

SUMMARY: MID-TERM REVIEW 2023



Count Me In! consortium

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INTRODUCTION

Count Me In! (CMI!) is a strategic partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) under the Power of Voices (PoV) framework. CMI! aims to contribute to a gender-equal and just world where all women, girls, and non-binary, gender non-conforming, trans and intersex people enjoy their rights fully and live to their full potential.

CMI! supports locally-led movements to be resilient so that they can leverage their collective power and engender sustainable and systemic change at all levels, from the local to the global, and from the global to the local. CMI!'s complementary strategies are implemented across 26 countries in the Global South. CMI! consists of six members and two strategic allies that are comprised of funder organisations (Mama Cash, Red Umbrella Fund, Urgent Action Fund for Feminist Activism and Urgent Action Fund-Africa) and feminist international women's rights organisations (AWID, CREA, JASS, and WO=MEN).

From March to October 2023, CMI! embarked on a mid-term review (MTR). The Feminist Collective, an independent team of feminist evaluators based in the Global South, conducted the MTR to assess the contribution of the CMI! programme in achieving its goals, and analyse and articulate the effectiveness, relevance and sustainability of the programme. The MTR also explored ways that CMI! can adapt and improve its strategies, and includes recommendations to strengthen CMI!'s learning agenda, as well as insights into how CMI! can best leverage its strategic partnership with the MFA.

METHODOLOGY

The Feminist Collective used an evaluation approach that is firmly rooted in feminist monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) principles, aligned with the evaluation criteria used by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Feminist Collective applied a mixed-method approach which combined Contribution Analysis and Most Significant Stories of Change (MSC) as the guiding frameworks. Quantitative data analysis was used to calculate demographic contributions, percentage contributions towards the outcomes, and through partners.

In addition to desktop analysis, data collection methods included:

SURVEYS	REGIONAL DIALOGUES	KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS
<p>At least 138 partners were contacted. 54 responses were received in total, broken down as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Africa (16)• South West Asia and North Africa (SWANA) (14)• Asia (14)• Latin America (10)	<p>Regional Dialogues were held for a total of 52 participants as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Nigeria), 27 participants• Asia, 16 participants (India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Indonesia)• Latin America, 9 participants (Honduras, Guatemala)	<p>Total of 36 interviews: 12 x Partners (Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, Cameroon, Benin, Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt)</p> <p>20 additional interviews: CMI! Members, Working Groups and the Lead Group; External Partners; MFA representatives</p>

Some partners were excluded from participating in surveys, interviews and regional dialogues to ensure their security and need for full anonymity. The Feminist Collective worked closely with CMI! members to address the safest way to reach as many CMI! partners as possible and to mitigate against potential risks to their security, including by, for example, engaging in digital security and safe file sharing protocols.

The analysis of primary and secondary data led to the identification of CMI! themes which were mapped onto a findings, conclusions and recommendations matrix. Data analysis utilised triangulation throughout to verify the validity and consistency of findings across different respondent types and sources. One sense-making workshop was conducted, following an initial round of data analysis, to ensure that CMI! members were able to participate in determining the validity of initial findings and to discuss key learnings. The workshop contributed to creating a robust linkage between the evaluation process and learning within CMI! and resulted in a deepened understanding of the data collected, as well as contributions to a refined Theory of Change (ToC).

CMI! THEORY OF CHANGE

CMI!'s five-year strategic objective is to ensure that political actors, societal actors, and donors at the local, national, regional, and global levels take action to recognise, protect, and fulfil the human rights of all women, girls, and non- binary, gender non-conforming, trans and intersex people, as a result of strong and autonomous feminist movements holding them to account. CMI!'s core constituencies are: 1) women's rights organisations (WROs) led by structurally excluded women and girls and 2) women human rights defenders (WHRDs).

Building strong and autonomous movements is at the heart of CMI!'s work toward enabling sustainable change. Three core strategies – Money, Movements and Making Change – mutually strengthen CMI! members' and partners' capacities to engage in lobbying and advocacy that results in legal and social norm change in relation to women's rights and gender equality.

Money strategy

CMI!'s Money strategy involves flexible and responsive grantmaking targeted at WROs and WHRDs, as well as participatory grantmaking that shifts decision-making on how to support their communities to structurally excluded women and girls. Grantmaking includes long-term core grants as well as rapid response funds, which serve to respond to unexpected moments for mobilisation or opportunities for advocacy. These funds have been directed specifically at WROs and WHRDs addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and economic justice for women, as well as holistic security and collective care needs of WHRDs and WROs.

Movements strategy

CMI!'s Movements strategy entails their movement-building work towards creating strong and autonomous feminist movements. This includes, for example:

- ★ Strengthening safety, well-being and resilience of WROs and WHRDs, including attention to digital and physical security, holistic health and wellbeing, and safety and security tools
- ★ Capacity strengthening, focussed both on CMI! partners as well as CMI! members, which are undertaken through participatory consultation processes to determine the needs and priorities of partners, including, e.g., institutional strengthening, programmatic activities, and mentorship and accompaniment

- ★ Strengthening strategic responses to opposition and anti-rights forces that seek to undermine gender equality and women’s rights globally and delegitimise the work led by CMI! partner constituencies, including, e.g., strategic communications, knowledge-building and awareness-raising, cross-movement alliance-building, monitoring, research and mapping of anti-gender and anti-rights movements
- ★ Cross-movement solidarity building to connect partners across countries and regions through various exchanges, dialogues and fora, both online and in-person.

Making Change strategy

CMI!’s Making Change strategy has involved advancing lobbying and advocacy (L&A) for sustainable investment (towards donors), L&A for law and policy reform (towards political actors) and L&A for social norm change (towards societal actors). This strategy includes, for example:

- ★ Funding L&A initiatives undertaken by CMI! partners at the national level
- ★ Presenting evidence on how funding WROs led by structurally excluded women and girls leads to structural, sustainable change in donor and multi-stakeholder networks
- ★ Lobbying and advocacy directly with donors
- ★ Capacity building and strategic support for CMI! partners to effectively engage with UN processes and mechanisms
- ★ Drawing attention to the security and protection of WHRDs
- ★ Development of resources and knowledge beyond the national level (regional and global) for L&A targeted at donors, political actors and societal actors to address discrimination, gender-based violence, economic injustice and criminalisation

The countries covered by CMI!’s work:

AFRICA		ASIA	LATIN AMERICA	SOUTH WEST ASIA AND NORTH AFRICA	
Burkina Faso	Nigeria	Bangladesh	Guatemala	Afghanistan	Palestinian Territories
Ethiopia	Rwanda	Nepal	Honduras	Egypt	Tunisia
Kenya	Senegal	India		Iraq	Yemen
Malawi	South Sudan	Indonesia		Jordan	
Mali	Uganda			Lebanon	
Mozambique	Zimbabwe				

MAIN FINDINGS

Relevance

This section explores CMI!’s relevance through a reflection on CMI!’s ToC and, linked to that, how clearly CMI!’s interventions, goals and implementation are aligned with partners’ and stakeholder needs, and the

priorities underpinning the programmatic interventions. Relevance comprises four main dimensions: responding to needs, policies and priorities; being sensitive and responsive to context; quality of design; and responsiveness over time. Key findings:

1. CMI!'s ToC and interventions are highly responsive to context, which is currently characterised by the rise in authoritarianism and anti-rights movements, as well as crisis as a consistent state of organising. The consortium's adaptability is grounded in a feminist political analysis and bolstered by engagements with partners and other strategic actors.

The escalation of anti-rights agendas, discourses and sentiments among political actors, at local, national and global levels are present in the contexts of CMI! partners' work. These anti-rights trends shape governments' stances towards structurally excluded women and girls, leading to increased risk for WHRDs and WROs. 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 governance. Conditions of significant uncertainty require an adaptive, learn-as-you-go approach in terms of programming. WROs and WHRDs have indicated that coming together to “hold the line” in the face of multiple intersecting crises has forced cross-movement solidarity, greater integration of care into their work, and innovations toward shaping and developing strategies. At the same time, structurally excluded women and girls continue to bear the brunt of these intersecting crises in their lived realities. This contrasts with larger, more established WROs that are better connected to larger funds and, therefore, less fragile in the midst of ongoing challenges.

The persisting challenges presented by the context have led CMI! to maintain their focus on supporting solidarity building, knowledge exchange between regions, awareness raising and capacity strengthening. These remain extremely valid as mechanisms for responding to the realities of structurally excluded groups. At the midpoint of the programme, CMI! reported that they had enabled the creation and strengthening of up to 1533 cross-movement alliances globally. These efforts have proven the importance of cross-movement alliance building to claim or defend civic space in contexts of increasing anti-rights opposition. This validates the relevance of CMI!'s ToC given the changes in the socio-political context.

Due to security concerns, the evaluation did not engage directly with WHRDs at risk who had been supported through the rapid response grants. However, the increase in the allocation of security and protection grants indicates the heightened insecurity WHRDs are experiencing.

2. CMI!'s ToC is grounded in a feminist political analysis and is responsive to the visions, strategies, leadership and organisation of structurally excluded WHRDs and WROs in their respective contexts. CMI!'s work across the strategies of Money, Movements and Making Change correlate with and support the needs and priorities of agendas driven by structurally excluded women and girls.

The MTR affirmed that CMI!'s **Money strategy** (from CMI! 1.0 to 2.0), is central to strengthening feminist movements. By directly moving money to structurally excluded women and girls, CMI! was able to respond to the most critical needs articulated by their primary partners. Financial support was provided through diverse funding modalities such as rapid response funding (crisis, security, emerging opportunities), core, flexible and long-term funding (to support movements to strengthen and consolidate their infrastructure and their gains over time) and participatory grantmaking (that ensures structurally excluded women and girls make decisions about funding coming to their movements). Funding from CMI! members allowed partners to advance their objectives related to organisational strengthening at the local, national and regional level, empowering women's voices, helping to defend human rights and advancing advocacy strategies.

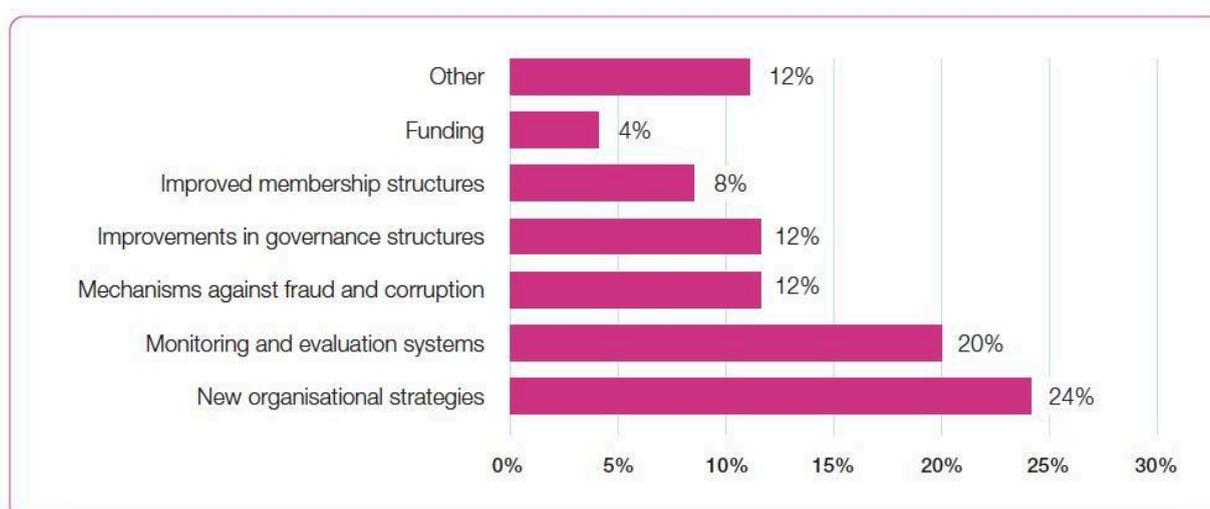
Across all the data sources, there is evidence that CMI! had increased the diversity of groups being resourced. CMI! was able to reach a diverse range of structurally excluded women and girls, such as constituencies of LBTQI+, sex workers, young feminists, migrant workers, land rights defenders, indigenous communities, disability rights activists, among others. Other highlights from this strategy include:

- ★ Twenty-eight percent (28%) of respondents across all regions indicated that funding from CMI! members helped build donor confidence and that they have received funding from new donors (including, for example, the Global Fund for Women and UHAI).
- ★ In the Latin America region, WROs reported that flexible funding enabled organisational strengthening at local, national and regional levels. Across all regions, WHRDs and WROs reported that they were able to deliberately put in place security plans, cutting-edge tools and processes that ultimately support the wellbeing, safety and resilience of WHRDs such that issues of insecurity and absence of wellbeing strategies did not stall movement-building activities.
- ★ In Egypt, groups indicated that whereas previously donors were used to working with certain organisational entities, some donors started to increase their partnerships and diversify the groups they support. This result can be linked to CMI!'s work in expanding donor confidence in WROs led by structurally excluded women and girls.

The evidence confirms that direct resourcing to structurally excluded women and girls has nurtured and sustained them at critical moments. CMI!'s approach to deliberately fund groups that may not necessarily receive funding elsewhere contributed to visibilising and amplifying their influence and organising capacities, in turn increasing their capacity to raise funds from additional sources. Whilst respondents affirmed the positive and necessary impact of CMI!'s Money strategy, they also acknowledged that accessing sustainable resourcing outside of CMI!'s support remains a challenge. CMI! accounted for this challenge in its ToC, and addresses it through their collective donor L&A work that will be discussed under the Making Change strategy.

With respect to CMI!'s **Movement strategy**, the MTR found that CMI!'s resourcing support has played a significant part in strengthening the institutional arrangements of WROs (whether informal or formal) and enhanced their capacities to collectively confront injustice (see Figure). Significantly, most of the institutional strengthening focussed on new organisational strategies (24%) and monitoring and evaluation systems (20%). Mechanisms against fraud and corruption and improved governance structures were at 12% respectively. Only 4% of grantee-partners focussed their institutional strengthening efforts on funding strategies.

Figure: Institutional capacities developed across CMI! partners (from survey data)



CMI!'s Money and Movements strategies have, in combination, resulted in increased capacities, provided support for wellbeing, safety and resilience needs, and enabled WROs to develop and advance their L&A strategies. Specific activities carried out by partners in this period include, for example, leadership, and capacity building and training interventions (e.g., courses for political facilitators, feminist movement building schools), membership meetings and creating of safe spaces for members, elaboration of communications tools (e.g., videos, toolkits, radio spots, social media pieces), and political accompaniments for advocacy at different spaces, including local, regional and global meetings.

Increased institutional capacities of partners have also contributed to their agility to respond to the complex web of oppression and repressions within their contexts. From baseline to midline, the data reaffirms that the ever-present need to respond and organise to crises and emergencies has resulted in cycles of insecurity, fatigue and burnout amongst activists. At the individual level, the expectation of resilience of WHRDs puts pressure on activists to bounce back, to adapt and to continue 'business as usual'. Apart from well-being, safety and resilience interventions at the individual level, CMI! support to WROs to prioritise holistic security and wellbeing at the collective level has positively impacted such groups. CMI! knowledge products and tools such as the *Feminist Republik and Healing Justice Framework* (JAF-Africa) played an important role in supporting and capacitating WROs and WHRDs in their movement building and alliance building work.

CMI! resourcing enabled the creation and strengthening of different types of alliances at national and local levels. During the MTR, multiple examples of new and strengthened alliances emerged. CMI! partners also shared how changes in context acted as a catalyst for cross-movement alliance building. The underlying driver for such alliances was the urgency to coalesce around common agendas, particularly in contexts of growing anti-rights movements and shrinking civic space.

While the evaluation findings indicate that WROs are well coordinated at national and international levels, there is room for strengthening coordination and organising at the regional level. While some regional level alliance building is happening, for example, the organising by CMI! partners of regional meetings in some regions (such as Latin America), the impact of these alliances was fairly nascent at the time of the mid-term review. Hence, there are opportunities to strengthen coordination and mobilisation around common agendas at regional levels, particularly around cross-cutting issues, including GBV and economic justice.

The relevance of the **Making Change** strategy is reflected in achieved results described in more detail in the following section (Effectiveness). The changes and transformations brought about by CMI! partners validate the ToC in many ways. Firstly, the causal relationship between funding and capacity strengthening, and the strength of movements or organisations was affirmed in all primary and secondary sources of data. Resourced (financial and non-financial) WROs are then able to play a critical role in defending space and influencing political, societal actors, and donors in advancing their change agendas.

Effectiveness

This section examines the degree to which CMI! is on track to achieve programme outcomes linked to the MFA indicators to inform planning for 2024-2025 and where necessary make adjustments to targets. Key findings:

1. The evaluation affirms that CMI! is effective and that CMI!'s collective work is on course to fulfilling its mission of strengthening autonomous feminist movements. Findings indicate that significant changes have been made at all levels. CMI! has met and surpassed programme targets. A key contributing factor for this achievement is CMI!'s unique coordination and collaboration among members to leverage their influence as a collective. The consortium's ability to act as a consolidated force and to leverage the diverse thematic expertise of its members, and their expansive feminist and rights-based networks around the world cannot be underestimated.

CMI! INDICATOR	BASELINE VALUE	TARGET BY MIDLINE	ACTUAL BY MIDLINE
# of WHRDs who received support from CMI members, with increased L&A capacities and/or with new or strengthened holistic security approaches	0	752	5184
# of WROs who receive support from CMI members with increased L&A capacities, strengthened and/or new alliances, and/or new or strengthened holistic security approaches	0	578	1533
# of times that WHRDs and WROs (including CMI! members) create and defend spaces for feminist demands at different scales (local, national, regional or global)	0	88	187
# of laws, policies and strategies blocked, adopted and improved	0	101	1736

- The evaluation finds that CMI! has effectively strengthened movements led by structurally excluded women and girls by increasing direct funding, providing resources through movement-building support, and advocating for more and better funding to these movements. CMI! has further proven effective in advancing their priorities through thematic work focussed on economic justice and GBV. To supplement and elevate achievements by partners, CMI! harnessed their collective influence to amplify the voices and viewpoints of feminist movements in strategic policy and advocacy spaces. This engagement extends to donors, governments and other political actors, enabling CMI! to influence their policies and practices. The consortium model fosters effective cross-movement dialogue and exchange between structurally excluded communities, reinforcing movement strengthening and alliance building.

Strengthened capacities to defend or create space for feminist demands

Across all regions, partners reported that they engaged in activities to **respond to shrinking civic and democratic space**. This is in the context of increased criminalisation of human rights defenders, including Indigenous people, LBTQI+ communities and sex workers. Anti-rights trends (bills, discourses, tactics, etc.) and authoritarianism in different countries have resulted in backlash and targeting of human rights defenders, as mentioned earlier. Amid these threats to feminist organising, CMI! members are defending and creating civic space, for example:

- ★ In Lebanon, CMI! partners organised a feminist forum in 2022 in Beirut and invited feminist content creators from all over the region. This assisted in building a feminist network that can push back against mainstream narratives related to shrinking civic space and security of WHRDs, particularly for

marginalised communities of refugee, migrant and trans activists. Partnerships and networking are part of a very crucial strategy to achieve goals for these local partners.

- ★ In Latin America, WROs are working to strengthen women's spaces and organisations by providing them with tools to confront the multiple forms of violence they face, not only against an extractivist model but also against the shrinking civic space. CMI! has been supporting such organisational spaces to create opportunities for WROs and WHRDs to come together, express themselves as WHRDs, create common agendas, and organise for L&A to influence communities and local governments.

At the global level, CMI! and its members have been key in advancing feminist context analysis and knowledge, monitoring and **countering anti-rights narratives and forces** and holding the line for collective feminist movements advocacy. These strategies and ways of working have built on work from AWID toward building and strengthening movement alliances across national/regional/global levels to counter anti-rights narratives and forces in strategic spaces, whether through research and knowledge building, cross-movement strategising or L&A. CMI!'s contribution to opposition work is to reframe narratives and delegitimise oppressive values and belief systems in a context in which anti-rights actors, backed by obscure funding, are exerting influence in international spaces as well as domestic politics.

Strengthened capacities to influence political and societal actors, and donors

There are numerous examples in the data of advocacy efforts led by CMI! members and partners at the local and national levels on multiple aspects of GBV and economic justice, including rights, policies and practices related to bodily autonomy, gender, sexuality, land, labour, taxation etc. While it is important to note that some of these efforts by WHRDs and WROs were initiated pre-CMI! the support, accompaniment and leveraging of cross-movement building initiatives have led, with the advent of CMI! support, to examples of **increased governmental and political support** for the rights and demands of structurally excluded women and girls. Examples include:

- In Africa: The sex workers movement in Uganda had dialogues with members of parliament on changing problematic clauses within the Sexual Offences Bill, which brought about amendments. In Kenya, WROs have secured the establishment of stand-alone courts for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence cases to reduce the backlog of cases in mainstream courts. In Zimbabwe, a bill was passed that grants teachers maternity leave, as a result of coordinated, cross-sector advocacy.
- In Asia: Amendments to the Law on Sexual Violence Crimes in 2022 (Indonesia), policies around the protection of natural resources and the environment, and policies around reservations for trans persons (India). In Bangladesh, WROs reported that the consistent campaigning of feminist movements has resulted in some positive policies and practices, for example, the establishment of a One Stop Crisis Center for survivors of GBV.

At the national level, CMI!'s work has strengthened partnerships between civil society and government through its support of lobbying and advocacy initiatives among partner WROs. At the regional level, this is evident through achievements such as learning exchanges and generative relationships formed between WROs and judiciary, government representatives and through campaigns and capacity building initiatives that are successfully leading to increased representation of women in government (for example, in Zimbabwe and Nepal). This is based on the premise that building relationships is the first step in successful influencing.

Across all regions of CMI!'s work, the data sets affirm **increased awareness** amongst various actors (political, societal and donors) on the issues and priorities of structurally excluded women and girls. However, particularly for political actors, the evidence does not necessarily affirm a causal relationship with these same actors being equally willing to take active steps to promote the rights of women and girls. There are indeed some examples in the data analysed of political actors being willing to act. However, respondents during the evaluation expressed frustration that there was not necessarily a linear relationship between the awareness

raising and skill-building work, and that such outcomes took time to yield results. Where there were some positive outcomes, it was clear that partners had built on interventions initiated under CMI! 1.0, which has contributed to social norm change. Advocacy work by partners was supported by CMI! member efforts. Areas of advocacy support include introduction trainings to policy spaces, strategic communication, personal development and self-care training, the establishment of legal aid support mechanisms to handle GBV cases in Kenya, and a legal audit of laws that affect transgender persons in Uganda.

At the global level, CMI! as a collective brought feminist movement actors in dialogue with governments and philanthropy to raise awareness about the critical role of feminist movements and the importance of increasing political and financial support to them. For example, CMI! supported sex workers' rights activists to participate at the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York in 2021 and 2022 and to raise their advocacy agendas, including addressing governments, UN agencies and donors at events co-organised with the Dutch government and other government and civil society organisations. CMI! also developed and disseminated knowledge products and tools to support movement actors' L&A and alliance-building work, such as AWID's *Rights at Risk* – a trends report on anti-rights forces and feminist advocacy efforts. The report has been used to inform representatives of governments and UN agencies and UN human rights mandate holders, among others. Moreover, CMI!'s collective L&A has been effective in influencing the MFA and other progressive governments, especially in the global North, to become genuine supporters of women's rights, not just in the context of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), but in the full range of social, economic, cultural and political rights, all of which have a gender dimension.

The strategies needed to influence political actors, societal actors and donors to actively promote the rights of women and girls require complex, multi-sector and cross-movement approaches. Across regions, such actors have increased awareness and capacity to promote women's and girls' rights, as a result of the work done by WROs. However, as noted by partners, few of these actors are yet taking action in a committed way.

Strong and autonomous movements

CMI! resourcing has led to partners' strengthened institutional capacities and increased safety, wellbeing and resilience (of both WROs and WHRDs), which feminist movements define as necessary for "strong and autonomous" movements (i.e. constituency-led, articulated and resourced movements). Evaluation participants noted that an increase in **cross-movement alliance-building** as a strategy to counter backlash and tackle crises and the existence of learning and self-care spaces are characteristics of strong movements. As a result of core, long-term, flexible and rapid response funding, partners were able to initiate and participate in increased cross-movement alliances that have enabled coherence and cohesiveness in the coordination of their advocacy and the articulation of their political agendas among a variety of target groups. For example:

- ★ In Nepal, the establishment of a network of women working in the entertainment sector is covering more and more districts and providing a space for the women to organise and carry out their own negotiations and collective bargaining with employers. They also advocate with local government officials. An increase in coordination and autonomy is an indication that the movement is stronger. The network is self-led within the sex worker-led movement and strengthens the connection between the sex worker-led movement and labour rights.
- ★ In Burkina Faso, a campaign called "my life, my body" that started as a reaction to a rape case, received extensive media exposure throughout the region. The importance of this campaign is that it expanded the discourse on bodily autonomy to invite critical reflection on problematic societal attitudes concerning gender and sexuality which serve to normalise and perpetuate sexual assault. Therefore, instead of limiting the discussion to rape, which despite efforts continues to be pervasive in society, the discussion has moved towards considerations of a rape culture. It changed how the public views women's bodies and rape. This campaign happened

thanks to a network of organisations that connected to advance a common agenda and is illustrative of social norm change.

Backlash (and shrinking space) has also required **cross-issue and cross-movement alliance building** to challenge the political context. For example, in Indonesia the series of repressive laws, including those related to corruption, natural resources and the criminalisation of LBTQI+ activists, has brought together and consolidated diverse movements, manifesting in protests in the country. However, responses to the protests have taken the form of repressive measures including detention and police violence; leading activists to rethink tactics. Hence, localised responses provide opportunities to raise awareness on common interest campaigns that then link up nation-wide and even internationally, to resist authoritarianism.

A politically volatile context means that what in one moment might be an opportunity, may be a risk or threat in another. In reflections on the nature of autonomous movements, partners identified **safe space** as a critical characteristic. Safe spaces for learning, strategising and self-care were identified as pivotal for movement strengthening. Respondents reported that these spaces strengthened their leadership, supporting them to work on their agendas, building collective care and planning together to advance their agendas.

CMI!'s contribution to strong and autonomous movements is also evident in the way that WROs were able to advance their agendas for change from **local into global** and from **global to local**. For example, in 2021, CMI! worked with other international feminist and women's rights organisations to condemn exclusion of Afghan women from key mechanisms to address Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis. The outcome of this collective action was improved coordination among feminists advocating in different countries, and ongoing dialogue among Afghan women and international feminist and women's rights NGOs. The evidence illustrates how partners have strengthened their voices (alliances), resisted oppressive forces of power and taken steps to advance in claiming their rights in precarious organising contexts.

Leveraged collective influence

CMI! members have a strong and visible global presence, with influential and trusted relationships with donors, intergovernmental institutions and other key stakeholders, and reputations for expertise informed by lived realities of structurally excluded women and girls. Since the inception of the programme, CMI! has leveraged this positioning towards effective global advocacy and donor influencing, which has been a central pillar of activity within the Making Change strategy. The evaluation suggests that, second to that of its grantmaking, CMI!'s **impact through donor influencing** work is one of CMI!'s biggest contributions at the global scale towards the strengthening and sustainability of feminist movements. CMI!'s global advocacy gains include:

- ★ The Alliance for Feminist Movements, a multi-stakeholder initiative that addresses the critical need to increase and strengthen political commitments in support of and funding for feminist activism. A coordinated and collective effort by CMI! has meant that throughout the ideation, design and formation of the Alliance, CMI! priority constituencies are actively engaged and inform the Alliance's agenda.
- ★ The Dutch MFA committed to a Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP) in 2022. CMI! has advocated for integration of CMI! objectives into policy frameworks and plans to continue to play a key role in ensuring that the FFP (and other policy instruments) lives up to its ambitious goals and accounts for the realities of structurally excluded women and girls globally and particularly in the Global South.
- ★ The EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, a multi-year partnership aimed at eliminating violence against women and girls which has channelled 73% of its funding allocated for civil society to women's rights organisations. CMI! contributed to these outcomes through its advocacy during development of the initiative, and continues to engage in its Global Reference Group.

CMI!'s influence in its global advocacy work stems from a position of expertise and close connectedness to feminist movements at national and sub-national levels. The latter is legitimised through the existence of real, trust-based, genuine and long-term relationships between CMI! members and their partners. The evaluation found that CMI! has, through a committed strategic focus on networking, partnership and relationship building across multiple stakeholders, been able to support feminist movements. By bringing into global advocacy spaces the insights, strategies, concerns and challenges of structurally excluded women and girls, CMI! has facilitated increased buy-in among donors, including bilateral donors. This has supported the overall agenda of CMI!'s work.

Sustainability

In reflecting on sustainability, the evaluators considered the question in terms of the continuation of benefits or outcomes of the work undertaken by CMI! and partners. The MTR found that:

1. In contexts of crises, CMI! partners identified the vibrancy and health of their organisations and movements as a critical pillar of sustainability, and that CMI! addresses these.

Grantee-partners highlighted the importance of funding for long-term sustainability. Notwithstanding the importance of funding, the sustainability of the work of their movements was dependent on:

- achieving systemic social change and transformation
- sustaining the power they have right now, i.e. hold the line, and
- their ability to keep going amidst repression or backlash.

Partners noted that all of these elements are present in their collaboration with CMI!. These reflections are already captured in CMI! learning and insights.

2. CMI!'s inclusive approach contributes to sustainability.

CMI!'s prioritisation of structurally excluded women and girls (and their movements/organisations) addresses the “leave no one behind” principle: CMI! builds the capacities and confidence of grantee-partners to engage and work with other donors in future. By directly funding these groups, CMI! ensures that a pathway is created for marginalised groups to experience the ongoing positive benefits as well as trade-offs beyond their relationship with CMI!.

3. There is evidence that CMI! has built an enabling environment for inclusivity and justice for structurally excluded women and girls.

CMI! does so by supporting the L&A efforts of their partners, as well as leveraging their positionality to influence donor spaces, and counter anti-rights narratives that might impact on the leadership and organising agendas of structurally excluded women and girls. In this way, CMI! has worked towards building capacity and commitment from donors, political and societal actors to create and uphold an enabling environment for the rights of structurally excluded women and girls.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on key findings in relation CMI!'s relevance and effectiveness, the evaluators offered several recommendations:

- ★ The consortium should create more opportunities for CMI! members, partners and constituencies to engage with the subject of crisis, to share how it affects their work and informs their strategies, and to generate collective knowledge, learnings and possibly agendas on effective feminist responses to crises. The consortium should continue working with partners to build on their (including CMI!'s) responses to crises and deepen learning on how crises are shifting and the resulting feminist tactics and processes that CMI! and partners are using to respond to these ongoing threats.
- ★ CMI! should continue its current approach to understanding and documenting changes in context, particularly in times of crisis. CMI! should use this understanding, documentation, knowledge and learning to advocate to the MFA for feminist MEL that captures the multiple ways in which movements are advancing their change agendas.
- ★ The consortium should continue their thought leadership role and share best practices on safety and security of WHRDs and WROs, for which CMI! and its members are recognised and respected among civil society, policy makers and funders alike.
- ★ CMI! should deepen regional and cross-regional movement and alliance building. Under this umbrella, there is an opportunity for different movements to learn, share and exchange how they are working to strengthen their movements and create changes.
- ★ Given the successes of CMI!'s donor influencing work, the consortium should continue to leverage their positioning to challenge and influence donors to improve their practices based on the evidence documented by CMI!. Importantly, CMI! should continue to consider strategies for mitigating the risks related to the disconnect between donor agendas and the agendas of structurally excluded women and girls, to ensure they remain aligned.

