

Annual Report 2023



29 APRIL 2024

COUNT ME IN! IN 2023

In 2023 the Count Me In! (CMI!) consortium entered the third year of its second programme period (2021 - 2025) of its 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 Urgent Action Sister Funds, Urgent Action Fund for Feminist Activism (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 partners 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.

MTR & AFFIRMATION OF CMI!'S THEORY OF CHANGE

In 2023 CMI! continued supporting women's rights organisations (WROs)¹ and women human rights defenders (WHRDs)² 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 and girls'³ rights and gender equality.

This work is driven by women and girls who confront multiple, intersecting forms of discrimination and are structurally excluded from full participation in society as equals. Structurally excluded women and girls are CMI!'s primary actors because they actively drive the change they seek for themselves and their communities. They demand their right to be counted.

Reaching the midline in 2023 CMI! conducted a Mid Term Review to assess the effectiveness, relevance and sustainability of the programme. We engaged with 142 CMI! partners and key informants - representatives of (WROs), feminist movements, and funds from across all regions of CMI!'s work – through interviews, a survey and online regional dialogues. The Mid-Term Review confirmed that CMI! contributes to strengthening feminist movements. By providing resources, supporting movement building efforts, and advocating for more resources, and legal and policy change, it enables movements to respond to anti-rights forces and to shrinking civic and democratic space. CMI! provides the needed scaffolding for feminist movements so that they can remain strong, coordinated and resilient, even in times of crisis.

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 WHRDs for CMI! refers to Human Rights Defenders that are women, girls and anyone who faces sex or gender discrimination such as non-binary, gender non-conforming, trans or intersex people.

³ 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.

The MTR affirmed that CMI's Theory of Change (ToC) and its interventions are highly responsive to context and particularly strong in adapting to environmental, socio-economic and policy changes over time. The implementation strategies were tailored to align with CMI's comprehensive understanding of partner's and movement's needs and priorities as well as the dynamic changes in their operational and activist contexts. Responding to shifting contexts, all three of CMI's strategies - Money, Movements and Making Change -, have proved pivotal in supporting feminist movements to hold the line and challenge anti-rights and authoritarian governments.

The changes and transformations brought about by CMI! and its partners shared here and within the MTR validate the ToC. Firstly, the causal relationship between funding and capacity strengthening by CMI!, and the strength of movements and WROs was affirmed in all primary and secondary sources of data. Resourced (financial and non-financial) WROs are able to play a critical role in defending space and influencing political and societal actors, as well as donors, in advancing their change agendas. Of concern, though, is the fact that changes in context and ongoing risks (as described in chapter 1) to structurally excluded groups pose challenges related to the sustainability of their work, particularly in the challenging funding landscape.

The MTR also unpacked and tested the current assumptions in the ToC and found the assumptions to be valid; some assumptions were harder to validate given the short two-year time period of programme implementation. The evaluation found that the ToC allows structurally excluded women and girls to apply the strategies in ways that are relevant to their diverse and ever-changing contexts and experiences. The evaluators, however also indicated that for robust validation of some assumptions, more time would be needed, as lasting long-term change spans across more than two years.

This annual report presents key accomplishments of 2023. 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

2023 was an intense year for feminist activism, with the reduction of Covid restrictions increasing opportunities to reconnect and mobilise in person again. It was filled with the enthusiasm that coming together brought and, at the same time, the difficulties of engaging in our activism. At the same time, activists were able to maintain the innovations required during lockdowns that had strengthened their organising across regions and communities. Feminist movements picked up their pre-Covid in-person organising pace and gathered in multiple places to strategise, learn and build towards better futures.

In 2023 structurally excluded communities across all regions have continued to face the impacts of multiple and overlapping crises related to conflicts, humanitarian emergencies, climate change, deepening crisis of democracies and geopolitical shifts. Almost a third of the world's population now lives in countries with closed civic space, the highest number since 2018, when CIVICUS started systematically tracking civic space conditions around the world.⁴ Of the 26 CMI! countries, five are rated in the lowest category of *Closed*, fourteen as *Repressed* and seven as *Obstructed*. In 2023 two countries were downgraded by CIVICUS to *Closed* (Bangladesh) and *Repressed* (Senegal).⁵ This means an observable rise in the closure of civic space, and enabling of the anti-rights movement, which is resulting in a reversal of rights protection, the restriction and repression of alternative voices and opposition, and the curtailing of rights of free speech, organisation and assembly. Authoritarian regimes and political movements have been using political instability, internal conflict, cross-border tensions, climate change or socio-economic inequality to consolidate and retain power and further limit fundamental rights and freedoms.

These developments are a global phenomenon impacting feminist movements across all regions, including in CMI! countries. Political tension heightened in Senegal in the lead-up to the presidential elections, which led the authorities to repress opposition protests, arrest journalists, suspend media outlets and restrict internet and social media access. Bangladesh saw an escalating crackdown on activists, journalists and dissenting voices ahead of national elections scheduled for January 2024. The eruption of gender-based violence (GBV) around elections also impacted WHRDs in Indonesia with increased right-wing and pro-religious rhetoric targeting women and LBTQI+ people. In Guatemala, Indigenous people, young protestors and diplomats took to the streets in November 2023 to ensure that the president-elect would be able to take office this year (2024). In Yemen, there were increased attacks on WHRDs and threats of a possible execution of a prominent WHRD by Houthi militia. The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan qualified the large-scale systematic violation of the rights of women and girls by the Taliban as gender persecution and strict institutionalised binary segregation.⁶ In Honduras, Indonesia and Zimbabwe state,

⁴ [Rights Reversed: Data from 2019 to 2023 \(civicus.org\)](https://www.civicus.org/)

⁵ Rated as *Closed*: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Iraq, Yemen. Rated as *Repressed*: Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Jordan, India, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Rated as *Obstructed*: Burkina Faso, Kenya, Indonesia, Lebanon, Malawi, and Nepal. Palestine did not get an individual rating, but Israel was rated as *Obstructed*.

⁶ [A-HRC-53-21-AdvanceEditedVersion.docx \(live.com\)](#), p. 16.

political and corporate actors' interests have become entangled and corporate capture⁷ of natural resources and capital has severely impacted the livelihoods of women and their communities. Women land defenders and Indigenous communities defending land, territory and food sovereignty have faced challenges in demanding their rights, including as a result of GBV. In Kenya, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Senegal, killings of land defenders are largely linked to mining, logging and agribusiness expansion; defenders are faced with arbitrary arrests for refusing to be dispossessed of their lands – these arrests are facilitated by both multinational corporations and the governments in partnership. The courts, police and legal systems are weaponised as tools of oppression against those that challenge the power and interests of those abusing the environment, thereby legitimising the attacks on them. The media is another weapon – through it, politicians and corporations frame defenders and accuse them of hindering economic freedoms by stopping the major projects they are against. Instead of providing protection to all, law enforcement authorities are often perpetrators of violence and harassment, putting already vulnerable communities at even greater risk. In Lebanon, Syrian refugees are increasingly being deported by the Lebanese government, disproportionately impacting trans and queer refugees.

Crackdowns on civil society organisations, media and peaceful demonstrations severely affected the work and safety of WROs and WHRDs with whom CMI! partners. As CMI!'s IATI data show, the main threats faced by WROs and WHRDs in 2023 were regressive legislation, criminalisation of sex workers and other structurally excluded communities, shrinking ability to engage in policy debates, defamation campaigns, cyberbullying and doxxing⁸. These threats have restricted advocacy efforts and hindered progress towards legal reform and greater protections. GBV remained one of the biggest challenges for women and girls and structurally excluded groups in CMI! countries with governments doing little to increase legal protection or take adequate measures. Violence is often perpetuated by patriarchal social, economic and political norms and institutionalised in laws, policies and practices, leading to the criminalisation of women because of their work, identity, sexuality, activism, lack of recognition before the law and limited access to protection.

The pushback against gender equality and the rights of women, girls, and non-binary, gender non-conforming, trans, and intersex people is intensifying and becoming increasingly violent. The well-funded and coordinated anti-gender and anti-rights movements are specifically targeting our communities and feminist movements at the national, regional and global level and are becoming increasingly successful in dividing and fragmenting feminist movements. Examples of this coordination are the Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Family Values and Sovereignty, held in April in Entebbe, Uganda, and a template for a family protection bill by Family Watch International which has been adopted and adapted by lawmakers across Kenya, Uganda and Ghana.⁹ Their strategies and mobilisation are a direct response to the successes and visible gains of our movements for women's rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and LGBTI rights in recent decades, and a co-optation of our strategies. In

⁷ "Corporate capture" is a phenomenon where private industry uses its political influence to take control of the decision-making apparatus of the state, such as regulatory agencies, law enforcement entities, and legislatures. Definition from: <https://ccrjustice.org/corporate-capture>

⁸ Doxxing means revealing identifying personal information about someone online such as their real name, address or workplace as a means to intimidate, harm, or exploit the person.

⁹ [Commonwealth Africa: LGBTQI+ rights under attack - CIVICUS LENS](#)

Malawi, there was notable pushback against women's rights with intense opposition against proposals to criminalise marital rape and to access abortion. In Iraq a constitutional amendment to penalise LGBTI people with the death penalty was tabled in Parliament. In Uganda the Anti-Homosexuality Act resurfaced and was adopted in Parliament. It is of real concern that actors within the women's movement are repeating and replicating opposition narratives seeking to limit SRHR as well as the rights of specific communities, especially trans and gender-diverse people, and sex workers, as well as tactics justifying violence and discrimination against them. At the global level this became visible through the series of harmful statements and actions taken by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women (UN SR VAW). By misrepresenting and regressing from international norms and standards, she has weaponised "protection of women and girls" to advocate for discriminatory policies against trans people and sex workers.

An issue that has profoundly shaken and continues to reverberate across feminist and social justice movements worldwide is the ongoing genocide in Palestine. Not only has it repeatedly shown the gendered impact of war and conflict through Israel's prolonged occupation, it has also deprived women, girls and structurally excluded communities of their rights by undermining living conditions, restricting access to essential services and heightening vulnerability to gender-based violence. Yet it also raised questions about the responses of Global North governments to this crisis in stark contrast to other crises. It has visibilised the contradictions and inconsistencies in their feminist foreign policy and funding approaches where the lives of some are prioritised over others. The Sudan war, which has led to the killing and displacement of thousands of women, WHRDs and children, and destroyed the entire social-economic infrastructure of the country is receiving significantly less attention and humanitarian support compared to other conflicts. The level of international assistance for Sudan is notably lower in comparison to other countries. In response to the crisis, it is women's groups that have taken the lead in providing support. However, these groups are facing challenges, including limited resources and government restrictions.

In spite of these challenges, there have been exciting developments in how feminist movements resisted and boldly continued their incredible mobilisation and activism to 'count in' the voices of all women and girls in 2023. Inspired by the second Feminist Republik festival in Kenya in 2022, held by CMI! member organisation UAF-Africa, movements in Senegal, Sudan, Mali, and Burkina Faso organised their own local, national and regional feminist festivals and spaces to provide an analysis of the key systems of oppression that generate trauma and impact on the wellbeing of WHRDs. They planned for collective action and have held regular convening spaces to support defenders and activists across the intersecting crisis-ridden Sahel context including Senegal and Mali. Within the most challenging circumstances of authoritarianism, extremism and crises, WROs found ways to speak out, nimbly move resources and defend civic spaces and rights. In Yemen, WROs worked with local government, law enforcement, media and their communities to reduce stigma and discrimination resulting in human rights violations of women who are incarcerated. Feminist movements seized the moment to create more awareness around the anti-rights movement to build solidarity and momentum across movements. WROs successfully contributed to more awareness of trans rights in Bangladesh, on the impact of restrictive laws on sex workers and LBQ women in East Africa, and to more support for same sex marriage in Nepal. CMI! contributed to increased awareness among many more actors in mainstream civil society in-

country as well as at regional and global level highlighting the urgency and the importance to take a position and speak up as allies, including on trans rights and sex work.

The protests against the genocide in Palestine across the globe showed the power in interconnected struggles and transnational solidarity with feminist movements from all over the world raising their voices in large numbers to demand a cease fire and freedom for Palestine. This led to a pivotal moment of feminist activists collectively demanding accountability from governments who are generally supportive of women's rights and gender justice during the Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy conference in The Hague on 1 and 2 November 2023. CMI! stood in solidarity with Palestinian feminists calling for a permanent ceasefire. In our donor influencing work we politicised our crisis and emergency response efforts and provided frameworks and guidance to strengthen policy and funding coherence of donors so they can better support movements before, during and after crises. CMI! provided support through collective advocacy for a permanent ceasefire, legal support for activists at risk, and financial support for the most pressing needs of frontline activists. This included overcoming banking restrictions and other barriers to access funding and support.

Budget cuts to gender equality in the philanthropic and international cooperation sector is impacting the resourcing landscape of the feminist movements. In the Dutch context, for instance, the political developments following the fall of the government in July and the November Parliamentary elections, together with the already announced budget cuts to development cooperation, might have a negative impact on the Dutch commitment to a Feminist Foreign Policy, and overall in their continued support for resourcing feminist movements including in the next funding framework.

Risks and mitigation strategies

The risks and mitigation strategies identified in our programme proposal are still relevant to the impact of crises, including conflict, political instability or climate change induced disasters featuring more prominently and consistently than at the time of developing the proposal. Crises aggravate GBV and economic injustice in already challenging contexts for structurally excluded communities. CMI! holistically addresses the needs of our movements and works in solidarity with partners and allies to make visible and address the root causes of these crises and how they affect their safety, well-being and human rights. CMI! has intensified its emphasis on holistic security, rapid response funding and capacity-strengthening support. As the MTR highlighted, our support enables communities to move from survival mode to innovation, from resilience to regeneration and sustained resistance. It also enables them to leverage the potential for transformative change, including in crisis situations, and through feminist economic alternatives anchored in community solutions.

The intensified mobilisation of anti-rights actors and the impact of authoritarian regimes creates a risk of programmatic backlash with threats to the safety and operations of the groups with whom CMI! partners and supports. In response, CMI! engages in sustained monitoring of opposition actors at global, regional and local levels as well as the collective protection needs, care and safety of the communities we support. We aim to strengthen transnational feminist solidarity and inclusive feminist narratives to support communities targeted, such as trans and gender-diverse people and sex workers.

Under resourcing is becoming a more tangible risk with budget cuts being announced in the philanthropic and international development cooperation sector and support for the role of society waning, including by the Dutch caretaker government. As mitigation, CMI!'s donor influencing strategy focuses on stimulating diverse funding partnerships and alliances and engaging new funders into resourcing feminist movements while simultaneously pushing back against restrictive funding mechanisms, such as issue-based restrictions and only providing access to short-term, project-based funding vs multi-year, flexible core-support funding. Strengthening peer-to-peer dialogue and learning in the community of funders will be the focus of the Moving Money, Building Movements convening in December 2024. CMI! also addresses the repercussions women's funds have faced from donors for their continued solidarity efforts addressing the humanitarian catastrophe in Palestine in conversations with, for example, the Dutch government.

As noted in the MTR, the value of working as part of a consortium is the coordinated and interconnected response of CMI! to contextual challenges, ensuring that WROs and WHRDs are not isolated or siloed in their critical efforts and are instead building on collective knowledge, experience and strengths. Our intersectional feminist approach has allowed for solidarity between communities, more connectedness between movements and funders, and the building of cross-movement alliances. CMI!, for example, stepped in when the donor community failed to do so in the case of Palestine and Sudan.

CHAPTER 2 SUSTAINABILITY AND PARTNERSHIP IN 2023

Strong and autonomous movements is a key objective of CMI!'s Theory of Change. When entering partnerships, CMI! commits to a long-term engagement that stretches beyond a financial relationship and sustains partners in a broad sense. CMI!'s movement building approach ensures sustainability and lasting positive effects of our results by specifically seeking to build broad, committed bases of support through alliance-building and coordinated collective action. This includes long-term investment in developing women's leadership and organising capacity, building networks for safety and support, creating tools and methodologies that can be replicated and scaled up, such as training-of-trainers and the [Behind the Scenes of Extractives: Money, Power, and Community Resistance Toolkit](#). Through this approach, the work is carried beyond the life of any single organisation or programme. Long-lasting effects for our work on the ground and with our community-led partners come about through local leadership, voice and agency. CMI! engages in partnerships with community-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.

According to the MTR, CMI! partners highlighted that CMI! contributed with funding and movement support to their sustainability. The MTR found that:

1. In contexts of crises, CMI! supports the vibrancy and health of organisations and movements as a critical pillar of sustainability. Partners noted that three key elements for that are present in the collaboration with CMI!:

- a. Achieving systemic social change and transformation
 - b. Sustaining the power they have right now or holding the line, and
 - c. Maintaining their ability to keep going amidst repression or backlash
2. CMI!'s inclusive approach prioritises structurally excluded women and girls, and non-binary, gender non-conforming, trans, and intersex people. It contributes to sustainability by ensuring a pathway is created for them to experience the ongoing benefits beyond their relationship with CMI!.
3. CMI! has built an enabling environment for inclusivity and justice for structurally excluded women and girls.

The review found that CMI!'s collective work is on course to fulfilling its mission of strengthening autonomous movements by increasing direct funding, providing movement building support, and advocating for more and better funding to these movements. In 2023, partners continued to be supported by CMI! with core, flexible and long-term support. CMI! supported partners with accompaniment, development of organisational and collective leadership, capacity-strengthening for L&A, South-South exchanges, learning about feminist MEL and the development of organisational work plans. CMI! partners share power in grant-making processes through participatory decision-making, co-creation or through advisory roles.

With the strategic leadership of Red Umbrella Fund on sex workers' rights issues, CMI! has been able to provide capacity strengthening support, provide long-term core and emergency security grants to sex workers' rights organisations, and show up in solidarity action and advocacy support. Red Umbrella Fund is led by the community it serves, ie. sex workers. Strategic planning, operations, funder advocacy, grantmaking, and accompaniment are all self-led through consensus decision-making practices. Feminist activists from all around the world make decisions on all of Mama Cash's grants to feminist organisations, networks, women's funds and individuals via a participatory grantmaking approach. Both UAF Africa and UAF rely on the expertise and input of their rich networks of advisors (activists with a deep knowledge of feminism and connections to local women's, LGBTQI+, and human rights movements) for their grantmaking decisions. CMI! members and strategic partners actively engage partners in their activities, including donor influencing, feminist MEL, the planning and implementation of activities, strategy development, advocacy, communications and statements, events and panels. Together with partners, CMI! produced and launched knowledge products and tools (see Annex III for extensive list) to support WHRD activism such as the research piece *Learning from Transness and Disability: Toward a Framework of Bodily Autonomy* from CMI! partners in Lebanon and the *Training-of-Trainers manual on Gender and Sexuality* for LBQ WHRDs in Egypt.

CMI! employs a gender-transformative approach, meaning it addresses root causes of injustice and oppression and seeks to permanently transform relations of power. We aim for structural gains that move past symptoms and bring change to whole systems. These processes of change do not happen overnight and may take many years. CMI! member organisations and partners have been fully engaged in advocacy aimed at influencing changes in laws, policies and practices as well as changes in the hearts and minds of political and social actors. Some examples of legislation and policies addressed by CMI! members and partners are laws criminalising sex work, gender identity and sexual orientation, better legal protection and recognition for trans and intersex people, GBV laws and policies, social

protection services, access to education, employment and financial institutions, human rights defenders protection, and access to health care and SRHR. Partners' voices and demands were amplified by being speakers at CMI! events, held during the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) on online gender-based violence, during Women Deliver on how to be a better ally to the sex workers' rights community and during the Feminist Foreign Policy Community Festival in The Hague on 31 October.

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 poor access to core, long term and flexible support for WROs remain key obstacles to sustainable movement building. With our donor influencing efforts we seek to both increase the resourcing of feminist movements and change the modalities of funding so that communities that have been historically excluded have better access to more and better funding. We do this in alliance with others for example through the Alliance for Feminist Movements and in joint advocacy with the other 8 feminist Strategic Partnerships funded by the Dutch government: AWESOME, GAGGA, Leading from the South, OVOF, Power Up!, Women Gaining Ground, FemPower and Y4W4CA. To create awareness we organised spaces for learning such as an educational pub quiz during CSW where representatives of governments and civil society discussed the key components of Feminist Foreign Policy in a playful way, or a Feminist MEL session in cooperation with Partos and Power Up!, or a cross-movement conversation on *Ending online GBV: how feminist approaches create inclusive online spaces for all women and girls*.

Learning agenda

Learning is integral to the work of CMI! to ensure we continue to respond to the needs and priorities of our partners in interaction with changing contexts and to adapt our approach to more effectively support them. Learning is integrated throughout the CMI! structure and happens in different spaces, such as the Lead Group, the working groups, our biannual meetings and sensemaking workshops, and with different tools, including After Action Reviews of events, publications and materials developed from the knowledge we generate through primary research and consultative processes with feminist allies and our partners.

In 2023 we continued our learning agenda consisting of the following overall learning questions (i) Is our feminist movement building strategy working? and (ii) are structurally excluded women and girls shifting power? These also informed the design of the mid-term review process in 2023.

The MTR evaluation report also highlighted how CMI! can adapt and improve its strategies, inform and strengthen CMI!'s learning agenda.

An important area of learning for CMI! has been on how to support CMI! partners in their organising in contexts of ongoing and multiple crises. With the increasing impact of polycrises on feminist movements and local communities, CMI! has had to exercise flexibility to respond to the changing needs of CMI! members and partners and centred supporting feminist movements towards resilience and regeneration. As identified in the MTR, CMI!'s approach is increasingly adaptive and flexible and includes (i) moving money and (ii) centring safety, well-

being and resilience at the individual and collective level. Funding and support enable groups to plan and strategise long-term and be ready to respond to unexpected moments of mobilisation and/or insecurity.

In a workshop in July, we refined our learning agenda and specified three thematic areas for learning to inform our programming and strategies:

1. **Crisis response:** How do we as CMI! leverage our strengths in formal and informal ways to respond and react to feminists in crisis?
2. **Resilience:** How is CMI! balancing the expectation of movements being resilient with our support of and accountability toward these movements?
3. **Sustainability:** How can CMI! better support sustainable movement building for structurally excluded communities?

Lessons learned

The key areas of learning in CMI's work identified in the MTR are:

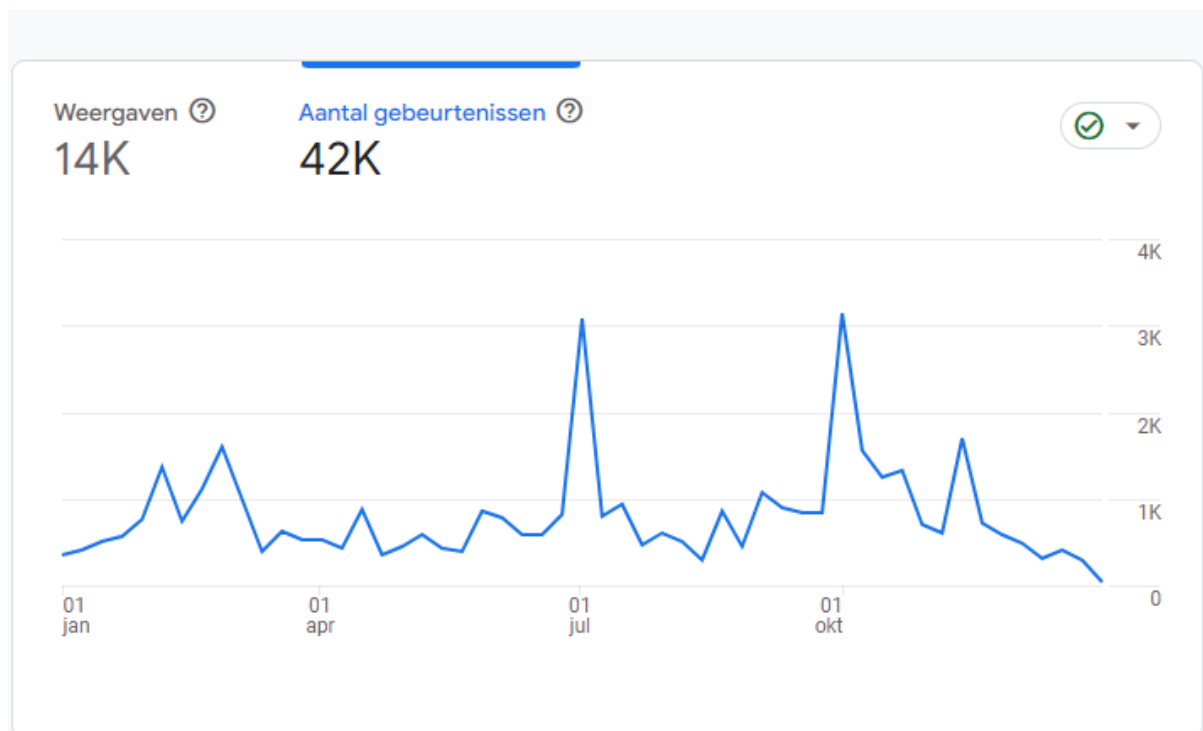
- ❖ “Supporting feminist movements towards resilience and regeneration”: CMI! has reinforced its response to crises by investing more deliberately in movement infrastructure and capacity. CMI's adaptive and flexible approach has allowed movements to continue organising in times of crisis.
- ❖ “The power of a unique, consolidated feminist force”: CMI! members and strategic partners each play a different role in the consortium and contribute their individual expertise to the consolidated feminist force. Members are learning more about how to activate their collective strength and leverage the collective power more strategically for collective impact. These are manifesting in the areas of donor influencing, sex workers' rights advocacy, feminist economic realities and pushing back against opposition.
- ❖ “Transformative partnerships and alliances for influence”: The MTR noted that the formation of partnerships with structurally excluded groups is a key success factor of CMI!'s work. In addition, a core contribution of CMI! has been its support of the development of networks and alliances that have led to stronger influence by movements across issues (e.g. climate change, anti-rights tactics, extractivism), communities and regions. The MTR recognised the potential of strengthening and activating more of such opportunities for advocacy, support and solidarity to build collective power. Also, the added value and potential of creating more links for learning and exchange between partners was flagged as critical for solidarity building across issues and contexts to facilitate the emergence of shared learning and strategies across movements.

CMI! members and strategic partners have been learning, experimenting and implementing strategies to better respond to existing or emerging crises. They complement one another with expertise in advocacy, resourcing, funding, holistic safety and security, and creating spaces and tools for movements to connect and be safe. Spaces, such as the regional feminist

festivals or the AWID Forum, contribute to the resilience and sustainability of movements by centering Global South feminists and structurally excluded communities, providing space for healing and allowing them to strategise to shift power and connect with allied movements, funders and policy-makers. CMI! is seeing a need for deepening and integrating collective safety and protection mechanisms in the movement building work.

Communication

Since its launch at the end of 2022, the [CMI! website](#) has been updated with engaging stories and resources relevant to our diverse audiences. In 2023, we posted updates on 18 old and new CMI! publications, and 16 news, blogs, events, stories of changes, etc. A new page was created on the website [to showcase the resources on Feminist MEL](#) from CMI!, its members and strategic partners. This included a blog series to feature feminist MEL to address the increasing interest among our target audiences on this topic. We had a total of 14,000 visits and 42,000 engagements on the CMI! website in 2023 with the United States and the Netherlands as two top viewing countries where many of CMI!'s primary target donors, policymakers and INGOs are based.



In line with CMI!'s strategic communications objectives and to support CMI!'s advocacy efforts, communications materials were developed around five main events: our sessions at CSW and Women Deliver, UNGA event, the Feminist Foreign Policy conference hosted by the Dutch government and [the Feminist Foreign Policy Community Festival organised the day before by WO=MEN and its members](#). This included creating social media toolkits, promoting the events to ensure substantive attendance, live tweeting, and post-event engagement by blog posts and using quote cards, among others. Relevant materials such as recommendations on Feminist Foreign Policy and sex workers' rights factsheets were also developed or printed for dissemination and to increase CMI!'s visibility at these events.

We used our CMI! social media channels (X, the social media platform formerly known as [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#)) as a vehicle to amplify our work and drive existing and new audiences to our and our members', partners' and allies' websites. Like 2022, in 2023, we also launched the [#FundWhatWorks](#) campaign featuring seven stories of change which were shared extensively by all the members and strategic partners. The seven posts linking the seven stories on CMI!'s LinkedIn alone produced 4,731 impressions. We also promoted the [first blog on Feminist MEL](#) which is still the most visited page on the website. Partos noticed the blog and the richness of expertise it held, leading to featuring one of the interviewees in their webinar and [exploring and advocating more on the topic](#). We also amplified CMI! Members' social media campaigns including AWID's campaign 'No place for anti-trans agenda in the UN,' the Visible/Invisible 16 days of activism campaign led by CREA, Urgent Action Fund for Feminist Activism's rebrand and new website launch, and Urgent Action Funds' report 'How Can We Ground Ourselves in Care' launch.

One of the other communications outputs from 2023 is our story published in [Partos Impact Stories](#) on our work in the area of extractivism. The regular CMI! internal newsletter collected all the critical updates from different parts of the consortium and kept colleagues updated about each other's work. Given the increasingly restrictive political contexts for movements, we integrated safety and security in our communications to minimise their risk. For example, in the wake of the anti-homosexuality bills and laws in some countries in East Africa, we responded by reviewing and republishing every communication material and deleting the social media posts mentioning groups and activists, and web profiles of staff in the affected countries were pulled out. We also developed a safety and security protocol for communications related to our partners during that time.

CHAPTER 3 CMI'S IMPACT IN 2023

In 2023 CMI! supported more than 321 WROs and 1397 WHRDs¹⁰ to strengthen the capacities of activists, organisations and movements. Movements increased their coordination capacities and formed over 444 alliances at local, national, regional and global levels. Ongoing organising, movement support and mobilising of WROs and communities around the world led to encouraging successes in changing norms, policies and practices. CMI! supported a wide range of communities in their activism such as women with disabilities, Indigenous women and land defenders, LBTIQ+ women, displaced and migrant communities, factory workers, small-scale farmers, women entrepreneurs, community artists, teachers, and labour and democracy activists.

CMI! members stepped up their support in advocacy and solidarity to push back against authoritarianism, limited civic space and anti-rights and anti-gender opposition targeting trans and gender-diverse people and sex workers. CMI! supported partners to create and defend spaces for making feminist demands and ensuring these are sustained and increased. Some examples of different types of spaces created are:

¹⁰ These are unique numbers. The actual number of WHRDs and WROs supported by CMI! in 2023 is higher as through our movement building approach we provide long term core support and sustained accompaniment.

- Space for personal and collective well-being: Engaged 200 African LBQTI and gender non-conforming people on well-being in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Egypt, and Uganda.
- Inclusive knowledge and advocacy space: Meeting of 74 organisations in West Asia to enhance understanding of challenges faced by transwomen and women with disabilities and to strategise on creating safer spaces for vulnerable women to combat GBV
- Memorial and awareness space: A photo exhibition to commemorate transgender survivors of GBV and to highlight issues of transphobia and casteism in India
- Legislative advocacy space: Engaged members of Parliament to address the impact of criminal laws on sex workers in Kisumu, Kenya.
- Anti-Gender Narrative Counteraction Space: At the global level 60 actors convened during the CSW to address anti-gender narratives and opposition.

The grants and support provided to partners by CMI! were used to focus their advocacy on a wide range of different political and social actors including local and regional authorities, Ministries and Gender Equality bodies, Parliament members, law enforcement, media outlets, trade unions, education institutions, religious centres and leaders, health practitioners, UN mandate holders and agencies, savings and credit cooperatives, as well as influencers and celebrities. The work and advocacy of our partners led to significant changes and developments in the support for women's and girls' rights across various actors, including political actors, societal actors, and donors. In the town of Masaka in Uganda for example WHRDs successfully advocated for a gender-inclusive taxation policy. Masaka City authorities have started applying a gender-responsive lens and directing it towards gender-transformative taxation systems and social protection for vulnerable women in the city. They also agreed to include women as decision-makers in the Masaka City Tax and Gender Working Group. In South Sudan a coalition of WROs engaged with members of the Parliament committee on gender and succeeded in getting the Anti-GBV bill included among the priority bills to be reviewed by Parliament. Their mobilisation also ensured the accountability of leaders in a concrete case of the Mayor of Juba committing violence against a woman and had him removed from his position.

CMI! knowledge products and tools (see Annex IV) have been extensively used by CMI! partners in their advocacy to, for example, reinforce our demands with evidence, develop their own messaging and strategy, create a power analysis of key stakeholders, analyse relevant contextual factors or unveil investment chains behind extractives projects. A session on AWID's *Gender Impact Investing and the Rise of False Solutions. An Analysis for Feminist Movements report* created stronger awareness of the need to look critically at gender impact investments and the link between resource mobilisation and economic justice. UAF-Africa and JASS organised multiple sessions on the CMI! extractives toolkit in different regions, including training of facilitators (see also the Story of Change on p. 16). CREA produced a primer and source book together with activists on challenging the criminalisation of bodily autonomy of young people and curated a space for feminist organisations to come together and discuss the limitations of punitive responses to GBV. This was part of a wider campaign and contributed to the feminist discourse on limitations of the law in responding to protection needs especially for structurally excluded communities.

As part of CMI!'s strategic partnership with the Dutch government, we engaged extensively in the development of the Feminist Foreign Policy handbook for implementation as well as the

new civil society funding policy framework. This included participating in *Strengthening Civil Society dialogues* and organising a roundtable with MFA staff and feminist partnerships in November 2023 together with 8 other feminist Strategic Partnerships and a panel on *Transformative Approaches to Feminist Resourcing* as part of the Feminist Foreign Policy Community festival. CMI! and the other partnerships generated input for the new funding framework through a survey of over 850 Global South movement partners, collecting and synthesising input from women's, feminist and environmental funds, and facilitating engagement of partners in local consultations organised by embassies. CMI! also organised a side-event with the Alliance for Feminist Movements and the Feminist Foreign Policy Collaborative co-sponsored by the Dutch MFA at UNGA78 in New York to create space for interaction in addition to the Ministerial Event on FFP on the importance of supporting feminist movements and building allyship between governments, philanthropy, and feminist civil society. A full list of events, publications and submissions, letters and statements of CMI! can be found in Annex III.

Below we share four 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. These successes and more are highlighted by the additional Stories of Change of CMI! partners collected in Annex II.

Story of change: Visibilising Sex workers' Rights in a Non-Inclusive Space

Women Deliver has historically been contested as a feminist space for not being inclusive and safe for structurally excluded communities, such as sex workers. In 2020, the organising body of this conference faced significant criticism, including [allegations of racism and harassment](#). In 2023, CMI!'s Sex Workers Rights Working Group (SWAG) therefore designed a session called 'Get Your Hustle On! Be A Good Sex Workers' Ally' led by Red Umbrella Fund and co-organised with CREA, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the African Sex Workers Alliance (ASWA) and the Uganda Network of Sex Worker-led Organisations (UNESO). The session conveyed practices and recommendations on how women's rights groups and organisations can be better allies to the sex workers' rights movement. It focused on principles and steps to consider when designing programmes and activities meant to improve the lives of all women, including sex workers.

A diverse panel of sex worker representatives from East Africa, a feminist funder (UAF-Africa), a fund for and by sex workers (RUF), a long-standing government ally (the Netherlands) addressed a packed room. Moderated by CREA, speakers from the African Sex Workers Alliance (ASWA), an African regional sex worker-led network, and Uganda Network of Sex Worker-Led Organisations (UNESO) elaborated on practical examples of how the allyship between feminist funders and sex workers' rights groups works. Sex worker rights' activists from Uganda and Kenya on the panel shared their experiences and made recommendations on how to improve support for sex worker rights' movements. The diversity of the panel with activists, funders, a community-led fund and a government in conversation with each other

brought and connected the discourse to potential new allies within the feminist movement, and across funders and governments, opening up possibilities for more resources and placing sex workers' rights firmly in the feminist movement building agenda.

This event was not only highly attended but also broadly discussed as the highlight of the conference by many. The session's focus on how feminist movements can be better allies to the sex workers' rights movements was crucial, especially in the wake of increasing anti-rights mentality and opposition to the recognition and decriminalisation of sex work. This became particularly relevant following the opening remarks of the Conference by Caitlyn Novák, then-President of Hungary, who is known for her anti-rights positions, and Macky Sall, then-President of Senegal, who has been a long-time supporter of Senegal's anti-homosexuality laws and was known for his anti-democratic attempts at suppressing his political opposition and extending his last term in office.

The session links directly to CMI!'s vision and its movement-building and making-change strategies. The activity ensured structurally excluded activists' access to a space they may not ordinarily be invited to speak. From the making change angle, the visibility of sex worker rights within a feminist framework was critical at this event, as the Women Deliver Conference is traditionally an SRHR and "women's rights space" but is not necessarily feminist or sex worker-inclusive.

From our inception in 2015 the CMI! consortium through the inclusion of the sex worker-led RUF recognised the importance of including sex workers as a key constituency in our work and leveraging our power as an alliance of feminist organisations and funders to show up as an ally. With this session CMI! continued its advocacy and alliancebuilding by creating visibility of sex workers' issues in an international forum. The session effectively reached our target audience, the movable middle of feminist movements as well as funders and governments, and it visibly led to increased engagement between 'new allies' and representatives of the sex workers' movement.

Story of Change 2: Going deeper to confront Extractivism in Makassar, Indonesia

CMI's [Behind the Scenes of Extractives: Money, Power & Community Resistance Toolkit](#) has proved to be a powerful way to support community activists resisting extractives in Indonesia. Building on the launch of the toolkit and following workshops in 2022, JASS is now using the toolkit to go deeper by supporting young women from the JASS partner Forum Aktivist Perempuan Muda (FAMM Indonesia) to understand the ways in which extractive industries work, how they are financed, and where and with whom the power to change things sits. Nurfianalisa, a community activist from Solidaritas Perempuan-Anging Mammiri and FAMM Indonesia, shared after the series of workshop:

"Usually, the focus of discussions on extractivism is on the impact analysis on women. We do not typically focus on analysing the actors behind the impact. At the moment, things we observe are still only at the surface level. We must focus on going deeper into what and who is actually hidden, which is how the power analysis can help. This is what really helped me

and my community members because we did not have this understanding earlier. Developing this understanding has been transformative for us.”

Nurfianalisa, along with 19 other activists, was finally able to meet face-to-face in 2023, after a number of virtual processes facilitated by JASS Southeast Asia and FAMM. The workshop created space for young women members from several provinces to share their personal experiences of challenging extractivism. Participants mapped investment chains and actors within the extractivist projects that resulted in visible patterns across the country. The process was critical in identifying commonalities of their struggles and exchanging strategies to demand their rights.

Recently, Nurfianalisa and other community members, including [Pipi, whose story was featured in the Annual Report last year](#), responded to the deliberate attempts by the government and contractors - PT Banteng Laut and PT Boskalis International Indonesia (a subsidiary of Dutch-based Royal Boskalis Westminster) - to perpetrate acts of reprisals against them. These corporations continue to use the same strategies, creating trumped-up charges to criminalise those protesting against extractive projects. They are also spreading narratives portraying these communities as poor, backward, and “anti-development” on social and mainstream media. To respond, Nurfianalisa has been working with her community to spotlight the damaging impacts of an extractive model of development and seeking intervention from the National Commission on Violence Against Women in conflict resolution and for safeguarding women’s rights.

Nurfianalisa explains that through the use of the toolkit, women have recognised the power of organising with different groups of people united in a collective cause and have come together to collectively challenge extractivism in their communities. Nurfianalisa’s new skills and knowledge are helping her develop robust resistance strategies, including mobilising her community to build an impenetrable front.

“It is important to see that we have huge power because we, as women leaders and organisers, are the majority, and what we are up against is the minority. They may have power over capital, authority, and politics. But as activists and WHRDs, we need to know and see that there are a lot of things that we can do. These people dominate and have power over politics to discriminate and to take away things from women, so we need to strategise on how we can use our collective power to counter them,” says Nurfianalisa.

This story directly links to CMI’s movement-building strategy. The need to build collective power across movements and countries has surfaced as a critical future strategy for challenging extractivism. Therefore, the continued implementation of CMI’s extractives toolkit is directed towards cross-border movement building, with the goal of building anti-extractive activism and movements across the country and the region.

Story of Change - Fellowship as a Foundation of Change: Intersex Activism and Rights Recognition in Asia

In 2018 intersex activists representing organisations from ten Asian countries - Hong Kong (China), India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam – founded Intersex Asia (IA) which is the first regional network of Asian intersex organisations and activists. In the five years since, IA members have taken remarkable strides towards achieving their collective mission, as they work toward “*the promotion and protection of human rights of intersex people in Asia, [...] and to ensure that the rights to life, bodily integrity, physical autonomy and self-determination of intersex people are promoted and protected everywhere.*”

The group’s work contributes to significant gains made globally over the last decade by intersex activists. These gains have included positive changes to laws and policies that previously harmed intersex people in countries like South Africa, Australia, The Netherlands and Chile, for example. Adding to the momentum of this movement, IA works to challenge widespread stigmatisation, social isolation, and human rights violations against intersex people across the Asian region. These efforts are critical to securing the political, social, and legal rights of intersex people in countries where a lack of legal recognition prevents intersex individuals from having their births registered or their gender and sex markers accurately represented in legal documents. Through their educational and awareness-raising initiatives, IA is also helping to increase awareness and deepen understanding about biological variations among intersex people — efforts that are vital to preventing harmful medical practices like non-consensual surgeries and treatments on intersex infants and children.

IA strengthens the ability of member organisations to advocate for positive change within their national contexts. In Nepal, Campaign for Change (CFC) published a report on the “*Analysis of Nepali Legislations from Human Rights Perspective of Intersex People,*” identifying critical gaps in Nepali legislation that pose obstacles to the protection of human rights for intersex individuals. In the Philippines, Intersex Philippines and IA successfully advocated for the right of intersex individuals to change their names and gender markers in the civil register without requiring a judicial order. They did so by engaging with the Philippines Statistics Office (PSA) Legal Unit to address the access and benefits for intersex individuals under the Republic Act (RA) 9048. RA 9048 is a law in the Philippines that allows individuals to correct errors or change entries in their birth certificates. Through their consultation with the PSA Legal Unit, Intersex Philippines ensured their community's ability to access and benefit from the provisions of RA 9048. This collaborative effort played a role in advancing the understanding and recognition of intersex individuals' rights and needs within the legal frameworks in the country, but also helped to potentially set in motion positive changes in other political and legal contexts.

This story showcases the strength of resourcing (money strategy) in cascading successful social change. Financial support that IA receives from CMI! via Mama Cash also helps the network in their collective advocacy, education, and movement-building efforts, which are foundational to leveraging power for lobbying and advocacy. During the 2022-2023 period, this support helped the group expand their organisational capacity for research, advocacy, partnership and outreach, while sustaining and growing ongoing initiatives. Notably, IA’s third edition of its fellowship program provided a vital opportunity for young intersex individuals to gain leadership and advocacy skills while building community and growing the intersex rights movement across the region. Founding IA members and leaders also continued to raise awareness by sharing their powerful personal stories across numerous platforms, from

interviews with local media to keynote talks at international events like the World Pride 2023 Human Rights conference. These initiatives help to ensure that the next generation of intersex activists have the knowledge, platforms and spaces to voice their political agendas.

Story of Change: Justice for Structurally Excluded Women in Post-Crisis Malawi

The fault lines of inequality are revealed in crisis, leaving structurally excluded women and girls facing multiple and intersecting challenges. In 2023, Cyclone Freddy hit Malawi displacing over 500,000 people and destroying homes, shelter and livelihoods. Humanitarian actors actively responded to the crisis by setting up camps and providing basic needs. However, the distribution of humanitarian support employed a heteronormative approach, further marginalising structurally excluded women and girls, including those with disabilities and female sex workers (FSWs) across the 557 displacement camps.

In Mulanje district, Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) swiftly acted, engaging with women to have a better understanding of the crisis and mapping support needs for a movement-informed response. Two UAF-A grantee partner organisations supported this task: Extra Mile Development Foundation engaged with rural women and girls, including women with disabilities (WWDs) in the camps, while Liwonde Female Sex Workers' Alliance engaged with female sex workers (FSWs). Findings from these organisations revealed that women and girls, including those with disabilities and FSWs, were subject to extreme sexual exploitation and abuse by law enforcement officers and host communities in exchange for aid. Additionally, female sex workers faced heightened attacks from police due to the weaponisation of vagrancy laws.

Both organisations created space for dialogue, enhancing solidarity across different themes. In the different spaces, they engaged societal actors, including camp leaders, religious and traditional authorities, and the police, calling attention to existing intersecting layers of oppressions and their structural roots. They demanded a change in the administration of humanitarian aid during times of crisis, calling for specific considerations to be made for structurally excluded groups.

In response, camp leaders established reporting mechanisms for gender-based violence, including sexual violence ensuring inclusive support services for survivors, with a particular focus on women with disabilities and female sex workers. Societal actors and district officials also transformed their approach toward GBV by committing to support the justice system in holding perpetrators accountable and creating safe spaces for survivors, reminding law enforcement officers that sex work is legal in Malawi and their responsibility in providing protection to all people equally.

The organisations shared the need to further assess and interrogate typical humanitarian actors' practices, even when the crisis is acute, and how they are often exclusionary of already marginalised women's groups (FSW and WWD especially). Due to their heightened vulnerability, it is important for humanitarian actors to understand that the needs of FSW and WWD often extend beyond the provision of basic food items, water and shelter, and it is important for the feminist movement to facilitate that understanding and pursue its

incorporation into government driven response strategies. Additionally, while crisis often leads to fragmented responses within the feminist movement, the organisations agree that it provides an opportune time to creatively facilitate cross movement dialogues, ensuring that feminist issues are politicised and tabled for official engagement.

CHAPTER 4 PROGRESS

Progress of CMI! programme implementation continued to accelerate in 2023 after it had picked up steam in 2022. This can be seen in the data collected for the SCS and Women's Rights & Gender Equality (WR&GE) indicators. All organisations made their targets or were close to reaching them in terms of expenditures and implementation. There were some variations per country due to conflicts and security situations and members having to respond to the shifting needs of communities. In Afghanistan and Palestine, for example, projected grants could not be provided. In Yemen on the other hand, 7 more grants were made due to the rise in the Houthi movement and targeting of women and WHRDs. The data collected are showing that the movement building and lobbying and advocacy (L&A) efforts of partners in the past three years are starting to create impact. Alliances have been created, awareness campaigns rolled out, advocacy meetings organised with a multiplicity of political and social actors and knowledge products launched and disseminated. Cross-movement solidarity actions are quickly organised and mobilise a lot of support, such as the statement initiated by AWID- [There is no place for anti-trans narratives in the UN](#)- that was signed by more than 1700 organisations and individuals. Most L&A activities form part of a longer-term strategy, which means that the results aimed for and targeted impact will become visible at a later stage. Partners have however already been reporting successes as can be visible in outcome area 5 with 96 reports of political actors, social actors and donors supporting laws, policies and strategies promoting women's and girls' rights. Examples of these are illustrated in the Stories of Change above as well as in Annex III.

Cross-cutting themes of the framework

CMI! 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 2023 CMI! supported WHRDs who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. In many challenging and often ignored contexts this means that CMI! members are the only organisations providing support or rapid response funds to women human rights defenders and particularly those with multiple intersecting identities (e.g. disability, sex work, sexual orientation, gender identity, migrant status). These included **youth** and women land defenders addressing root causes of **climate change** and developing alternative feminist economic models.

Climate change is very closely linked to the two main themes of CMI!, gender-based violence and economic justice, as it can severely amplify gender inequalities by increasing GBV and

economic injustice with a disproportionate impact on women and girls that are already structurally excluded. In 2023 CMI! members continued their focus on the intersections of gender and climate change. UAF resourced WROs and WHRDs in Yemen, Palestine and Lebanon working at the intersection of gender justice and environmental and climate justice. These grants supported women-led efforts that address the water crisis, coastal erosion, sustainable livelihoods (seed preservation), the gendered impacts of the climate crisis and environmental degradation, and local solutions for conservation and adaptation. Strategies included awareness raising, public campaigns, research, documentation, advocacy and legal assistance. For JASS the work with land and territory WHRDs defending and reclaiming their communities' ancestral territories, and fighting against land exploitation very much links to the broader gender, climate and economic justice struggles. Activities included the first in-person South to South Exchange, held in Johannesburg with 28 land and territory defenders - indigenous women community leaders - from Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Malawi, Mexico, Philippines, South Africa and Zimbabwe, that fostered critical cross-movement alliance building and transnational solidarity. AWID organised a series of regional sharing circles to exchange on local and regional realities and strategies to advance feminist climate justice. These aim to support movement and community building, bringing together activists that are challenging dominant economic systems and working on sustainable feminist alternatives. UAF-Africa's movement building support created room for cross collaboration on issues relating to natural resource governance, environmental and climate justice, as well as land access. Following the cyclone Freddy crisis, an organisation of women entrepreneurs in Malawi was supported in their advocacy and awareness raising to women entrepreneurs and the wider public on how to prepare for the impacts of climate hazards. In addition, UAF-Africa advocated for the need for sustained environmental and climate justice resourcing in funders spaces, such as the EDGE Funders Conference in Berlin, Germany.

In 2023, CMI! supported young women and girls' initiatives through our grantmaking and accompaniment strategy, such as through Mama Cash and UAF-Africa. Young women are a key constituency of AWID with close to half of its members identifying as young feminists. CREA together with young people's groups developed a campaign - Flaws in Laws - to challenge the criminalisation of young people's sexuality in different countries in Asia. WO=MEN advocated for youth participation, such as on the official Dutch government delegation to CSW resulting in the first ever commitment to be followed up during the CSW in 2024.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

The challenges that structurally excluded communities faced in 2023 required CMI!'s sustained support and solidarity. In a time where oppressive governments and anti-rights actors actively marginalise women's rights and hinder gender equality advocacy - movement building emerges as a critical strategy. This includes fostering cross-movement collaborations, regional alliances, and cross-regional efforts which remain a crucial strategy for supporting the organising of structurally excluded women, girls, and non-binary, gender non-conforming, trans, and intersex people.

Through activities ranging from direct lobbying and advocacy, to organising movement building workshops or awareness raising campaigns, WROs and WHRDs supported by CMI!

have strengthened their movements and their advocacy. CMI! has also contributed to creating connections across movements and building alliances, and we have provided core financial support and rapid response grants to WHRDs and WROs, so that they can safely advance their innovative work.

Feminist movements are at the forefront of a remarkable surge in both influence and scale, actively engaging and holding political leaders accountable. At times this means steadfastly holding the line and preventing the opposition from passing regressive laws or resisting the tightening of civic space. In such instances, the act of preventing regressive change then emerges as a significant achievement in and of itself, underscoring the resilience and strength needed to maintain the status quo.

At times of seismic shifts with significant changes in governments, systems and funding of feminist movements, CMI! has been able to leverage political, financial and social infrastructure to counter harmful forces, laws, policies and practices. Where other funders have been stepping back, CMI! continued to step up with support, resources and solidarity for structurally excluded communities. Where opposing forces have tried to silence them, CMI! uplifted the voices of women, girls and non-binary and gender non-conforming, trans, and intersex people and ensured that they have access to and can participate in key decision making table.

