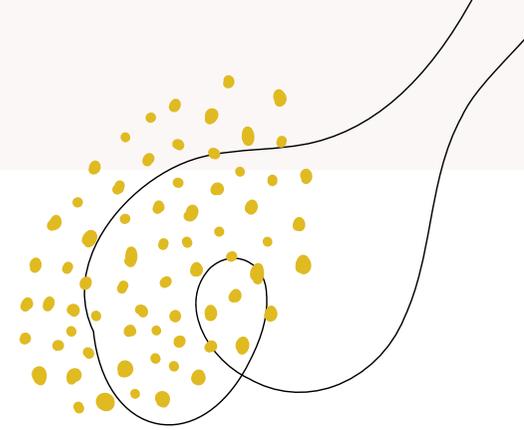
## AKIDWA: AKINA DADA WA AFRICA

 Ireland • 120 000€ • project support • July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

AkiDWA is a self-led network of migrant women in Ireland aiming to ensure equal opportunities and access to resources. Their project aims to continue their capacity-building program and develop new activities, including:

- Professional soft skills building, job seeking, and personal development program – soon to be an accredited program;
- Building partnerships with companies to organise learning visits and/or job matching;
- Young migrant women's network that provides mentoring, educational support and social networking opportunities;
- Training women to become Community Health Ambassadors.



## ALICE

 Czech Republic • 150 000€ • core support • July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

ALICE is a union of care workers in Czech Republic, which organises, trains and advocates for better wages and improved working conditions for care workers who earn below the Czech average wage.

ALICE intends to expand its structures by promoting knowledge exchange between marginalised Czech and migrant care workers from different regions and occupations within the care sector. This aims to strengthen their ability to engage in social dialogue, demand better working conditions, and overcome barriers of nationality and geographical fragmentation. ALICE will provide leadership trainings, peer-to-peer mentoring, and alumni networking.

## AMICOS FOUNDATION

 Spain • 135 882€ • project support • July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

The objective of the AMICOS Foundation is to enhance the socio-economic inclusion of people with disabilities. Their project aims to create opportunities for decent employment in the green economy for rural women with disabilities. They intend to achieve this through the following activities:

- Conducting needs assessments of target groups and identifying participants;
- Creating personalised socio-economic integration paths for participants, including vocational training, job seeking, and psychological support;
- Identifying inclusive and gender-equal companies in the green sector offering training and job placements;
- Establishing a support network for participants to exchange and connect;
- Performing a feasibility study on the creation of a social enterprise in the green and circular economy for AMICOS to sustain its activities focusing on the economic inclusion of women with disabilities in the green sector.

## ARAB WOMEN'S SOLIDARITY ASSOCIATION - BELGIUM (AWSA-BE)

 Belgium • 150 000€ • core support • July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

AWSA-Be is a self-led organisation with the mission of promoting Arab women's rights in Belgium. The organisation aims to deepen its socio-economic inclusion activities, including:

- Implementing a comprehensive program of coaching, self-esteem workshops, and networking for 15 women seeking jobs;
- Providing anti-bias training for 60 people working in organisations supporting job seekers and promoting their methodology;
- Organising sociocultural activities to facilitate networking;
- Disseminating educational materials on women's economic empowerment with an intersectional perspective.
- They also plan to hire staff dedicated to training and communication to facilitate the delivery of these activities.



© NANE

## ASSOCIATION FOR LIBERTY AND GENDER EQUALITY - A.L.E.G.

 Romania • 149 760€ • core support • July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

A.L.E.G supports women victims of violence in Romania. They want to develop their activities supporting Ukrainian and other refugees' economic inclusion along with their core holistic support. The supported activities include:

- Skills building and wellbeing workshops;
- Financial education and personal development mentorship;
- Development of partnerships with employers for job matchmaking;
- Awareness raising for employers and counsellors on gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence;
- Advocacy to address legal gaps in preventing sexual harassment at work and combating violence against women.

## BILITIS RESOURCE CENTER FOUNDATION

 Bulgaria • 123 540€ • core support • July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

Bilitis Resource Center Foundation focuses on promoting full equality for LGBTI people in Bulgaria. In partnership with Glas, they have developed a project to enhance their economic opportunities. They will implement individualised inclusion paths tailored to the needs and goals of each participant, including:

- Coaching for self-empowerment and the development of soft skills in job seeking or business development;
- Career orientation and information about inclusive employers, including a job fair to connect them.
- Psychological support to improve workplace adaptation.
- Peer-to-peer exchanges.

## BIWOC\* RISING

 Germany • 120 000€ • core support • July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

BIWOC\* Rising's mission is to strengthen the economic, professional, and social participation of women\* experiencing discrimination and racism through the operation of the first intersectional coworking space and social club in Berlin. They will implement the following activities:

- Offering a free coworking space for women\* of colour, providing a safer environment free from discrimination where they can network and share economic opportunities;
- Implementing an educational program consisting of workshops, peer-to-peer mentoring, and network-building on topics like financial management, self-confidence, and strategies to counter discrimination;
- Developing a digital platform and counselling centre focusing on entrepreneurship;
- Conducting anti-bias training in companies and raising awareness on issues affecting their community, such as the intersectional pay gap.

## CHOISIR LA CAUSE DES FEMMES

 France • 85 000€ • project support • September 2023-December 2023

[Website](#)

Choisir was created to improve women's rights through law. We supported the organisation of their conference 'The Best of Europe for Women'. They compiled the best-in-class national laws regarding different areas of women's rights (family, gender-based violence, economic empowerment, and political representation) and are now advocating for their adoption at the EU level. In December 2023, they organised a European conference to discuss their findings and formulate an advocacy plan for the 2024 European elections.

## CONTEMPORAINES

 France • 100 000€ • core support • September 2023-August 2025

[Website](#)

Contemporaines aims to promote gender equality in contemporary art by supporting underrepresented women, transgender, and non-binary artists. They undertake the following activities in partnership with a broad network of cultural organisations, galleries, and artists:

- Professionalising and supporting artists through mentoring and workshops on the legal, economic and developmental aspects of artistic work;
- Raising awareness for a more diverse art scene through events and communication promoting the work of these artists.



© Akidwa

## EXPANSE OF GENDER AND MEDIA CULTURE 'COMMON ZONE'



Common Zone is a self-led grassroots organisation with a mission to increase the impact of women and gender aware individuals. In the framework of their strategic plan for 2022-2024, they have identified economic empowerment as a key focus. Their project, in partnership with Impact Hub Zagreb, aims to improve economic opportunities for LGBTQ+ people through:

- Providing business support or business skills building for existing or new entrepreneurs;
- Outreach and collaboration with inclusive companies on job matching, mentoring and/or job shadowing;
- Establishing a peer-support network for program participants;
- Providing legal and psychological support for participants as well as organising strategy retreats with participants.

## FAIR SHARE OF WOMEN LEADERS



FAIR SHARE aims to spark and sustain a feminist transformation of the international social impact sector by monitoring the representation of women leaders and providing access to spaces and resources on feminist leadership.

With our support and in collaboration with the One Future Collective, they are piloting the Feminist Leadership Hub, a virtual, community-driven, peer learning platform centred around feminist leadership. In this space, civil society practitioners can share and access resources, exchange experiences and ideas, and connect with peers in their region or working on similar topics. All our grantees will have access to it, as part of our commitment to provide organisational development opportunities and strengthen their capacity and sustainability.

## GIRLDREAMER



GirlDreamer is a self-led organisation that supports the personal and professional development of young women of colour to pursue their dreams and tackle social inequality. The Alliance will finance their Dream Fund, which provides micro-grants up to £2500 to support grassroots women of colour-led social organisations and entrepreneurs. In addition to these micro-grants, the program offers one-to-one and group support, mentoring, and workshops in financial management, fundraising, branding, marketing, and impact measurement.



## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN\* SPACE

 Germany • 150 000€ • core support • July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

International Women\* Space (IWS) is a self-led feminist and anti-racist women's organisation empowering migrant and refugee women.

As a follow-up to the support provided by the Alliance in 2022, the Break Isolation Group (a migrant and refugee-only group within IWS) will upscale their peer-to-peer empowerment approach through:

- Upscaling existing mini projects\* into sustainable economic opportunities for women;
- Launching new mini projects by new participants;
- Building networks with other CSOs to raise the visibility of their issues.

\*Mini projects are developed and implemented by women to embrace self-care and nurture their leadership and entrepreneurial spirit to be fit for the German labour market. Last year, these projects included the production of hair products, makeup tutorials, vegetable gardening, and community soup kitchens.

## INTERNATIONELLA KVINNOFÖREGNINGEN I MALMÖ - IKF

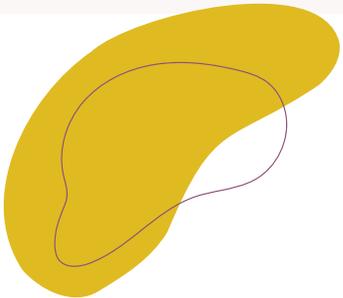
 Sweden • 141 983€ • core support • July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

IKF Malmö promotes the inclusion of foreign-born women through study circles\* and vocational training. They will upscale their study circles on economic empowerment, focusing on preparing for jobs, financial management, learning the Swedish language, green industry practices, career planning, and entrepreneurship. Additionally, they collaborate with companies, public institutions and key local leaders to provide economic opportunities for their participants. Their plan involves having circle participants become ambassadors and creating their own circles, thus creating a multiplier effect and facilitating specific awareness-raising moments.

\*A study circle is a form of non-formal education training where a facilitator supports participant reflection and provides an open and safe space.





## LALLAB

 France • 150 000€ • project support • September 2023-August 2025

[Website](#)

Lallab is a self-led feminist and anti-racist association that aims to defend the rights of Muslim women and amplify their voices.

Their project focuses on economic empowerment with two components:

- The POWER program, developed in partnership with cities and public services, offers skills training, mentoring and networking opportunities for Muslim women to improve soft skills, gain knowledge about their rights, and develop a network of accomplished professional peers.
- They conduct awareness-raising workshops for public and private employers on anti-discrimination. They also seek to build partnerships with other feminist and labour union organisations to defend the rights of women in the workplace.

## LEV FEM

 Bulgaria • 65 336€ • core support • July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

LevFem is a queer feminist organisation working at the intersection of gender equality and economic justice. They will build a movement to improve the working conditions of care workers in Bulgaria through the following actions:

- Conducting research on the exploitative aspects of care work and inform evidence-based advocacy;
- Organising a community of care workers and providing empowerment training;
- Cooperating with various stakeholders to articulate common political demands for improving the working conditions in the care sector.



© Kirill Kazakov and ORAM

## MEDFEMINISWIYA. NETWORK

 Croatia, Greece, France, Italy, Spain •  
150 000€ • core support •  
July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

MedFemiNiswiya.Network is a network of feminist women journalists, photographers, designers, and translators from across the Mediterranean region. The organisation provides a space for women journalists to diversify and/or strengthen their professional capacities while covering women's rights issues. They will implement the following activities:

- Developing the network by contracting 20 additional women journalists with a migration background;
- Strengthening journalists' capacity through targeted workshops focusing on developing their journalistic skills and increasing their visibility among other media outlets;
- Developing the magazine by increasing readership, providing additional translations, and producing a video showcasing impact for network participants;
- Creating a journalistic dossier on the intersecting discrimination faced by women workers of foreign origin.

## MOZAIQ LGBT ASSOCIATION

 Romania • 149 550€ • project support •  
July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

MozaiQ is a leading LGBTI organisation in Romania. In partnership with TransCore, they are implementing an economic inclusion program for marginalised trans and non-binary people in Bucharest and Brasov. The program includes:

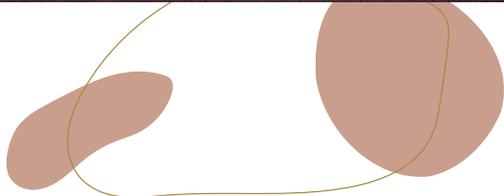
- Personalised interventions based on an individual assessment, such as training sessions, career counselling, and psychological support;
- Raising awareness on trans-inclusive practices for employers and organising job fairs for trans job seekers;
- Conducting public awareness campaigns on the experiences of transgender people in the job market.

## NANE ASSOCIATION

 Hungary • 150 000€ • core support •  
July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

NANE is the primary organisation supporting women victims of violence in Hungary. In partnership with PATENT, they aim to sustain and develop their activities related to economic abuse, including economic control, employment sabotage, and economic exploitation. They will continue their core activities addressing economic abuse with helplines, legal assistance, support groups, and peer-support networks. Additionally, they will develop an economic empowerment program for victims of intimate partner violence to equip participants with knowledge about the issue, strategies to mitigate its impact, and assistance in achieving economic independence. Furthermore, they will develop an awareness-raising program for young women and launch a communication campaign to raise visibility around the issue.



## ORAM GGBH

 Germany, Poland • 150 000€ • project support • July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

ORAM protects and empowers LGBTIQ asylum seekers and refugees globally by providing assistance, advocating for their rights, and advancing their socioeconomic empowerment.

In partnership with Lambda Warsaw, their project aims to create stable economic opportunities for LGBTIQ displaced Ukrainians in Poland and Germany based on a community needs assessment. They plan to achieve this by:

- Providing data skills development and training to target groups, enabling them to enter the tech industry;
- Offering administrative and legal support to individuals seeking to become freelancers and assisting them in developing business opportunities;
- Creating a job pool in collaboration with LGBT-friendly multinational companies to facilitate the placement of trained participants;
- Operating a work centre in Poland where individuals can apply their newly developed tech skills and be hired by Lambda to further enhance their skills, ease their entry into the job market, and ensure economic security.

## ORGANISATION FOR THE PROFESSIONAL EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN | WOMEN ON TOP

 Greece • 150 000€ • project support • July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

Women On Top is dedicated to the economic empowerment of women and for gender equity in the workplace. Their project aims to establish the Women Work Hub, the first female-focused working, learning, and advocacy hub with on-site childcare in Greece. The initiative will be built around four pillars:

- A co-working space with childcare facilities;
- Professional development programs and initiatives, including a job rehabilitation bootcamp, an incubator for female-owned SMEs, and a financial literacy camp;
- Launching a pilot social enterprise (a hair salon) dedicated to training and employing women from marginalised groups.
- An advocacy and civil society lab in partnership with longstanding partners active in gender equality, focusing on underserved women.



© International Women Space

## PER ESEMPIO ONLUS



Italy • 150 000€ • project support • July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

Per Eempio's mission is to empower individuals at risk of socioeconomic exclusion in Palermo, Italy, and support them in improving their skills and knowledge. In partnership with Handala, the project will build upon the socioeconomic empowerment activities for young women supported last year by the Alliance. The project will consist of:

- Conducting various peer education workshops to reinforce the skills and knowledge of young women for their economic inclusion in two neighbourhoods;
- Developing community engagement and self-advocacy among these women to address their issues with local policymakers;
- Facilitating the exchange of best practices on socioeconomic empowerment between the two organisations involved in the project and with other stakeholders.

## ROMAVERSITAS FOUNDATION



Hungary • 150 000€ • core support • July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

Romaversitas is a Roma women-led community organisation with the aim of establishing a strong Roma intellectual middle class in Hungary by providing academic services and support for Roma high school and university students to launch their careers. They will implement a holistic, sustainable economic inclusion program for young Roma women, comprising the following elements:

- Community-led needs assessment;
- Career readiness training program focusing on financial literacy, economic independence, career planning, and identity exploration, with training and peer-mentoring;
- Internship placements;
- Advocacy and awareness-raising for Roma women's inclusion in economic opportunities.

## SHOUTOUT



Ireland • 145 400€ • project support • July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

ShoutOut works to end discrimination against LGBTQ+ people in society. They aim to safeguard and expand the delivery of their awareness-raising programmes promoting economic inclusion and equality in schools, universities, and workplaces. More specifically, they will develop workplace inclusion programmes by reaching more organisations, deepening the impact with these organisations through long-term engagement, embedding inclusive practices, measuring the impact of their work, and empowering LGBTQ+ women, trans, and non-binary champions and networks in these spaces to drive change.

## SOS RACISMO MADRID



Spain • 139 960€ • project support • July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

SOS Racismo Madrid is a self-led organisation of migrant and racialised women with the aim of fighting against all forms of discrimination, segregation, and structural racism.

Their project aims to facilitate the access of young racialised women in their final year of university to employment and to promote the development of their vocational skills through the following activities:

- A training program focusing on job orientation and development of soft skills;
- The establishment of a network of companies that will benefit from anti-racism workshops and will offer internships to the young women;
- A mentoring program for the participants;
- Legal advice on labour and immigration law.

## STICHTING SINGLE SUPERMOM

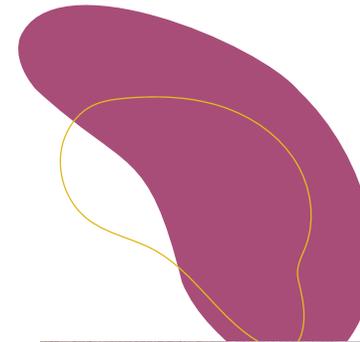


The Netherlands • 148 000€ • project support • July 2023-June 2025

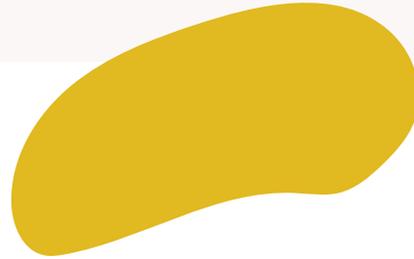
[Website](#)

The Single SuperMom Foundation is a self-led organisation and the largest network for single mothers in the Netherlands. Their project will be carried out in partnership with two pilot municipalities as follows:

- Setting up of a local working group of civil servants, social workers, job coaches, and the organisation's own specialists and experts;
- Exploring new paths to the labour market for single mothers, often with a migration background, who live in poverty and face multiple challenges. This includes starting with training courses and leading to sustainable jobs (or serious job prospects) that suits their capacities and situations;
- Four groups of 16 single mothers (two per municipality) participate in the pilot while monitoring and evaluating the process through participatory research and disseminating the findings.



© ShoutOut



© Kirill Kazakov and ORAM

## THE SORORUM



United Kingdom • 100 320€ • core support • July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

The Sororum is designed to support first generation professionals/first in family young women between the ages of 16 and 24 from marginalised and minoritised backgrounds to transition into professional services and bridge the education-to-industry gap. They aim to upscale their volunteer-run organisation into a more formalised and structured one. They will continue running their Academy, a training program to guide young women into employment, and the collective career peer-coaching program. On top of that, they intend to create:

- An employment pipeline by identifying and onboarding employers;
- An online portal providing resources on financial literacy, job boards, events and a safe space for women to connect.

## TRACANELUPA APS

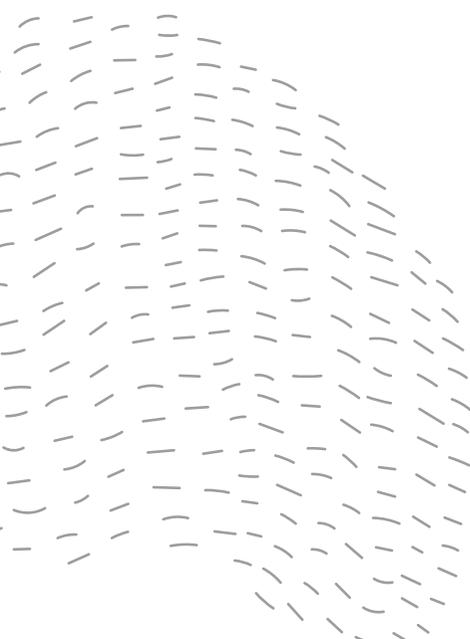


Italy • 60 000€ • project support • July 2023-June 2025

[Website](#)

Tracanelupa is a new ecofeminist organisation dedicated to experimenting with new systems of development that respect nature and women. Since 2020, they have operated Gramigna, a community garden for women victims of violence. They now aim to turn it into a small cooperative providing economic opportunities for women survivors. They will achieve this by:

- Training 10 women in organic agri-food production;
- Raising awareness about the economic autonomy of survivors of violence;
- Transforming Gramigna into a small business.



# OUR IMPACT AND LEARNINGS



**Objective 1: Provide financial support and capacity-building for small, frontline organisations working on gender equality across Europe that work with people living in the most vulnerable situations.**

*"The funding from the Alliance has been instrumental in strengthening and growing our core activity, both financially and through our capacity to deliver on a much larger scale. It has given us the platform to highlight our work both in a broader light, to a wider audience and create greater impact that meaningfully aligns with our organisational goals."*

Kiran Kaur, CEO of GirlDreamer



## RESULTS

During our first full year of operation in 2022, we gained valuable insights into our grant-making process, which we incorporated into our new round of grants in 2023. This led to the following results:

### **Streamlined application process**

Through our Q&A webinars, targeted coaching for smaller organisations, and a two-stage application process, we reduced the workload for applicants.

### **Continued core support and funding for overhead costs**

46% of the grants were core funding, and 54% were project funding, the same distribution as the last round of grants. For project grants, the overhead costs are limited to 20% and there is no limit to staff costs.

### **Continued support for the most marginalised groups with an intersectional perspective**

All supported organisations focus on low-income

women, transgender, non-binary or gender non-conforming people with characteristics such as: migration background, ethnic minority status, victim of violence, living in rural or disadvantaged areas, disability, perceived as young (entering the job market), or perceived as old (closer to retirement).

### **Longer-term support**

We offered two years of support instead of one, and renewed three grantees from the previous cohort.

### **Selection of proposals linking individual empowerment and systemic change**

The common thread between all the grantees is that they combine individual empowerment with challenging oppressive systems to improve gender equality and economic inclusion. Indeed, most of our grantees carry out service provision, capacity strengthening and advocacy. They are self-led organisations or use highly participatory



methodologies.

### Increased funding

We committed 3 605 131€ in grants to 28 organisations, a sixfold increase compared to the previous round of grants. 2 427 468,50€ was distributed in 2023, with the remainder to be distributed in 2024 and 2025. The average grant amount over the two years is 128 755€, representing a 40% increase in average yearly grants compared to the previous round.

### Increased geographic diversity

The number of grantees we funded more than doubled, and they operate in 16 countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom), representing a 60% increase in geographic diversity. However, the thematic focus of the call for proposals resulted in less diversity in terms of topics represented in the grantee cohort.

While it is too early to assess the impact of the grants distributed in July 2023, we have received feedback on the impact of our support on organisations' sustainability and capacity.

### Coaching for smaller organisations

11 organisations received coaching during the second stage of the application process to better prepare their application. All of them reported that the coaching had enhanced their proposal, with 86% expressing increased confidence in applying to other donors. We believe this support has contributed to levelling the playing field for smaller organisations.

### Challenges with open calls for proposals

Despite efforts to streamline the application process, we acknowledge that open calls for proposals remain time consuming for applicants as they usually have only a small chance of being funded. Indeed, we received 364 applications and could only fund 26, resulting in a 7% chance of receiving a grant.

### Seed funding for capacity-strengthening

We provided seed funding to five grantees, enabling them to recruit staff. Hiring staff has led to increased capacity and sustainability for these organisations. Tangible benefits include:

- Enhanced financial sustainability: With operational tasks delegated, the board can focus more on strategic development. Organisations can also develop new training or consulting products to diversify their income.
- Strategic planning for future activities.
- Development of internal tools for project management and administration.
- Creation of partnerships with other organisations.
- Remobilisation of their members.

## ACTIVITIES

To achieve these results, we implemented the following activities:

### January to May 2023: Call for proposals in two stages

#### January: Q&A webinar for applicants about the call for proposals

These sessions presented the main aspects of the call and allowed participants to ask questions, aiding them in determining if they were suitable candidates.

#### Application process in two stages: First stage (January to February) and second stage (March to April)

In the first stage, applicants submitted a two-page concept note. 50 organisations progressed to the second stage, requiring a full application. This meant more proportional efforts considering the likelihood of being funded.

#### March-April 2023: Coaching during the call for proposals

As explained above, organisations benefiting from coaching indicated its impact and usefulness in improving their fundraising knowledge.

#### May 2023: Selection committee assessment and recommendations

An external selection committee comprising gender experts from civil society, women's funds, philanthropy, academia, and the private sector across Europe provided recommendations to our steering committee. This was a way for us to engage with the wider sector and broaden our perspectives.

### Between April and July: personalized feedback to all the 364 applicants

Given that applicants rarely receive feedback when their application is rejected, we contributed to strengthening their capacity in fundraising by providing personalised feedback.

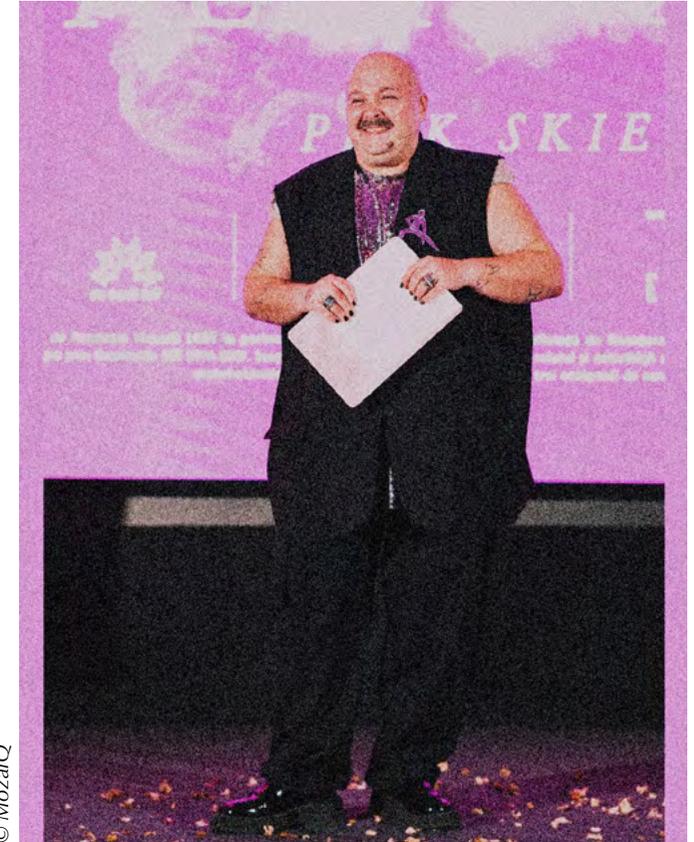
### Onboarding of grantee partners

#### Onboarding calls

#### Contracting and initial payment

Grantee partners were contracted and received either 70% or 50% of the grant upfront. This payment structure is vital to ensure small organisations have enough cashflow to run their activities.

### November 2023: Grantee convening



© MozaiQ



## LEARNING & INSIGHTS

We have gained some additional insights about our grantmaking model. In general, we have made progress towards our goal of becoming a more trust-based and equitable donor, but there is still much more to be done.

### **Equity and accessibility of applications is key**

Streamlining the application and partnership processes is crucial to increase the equity and accessibility of our grantmaking, especially when working with small frontline community-based organisations. We adjusted our call for proposals, implementing two stages, organising Q&A webinars, providing coaching to smaller organisations, and offering personalized feedback to all applicants. These changes have contributed to enhancing the capacity of all applicants in small or big ways.

However, given the nature of open calls for proposals, there is only so much we can do to reduce the burden for applicants. The high competition also meant that not all deserving organisations were funded. Open calls also encourage a competitive mindset that does not fully align with our principles of equality, fairness, and justice. Additionally, calls for proposals are time consuming for the small team at the Alliance. As we also aimed to provide applicants with a prompt response, it resulted in a heavy workload and less qualitative time spent on analysis.

The next step is to explore alternative ways of sourcing organisations and proposals, such as closed call for proposals, conducting our own prospecting, and collaborating with a network of local experts. The key point will be to assess how we can guarantee transparency, fairness, and quality of the selection process while being less burdensome for both applicants and the team.

### **Funding what matters for organisational development**

We have observed that providing core funding, not restricting staff costs and not limiting the grant amount compared to an organisation's annual budget, has remarkable ripple effects on the capacity and sustainability of small organisations. They are often at a stage where investing in core staff is essential for their development, yet funding for this purpose is often difficult to obtain. We aim to go further and offer unrestricted funding, a practice widely documented to have the most positive impact on organisational development.

### **The power of oral exchanges**

We have learned about the limitations of written proposals, as they reduce the time for meaningful exchanges and understanding of the applicants' goals, rationale, and work. English, our working language, is not the native language for most applicants (and us), which can lead to crucial information being lost in translation. On the other hand, we have observed the great added value for both applicants/grantees and the Alliance team in hosting Q&A webinars and onboarding calls. It facilitates the exchange of concrete and useful information in a time-efficient manner. Going forward, we aim to prioritise oral exchanges over written ones as much as possible.

All these take-aways will be further discussed and integrated into our grantmaking framework to be consolidated in 2024.



**Objective 2: Foster collaboration between funders and grantee organisations to accelerate learning and improve gender equality work.**

*"I met an unbelievable group of activists and changemakers. It was a privilege to be in this company. There is so much potential for further collaborations."*

A grantee about the Grantee Convening from November 2023

## RESULTS

We incorporated much of the feedback and learning from our Funding+ framework pilot in 2022 into our activities in 2023. This led to increased collaboration among grantees and enhanced learning on gender equality work.

94% of participants found that the grantee convening enabled them to build stronger and more meaningful connections with other grantees. Highlights included networking with other civil society leaders, learning from peers, and mutual empowering.

Grantees also reported that all sessions contributed to their knowledge on intersectionality, economic inclusion, and areas of organisational development. Most partners found the discussions provided actionable insights that they plan to implement in their organisations.

The Alliance strengthened its connections with grantees and expanded its knowledge base. Examples include:

- Increased understanding of the context in which organisations work
- Greater connection to the realities of frontline organisations
- More knowledge about effective gender equality work, emerging trends, successes, and challenges.

Building connections between grantees and Alliance member foundations yielded more nuanced results. Grantees expressed a desire for more time to showcase their work to funders. However, it's important to strike a delicate balance, ensuring that fundraising activities do not overshadow the primary goal of grantee convenings, which is to foster meaningful connections and learning between grantees and foundations.

## ACTIVITIES

To achieve these results, we took into account the feedback and lessons learned from the previous year and adjusted our activities accordingly. We implemented the following:

### Review of our Funding+ framework

In 2023, we reviewed our pilot Funding+ framework. We distributed a survey to our new cohort of grantees to assess their needs and priorities related to organisational development and expertise. Based on their feedback, we refined our Funding+ framework to provide more detailed definitions of sustainability and organisational development. Additionally, we incorporated elements of feminist leadership and governance and tailored capacity-strengthening activities.

### Convening

We organised a convening on November 28 and 29 in Brussels, which was attended by 40 people, including grantees, their implementation partners, and Alliance members. The two-day event included sessions on peer-learning on organisational development and economic inclusion, as well as cultural and social moments. By focusing sessions solely on networking and peer-learning, we fostered meaningful connections and shared learning among participants. We also introduced the [NGO Capability Map](#), a tool developed by our partner Bodossaki Foundation to self-assess strengths and weaknesses in organisational development. A session on applying intersectionality in gender equality work was particularly appreciated by grantees in terms of learning.

### Site visits

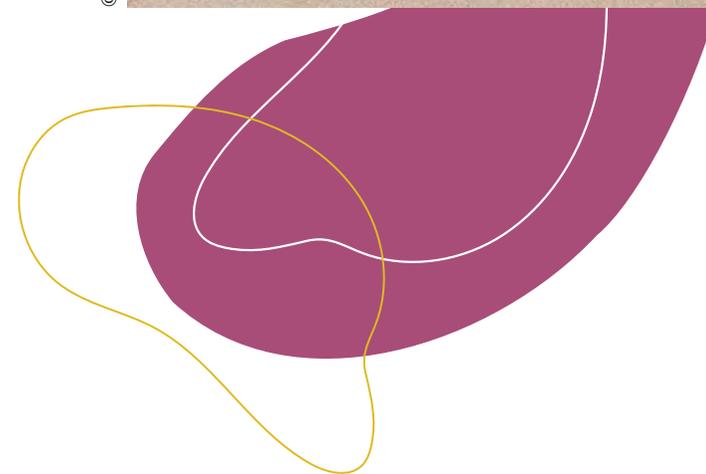
The Alliance conducted four site visits in France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Slovenia, where we met grantees, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders working on gender equality. Similar to last year, these visits enabled quality one-on-one engagement with grantees to better understand their context and impact, as well as to provide evidence-based support.

### Feminist leadership Hub

In response to the need for an online space for grantees to connect beyond convenings and to integrate feminist leadership principles in our work, we launched the Feminist Leadership Hub in December 2023. In partnership with Fair Share of Women Leaders and One Future Collective, this space provides resources, events, and a community to exchange ideas and learn about feminist leadership practices.



© Lallab





## LEARNING & INSIGHTS

Recognising the effectiveness of site visits, event attendance, and stakeholder engagement, the Alliance will continue these activities to enhance our knowledge and inform our gender equality work.

Regarding our revised Funding+ framework, while we have limited learnings to share as not all activities have been implemented yet, our convenings have proven successful in building authentic and inspiring connections among our grantee partners. We plan to enhance the quality of these convenings by:

- Codesigning the agenda with the grantees for the convening scheduled for November 2024;
- Structuring the agenda to include more informal spaces and moments for networking;
- Providing opportunities for exchange with Alliance foundation members to gain insights into their strategies with sessions such as “I’m a Funder, Ask Me Anything” sessions.

The upcoming activities within our Funding+ framework include:

### Organisational development grants

In spring 2024, we will roll out organisational development grants for our grantees of up to €15,000, accessible on a rolling basis to address various organisational development needs. These grants aim to complement other Funding+ activities by providing tailored support to enhance their capacity and sustainability.

### Activities within the Feminist Leadership Hub

We will organise activities within the Feminist Leadership Hub to encourage engagement among grantees. Given that this platform is in its pilot phase, we will closely monitor its impact on our grantees.



**Objective 3: Establish a robust donors collaborative on gender equality in Europe, deepening our understanding of the most impactful ways to support the gender equality ecosystem.**

*“Through pooling resources and coordinating its members’ contributions, the Alliance is already championing a multi-level and cross border approach to advancing gender equality in Europe.”*

Jennifer Clarke, Director of Programmes and Grants at Bodossaki Foundation

## RESULTS

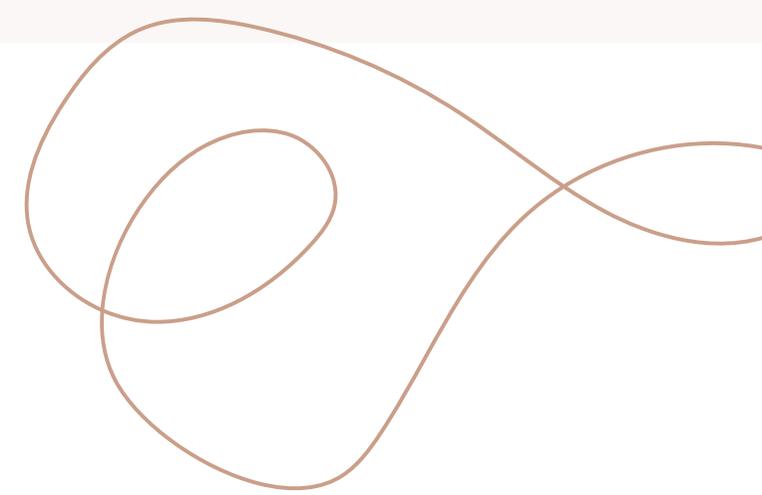
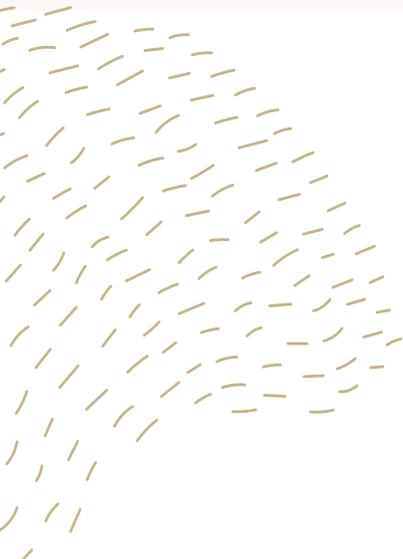
In 2022, as we embarked on the donor’s collaborative initiative, significant emphasis was placed on this objective. By early 2023, an external evaluation revealed that members found enough value in the Alliance to justify the time, energy, and resources required for participation. Our initial learning question had been sufficiently addressed, providing a solid foundation upon which to build while focusing on other objectives.

In 2023, we operated with seven foundations, an increase from four in 2022. This necessitated a revision of our ways of working. The steering committee took on a less involved role in operational tasks. Trust was built among members, resulting in open and consensus-driven discussions and decisions. The main achievement was the collective agreement to distribute 3 605 131€ in grants, along with defining a thematic focus, objectives, selection criteria and processes. This represented approximately six times the amount of funding compared to the previous

funding round. Additionally, members also agreed on various communication messages for external dissemination. Given their different communication approaches and sensitivities, this was a testament to the collaborative spirit within the Alliance.

Furthermore, the steering committee deepened its understanding of the most impactful ways to support the gender equality ecosystem, particularly regarding the impact of long-term unrestricted funding, systems change funding, and the women’s fund model.

Securing partnerships and budgets until the end of 2026 provided the opportunity for more long-term strategic reflections and planning within the group. By the end of 2023, the steering committee had agreed on the following strategic work in 2024: the consolidation of a grantmaking framework, the development of a multi-year strategy (2025-2027), hiring a third staff member, and creating a reserve fund for financial sustainability.



## ACTIVITIES

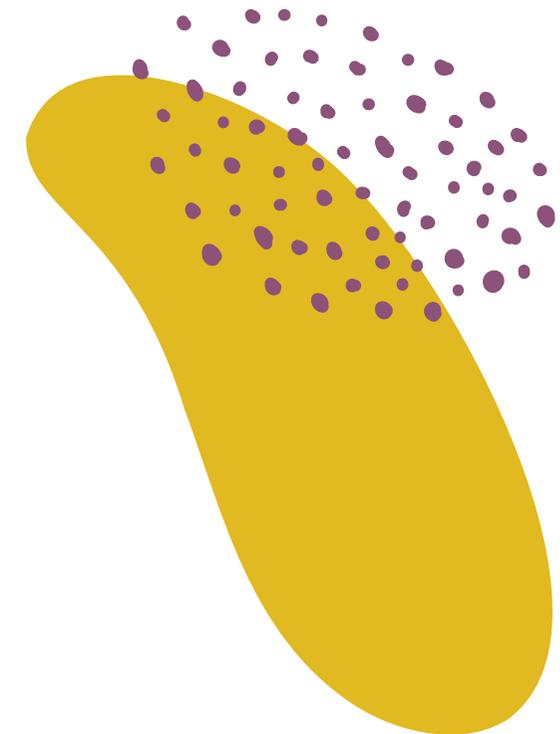
In January and February, an external outcome assessment was conducted for this objective. It demonstrated that members recognised the value of the Alliance, justifying their time and financial commitment.

Throughout 2023, four steering committee meetings and several coordination meetings were held. Those discussions led to the revision of the governance framework and [position paper](#) to accommodate the growing number of members.

During the summer of 2023, the team conducted individual discussions with each Alliance member on the following strategic topics: the long-term vision of the Alliance, learnings, grantmaking, governance, finances, and communication. These discussions uncovered areas of consensus and debate within the group, complementing the discussions in group meetings.

On November 28, our first public event "*Impactful strategies to achieve economic gender equality in Europe*" was held, accompanied by external communication efforts. This event was successful in terms of external outreach and collaboration, although it required a substantial time commitment from both the team and the member foundations to organise and coordinate communications.

The advisory committee participated in the steering committee meeting of 29 November 2023. This fostered collaboration between steering committee and advisory committee members and brought external expertise in the group. During this meeting, learning sessions were held on systems change funding, the benefits of long-term unrestricted grants, and the women's fund model, with two advisory committee members leading a session and sharing their external expertise with the group.





## LEARNING & INSIGHTS

As the Alliance transitioned from one staff member to two last year, effectively doubling its capacity, it allowed for more time dedicated to deepening learning and collaboration.

The team's facilitation style, recruitment of high-level and qualitative consultants, and involvement of the advisory committee in the steering committee discussions were all acknowledged as contributing factors to our achievements. Moving forward, we intend to continue and enhance these practices. There is also a growing interest in enhancing consultation with our grantee partners and stakeholders in the gender equality sector.

Given their added value, we will formalise individual check-ins with members. From these check-ins, we have identified the following next steps for 2024:

### **Team operating with three team members**

In 2024, the Alliance will expand to include three team members, enhancing our capacity across the board and strengthening the donor's collaborative.

### **Deepening learnings**

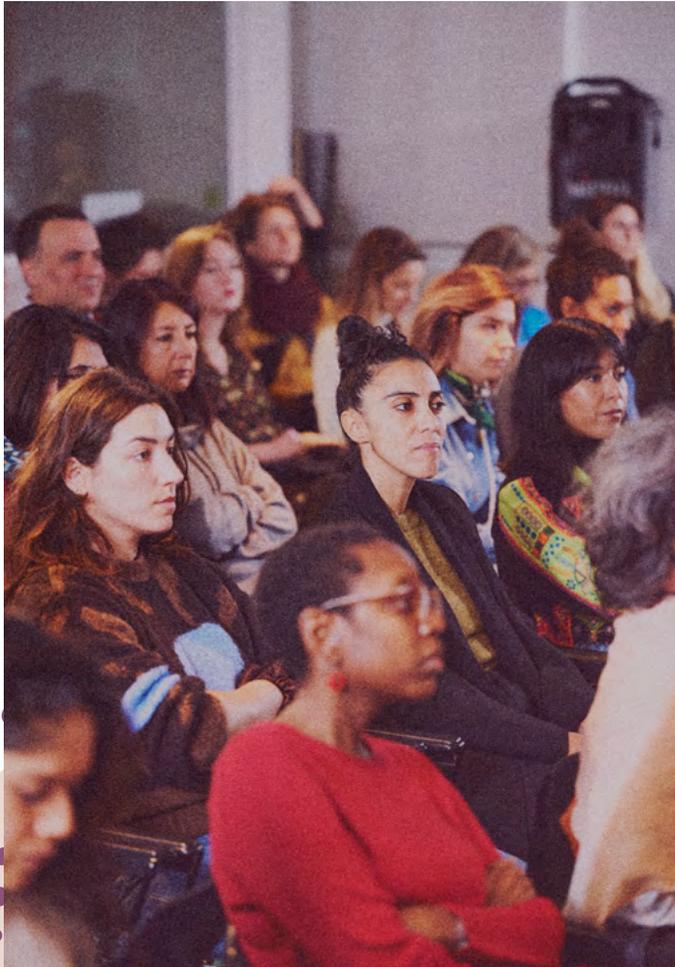
We are in the process of onboarding a Communications and Learning Manager, who will focus on deepening and enriching learning activities in 2024. Members expressed a desire to learn more about both grantmaking practices and gender equality topics.

### **Consolidation of a grantmaking framework**

There is a consensus among the group to explore grantmaking beyond the traditional call for proposals, as well as providing long-term and unrestricted funding. These and other considerations will be incorporated into a consolidated grantmaking framework.

### **Strategy consolidation**

In 2024, we will consolidate a three-year strategic plan for 2025-2027. This plan will build on our current vision, mission, and objectives with an external evaluation of the Alliance since it started in 2021.



**Objective 4: Mobilise the philanthropic community to support gender equality in Europe.**

*“The scale of the challenges facing women and girls across the world and in Europe, needs to be matched with more collaboration among donors and material commitment of resources and expertise.”*

Marion Schaefer, Managing Director of Fondation CHANEL France & Europe and Chair of the Alliance

**RESULTS**

In 2023, the Alliance continued its development, welcoming two new members and bringing the total number of members to seven. Additional commitments from both current and new members to the Alliance amounted to 5 010 000€ for the period of 2023-2026. By the end of 2023, two other funders had expressed a concrete interest in joining the Alliance at a later stage.

We developed our communication activities, gradually building our external brand. Our messaging emphasised the link between gender equality and democracy. As MEP Frances Fitzgerald eloquently put it at our first public event: *“We have unfinished democracies because of gender inequality. By 2050, advancing gender equality could result in a GDP boost of 1.95 to 3.15 trillion euros in Europe. Meanwhile gender-based violence incurs a cost of 366 billion euros to the European Union annually.”*

We increased our audiences. We estimate that more than a thousand people attended our

events or those where we were speakers. The event mentioned above gathered 90 attendees in Brussels from diverse backgrounds, including EU policymakers, gender equality non-profit organisations, funders, and other gender equality stakeholders. Our online presence also grew. We gained 3 318 followers on LinkedIn over the year, tripling the number compared to 2022.

Despite these achievements, we encountered several challenges. First, accurately quantifying the participation of the philanthropic community in our audience proved difficult due to limited capacity and inadequate tools. Additionally, while we reached out to numerous donors for the event, only a few were able to attend in person, potentially due to the event's duration of two hours, which did not constitute a good enough motivator. Furthermore, due to capacity constraints and competing priorities, our engagement in development activities fell short of our aspirations.

## ACTIVITIES

The main activities undertaken to achieve these results were the following:

### Definition of our messaging and outreach strategies

We worked with Saloni Fruehauf, a strategic communication consultant to define our key messages. These included the economic impact of gender equality, the social justice/fundamental rights impact of gender equality, the chronic underfunding of the sector, grassroots organisations as frontliners of systemic change, and new and old challenges impeding gender equality. This has been helpful in framing our subsequent communication activities.

### Development of online communication activities:

- [3 press releases](#) were published in November and December 2023 to promote our public event.
- [6 blog articles](#) were published, tripling our annual output. These articles provided information about our call for proposals and reflections on our work.
- We published more than two dozen [LinkedIn posts](#), directly contributing to the growth of our audience on the platform.

These communication activities helped raise the Alliance's profile and likely indirectly contributed to our donor mobilisation objective.

### Organisation of first public event

["Impactful strategies to achieve economic gender equality in Europe,"](#) showcased the contributions from our grantees, the Alliance, and EU policymakers. This event had ripple effects in our communication, further boosting our brand and outreach.

### Participation in events

The Alliance also participated in 20 events, including nine donor-focused events. Additionally, we were speakers at six events, such as the session titled *"Democracy & Equality: what is at stake in Europe"* at the Philea conference, which gathered over 50 philanthropic professionals from Europe. Such engagements provided valuable opportunities to get our message and work across to our key audience of philanthropic professionals.

## LEARNING & INSIGHTS

The increase in financial commitments to the Alliance from both new and existing members generates positive ripple effects across all our objectives. This entails having more funding available for grants and capacity-strengthening activities. It also allows for increasing our internal capacity by growing our team, enabling us to dedicate more time to building a robust donor collaborative and fostering collaborations with and between grantees and donors, accelerating learning and enhancing gender equality efforts.

In light of this, we will review and adapt our growth strategy to ensure continued development and increased income from current and new members. Originally devised in 2022 during our pilot stage, the growth strategy is no longer appropriate for our current level of development.

Furthermore, we recognise the importance of building the Alliance's brand for our long-term growth and mobilisation of the philanthropic community. That's why in 2024, we will onboard a Communications and Learning Manager. This additional resource will provide more time to develop and implement clear communication and awareness-raising plans. Priorities include reflecting on an events policy, conducting audits of our LinkedIn page and website, and conducting preliminary research work for a publication on the link between gender and democracy in Europe.



# OUR PLANS FOR 2024



## FEBRUARY:

Official launch of the Feminist Leadership Hub for our grantee partners.

## MARCH:

Steering committee meeting.

## APRIL:

Launch of the organisational development grants for our grantee partners.

## SUMMER:

Finalisation of the evaluation of the Alliance.

## JUNE:

Steering committee meeting.

## NOVEMBER:

- Grantee convening.
- Steering committee meeting.

## DECEMBER:

- Steering committee meeting.
- Validation of the strategy consolidation and grantmaking framework.

### In 2024, the Alliance will engage in the following strategic processes:

- Evaluation of the Alliance since its inception.
- Consolidation of a strategy for 2025-2027.
- Consolidation of a grantmaking framework.
- Revision of the growth strategy.