

Annual Report 2021



29 APRIL 2022



Count Me In! in 2021

2021 marked the first year of the second programme period (2021 - 2025) of the Count Me In! (CMI!) consortium's Strategic Partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. CMI! consists of member organisations Mama Cash (MC), the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), CREA, Just Associates (JASS), and the Sister Funds Urgent Action Fund (UAF) and Urgent Action Fund Africa (UAF-Africa). The sex worker-led Red Umbrella Fund (RUF) and the Dutch gender platform WO=MEN are strategic allies of the consortium. CMI! envisions a gender equal and just world, where all women and girls, and non-binary, gender non-conforming, trans, and intersex people enjoy their rights fully and live to their full potential.

Theory of Change

Building on the achievements and lessons of the first five years, CMI! continued supporting women's rights organisations (WROs) and women human rights defenders (WHRDs)¹ to become better *resourced, coordinated and resilient* so they can leverage their power to create change from local to global and from global to local. CMI! believes that we bring about sustainable change by building strong and autonomous movements. Our core strategies, *money, movement-building and making change*, mutually strengthen CMI! members' and partners' capacities to engage in Lobbying & Advocacy (L&A) in order to effect positive and sustainable legal, policy and social norm change on women's rights and gender equality.

CMI!'s Baseline Study of 2021 validated CMI!'s Theory of Change and underlying assumptions. The study affirmed that CMI!'s primary partners, structurally excluded women and girls², have extensive organising experience and strong links to constituents in their respective contexts. The study further confirmed the importance of CMI!'s core strategies to support and strengthen their work.

This annual report presents key accomplishments of 2021. It includes stories of change that illustrate the impact of CMI!'s strategies. Central to these stories of change is how CMI! members and partners have worked to strengthen movements and ensure that the voices, priorities and strategies of women's rights movements inform decision making and agenda-setting spaces at local, regional and international levels.

Chapter 1 Context

The context analysis of the baseline study describes a continuing increase of populist and authoritarian tendencies, a rise in opposition to the rights of women and girls, and trans, non-binary and gender-non conforming people, increased state control on civil society as well as increased corporate impunity. The baseline findings highlight that these challenges and threats profoundly affect the work of WROs and WHRDs, who continue to be under-resourced globally.

¹ WROs for CMI! refers to Rights Groups and Organisations led by and for women, girls and/or anyone who faces sex or gender discrimination such as non-binary, gender non-conforming, trans and intersex people.

² For CMI! "women and girls" refers to women and girls and anyone who faces sex or gender discrimination such as non-binary, gender non-conforming, trans and intersex people. 'Structurally excluded women and girls' are those facing multiple, intersecting injustices, including but not limited to: women and girls with disabilities, sex workers, and lesbian, bisexual and queer (LBQ) women and girls.

Specifically, CMI!'s partners are boldly confronting exclusion, discrimination, and violence while they work to advance gender equality and respect for their human rights. Gender-based violence remains widespread across CMI! countries, in some contexts leading to the (further) criminalisation of women who denounce violence, such as in Zimbabwe. In many CMI! countries the conditions for WHRDs worsened over the past few years with states imposing further legal and policy restrictions, sometimes as Covid regulations, that shrink civic and democratic space for organisations to operate or receive funding. Based on a qualitative assessment of the countries where CMI! operates, we found that in Senegal, for example, laws adopted in 2021 to combat terrorism have restricted the ability of WROs and WHRDs to oppose the government, including the right to protest laws. The example of Senegal reflects what WROs and WHRDs face in other countries where laws and policies have been passed that restrict civil society in the name of peace and stability.

In 2021 we observed an extensive use of misinformation or the spread of false information by far-right, nationalist and anti-rights movements as well as authoritarian governments distorting people's perception of reality and undermining trust in public institutions and rule of law. The assault specifically on women, girls, sex workers, and trans and gender non-conforming people also continued in 2021.

In several CMI! countries, such as Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Mozambique, Palestine and Yemen, we have seen heightened tensions and conflict in 2021. In Afghanistan, for example, the Taliban takeover - following decades of foreign involvement - rolled back the gains for women's and girls' rights achieved in the two past decades and has resulted in a dire humanitarian crisis and security threat for Afghan women generally and Afghan feminists in particular. WROs and WHRDs in Lebanon, meanwhile, have been facing multiple unprecedented crises with the port blast in 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic and political and economic instability, putting already excluded groups in a really vulnerable position. The deterioration of the political and security situation in CMI! countries led many WHRDs to request support from CMI! to leave, or relocate.

In 2021 the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and government responses continued to be felt by CMI!'s constituencies, and included even more economic insecurity, poverty, injustice, increased violence, heightened care burdens and exclusion from national emergency, relief and recovery plans. Lockdowns have hampered organising and community building by CMI! partners and members as well as engaging in-person in advocacy in global spaces. Partners reported more harassment and violence in digital spaces and entrapment of sex workers and LBT people in particular. CMI! therefore supported partners to build out digital security processes in their organisations. Also CMI! member organisations and strategic allies themselves are feeling the effects of the ongoing pandemic as they work with continuously lower staff capacity, higher work pressure and exhaustion.

The risks and mitigation strategies identified in our programme proposal are still relevant. In addition to the challenges and risks highlighted above, the baseline report pointed at the risk of division within and across movements related to the increasing opposition to women's rights as well as the co-optation of feminist terminology. There are actors, who proclaim to be feminists, and yet do not actively change their policies or practice. There are also actors who are calling themselves radical feminists, but act against feminist principles by opposing the rights of sex workers and trans people. CMI! will pay increased attention to supporting movements in their response to these risks (see Management Letter of 15 December 2021).

Chapter 2 Sustainability and Partnership in 2021

CMI! ensures sustainability and lasting positive effects of our results through a movement-building approach, which specifically seeks to build broad, committed bases of support through alliance-building and coordinated collective action. Through this approach, the work is carried beyond the life of any single organisation or programme. CMI! intentionally addresses root causes of injustice and oppression and by doing so, seeks to permanently transform relations of power; we are focused on structural gains that move past symptoms and bring change to whole systems. And it is for this reason that CMI! recognises strong, autonomous feminist movements as an outcome in itself. Long-lasting effects for our community-led partners come about through local leadership, voice and agency. CMI! engages in partnerships with self-led groups representing structurally excluded women and girls pushing for systemic change and who are committed to building collective power together with other networks and movements for greater impact.

Partners were therefore at the heart of our Baseline Study 2021 as key informants through six regional and one global context dialogue. Their analysis of the context, threats and challenges set the baseline against which CMI! will measure its impact over the five years of the programme.

At the implementation level, partners continued to be supported by CMI! with core, flexible and long-term support. In addition, CMI! supported partners with accompaniment, development of organisational leadership and governance, capacity-strengthening for L&A, South-South exchanges, learning about feminist MEL and the development of organisational work plans in 2021. In CMI! partners share power in grant-making processes through participatory decision-making or through advisory roles. Together with partners, CMI! produced and launched knowledge products and tools (see Annex IV for extensive list) to support WHRD activism such as the toolkit on navigating extractives, [*Behind the Scenes of Extractives: Money, power and community resistance*](#).

In addition to strengthening movement building, CMI! continued engaging in advocacy and dialogue with donors for sustainable investment in women's rights and gender equality, as under resourcing and access to core, long term and flexible support for WROs remain a key obstacle towards sustainable movement building. Partners' voices were amplified by being speakers at CMI! events, such as during the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) or Global Philanthropy Project (GPP)'s Shimmering Solidarity summit. CMI! successfully collaborated in advocacy with partners at the Generation Equality Forum and Action Coalition 6 leading to the establishment of the multistakeholder initiative Global Alliance for Sustainable Feminist Movements. The international emergency coordination initiative Feminist Action for Afghanistan ensured that Afghan WHRDs were involved, engaged and their needs centred in advocacy efforts at the UN and with governments.

Lessons learned

CMI! members have become more agile and responsive in 2021 as the innovations required during lockdowns have become sustained adaptations, such as through the use of new virtual tools and skills, and providing multilingual access to events and resources. This has enabled CMI! to better support movements to define and lead on their agendas. The same agility and responsiveness from CMI! was needed to support CMI! partners in multiple countries confronted with crises in their context. CMI! members have increased their ability to strategise

collectively in emergency response and coordinate global feminist advocacy with the UN and bilaterals to address the urgent needs of WHRDs and WROs.

Learning plan of the alliance

CMI! is developing a longer-term learning agenda and plan to identify and address priority questions that are relevant to the CMI! five-year programme. CMI!'s five-year strategic objective guides the learning process and plan. The questions identified for the learning process are:

- (i) How has the CMI! Movement-building strategy contributed to sustaining effective Lobby and Advocacy?*
- (ii) How has Lobbying and advocacy resulted in agenda-setting, discursive, policy and behaviour change?*
- (iii) What type of evidence will show that strong and autonomous feminist movements are the most effective ways/tactics to ensure progress and sustainable change for women's rights and gender equality?*

Activities to date include a series of conversations focusing on refining the learning questions, agreeing on the learning process and the installation of a new working group to develop a learning plan for the next four years. This group, consisting of PMEL WG (working group) and LG (Lead Group, the main decision making body in CMI!) members of CMI!, will work across the consortium, to review and ensure that evidence is woven into the learning plan developed.

In 2021, meanwhile, CMI! already began learning, through a sensemaking process focused on the year's IATI data, establishing learning opportunities, such as the internal extractives toolkit webinar, and cataloguing and celebrating CMI! achievements to date. CMI! also conducted a review and reflect process on a series of stories of change (examples in this report, below) to explore how strong and autonomous feminist movements are creating sustainable change for women's rights and gender equality. The baseline setting process provided CMI! with important guidance to learn from in relation to programmatic strategies and how we measure change in the next years. These lessons are already being incorporated in our work in 2022.

Two of CMI!'s working groups, on extractives and on sex workers' rights, designed learning spaces to review our collective work as a consortium on gender-based violence and economic justice. One learning from the sex workers' rights working group was the importance of harnessing the power of the consortium by strengthening ownership and communication on the tools developed and ensuring they inform the work of the members.

The next step will include finalising the learning plan, establishing clearer parameters for future sensemaking sessions, organising (further) knowledge building sessions for working groups, and creating more learning spaces to review CMI! achievements.

Chapter 3 CMI's impact in 2021

In 2021 CMI! supported more than 284 WROs and 4309 WHRDs to strengthen the capacities of activists, organisations and movements. Ongoing organising, movement support and mobilising of WROs and communities around the world led to encouraging successes in changing norms, policies and practices.

In Zimbabwe, for example, the Women's Academy for Leadership and Political Excellence (WALPE) campaigned against police brutality, arbitrary arrests and violence against WHRDs. Their advocacy successfully led to increased awareness of the violence against WHRDs among key political and social actors, some of whom then went on to take actions such as the Inter Parliamentary Union launching an investigation and the Speaker of Parliament condemning the violence. In India trans activists successfully opposed a bill that would include all transgender persons in the category of 'Other Backward Persons' for the purpose of reservation in educational institutions and government jobs. These vertical reservations³ would only benefit trans persons from upper castes, and perpetuate exclusion of trans persons from oppressed castes from access to education, housing, and opportunities for employment, and increase their vulnerability to gender-based violence and discrimination.

Thanks to the strategic partnership with the Dutch government, sex workers' rights activists were actively included at the UN CSW in New York. As the main norm setting space for gender equality at the international level, and given the attempts to push back on already agreed language on women's rights in recent years in this space, the Dutch government's commitment to continue partnering with CMI! by co-organising an event with CREA, RUF and WO=MEN, and maintaining a rights-based approach to sex workers has been critical to the possibilities of sex workers to secure their rights in their respective contexts.

CMI! successfully influenced the funding landscape to better support WHRDs and WROs by co-developing the Global Alliance for Sustainable Feminist Movements, a multi-stakeholder initiative focused on exponentially increasing, sustaining and improving financial and political support for women's rights and feminist organisations and movements. There was overwhelming interest in the CMI! extractives toolkit launches organised by UAF-Africa and JASS in the African and South-East Asian region with over 150 WHRDs attending.

Also the *Rights at Risk: Time for Action*, the second trends report by AWID and the Observatory on the Universality of Rights (OURs), launched and was well received. UN officials and mandate holders, international development agencies, as well as feminist, women's rights and LGBTQI+ rights organisations have indicated they are using the report to learn about anti rights strategies and feminist resistance, or as a tool for advocacy.

Below we share three stories of change in more detail as examples of local and international advocacy efforts across different geographies and themes. Together these stories show how WHRDs and WROs are building cross-movement alliances, creating more awareness among political and societal actors, influencing norms and changing laws, policies, and funding practices. Two of these stories also demonstrate how WROs have creatively responded while facing crises in their countries in 2021. These successes and more are highlighted by the additional Stories of Change of CMI! partners collected in Annex III.

³ In India, reservation is meant to be the act of reserving a fixed number of seats in government jobs, legislatures, and educational institutions as a form of affirmative action. Vertical reservations are meant for Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes.

Story of change - Feminist movement building for Afghan WHRDs in times of crisis - connecting local to global

2021 marked a historic and dramatic setback for women's rights and gender equality in Afghanistan. After two decades of gains for women's and girls' rights the Taliban takeover and the full international troop withdrawal put women and girls on the frontline of this crisis. The rolling back of these gains has resulted in a dire humanitarian crisis and security threat for Afghan women and girls.

The takeover led to a rapid shift to normalising discriminatory gender norms and a general curtailment of Afghan women's and girls' fundamental rights and freedoms⁴, limiting their access to work, education and participation in public life. WHRDs, and women working in more 'public' roles such as humanitarian aid workers, journalists, teachers, judges, academics or as staff in foreign-funded programmes were from the very first day a target for the Taliban and therefore at grave risk for their lives and the lives of their families. Because foreign governments chose not to take a gender-sensitive approach to the evacuations and humanitarian assistance they offered, WHRDs were left to fend for themselves even though the threat to them was widely and well known.

The evacuation of Afghan feminists and WHRDs was a struggle, not only because of Taliban control over the airport and the city, but also because of the hurdles and conditionalities installed related to obtaining visas. States known as women's rights and gender equality champions went silent and ceased issuing visas for WHRDs or recognising them as a category at risk. UN agencies responded slowly and inefficiently. Much of the evacuation efforts on the ground were led and coordinated by civil society. Conspicuously, as we mark 25 years to the UN Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Security, a range of states and international organisations dispatched men-only delegations and missions, excluding women entirely from political processes on the future of the country.

Witnessing the failure of the international community to support and include Afghan women and WHRDs, international women's and feminist organisations joined forces for an emergency collaboration. CMI! supported the establishment of the initiative called 'Feminist Action for Afghanistan' to coordinate efforts and identify how to support Afghan feminists and the Afghan women's rights movement. AWID provided capacity to set up the infrastructure; UAF and Mama Cash supported partners and WHRDs in relocation efforts; and WO=MEN linked global advocacy up with their national lobby efforts towards the Dutch government to ensure WHRDs were recognised as a risk category for evacuation.

This collaboration led to improved coordination, information exchange and learning from each others' practices and successes among feminists advocating in different countries. Ongoing dialogue with Afghan WHRDs both in country and in exile ensured that their needs and challenges, such as on visas and evacuation, were centred in advocacy and responded to. The coalition engaged in advocacy with the UN and Member States on inclusion of Afghan women in political processes, and with individual governments, such as the Netherlands, Canada, the US, the UK and Sweden, on evacuation and asylum support. A special formal appeal was made to donors to avoid using mechanisms that could legitimise the Taliban

⁴ <https://unama.unmissions.org/srsg-lyons-briefing-unsc-situation-afghanistan-3>

regime and to fulfil their funding commitments to support gender equality and the rights of women.

Connecting between local and global levels strengthened international feminist movements in their emergency response and supported the establishment of an informal network of Afghan WHRDs living in exile in different countries. Women's rights activists were supported with mental health and psychosocial support. Coordinated efforts, such as the briefing session with State representatives in December, led to more awareness and understanding of the crisis and risks faced by Afghan WHRDs as refugees in receiving countries and those still in Afghanistan.

Story of Change - Women ex-prisoners advocating for economic rights in Kenya

Women's rights are not addressed in prison systems globally, including the rights of trans people and sex workers, who are unjustly criminalised for who they are and the work they do. In Kenya, women and girls have also been unjustly imprisoned for running away from their homes, often to escape child and forced marriage, trafficking, or sexual or physical violence. They are even being incarcerated for acts that are not punishable by Kenyan law, such as abortions in cases of rape. Furthermore, women who are victims of so-called crimes of honour, domestic violence or trafficking and sex workers have been administratively detained supposedly for their own protection or rehabilitation. Due to the stigma attached to incarceration, former female prisoners face multiple obstacles in accessing formal employment and education and struggle to find financial stability, housing and to provide for their family. In addition, they face institutional barriers in accessing the judicial system and traditional dispute resolution mechanisms to claim resource and property rights, in spite of legal changes that allow women to do so. As a result, they often lack the avenues to both claim and acquire economic resources and property rights.

CMI! supports women who are structurally excluded, including women who used to be in prison, to lead systemic change and address the root causes of economic injustice, by having their voices heard and their lived experience of stigma, discrimination and exclusion shared. This story of change focuses on CMI!'s support of the organisation of ex-detainees Eldoret Women for Development (ELWOFOD). The story speaks to the importance of core funding, building strong alliances across communities and having communities advocate on their own behalf. CMI! through Mama Cash provides core-financial support to ELWOFOD, an organisation founded by two ex-inmates in 2007. The organisation supports previously incarcerated women's re-entry into their communities by providing them with economic opportunities, such as vocational training. Part of their work also involves lobbying and advocating to public officials for their community's rights in educational and justice policies.

In 2020, ELWOFOD worked in coordination with the Women Against Women Custodial Justices Movement (WAWCI), a network of 10 feminist, advocacy organisations, to petition the Uasin-Gishu County Assembly to acknowledge and address the needs of ex-prisoners, women sex workers, girls, trans people and intersex people in the county's Integrated Development Plan and Fiscal Budget. As part of this effort, ELWOFOD targeted the County in their advocacy addressing the discrimination faced by women ex-prisoners in accessing the Affirmative Action Fund. This Fund was set up by the government in 2012 as part of its

commitment to redress past economic disadvantages among certain segments of the population, including women, youth and persons with disabilities.

Working in alliance to advocate for access to the fund, ELWOFOD and WAWCI succeeded in increasing funding to vulnerable women. 20% of the County's budget was allocated to women's groups through the Affirmative Action Fund in 2021 up from 5% in the previous year. Furthermore, ELWOFOD was given the opportunity to manage the Langas County Market. Through this opportunity, 21 women ex-prisoners take home 40% of the revenues earned daily in the market. Another 21 ex-prisoners have also become employed through the nation-wide National Sanitation Programme (Kazi Mtaani). This programme enables members of vulnerable populations in Kenya living in informal settlements to undertake projects that improve urban infrastructure and sustain public goods. In addition, 250 women ex-prisoners were trained and supported to grow fresh farm vegetables for household consumption and surplus sale to supplement family income. These farm activities and group meetings provided women ex-prisoners with self-employment, as well as opportunities that encouraged their healing and confidence building.

With the support of CMI!, the community of female ex-prisoners has been able to have their voices heard and address institutional barriers and discrimination. ELWOFOD's increased coordination and alliance building with other organisations and structurally excluded communities have strengthened their advocacy leading to concrete social change. Advocating for their rights has led to more financial security for female ex-prisoners and impacted positively on their confidence. They gained recognition in their communities and society more broadly, and created a stable environment by being able to provide for their family, and to access housing and education.

Mama Cash has been providing ELWOFOD long-term financial, core support in order to support the group in strengthening and coordinating their work with and for women who are ex-prisoners. As a result of Mama Cash's ongoing support through CMI!, ELWOFOD has been able to apply continued pressure on local government officials to influence the economic opportunities and funding made available to women who are ex-prisoners. The results are clear from their work: every year the Kenyan government provides a greater percentage of money to members of the group's constituencies and stable, economic opportunities that allow women who are ex-prisoners to earn an income.

Story of Change - Resisting violence with art and activism: community organising and providing safe space in Lebanon

In many countries and regions worldwide, LGBTQIA+ persons face continuous systematic exclusion and oppression by their communities. Lebanon is not an exception. The country is going through an unprecedented economic and social crisis exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the port blast in Beirut, worsening gender based violence against LGBTQIA+ communities in Beirut.

The explosion at Beirut Port on August 4, 2020 exacerbated the country's existing social and economic crisis rendering 300,000 people homeless and many more unemployed. For the LGBTQIA+ community, the blast did not only destroy their houses and their jobs, but also the few safe spaces they had. As a result, the community is facing spikes in harassment,

homophobia, and transphobia, as they had to return to their unsafe family homes after the blast and stay confined due to the pandemic. According to an Oxfam survey with 101 LGBTQIA+ individuals: 48% of the respondents reported having no access to community space or support system; and 39% reported having no safe living space.

Haven for Artists' latest report unveils the critical reality of its community members, who are struggling for food, livelihood, shelter, sexual health, and WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene). One third of the 493 individuals assessed reported having worked in sex work because of food insecurity, while 70% of them never did sex work in the past. Their psychological well-being is further threatened due to censorship on art and culture. There are clear indications that freedom of expression, and the work of activists (artists who are activists/activists that use art in their activism) are at risk. There has been a massive wave of emigration of artists. On February 4th, 2020, Lokman Slim – a political activist, publisher and commentator who criticised extremist groups for their militancy in Lebanon and West Asia was assassinated and on October 1, 2021 a play at Al-Madina Theatre was shut down.

In response Haven for Artists, with the support of CMI! through UAF, opened a safe cultural space in Beirut to welcome activists and artists. Open every day, the centre is LGBTQIA+ inclusive and community-led. It includes free facilities like working space and access to wi-fi and computers, a meeting room, and a large community garden. The space is designed in a sustainable, socially and environmentally conscious way. As Beirut lacks green spaces, Haven for Artists offers a green space with composting and recycling facilities. The centre is using solar panels so that it does not depend on government electricity, which is usually available for less than four hours a day.

The centre is a platform for women's, artists', activists' and LGBTQIA+ communities to gather in a safe, functional space, create links, work alone or together, self-organise, exhibit their work and exchange experiences, knowledge and skills through conversations or workshops. The centre also supports existing networks and initiatives as they find ways to deconstruct and dismantle the systematic oppression they face. Taking physical safety into consideration, a security infrastructure via a video doorbell has been installed. In addition, a digital security trainer was brought on to ensure internal digital and data security. The cultural space was officially opened on February 19 in the presence of a diverse group of activists, artists and donors and a representative of the Dutch Embassy.

Haven is also producing an art book to document the experience and struggles of the LGBTQIA+ community by compiling the works of queer artists and activists from the South West Asia and North Africa (SWANA) region. This archive will showcase art's impact on shaping queer realities within local contexts, and the impact of censorship and structural exclusion on art. The activists and artists have identified a large discrepancy in cultural and historical understanding of the LGBTQIA+ movements in the region. There is little knowledge and almost no recognition of the work being done by the LGBTQIA+ community in Lebanon and West Asia at-large. The book will document and celebrate their work, and contribute toward a more comprehensive representation of queer art and activism in the region, while inspiring and spreading awareness for social norm change through their art.

In the midst of Lebanon's unstable and insecure social and political reality, with the help of UAF's grant, Haven was able to create a space of hope, creativity, support, and resistance for the LGBTQIA+ community in Beirut, Lebanon and the region. With the safe, functional space

and the solidarity it enables and nurtures, the community can escape from the violence and oppression in their lives, build movements to catalyse social change and enjoy creative ways of working together in a place they own and belong to.

Chapter 4 Progress

Progress of CMI! programme implementation in 2021 was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and can be seen in the data collected for the SCS and WR&GE indicators. This means that some actual values for 2021 were much lower than expected, while others far exceeded the target we were expecting to reach. Some of the lower values were also due to the fact that in some CMI! countries new partnerships still needed to be developed in the first year of this programme period and the baseline study required time and capacity. This was also hampered by the limited possibility for travel. Other results have not been recorded yet, but will become visible next reporting period.

Members changed their approach to movement building when needed, moving from in-person meetings to online convenings and alliance building activities. The use of online platforms allowed for members to reach larger audiences (see indicator 1.1 / 1.2 / 1.4 in Movements and 1.3 in Making Change), such as through the use of SMS and Whatsapp groups with audio and video messages. CMI! ensured access to online meetings for WHRDs by covering the costs of internet data. There was also a stronger focus on knowledge production, strategic communications, and supporting WHRDs to engage with power holders virtually.

When required, CMI! members changed their grant-making tactics to address the needs of our constituencies. In 2021 there was an increased need for GBV interventions and post-Covid economic recovery initiatives. Due to the increased need, more grants of a smaller size were awarded.

Cross-cutting themes of the framework

In its 2021 activities CMI! also contributed to the cross-cutting themes of gender, climate and youth of the Strengthening Civil Society framework. As CMI!'s target groups are structurally excluded women and girls, all its interventions contribute to the **cross-cutting theme of gender**. CMI!'s output and outcome areas are aligned with and contribute to the basket indicators in both the Power of Voices (PoV) and the Women's Rights and Gender Equality (WR&GE) results frameworks. In 2021 CMI! supported WHRDs who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. These included **youth** and women land defenders addressing root causes of **climate change** and developing alternative feminist economic models.

CREA worked extensively with **girls and young women** through community-based programming in India and on challenging criminalisation of young people's sexuality in South Asia. AWID engaged young feminists in the Beijing +25 process and ensured that young feminist critique and visions on multilateralism were spotlighted in the framework of the Generation Equality Forum. They contributed to the accountability conversation by bringing in a feminist and youth lens. Within the framework of Alquimia schools - a long-term learning and education initiative to strengthen the knowledge and capacities of WHRDs in Mesoamerica - JASS ensured that there was intergenerational regional dialogue and participation of young

leaders in the different national processes in the region and moments of exchange at the regional level.

The impact of **climate change** has exacerbated the precarity of women's lives and further widened the gender gap. In addition to the Covid-19 pandemic, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi for example have had to deal with climate crises, as tropical cyclone Eloise and tropical storm Ana hit Southern Africa, killing many people and causing massive destruction of infrastructure and to people's livelihoods. Feminist movement actors are therefore developing alternative responses to extractive forms of development that are compatible with the preservation of the earth. CMI! continues to support WHRDs to advocate for economic and environmental agendas rooted in what women know and what communities need. Extractive projects form a threat to the livelihood, resources, climate and environment of communities. CMI! therefore supported WHRDs defending their land and territories against extractive projects in several ways in 2021. For example, JASS and UAF-Africa launched and popularised the CMI! extractives toolkit in Africa and Asia. Likewise, CMI! through JASS supported indigenous women and women resisting extractive projects in Zimbabwe to address climate change as a form of structural violence. Specifically, JASS accompanied the women of the Binga community to resist a coal power plant in Zimbabwe. When openly challenging the government's support for the plant and the investor RioZim, by withholding consent to access their communal land, the WHRDs as well as the JASS team were met with violence, arrest and further policing and surveillance. Finally, CMI! also supported advocacy efforts and capacity building of land defenders during the WHRD month (September) at the UN Human Rights Council.

UAF-Africa engaged in a year-long campaign on water availability for women in Africa and published a report on water justice titled [*Women and Water in Africa: An overview of Water Justice struggles*](#) which details the experiences of women and water management access and control. The report interrogates the neo-liberal approach to water management and access through privatisation, and asserts that this approach increases human rights violations and vulnerability to social, health and economic violence. The campaign strengthened movement building and advocacy for water justice and contributed to knowledge development through popular education materials.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

Despite the current challenges and backlash against gender justice and human rights, CMI! members and their partners have ensured that activists have a seat at the table and that the voices of women, girls, and non-binary, gender non-conforming, trans, and intersex people are heard and taken into account. Our activities have ranged from direct lobbying and advocacy, to providing feminist leadership trainings and movement building workshops to activists and feminist. CMI! has also contributed to alliance-building, and we have provided core financial support and rapid response grants to WHRDs and WROs, so that they can safely advance their innovative work. Through these initiatives, the constituencies of structurally excluded women, girls, and non-binary, gender non-conforming, trans, and intersex people that CMI! works with, have strengthened their movements and their advocacy. They are increasing their influence and scale, and holding political leaders accountable. In a time where oppressive governments and anti-rights actors isolate women's rights and gender equality advocates, movement building - including cross-movement, regional and cross-

regional efforts – is a crucial strategy for supporting the organising of structurally excluded women, girls, and non-binary, gender non-conforming, trans, and intersex people.