

IWDA INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S
DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY

PACIFIC
FEMINIST FUND

URGENT ACTION
FUND
FUNDACIÃO DE APOIO ÀS MULHERES
ASSA E FEMCISG

**Resourcefull
collective**

Principles of Gender-transformative Giving in Australian Philanthropy

July 2024



Resourcefull collective

The Principles of Gender-transformative Giving

**WHERE
THE MONEY
GOES:
TO WHOM &
TO WHAT**

**HOW YOU
FUND:
GRANT
MECHANICS**

**HOW YOU
SHOW UP
IN YOUR
PARTNERSHIPS**

**WHO IS
GIVING:
YOU ARE PART
OF THE
CHANGE**

Background

The **Principles of Gender-transformative Giving** were developed by the ResourceFULL Collective. They were tested and refined through a series of ‘Curated Conversations’ – intimate, curated spaces for Australian feminist philanthropists, gender equality advocates, and Pacific feminist movement-leaders to come together and share good practices in Gender-transformative Giving, reflect on barriers to change, and find practical solutions.

What is the ResourceFULL Collective?

The ResourceFULL Collective is a group of feminist not-for-profit organisations: International Women’s Development Agency, Pacific Feminist Fund, and Urgent Action Fund - Asia and Pacific.

The ResourceFULL Collective works together to expand the community of Australian philanthropists practicing Gender-transformative Giving, and to move greater financial resources to feminist movements in our region.



IWDA is a feminist organisation based in Melbourne, Australia. IWDA resources diverse women’s rights organisations primarily in Asia and the Pacific and contributes to global feminist movements to advance our vision of gender equality for all.



The Pacific Feminist Fund is for and by Pacific feminists and the Pacific feminist movement, responding to needs as defined by them.

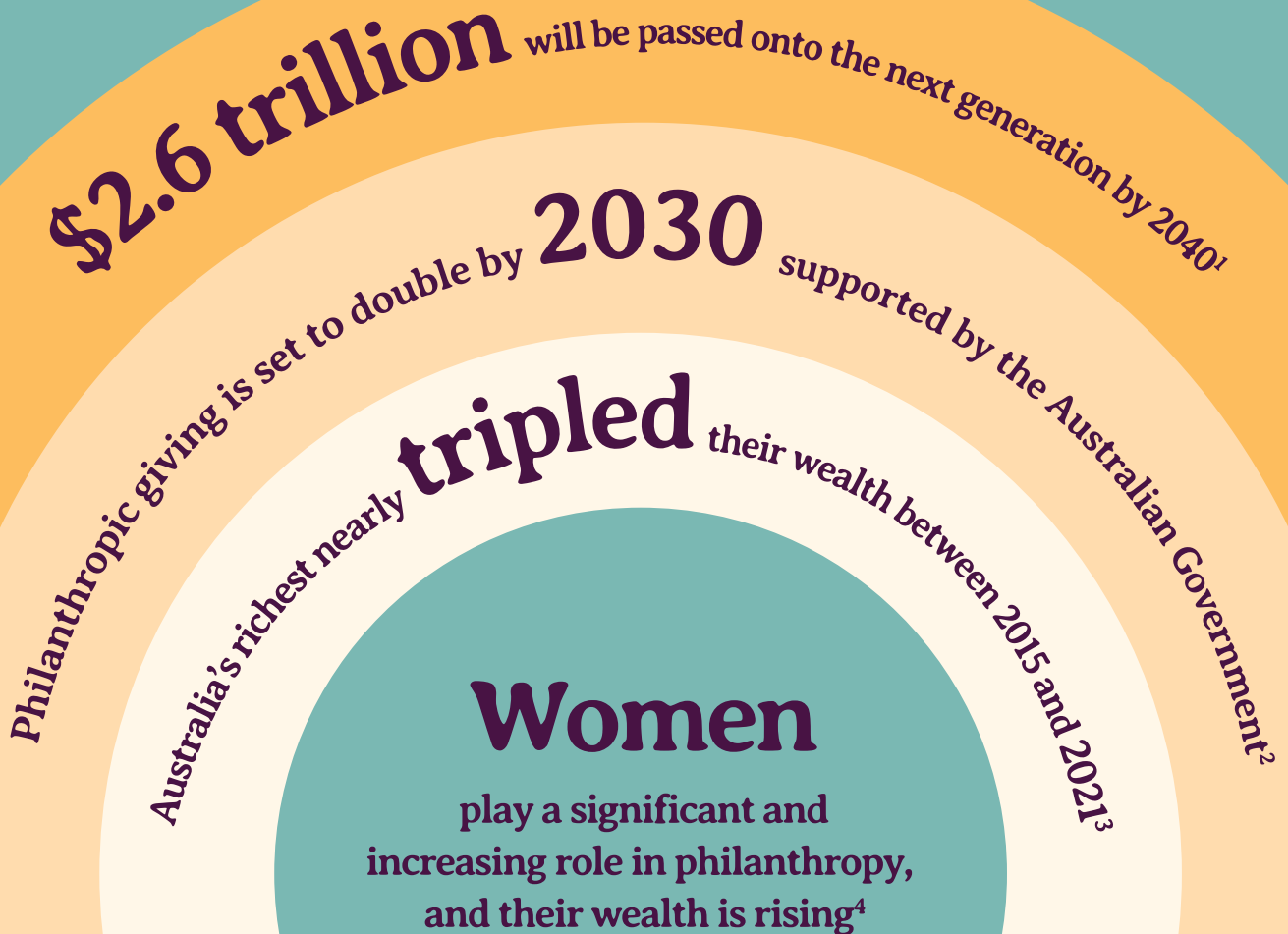


UAF A&P is a feminist fund supporting the safety and wellbeing of women, trans and non-binary human rights defenders, and activists taking bold risks. We provide rapid-response grants, and co-create and support solidarity networks in the region.

We are at a significant juncture in change-making philanthropy in Australia

Without significant change, it will take another **134 years** to achieve global gender equality.⁵ But trail-blazing philanthropists are working to accelerate change. With a shift towards more **flexible, trust-based and core funding** to the movements and organisations on the frontlines of the push for change, cutting-edge philanthropists are focused on fundamentally **transforming the**

systems that have allowed inequality to endure for too long.⁶ This is a critical moment for Australian philanthropy to harness that momentum and embrace the **Principles of Gender-transformative Giving**. We invite Australian philanthropists to draw on these Principles to guide funding decisions and practices, contributing to systemic social change.



The Origins of the Principles of Gender-transformative Giving

While many of the Gender-transformative Giving Principles are recognised as **best practice** philanthropic giving, it's important to acknowledge their roots in **feminist movements**.

Why? Because while there are many misconceptions of feminism, at its heart, feminism recognises that gender inequality is fundamentally caused by power imbalances, is intersectional by nature– that is, intertwined with other forms of inequality and discrimination– and continues to be perpetuated by unjust systems.

Feminist approaches are therefore **intersectional, power-shifting, and systems-transforming** – they get to the root of what causes gender inequality to create lasting change.

The Principles of Gender-transformative Giving embrace these central tenets of feminist approaches and consider their practical application to funding relationships – both in **what** and **how** we fund.

Why tell this story? We recognise these roots, connections and contributions as a way of driving change for gender equality. History has too often erased the contributions and achievements of women– particularly First Nations women, women from culturally diverse backgrounds, and gender-diverse people. This both explains and sustains women's invisibility.

Acknowledging history is therefore an integral part of the journey to achieving gender equality.

Embracing the ecosystem of approaches to gender equality funding

There is a growing body of resources regarding funding for gender equality, including in Australian philanthropy.⁷ The good news is, we don't need to pit them against each other. Rather, these different approaches to funding for gender equality can be seen as an **ecosystem**: they nurture and support each other, which creates a thriving environment where good things can grow.

In this ecosystem, some approaches focus on **who is giving** – such as women-led giving; some focus on applying a gender-lens to **where the money is going** – to what and to whom; and some focus on **how you give** – both in how the grant functions, and the dynamic of the funding relationship. These various approaches are **complementary and interdependent** pieces of the same puzzle, and crucially, all are important to funding for gender equality.

What is power-shifting and why does it matter?

The Gender-transformative Giving Principles apply a **power-shifting lens** across all aspects of a funding process: who is giving, where the money is going, and how it is given. It is the **proactive application** of this lens across the funding process that activates the Principles' **transformative potential**.

Why is power-shifting relevant to funding for gender equality? We know gender inequality is, at its foundation, caused by power imbalances. It is also inherently intersectional, and embedded in unjust systems. This means ending inequality requires deep-rooted solutions that match the scale of the problem. For example, training women in climate negotiations will be limited in effectiveness unless we also tackle norms around women's leadership that mean their contributions at the table are overlooked or diminished.

The Principles of Gender-transformative Giving

Where the money goes: To whom and to what

Paying attention to who leads the initiatives you support, and how the priorities are shaped is key to the transformative potential of your grant.

To Whom

Fund organisations, initiatives and movements:

- ◆ With a **principal or significant focus on gender equality**.
- ◆ That are **led by the people who have historically been marginalised** by the relevant issue – here, gender equality.

Examples of this include: women-, trans- and LGBTIQ+-led initiatives, women's movements, feminist movements, etc.

Read more about the transformative power of feminist movements on page 12.

To What

Fund priorities or projects that:

- ◆ Have been **identified by grantees themselves**.
- ◆ Encourage, take or have considered **systems change** and/or **root causes approaches**.

For example, if you're aiming to increase women's political leadership, in addition to women's leadership programs, consider funding initiatives that challenge gender bias in voting behaviour and advocacy campaigns for legal and policy reforms to remove barriers for women.

- ◆ **Apply an intersectional lens**, which acknowledges that no one identity (such as womanhood) defines all of a person's experiences of power or inequality.⁸ An intersectional approach is nuanced and holistic, addressing the multifaceted and compounding factors contributing to a person's experience of discrimination.

For example, to eliminate violence against all women and girls, we must address how violence differs between groups of women: women and girls with disabilities are at least twice as likely to experience sexual violence than those without disabilities,⁹ and First Nations women are 32 times more likely to be hospitalised and 11 times more likely to die from assault than non-Indigenous women in Australia.¹⁰

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How you fund: Grant Mechanics

Trust is the foundation in any transformative grant process. Transformative grants fund core costs, and are flexible, long-term, and enabling. This supports grantees to move beyond survival mode, do more, and better look after themselves and others. **These are the pre-conditions for sustainable, effective work in any industry.**

Core

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Also known as ‘unrestricted’, core funding prioritises support for the structures making the work possible, which enables the work to be as efficient and effective as it can be. Organisations and movements need funding to *be*, not just do.

Long-term

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Funding commitments need to match the timelines of real change, and systemic change takes time. Funding for more than three-year cycles enables change to be embedded, sustainable, and enduring. Short-term funding, at best, leads to short-term outcomes.

Flexible, trust-based

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Trust-based funding recognises that people experiencing gender inequality in the relevant context are best-placed to determine how funds can be most effectively used. Flexibility can harness this trust to get funds to where they’re most needed, quickly, and enables grantees to innovate to find new solutions.

Co-designed, enabling

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Transformative grant processes are simple, clear and transparent. Such processes enable recipients to do their work better. For example, reporting requirements that help grantees meaningfully measure and improve their work, rather than taking time, energy or resources away from it. An effective way to achieve this is through co-designing processes.

WHAT HAPPENS WITHOUT THIS APPROACH?

Grantees can’t be agile in meeting quickly changing needs. There’s no space for innovation, daring, or testing new things. Short-term funding addresses the symptoms without tackling root causes – the deeper problems persist and will rear their heads again without the long-term work of systems change.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

At best, the impact of a grant drops. Grantees work hard for limited, often fleeting success, and philanthropists wanting to create cascades stay in the paddle-pool of change. In some cases, failing to follow this approach can cause active harm.

The Principles of Gender-transformative Giving

How you show up in your partnerships

Shifting power in your partnerships starts with trust, collaborating to solve problems, and being open to listening and learning from different perspectives, even when it feels uncomfortable.

Cultivate genuine relationships

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A prerequisite to real trust and genuine collaboration is deepening our understanding of each other. Cultivate a relationship that is not solely centred on your partnership. This enables you to speak more openly, hold differences lightly, and navigate waters smoothly.

Lead with trust

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Trust is the foundation to shifting power in any relationship. Lead with trust, always. Trust that the grantee knows their context and issues best, and enable an equal partnership where you can co-create effective solutions tailored to their specific challenges.

Talk about power

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Naming it helps shift it. As part of honest dialogue, acknowledge and address the power differentials in your funding relationships.

Collaborate

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Collaboration is at the heart of transformation – together we will achieve more, sooner. Where challenges arise, take a collaborative approach to solving the problem, and support collaboration in the gender equality ecosystem.

Listen and learn

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Aspire to learn new things and embrace new perspectives through funding relationships. Ask questions from a place of curiosity; listen with open minds and hearts; look for what is not being said; seek clarity; and respond with the intention to learn and unlearn without defensiveness, especially when the conversations are tough.¹¹

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Who is giving: You are part of the change

You are at the centre of your giving; **your attitude and approach matter**. Transforming power asks us all to reflect on our own position and power in any context, including funding relationships, and to work actively to shift imbalances and hierarchies that perpetuate inequalities.

We start with the only domain in our full control: ourselves.

Reflect on your power in your relationships

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In addition to the funder/grantee power dynamic, consider other elements of possible inequality: ethnicity, race, sexual orientation and gender identity, economic status, education, (dis)ability status, first language, migratory status, age, indigeneity and other personal characteristics.

Take proactive steps to level the playing field

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Be proactive in addressing power imbalances you see, and when you are not sure of your position in a power dynamic: **ask**.

Keep reflecting and learning

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This is an ongoing journey. For a long time, we have lived in systems that breed inequalities. We need to keep reflecting and learning with kindness to ourselves and others – we're in this together.

The Power of Investing in Movements

Social movements have been drivers of change across history. Key examples include the civil rights movement in the United States and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.

Resourcing collective action that upends the status quo is one of the **most effective ways of supporting change**. And the same is true with achieving gender equality.

Feminist movements are a type of social movement that work towards gender equality by transforming gendered power structures.

These movements are, by definition, led by those who have historically experienced gender inequality. They centre **collaboration** and **shared power**, and take a **holistic** and **intersectional** approach. They are powerhouses for transformative, lasting social change.¹²

Well-known examples of feminist movements include the **women's suffrage movement** that guaranteed women the right to vote, and the more recent **#MeToo movement**, which has dramatically shifted public attitudes towards sexual harassment and violence.

Lesser-known, yet important examples include: the 'green wave' movement, which achieved significant gains in reproductive rights in Argentina, Ireland and Mexico;¹³ the years of feminist-led advocacy that saw Solomon Islands' national cabinet support Temporary Special Measures to improve women's political representation;¹⁴ and a feminist-led student movement in Vanuatu that resulted in 132 countries requesting advice from the International Court of Justice on states' obligations to protect the Earth from climate change.¹⁵

FEMINIST MOVEMENTS AS THE GAME CHANGERS

Abundant data shows that funding feminist movements is a highly effective strategy for advancing gender equality worldwide.¹⁶ A robust analysis of 70 countries over four decades found the **existence of autonomous feminist movements was the most significant factor positively impacting a country's policy responses to violence against women.**

A strong feminist movement was more important than all other factors considered— participation of women in politics, left-leaning political parties or the country's wealth.¹⁷

What's next?

The **ResourceFULL Collective** is delivering practical strategies to grow the community of Australian philanthropists practising Gender-transformative Giving and resourcing feminist movements in our region.

We are hosting events, investing in new research, developing useful resources, igniting conversations and always brewing new ideas.

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**Interested in learning more?
We'd love to connect.**

If we can speak at your next event, contribute our ideas to your publication or website, or share more about the Principles with you directly, please get in touch!

Key resources

- ◆ Bridgespan Group, *illuminating Impact: Why Gender Matters for Funders in Any Issue Area*, 2024.
- ◆ Bridgespan Group, Shake the Table, *Lighting the Way: a Report for Philanthropy on the Power and Promise of Feminist Movements*, 2022.
- ◆ Equality Fund, Community Foundations of Canada, Canadian Women's Federation, *Feminist Funding Principles*, 2020.
- ◆ Mama Cash, *Feminist Activism Works*, 2020.
- ◆ 'Ofa-Ki-Levuka Louise Guttenbeil-Likiliki, *Creating Equitable South-North Partnerships: Nurturing the Vā And Voyaging the Audacious Ocean Together*, 2020.
- ◆ Noble Ambition, World Vision Australia, *Making a World of Difference: Growing Philanthropic Investment in International Development*, 2023.
- ◆ Philanthropy Australia, *Women's Giving and Philanthropy*, 2024.
- ◆ She Gives, *Behind She Gives: A campaign to celebrate, share and inspire women's giving in Australia*, 2024.
- ◆ Urgent Action Fund, *Sisterhood Feminist Principles of Philanthropy*, 2021.
- ◆ Williamson, A, Smith, K, Sojo, V, Barraket, J, Ong, S, Reilly, J, Mitchell, E, & Teo, J, *Equitable Foundations: A Framework for Gender-wise Philanthropy in Partnerships*. Australians Investing In Women and Melbourne Social Equity Institute, 2024.

Endnotes

1. Philanthropy Australia, *Giving Trends and Opportunities*, 2022.
2. Ministers for the Department of Social Services (Cth), *Philanthropy Australia: Philanthropy Meets Parliament House*, 2023.
3. Noble Ambition, World Vision Australia, *Making a World of Difference: Growing Philanthropic Investment in International Development*, 2023; Centre for Social Impact, *High Net Wealth Giving in Australia*, 2022.
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5. World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report 2024*, 2024.
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8. Samudzi, Z. et al, *Can we all be Feminists?*, eds Eric-Udorie, J., Penguin Books, New York, 2018.
9. Australian Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, *Alarming rates of family, domestic and sexual violence of women and girls with disability to be examined in hearing*, 2021.
10. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia*, 2018; reported in Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices), *Securing Our Rights, Securing Our Future*, Australian Human Rights Commission, 2020.
11. Equality Fund, Community Foundations of Canada, Canadian Women's Federation, *Feminist Funding Principles*, 2020.
12. Bridgespan Group & Shake the Table, *Lighting the Way: a Report for Philanthropy on the Power and Promise of Feminist Movements*, 2022.
13. Washington Post, *How Green Became the Colour of Abortion Rights*, 2022.
14. IWDA, *Major Milestone for Women's Rights in Solomon Islands*, 2024.
15. Australian Broadcasting Corporation, *UN backs landmark Pacific-led resolution clearing way for International Court of Justice advisory opinion on climate obligations*, 2023; Deutsche Welle, *UN passes landmark resolution for climate justice*, 2023.
16. Françoise Girard, *Philanthropy for the Women's Movement, Not Just 'Empowerment'*, 2019, Stanford Social Innovation Review; Mama Cash, *Feminist Activism Works*, 2020.
17. Htun, M & Weldon S.L, *The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective: 1975–2005*, American Political Science Review, Vol. 106, No. 3, 2013.

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