



Our Year of Impact 2025



■ Planting the seeds of a more compassionate, inclusive, and gender-equal future

A message from our Chair

— MARION SCHAEFER
FONDATION CHANEL
CHAIR OF THE ALLIANCE FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN EUROPE

The year 2025 was one of volatility. Polarisation, continued geopolitical pressures, and backsliding on rights affected us all. Across Europe, too many women and gender minorities faced violence, discrimination, and barriers to economic opportunity, healthcare, and leadership. At the same time, new technologies perpetuated inequality.

Just a few weeks into the year, substantial funding cuts for gender equality threatened to undo decades of progress for millions of women and girls. Some organisations went into firefighting mode, while others vanished almost overnight, taking with them life-saving care and essential programmes that many rely on.

To make sense of this shifting landscape, our community of member foundations came together throughout the year. We connected, listened, reflected, and reimaged what is possible when

we act and fund as a collective. 2025 reminded us that in times of uncertainty, togetherness will always be our greatest strength.

We also demonstrated what it means to rise to the moment. We resolutely stayed the course, providing vital resources to strengthen gender equality organisations and movements at a critical time. The report shows what our collaborative funding has made possible across Europe: it challenged inequality, protected progress, brought people together to dream big, and cut through the noise. We stood by our values above all.

The Alliance also stepped up in new ways. We connected with new allies, joined philanthropic coalitions, and contributed to bold conversations in new donor spaces. We used our platform and voice to demonstrate that collaboration is the antidote to isolation



and uncertainty – in philanthropy as much as anywhere else.

Even in a challenging year, glimmers of light brought renewed energy to our work. One such bright spot was welcoming Fondation BNP Paribas into our alliance. We also welcomed seven new advisors, who will bring fresh perspectives to our grant-making, capacity-building, and awareness-raising efforts.

We tend to think about progress as linear, as if history moves forward inevitably. But when we look back at the story of progress towards gender equality, we see many moments of breakthrough – from the right to vote to stronger protections from violence – but also of setbacks, loss, frustrating obstacles, repeated attempts to turn back the clock. And yet, time and again, people refused

to give up. They regrouped, found new ways to move forward, and inspired the hearts and minds of millions. We know there are no laws of history except one: it does not go backwards.

Hope is what allows us to keep moving forward and to plant seeds for the future. Those seeds will take root in the cracks of what is broken today and, in time, grow into something stronger and more beautiful. Some see just seeds but we see the trees they will become.

As we look ahead, we invite funders to join us in planting the seeds of a more compassionate, inclusive, and gender-equal future. Because when we invest in gender equality, we invest in democracy, climate, and a future where everyone can thrive.

■ Choosing ambition in uncertain times

A message from our Director

— NADÈGE LHARAIG
DIRECTOR
ALLIANCE FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN EUROPE



The movement for gender equality faced its toughest trials in 2025. Funding cuts, shrinking civic space, pushback against equality, and rollbacks of rights reverberated across much of Europe and the world. None of this was new but the scale and speed of change was chilling. Like a rug had been pulled from under us.

But as I look back, I also feel proud and grateful. We started the year with a new strategy that helped us stay laser-focused on our two goals during an uncertain and tumultuous period: supporting grassroots gender equality organisations and mobilising philanthropy to fund this under-resourced field.

We embraced these ambitious goals, giving €3 million to 46 grantee partners across 21 countries in Europe, bringing our giving to a total of €7.5 million since 2021. In addition to launching the second round of our Economic Opportunities Fund over the summer, we also introduced new areas of work to meet the moment: strengthening movements and democracy.

These investments matter now more than ever, as basic rights are under attack, opportunities are unequal, and justice is still out of reach. The funding will power women and LGBTQ+-led movements to continue to defend democratic values and the public good, just as they have done many times before. From Poland to Slovenia and France, they showed up when the wind was turning in the wrong direction. This is why strengthening movements is the most effective action philanthropy can take now to break through the current tide of backlash.

But we didn't stop there. The Alliance mobilised new resources for gender equality in Europe. We welcomed Fondation BNP Paribas to our donor collaborative, and in parallel, three member foundations also increased their financial contributions. Both are testaments to the strength of our collective efforts and impact. We are very grateful for their trust and look forward to working together for a future where everyone can thrive with agency and autonomy in an inclusive and equal Europe.

At a time when many were drifting apart in a fragmented world, we chose to do the opposite. As the only donor collaborative dedicated to gender equality in Europe, we provided a unique space for funders to come together, exchange, and deepen their understanding of what works and where they can make a difference effectively. We enabled them to combine their strengths, leverage funding, improve funding practices, and help sustain the sector at a critical time.

In some of the darkest moments of 2025, seeing how our grantee partners are creating change across Europe reminds me why funding this work is so essential. This report shares some of their stories. It highlights how they provided lifesaving services, protected hard-won rights, seized momentum to advance equality, opened up new economic opportunities for marginalised women and gender minorities, brought communities together, and built resilience in a rougher world.

Some of this work made headlines, but much of it happened quietly, locally, and over time. Yet it is precisely this sustained effort that bends the arc of progress towards justice.

In the Alliance, we believe we are in a moment that calls for bold thinking, cross-sector alliances, and creative ways to build sustainable funding flows. We need solutions that meet today's challenges and support women, girls, trans and non-binary people, their families, and all our communities.

For this reason, I am grateful for every honest and constructive conversation I have had over the past year with peers in philanthropy about how to secure more and better funding for gender equality, and how we can do this work together. From hallway conversations at Ariadne's Annual Reconnect to powerful panels on the sidelines of Skoll Forum. Another highlight for me was presenting, for the first time,

what the Alliance has achieved since 2021 and what we have learned along the way, in front of a packed crowd at the Philea Forum. The feedback was amazing, and connecting with others who share our commitment to gender equality filled me with much-needed hope.

Every action we have taken over the past year was guided by the belief that no individual, organisation, or donor can solve all structural issues alone. Together, we are more than the sum of our parts, and that is the energy we are bringing into 2026 and beyond.

If there is one thing I hope you will take away from this report, it is that when grassroots groups have enough resources, they can dream forward and develop strategies to get there. Gender equality isn't a side issue or a nice-to-have. There is ample evidence that gender equality leads to greater democracy, thriving economies, and more stable peace that benefits everyone.

I am grateful to be in community with so many brilliant people and immensely proud of our tiny but mighty team. My colleagues Iva Petkovic and Maria Cipriani do fantastic work, and our impact is proof of it. Our work would not be possible without the commitment, generosity, and kindness of our steering committee members, advisors, grantees, collaborators, thought partners, supporters, and allies.

Thank you to all our partners. You help the Alliance continue learning, improving, and growing so we can better support the ecosystem. Every day, you work to advance women's rights and gender equality, so that all people in all corners of Europe have the opportunity to live safe, healthy and dignified lives.

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ABOUT THE ALLIANCE FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN EUROPE



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2025

in numbers

Here's a look at what we accomplished last year by the numbers.

Funding grassroots organisations driving change

€2.9M

Amount committed, bringing the total to €7.5M since launching in 2021

€2.3M

Amount disbursed

50

Number of active grants*

46

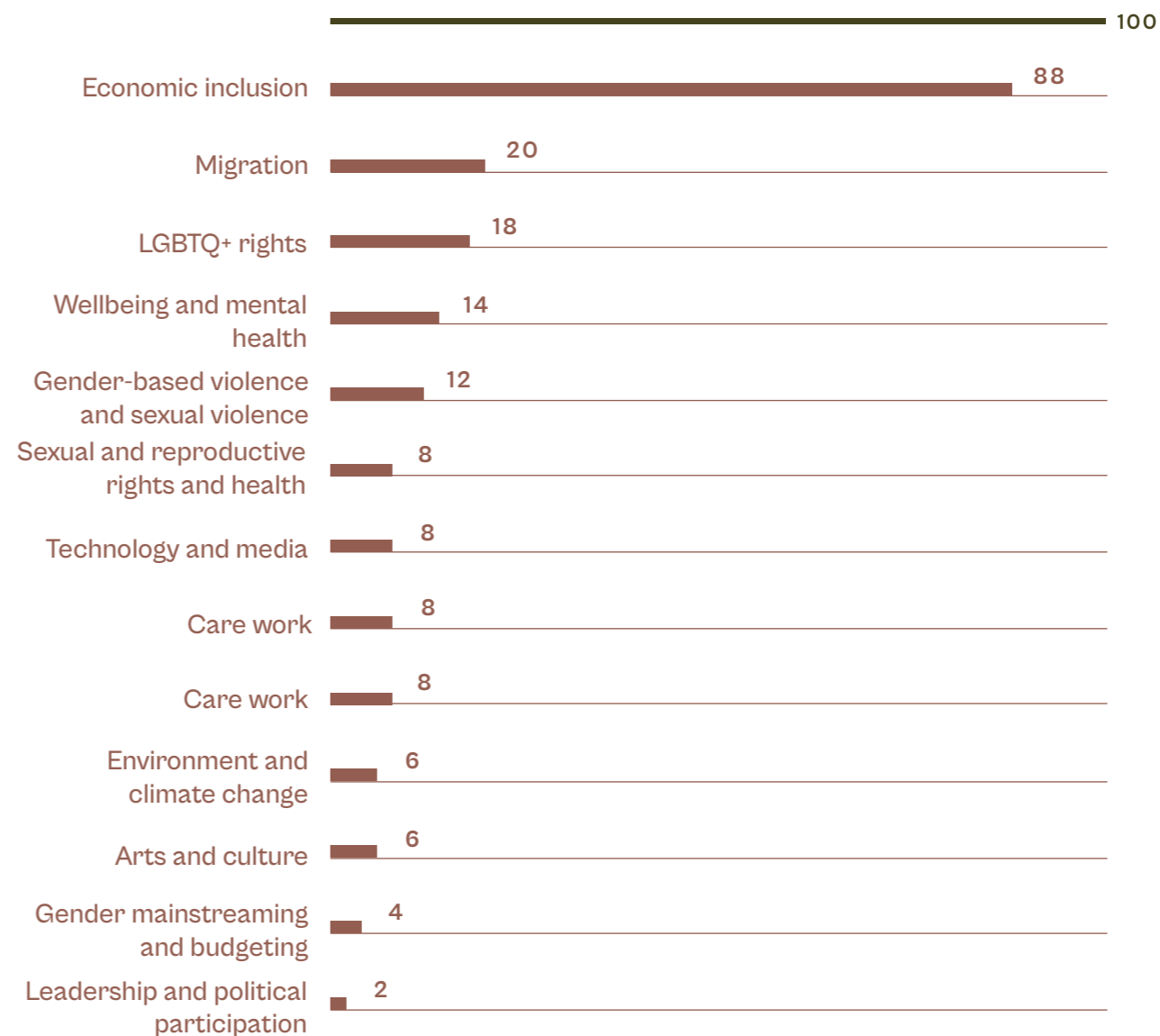
Number of organisations supported

21

Number of countries where supported organisations are based

*Excluding Organisational Development Grants

Percentage of grants by topic



Average grant size and duration

€136 997

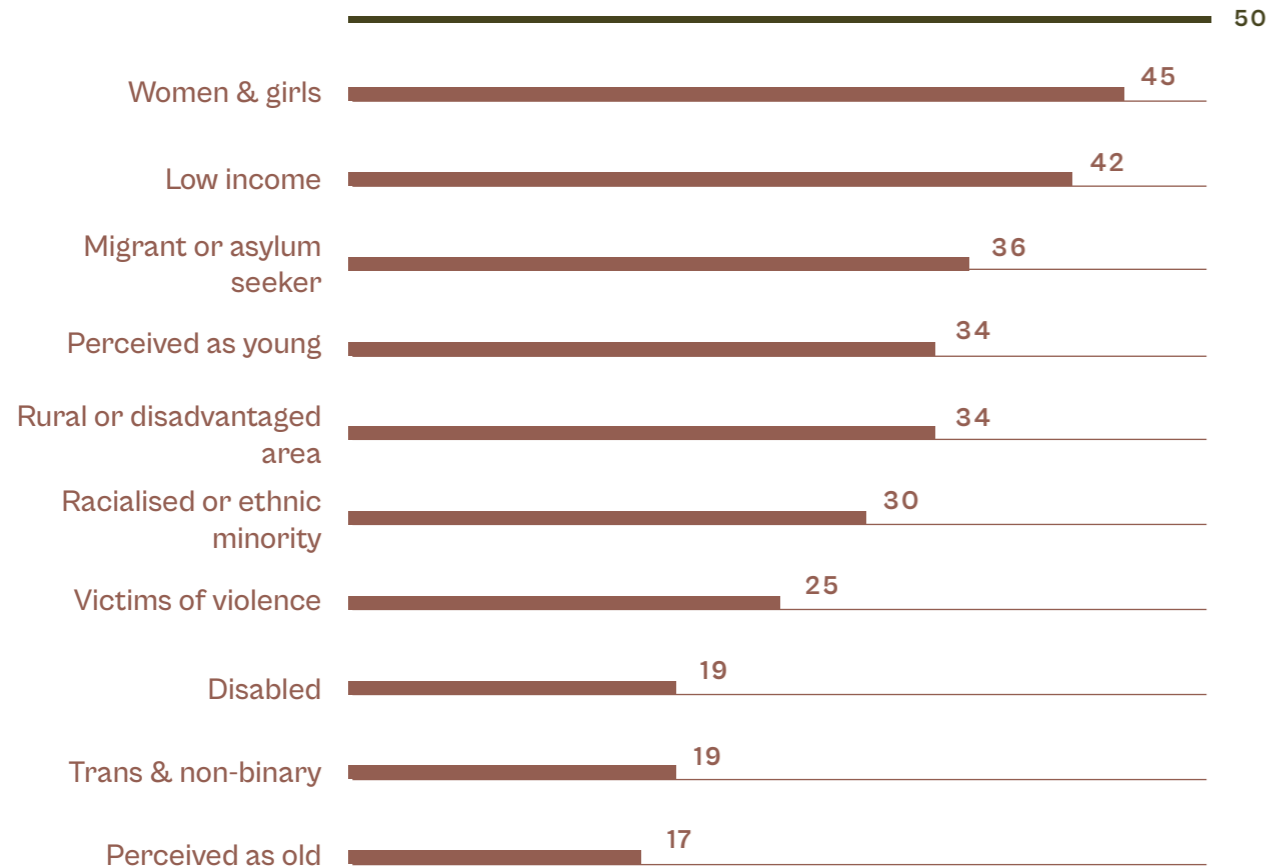
Average grant amount**

24 months

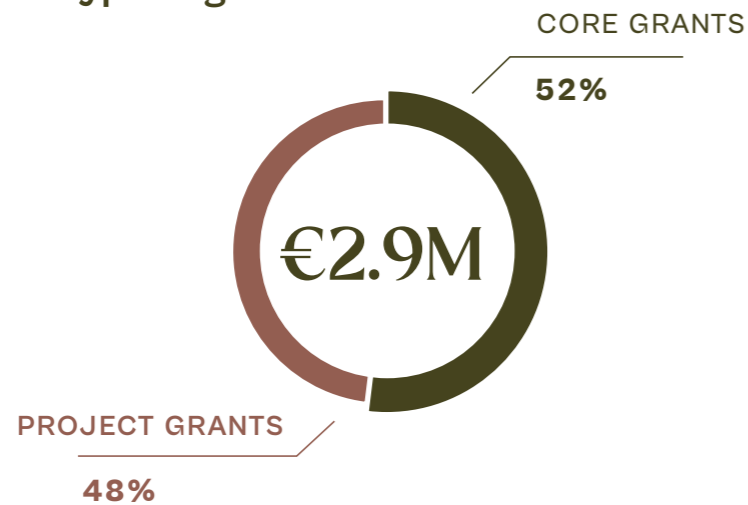
Average grant duration**

**Excluding Organisational Development Grants and Opportunity and Emergency Grants

Number of grants per target group



Type of grants



Strengthening organisations to maximise impact

€141K

Awarded in organisational development grants to 11 organisations, bringing the total to €308,204 awarded to 23 organisations since 2024.



Mobilising the philanthropic community



■ A year of driving change

In 2025, through this complex and uncertain moment, members came together to pool resources. We adjusted our giving strategies and expanded support beyond grant funding. We connected more, deepened our knowledge, and sparked lasting change.

The following sections present the outcomes of our grant-making, capacity-strengthening, and awareness-raising efforts, as well as some lessons learned.

We are grateful to our grantee partners, advisors, and member foundations for sharing their time, insights, impact stories, and honest feedback throughout the year. Their reflections help us improve how we fund and how we show up as funders.



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OUR YEAR OF IMPACT 2025



Ecumenical Women's Initiative



© Alice



1. Increasing philanthropic advocacy for more and better funding

In 2025, our philanthropy advocacy efforts centred on three key priorities: **directly engaging funders to secure more and better funding for gender equality in Europe; improving grant-making practices of our member foundations through peer learning; and sharing evidence, narratives, and stories of impact in our communications.**

Unlocking additional funding

Amid widespread funding cuts, the Alliance focused on strengthening and stabilising our funding. This meant securing renewed and, in some cases, increased commitments from member foundations, while also cultivating new institutional donors.

As a result, the **Alliance welcomed Fondation BNP Paribas to its community of members. We also secured an additional €500,000 for 2026.** We thank our members for their generosity, continued trust, and for staying anchored in their commitment to advance gender equality in Europe.

The current moment demands broadening our tent, because the challenges facing us are too great for any one donor to tackle alone. That's why we met with 72 philanthropic stakeholders, built trust with several foundations exploring future membership, and actively sought opportunities to increase our visibility among new donor audiences. We attended 11 conferences – many of which were new donor spaces for us – to reflect with peers and plant the seeds for future collaboration. By accelerating the power of corporate and private giving, we can shift systems and unlock positive, lasting change for gender equality in Europe.

Better funding for gender equality

Feedback from member foundations in 2025 confirmed that the Alliance's pooled fund model increases their reach and impact, provides insights into emerging issues and opportunities to advance progress, strengthens their own grant-

making practices, fosters connections and confidence to give in bold ways, and reduces duplication and risk. These outcomes also impact the wider gender equality landscape in Europe. Here is what our member foundations shared:

All 7 Said they learned something new from another member foundation.

4 in 7 ●●●●●●●

Tried new grant-making practices or changed their own foundation's grant-making focus and practices.

5 in 7 ●●●●●●●

Expanded their funding reach geographically, thematically, or in terms of target groups through their participation in the Alliance.

5 in 7 ●●●●●●●

Saw the Alliance's grantee convening as a learning opportunity and learned something from an Alliance grantee partner.

Because of years of investment in building trust and community, members turned to the Alliance as a **vital space to make sense of a shifting landscape, deepen their knowledge, and embrace innovation.** Through funded organisations, advisors, and external speakers, members learned about how the grassroots movement has been adapting to an increasingly hostile anti-rights and anti-democratic environment and where philanthropic support was needed most. These insights directly shaped how they fund collectively through the Alliance, as outlined in the next section on becoming better grant-makers.

Last year's thematic learning focused on **how to engage men and boys in advancing gender equality.**

The topic generated significant interest among members, and we will continue to assess whether there is appetite among other funders to partner with us to invest in initiatives that move Europe from backlash to breakthrough.

We also **welcomed seven new advisors** to guide our grant-making, capacity strengthening, and awareness raising activities. These gender equality experts from civil society, philanthropy, and public administration will participate in steering committee meetings, advise on strategic decisions, and as of 2026, take part in grant-making decisions. They will act as critical friends and ensure we remain accountable to the sector.



Improving visibility of gender equality in Europe

Over the past two years alone, **our LinkedIn audience has grown sixfold, and our newsletter subscribers nearly doubled.**

We regularly publish thought leadership on gender philanthropy in [Alliance Magazine](#), [Philea](#), and other outlets. The Alliance was also featured by the European Institute for Gender Equality in its [2025 report](#) on milestones and opportunities for gender equality in the EU.

In addition, we have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from peers in philanthropy on our contributions, demonstrating that we are building credibility and shaping conversations on funding for gender equality in Europe at a critical time.

In September, we launched an initiative to highlight our grantees' impact through our communications channels. In 2025, we featured three grantees on our website:

- **Bulgarian Fund for Women:** Will Europe's next budget deliver on gender equality?
- **Lallab:** Why Muslim women face multiple barriers in Europe
- **WHEN:** How to make work actually work for mothers

Last year, the Alliance spoke at nine different events. We shared our impact, and that of our grantees at key events, including Philea Forum 2025. Our Director and Chair presented the story of the Alliance and how donor collaboratives like us have a profound positive impact on their member foundations and the philanthropic sector.

What we learned

Engaging philanthropy is a collective effort

Our experience shows that the most effective way to mobilise new philanthropic partners is through trusted, personal relationships. Member foundations opening doors through personal networks, direct introductions and peer recommendations proved far more powerful than cold outreach alone. Building on last year's insights, we dedicated time in Alliance steering committee meetings to coordinate and 'crowdsource' ideas and strategies, generating momentum and buy-in within our membership.

Resource mobilisation demands time and patience

Fundraising for gender equality demands time, perseverance, and consistency. We estimate that only a small proportion of foundations we have introductory discussions with will eventually join our donor collaborative. Mobilising foundations to become members is therefore not a sprint but a marathon, built on years of trust- and relationship-building, as well as sustained visibility.

Strengthening the role of advisors

Feedback from our outgoing advisors was overwhelmingly positive. They shared that they felt their expertise was valued, meetings were well organised, and the Alliance team was supportive. To strengthen the role of advisors, they recommended providing greater clarity in decision-making processes and to make more intentional use of advisors' networks to amplify the Alliance's work.

The session served as a moment of inspiration among philanthropy participants, as we shared how our grantee partners are creating the change we are all hoping for.

Another highlight was the I.G. Advisors' side event on the margins of the Skoll World Forum, where we discussed how donors, intermediaries and grassroots organisations can establish better partnerships to achieve social change.

Finally, over the past year, the Alliance was invited to join several philanthropic initiatives or informal collaborations, signalling our growing recognition as a trusted and relevant partner.



2. Becoming better grant-makers to meet the moment

In 2025, stability and flexibility were more important than ever. As the context shifted rapidly and unpredictably, our grantee partners needed reliability they could count on. To meet the moment, we strengthened our ability to respond and adopted innovative, trust-based approaches, enabling our partners on the ground to build resilience when it mattered most.

We maintained consistent grant sizes and durations, as well as a good balance between project and core funding. We also took a deliberate step towards **long-term funding**. With grants awarded in 2025, **over 40% organisations** will have received more than three years of funding from us.

Through a closed call for proposals, we renewed partnerships with organisations from our 2023 Economic Opportunities cohort, distributing €2.48 million to 21 organisations advancing economic inclusion for marginalised women, and trans and non-binary people across Europe.

The Alliance **scrapped its eligibility criteria** relating to the proportion of the Alliance's grant within a grantee's overall budget. Given widespread funding cuts, this change allowed more partners to apply.

“It's such a relief to have a funder like you. We wish we had more funders like the Alliance!”

— A.L.E.G, ROMANIA

“Now, we are able to build on. By the end of the next two years, we will have built a rooted and resilient structure. Multi-year flexible grants are key for sustainable work.”

— AKIDWA, IRELAND



We also established a clear framework for our Opportunity and Emergency grants to ensure we could act swiftly and strategically when organisations faced sudden threats or unexpected openings. Because when grassroots gender equality organisations are equipped to withstand destabilising pressures and seize opportunities to drive progress, democracy becomes more resilient. To date, we have allocated **nearly €500 000 to nine organisations across Europe**.

Recognising that challenges to democracy, human rights and equality are interconnected across Europe, and what happens in one part of Europe affects another, we **expanded eligibility to wider Europe**, supporting organisations in Serbia, Georgia and Armenia for the first time in 2025. Broadening the geographic scope of our funding marked an important milestone in our evolution.

What we learned

Trust-based philanthropy helps organisations thrive in times of upheaval

At the Alliance, we are committed to advancing the principles of trust-based philanthropy and serving as a leader. Grantee partners regularly shared that they appreciate our commitment to values, multi-year and flexible grants, seeking and acting on feedback, streamlined paperwork, and smooth reporting – all of which enabled sustainable work in challenging times.

3. Building the resilience of grassroots organisations

Grantee partners consistently reported that our **funding enabled them to strengthen their organisation or grow and mature programming**. During final reporting of the previous Economic Opportunities cohort in 2025, they shared that:

80%

used the grant to organise activities that otherwise wouldn't have happened

70%

used the grant to design a new programme or pilot a new idea

68%

used the grant to cover core structure

68%

used the grant to scale a programme or model

60%

used the grant to hire new staff

Between 2024 and 2025, we extended our support beyond the main grant, providing additional grants of up to €15,000 to organisations with active Economic Opportunities Fund grants to help them **strengthen their resilience, agility, and sustainability**. We know that too often, available funding is restricted to specific projects, leaving little room to invest in their own infrastructure and capacity development. Organisations used this support to address critical internal priorities, from strengthening financial resilience and investing in staff wellbeing to improving internal policies and long-term strategies.

“ I truly appreciate your approach to grant-making. I think it's revolutionary, and I hope that other foundations will follow your path.”

— TRACANELUPA

Their feedback showed that even modest support enhanced internal operations, practices, and organisational culture.



“ It was the first time we were able to have therapy for the team to take us through the year which was tough in [our context].”

— GRANTEE



95% of recipients said their capacity improved overall



40% of recipients said it strengthened their sustainability



40% of recipients said it enhanced team wellbeing, internal dynamics, and workplace culture



35% of recipients said it helped them develop or deepen collaborations with other civil society partners



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“ We appreciate that you are paying attention to the relationship between donor and grantee. It’s encouraging that you care about what we really do.”

— BILITIS FOUNDATION, BULGARIA

team visited grantee partners and local gender equality organisations in Ireland, Italy, Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia, achieving our goal of visiting all 26 Economic Opportunity grantee partners across 16 countries in two years. We met people with vision, heard uplifting stories of courage and perseverance, and listened closely to the challenges they navigate in their everyday work. After each visit, we returned to our office in Brussels better informed and better connected, and, we hope, as better funders.

Last year, we expanded our capacity-strengthening offerings. In response to grantee feedback, we hosted two online **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning webinars** to strengthen grantees’ confidence in tracking their impact and capturing learnings, with many participants going on to refine their own frameworks. We also organised a **safeguarding training** on preventing the risk of harm to anyone who interacts with their organisations. All post-event survey respondents reported that they would strengthen their safeguarding policies as a result.

Building the resilience of organisations also requires active listening. The Alliance



© Alliance for Gender Equality in Europe

What we learned

Early, flexible support can open doors to more funding and sustained growth

The snowball effect of our funding on organisations’ resilience is becoming visible. One grantee reported that thanks to our funding, they were able to showcase their impact to a major funder in the UK, which led them to secure a 5-year grant of almost £750,000 – a sizable investment that will unlock future growth for this small organisation. Another grantee shared that the Alliance’s grant gave them credibility, leading to co-financing by a national ministry. These impacts were unanticipated but show how early, flexible support can open doors to more funding and sustained growth.

Additional resources strengthen internal capacities of grantee partners

Organisational development grants received the strongest positive feedback of all additional support that the Alliance offers. The flexibility of this support was highly valued, with each organisation tailoring grants to accommodate their unique needs. Grantees described them as “extremely useful”, “a gamechanger” and “an amazing gift”, as they didn’t divert funds away from core programmes. More detailed lessons and recommendations are available in our [blog post](#).

Visiting grantees on their ‘home turf’ improves grant-making

We have found that there is no real substitute for showing up in person and meeting the team behind the work. Conversations flow more openly, trust deepens, and further down the line, it makes grant management smoother. However, even when a funder’s intention is to listen and learn, grantees may feel pressure to “perform.” Being explicit and transparent about the purpose of visits helps create a more honest exchange. [Our blog post](#) details five tips for funders who are reconsidering their approach to site visits.

Inspired by trust-based philanthropy, we continued to streamline paperwork to allow organisations to focus their time and attention on achieving their missions. For renewals, we simplified application forms by pre-filling information from previous proposals. Following positive feedback in 2024, we also continued to conduct narrative reports orally. Grantees reported these changes reduced the administrative burden and encouraged more open, honest communication between our team and the organisations we fund.

“ Administrative demands are not too much, which gives us time to focus on program activities.”

— COMMON ZONE, CROATIA

“ It was the first time I enjoyed reporting this much.”

— ALICE, CZECHIA



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4. Connecting gender equality organisations for wider impact

Last year demanded creating spaces of connection, learning, laughter, and hope. In October, we held our annual grantee convening in Brussels, bringing together nearly all grantee partners and member foundations. It was a space to exchange ideas, strengthen relationships, and feel a shared sense of resilience and solidarity.

Building on feedback from a survey and two consultations with grantees, last year's convening placed greater emphasis on building or advancing partnerships and included more unstructured time for grantee-led conversations. Grantees described it as "very valuable" and a "huge help". While **most were very or extremely satisfied with the gathering**, others shared they would have liked more structure that led to clearer outcomes.

88%

felt it provided an opportunity to learn about other contexts, struggles and practices.

82%

felt the convening helped strengthen relationships and trust.

59%

felt it identified and advanced opportunities for collaboration and joint action.

Participants shared that the convening allowed them to **connect with peers they would not otherwise have met**, better understand the broader gender equality ecosystem, recognise how much they have in common, and leave with new perspectives and concrete next steps.

“From the three convenings I have attended, I can see how each one has improved on the last.”

— ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK

During final reporting in 2025, **50% of grantee partners reported initiating collaborations or connecting with others** in the cohort. Examples include preparing joint applications to European calls for proposals, exchanging advice, participating in each other's events, and strengthening bonds of solidarity.



© Alliance for Gender Equality in Europe

Last year, we also piloted the Movement Strengthening Fund with an initial grant to women's funds, supporting their programmes and collaboration as movement builders in Southern and Eastern Europe. By the end of the grant, **women's funds reported increased partnerships or collaboration**, including collective statements, joint monitoring of anti-gender attacks, joint funding applications, podcast collaborations, or WhatsApp groups to coordinate action.

What we learned

A single convening cannot meet all needs

The feedback we received reflected the diversity of our grantee partners. Some suggested extending the convening to three days or meeting twice a year. Others, particularly smaller organisations, shared that it is already "hard to maintain links due to the workload." Newer organisations in the cohort wanted to focus more on building connections, while more established partners called for structured collaboration around EU advocacy, fundraising, and joint action to counter backlash. This variation reminds us that a single format cannot meet all needs and will require us to evolve our convenings as our cohort grows.

Movements need resources that strengthen collaboration and solidarity

Feedback from the pilot Movement Strengthening grant highlighted a growing awareness of the need to address funding competition through more collaboration, sharing of resources, and resilience networks. Feedback also reaffirmed the importance of in-person, cross-regional and intergenerational exchanges. Women's funds and their grantees reported that renewed energy for collaboration led to concrete ideas for joint advocacy and shared projects. A mapping study of European movements for gender equality, commissioned by the Alliance, reached similar conclusions. There is clear need for resources that foster collaboration and solidarity within Europe, and the Alliance plans to rise to the moment by launching a Movement Strengthening Fund in mid-2026.



5. Expanding access to rights and opportunities for marginalised communities

In a year defined by shrinking civic space, widening polarisation, and unprecedented attacks on gender equality, grassroots organisations across Europe continued to uplift marginalised women, trans and non-binary people and contribute to systems change with the support of the Alliance's funding. They showed what it means to rise to the moment and build a more inclusive, fair and equal society.

Our remarkable grantee partners directly **expanded economic opportunities, strengthened financial independence, and improved job skills**. From 2023 to 2025, they **transformed the lives of 26,200 people**, primarily women, girls, and gender minorities all over Europe, from Budapest to Berlin to Bucharest.

Our partners also responded to emergencies and seized critical opportunities to advance equality. For example, one grantee partner provided urgent psychological care, legal aid, and shelter to **women and gender minorities after fleeing war in Ukraine**. Another **mobilised 3 200 activists and over 1 million citizens** in a public campaign for a new EU gender equality mechanism that would allow member states to offer safe abortion care to individuals from countries where such access is restricted, prohibited, or inaccessible.

They also contributed to structural change across Europe. Through legal reform, court decisions, collective agreements, awareness raising, and narrative change strategies, our grantee partners collectively **extended their reach to 14 million people**, or nearly 30 million since the launch of the Alliance. For instance, in Romania, our grantee partner **A.L.E.G.** led the #EmployersForRespect campaign, contributing to the ratification of ILO Convention 190 in 2024 and to the adoption of three draft laws in 2025 that strengthen protections against workplace harassment and violence. As a result, 8 million workers in Romania have greater access to their rights.

Behind every figure, there is a team that worked with dedication, persistence, and collaborative spirit to change how equality is lived. You can find all our grantee partners listed on [our website](#).



“Another observation [is that] more women report and ask specifically about economic violence. This is also a direct result of this grant. It was not so well recognized by survivors. We have been doing a lot of awareness raising about this form of violence.”

— A.L.E.G., ROMANIA

What we learned

Civil society is operating under sustained and intensifying pressure

Across Europe, progress is uneven and challenges vary. In 2025, many grantee partners reported an increase in demand for their services, a sudden and substantial loss of funding, a hostile environment due to anti-gender and anti-migrant backlash, and staff overwhelm due to the emotional toll of being on the frontlines. A few also experienced defamation campaigns, physical attacks, and vandalism of their offices. Understanding the realities organisations face is essential. These insights will continue to shape how we design our funding and support going forward.

■ Impact spotlight

Change in people's lived realities is driven by the grassroots organisations themselves. They are the beating heart of progress. That impact is theirs. Our role is to fund their efforts, listen, and adapt.

We share stories and data on their work not to claim their achievements, but to demonstrate what becomes possible when civil society and movements are resourced, and to invite funders to imagine how much more change could be unlocked with sustained and increased investment.

Supporting young women of colour to pursue their dreams

GIRLDREAMER IN THE UK Supported through the Economic Opportunities Fund

Across Europe, women often do not have the resources, networks, or support they need to nurture their entrepreneurial talents. Out of every €100 of venture capital invested in Europe, less than €3 goes to women-led teams.

The UK is no exception. Only 2.87% of venture capital goes to women-led teams, while Black women receive just 0.02%. Women of colour face limited funding and little representation in economic, corporate, and financial systems that often structurally exclude them.

Young women of colour who want to start social impact businesses or projects often cannot find funding, making it hard for them to lift off the ground. Too often, those with the most potential to create real change face the biggest barriers to getting started.

GirlDreamer is working to change this. They break down barriers and create new opportunities so young women of colour can thrive, not just get by. By offering funding, leadership training, and support for wellbeing, they help young women start strong.

With funding from the Alliance, GirlDreamer's Dream Fund enabled **40 young women to grow their businesses and community initiatives**. Participants worked across diverse sectors, including technology for good, social services, childcare, ethical fashion, menstrual health, and therapeutic healing. Whether they were new founders, organisers, or leaders of informal groups, they received the resources and trust needed to turn their ideas into action.

The impact of these micro-grants is tangible and life-changing. Over the past year, **four new businesses were registered and 35%**

of established businesses increased their revenue. Beyond this growth, 90% of Dream Fund recipients reported that participation strengthened their ability to support their communities, 70% said they felt more confident to seek more funding, and 56% secured extra backing within six months.

The Dream Fund was created to disrupt traditional funding models that are often gatekept, rigid, and disconnected from lived realities. By removing unnecessary red tape and recognising lived experience as expertise, GirlDreamer ensures that underrepresented changemakers can access support when they need it most.

“ Within six months, you see the effects of that early stage intervention. Seeing the progression, seeing [participants] walk away with this feeling of ‘I can do it, I am talented, I just needed someone to believe in me and now this is the thing that will fuel me’ is the most profound thing.”

— GIRLDREAMER, UK



Challenging gender-based stereotypes and economic violence

NANE ASSOCIATION IN HUNGARY Supported through the Economic Opportunities Fund

Gender stereotypes continue to hold back progress towards equality. In 2025, the [European Institute for Gender Equality](#) highlighted how deeply ingrained these beliefs remain:

- **One third of young men believe men make better leaders than women.**
- **Nearly half of Europeans believe a man's most important role is to earn money.**
- **Almost half of men consider controlling a partner's finances acceptable.**

Such stereotypes have long restricted women's career choices and placed greater expectations on women to be caregivers. The third finding also shows that controlling a partner's finances is normalised, which helps explain why [95 percent](#) of domestic abuse cases involve some form of economic control. Although attitudes are slowly changing, dismantling gender stereotypes and harmful beliefs around money and power is key to achieving equality.

In Hungary, our partner [NANE Association](#) scaled up its support for victims of economic violence.

They expanded their direct services with emergency phone lines run by staff and volunteers, listening to each woman's story, helping them regain their strength, and giving them information to make their own choices.

In the last two years, **by addressing the effects of intimate partner violence and domestic abuse, NANE has helped over 5,000 women in Hungary move toward financial independence.**

Through active cooperation with helping professionals embedded in vulnerable communities, NANE organised workshops for Roma women, girls living in segregated areas, and women experiencing homelessness.

For younger participants, the focus was on prevention, like recognising signs of financial control and learning about equal decision-making in relationships. For adult women, the workshops focused on how to respond and stay safe, from identifying warning signs to planning safe next steps.

Participants left with a clearer understanding of economic abuse within coercive control, greater awareness of their rights, and at least one achievable personal step towards financial independence. These workshops further strengthened cooperation between participants and helping professionals, thereby reinforcing communities.

Despite an increasingly hostile environment for civil society in Hungary, NANE remained a trusted source of support for survivors of violence, while also playing a key role in improving legislation, raising awareness, and shifting social norms.

Cutting through the backlash and uplifting trans people

MOZAIQ IN ROMANIA Supported through the Economic Opportunities Fund

In 2025, civic space continued to shrink across Europe. Freedoms of assembly, association, and expression were all threatened. During this time, the anti-gender movement grew stronger, working against human rights and weakening democracy. It raised [\\$1.18 billion](#) in Europe between 2019 and 2023, up from \$707 million in the previous decade, to push back progress.

But these well-funded efforts have not gone unchallenged. People from all walks of life gathered to show their support for equality, human rights, and diversity. Last year, Bucharest Pride was the largest ever in Romania, with tens of thousands standing up for LGBTQ+ rights.

In Romania, the majority of support services for LGBTI+ people are provided by non-profit organisations. This makes the work of our partner [MozaiQ](#) vital and life-saving.

In the last two years, MozaiQ has directly **supported over 600 transgender people in vulnerable situations** through individual therapy, support groups, career counselling sessions, community events, the Unicorns@Work accelerator, and an internship program. MozaiQ reported a meaningful increase in confidence among participants. **Many found good jobs, felt more connected to their community, and gained better access to important services like housing and mental health care.**

MozaiQ also challenged backlash on multiple fronts. On the streets, they organised Pride events and supported seven local LGBTQI+ groups through micro-grants. They led a march calling for the legalisation of civil partnerships for all couples, using the slogan "Our tradition is love" to send a positive message.

MozaiQ also changed institutions through capacity-strengthening trainings for institutional actors, while also filing complaints against public figures who spread homophobic hate speech. In public discussions, they fought anti-trans misinformation with their storytelling campaign 'Glimpses of Beauty' and by sharing research about the challenges trans people face at work. A nation-wide study, developed by MozaiQ, showed that **only 11% of respondents told all their family, friends, and colleagues that they are trans, and just 32% shared their gender identity with their employers.**



About the Alliance for Gender Equality in Europe

What future do we want to see?

Our vision is an inclusive Europe where gender equality is achieved for all.

How are we contributing?

The Alliance is a philanthropic initiative that brings together specialised and generalist funders to support and strengthen the grassroots gender equality movement in Europe. Through grant-making, capacity strengthening, and awareness raising, the Alliance improves gender equality for all by transforming harmful gender norms and addressing the structural barriers that reinforce inequality and exclusion.

Our North Star

A well-resourced, intersectional, and impactful movement for gender equality in Europe.

Our funds

Economic Opportunities

With economic opportunities, women and marginalised groups gain the power to shape their futures. This fund supports efforts to remove barriers, create pathways, and expand choices so everyone can thrive.

Movement Strengthening

Strong movements for gender equality are key to building equal and just societies. By fostering connection, collaboration, and solidarity, this fund strengthens collective power to drive lasting change.

Opportunities and Emergencies

When gender equality organisations are well-resourced, they can seize opportunities, withstand crises, and sustain progress. This fund provides timely support where it's needed most.

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 BNP Paribas, Fondation de France, Fondation RAJA-Danièle Marcovici, King Baudouin Foundation, and L'Oréal Fund for Women.



Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee advises the Steering Committee on strategic decisions. The members for the period between January 2026 and December 2028 are:



Bushra Ahmed
Board member at Lloyd's Foundation, Mercedes Benz Global Fellowship, and 50:50 Parliament



Giulia Barnhisel
Head of Policy at European Community Land Trust and Independent Consultant



Miren Bengoa
Gender and Philanthropy Advisor; Director of Swiss Solidarity Foundation



Rachael Moore
Co-founder of Rainbow Nation Brussels; DEI consultant; Board member of ILGA World



Xavier Prats Monné
Senior international advisor on European affairs; Advisor at DONES MENTORES



Karla Pudar
Executive Manager at SOLIDARNA Foundation



Herta Tóth
Feminist grantmaker; Board chair of the Hungarian Women's Fund

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.



Nadège Lharaig
Director



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