HOW FAR HAVE WE COME?

A REVIEW OF FRIDA’S CONVENINGS OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS

Sian Maseko and Amiera Sawas, 2018
Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank and acknowledge everyone who gave their time, energy and honesty in responding to the questions and interviews during this review including FRIDA staff, grantee partners, allies and attendees at the convenings. It was a very important process and the authors really value and appreciate the effort many people made to give detailed and thoughtful responses.

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In 2017, FRIDA The Young Feminist Fund (henceforth FRIDA) commissioned an
evaluation of their local, regional and global convenings over the last five years to
analyse the following key questions: a) what has been the impact of FRIDA’s past
convenings? b) What lessons have been learned from the convenings to inform
FRIDA’s role as a funder and host of the convenings? c) How effective are conven-
ings as a strategy for feminist movement building as a space for alliance, reflection
and dialogue? d) What recommendations can be made for improving convenings?
e) What are the possibilities and opportunities for convenings in the future?

The approach to this review was participatory to ensure that the voices of young
feminist activists, as participants and co-organizers of these convenings were
central to this process. The consultants conducted a literature review, an online
survey with all FRIDA grantee partners and participants in convenings, individual
interviews with grantee partners, advisors and allies. This is a summary of the key
highlights and recommendations from the review.

This process has been an important learning process for FRIDA. As a feminist or-
ganisation FRIDA has embraced the opportunity to reflect and learn from the con-
venings they have hosted. There have been challenges, celebrations, affirmations
and but this review was an significant opportunity for FRIDA to consider: Are con-
venings an effective strategy for feminist movement building/catalyzing? Why is it
important and necessary to support (fund) convenings?

FRIDA will be using these recommendations to guide the development of a strate-
y on convenings a e to continue their commitment
to the global feminist movements.

This review is structured as follows:

1. Why was this review necessary and important? This section considers the key emerging issues affecting feminists and feminist organising.

2. What did we ask? This section highlights some of the questions that we wanted to ask our grantee partners and allies.

3. What did we find out? This section presents our key findings and highlights from the review.

4. Recommendations. This section offers some recommendations to FRIDA and other organisations about organising effective convenings.
FRIDA has been committed to supporting convening spaces as a key strategy for feminist movement-building since its founding. FRIDA, as a learning organisation, felt it was time to pause and reflect on our practice. It is critical to build a strong evidence base to emphasise why these convenings matter.

THE METHODOLOGY

The evaluation adapted a feminist participatory approach to engage grantee partners, partners and key allies in this review. The purpose of a participatory approach is to generate qualitative rather than just quantitative data. The survey contained both qualitative and quantitative responses and the interviews provided the authors an opportunity to probe more deeply to understand the impact of the convenings and the opportunities for the future.

This report includes analysis of 42 online surveys completed by grantee partners and attendees of FRIDA convenings, analysis of feedback submitted by participants after various convenings, analysis of interviews with 15 stakeholders and advisors and analysis of interviews with four key allies from two from AWID, one from CREA and an independent activist.
The following reports have been reviewed:

1. Global Convening, Istanbul, Turkey, 2012
2. Global Convening, Chiang Mai Thailand, 2013
5. Global convening at AWID Forum, Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, 2016
6. LAC Regional Convening, Mexico City, Mexico, 2016

FRIDA identified fifteen individuals to be interviewed including advisors, allies and grantee partners. These interviews were conducted over Skype and audio recorded by Rudo Chigudu, Amiera Sawas and Sian Maseko. Participants were all offered anonymity or confidentiality of their responses to ensure they felt comfortable to express their views.

The approach generated rich and interesting data. The individual interviews provided three different sources of information: an external analysis from ‘allies’, none of whom were ‘within the demographic of young feminists’, but identified themselves as allies; young feminists advisers to FRIDA; grantee partners. This report is interspersed with extracts from the literature review, which contribute to deeper thinking and analysis about the broader feminist movement. The authors were able to triangulate the findings from the surveys with individual interviews, which made the data more robust.

This report was developed over several months and inevitably took longer than anticipated, but it was important to spend more time generating as many responses as possible to ensure the process was as representative as possible.

This approach had some limitations:

1. It used an adapted participatory methodology, but it was not possible to use a fully participatory approach.
2. It was a challenge to compare different types of convenings — global, regional as well as convenings organised and hosted in different ways.
3. The survey was translated into three different languages and all the interviews were conducted in English. Therefore complete language inclusivity was not possible.
4. It is difficult to review a convening that happened a number of years ago; some participants couldn’t remember the specifics of some of the sessions.
5. Not all the stakeholders were part of the evaluation process. Only two FRIDA staff were interviewed.
6. The authors tried to ensure the process was as diverse and representative as possible. There was a large number of respondents, representing multiple regions, however not everyone who attended convenings were involved. Hence, there may be further feedback which is not represented in this sample.

7. Regional representation — some regions were under-represented.

The authors recognise the limitations of the approach and hope that in future this process could be undertaken on a more regular basis and ensure as many voices and opinions are involved in the process.

However, based on the data and the literature review, the authors are able to make recommendations that will support FRIDA’s ongoing commitment to improving future convenings and role-modelling feminist organising and practice.

THE CONTEXT: A CHANGING WORLD

Despite increasing attention, globally, to the role of feminist thinking and movements, there has been a lack of analysis about how movements are adapting and evolving. Under conditions of globalisation, where technology facilitates the rapid spread of real world events and ideas, there are more and more opportunities for feminists to join and develop collectives, organisations and movements. At the same time, we are witnessing a regression in global politics, with the election and media celebration of patriarchal and often misogynist figures. This has lead to policy steps away from supporting feminist movements and have bolstered an ongoing backlash against feminist notions of public policy and development.

Despite the backlash, in development and human rights, women-centred and LG-BTQI+ movements have become increasingly powerful agents for — at the very least — triggering dialogues around equitable access to rights and resources, and at best, effecting transformational change towards gender equity.1

FEMINIST MOVEMENT-BUILDING:
A POWERFUL RESPONSE TO THE BACKLASH

Over the last few years, there has been a transition in thinking, from focusing on the importance of internal reflection and self-awareness to seeing oneself as part of a wider collective or movement.

In recent decades, a feminist oppositional collective identity has developed. Individual women and other marginalised2 groups can easily opt into and support feminist rights and development movements.3

Through these exponentially growing movements, shared values and gender beliefs develop and are linked to issues of women’s and LGBTQI+, trans* and intersex inequality. The use of a common political agenda through which to act and advocate is key. The shared subjective experience of participating in these debates and consequent activities drives the continuity of women’s movements.

According to CREA, regular events and meetings as well as the use of a variety of approaches and strategies are key to ensuring the continuity of the collective movement.

JASS and CREA emphasise the need to analyse power dynamics within the collective to ensure that individual selves can actually ‘shape…the practice of leadership’ within feminist collectives or organisations.

2 This report uses the term marginalised deliberately to reflect the terminology used by many movements and groups (although not all), but equally to highlight the often overlooked issue of structural violence. The term also emphasises that communities are often intentionally marginalised, excluded and discriminated against by the state (whether through criminalisation or government policy).

The analysis of power goes beyond the ‘social structures of power and control that create and compound women’s vulnerability and insecurity’⁴ and instead seeks to locate power ‘within’ and ‘to’ as a process of reclaiming agency and asserting power.⁵

Some of those interviewed for this review highlighted that, at the moment the need to name and challenge oppressive systems is central to feminist work. They also agreed that is equally important to ensure that women and marginalised communities (re)claim their power and ownership over their own spaces.⁶

How can FRIDA convenings address this imbalance and create opportunities for the most marginalised and excluded voices to have a platform?

**DEMONSTRATING FRIDA’S IMPACT**

As the world changes and the backlash against women’s and LGBTQI+ rights has become arguably more severe, feminist movements are shifting and growing in response. Many activists interviewed for this review spoke of the importance of meeting ‘in person’ and the need for this space to ‘recover’ and ‘have fun’ against backdrops of intense stress, burnout, anxiety and stress (Grantee partner). For many activists these are powerful and important spaces, which provide opportunities for forging alliances, developing new skills and re-energising to face the significant and growing challenges of living in a global world that is clawing back the many gains that have been made on women’s and LGBTQI+ rights.

FRIDA wanted this review to reflect on these spaces to make them more effective, to consider how FRIDA could co-produce spaces with other organisations to maximise impact and ensure as many activists as possible had the opportunity to benefit from these spaces.

⁴ JASS (2013) Feminist Movement Builder’s Dictionary, JASS
⁵ Ibid
⁶ Individual interviews with AWID and CREA
GENERATING TRULY SAFE SPACES FOR FEMINISTS

A. Safety and security in physical spaces

Feminist groups have long faced the threat of surveillance, control and physical threat in response to their work. One form of backlash against women or LGBTQI+ rights work in fragile and post-conflict states are the attempts to impose tighter controls on their operations.

Feminist groups are routinely surveilled by intelligence agencies, paramilitaries and political groups, and the expression of that surveillance can be violent. There are insufficient — if any — support structures for affected feminists in many countries considered to be ‘the global South’. Feminist organisations have been consistently highlighting the specific risks faced by women human rights defenders (WHRDs) and the specifically gendered nature of attacks against them. In certain regions, for example Central America, there has been a systematic targeting of WHRDs with death threats and violence.

As one report noted, “frequently, the violence or threat against them is sexual in nature, or they face restrictions in their work on account of their gender. Furthermore, prejudice, exclusion and public repudiation by both state forces and social actors weigh heavily in their lives.” Safety and security, from a feminist perspective, is also about creating, providing and accessing, “spaces where we can form a community and develop practical ways to strategise, together, on how to keep going...how to stay safe...”

More needs to be done to understand the risks faced by feminist activists in their own regions, and especially when developing convenings. Even a visa application can stoke up suspicion about an activist or organisations’ work. Therefore, more needs to be done to help WHRDs assess the security implications of their feminist convenings.

B. Safety and security in online spaces

Online spaces have increasingly become the turf for feminist convenings to flourish. There has been a proliferation of online feminist spaces, through blogs and Facebook especially. These become spaces of intense discussion, contestation and learning around feminist issues. They provide access to discussion for individuals and groups who have restricted mobility and who would otherwise never meet. They celebrate the work of feminists and facilitate new work.

There is great promise for these spaces, but the majority of the participants and moderators are not sensitised enough to their digital rights and the risks of this work.\footnote{genderit.org/feminist-talk/digital-security-silencing-claiming-safe-spaces} Firstly, there is a difficult balance for their owners and moderators in ensuring difficult issues can be discussed – especially around intersectional experiences – without becoming unsafe for the participants.

In order for the space to be effectively moderated, there need to be full time moderators, to keep an eye on evolving discussions. This becomes a challenge for the majority of online spaces, which are set up by feminist activists who have full time jobs. Donors need to do more to fund moderation of these crucial hubs.

This review considered the importance of safe spaces and how these convenings could ensure and uphold the safety of all participants.
WHAT DID WE WANT TO KNOW?

Did you feel safe?

What did you enjoy about the convenings?

What could we do better next time?

Was the space inclusive?
How did you share what you learnt at the convenings with feminists and activists where you work?

Which session did you enjoy the least?

How do these convenings contribute to the broader feminist movement?
WHO RESPONDED?

The authors developed an online survey, individuals interviews and a review of the reports written for the convenings.

Of the data available the majority of respondents...

30.2% were from sub-Saharan Africa followed closely by LAC and MENA, both with 26.4%, there were 7.5% from Asia Pacific and 9.4% from CEECNA.

This is linked to the reality that FRIDA has organised regional convenings in LAC, MENA and SSA, with other regional convergences planned for 2018 in CEECNA and Asia Pacific.

The majority of respondents worked for organisations or collectives of similar sizes with between 3–5 or 5–10 staff and the same number of people involved in carrying out activities.

The majority of participants, 83% identified as female, 5.7% as trans-female, 3.8% as intersex, 1.9% for GNC, 1.9% for male, 1.9% for other and 1.9% for trans-male.

The majority of participants [30.2%] identified as heterosexual and then 22.6% as lesbians, 18.9% identified as queer, 11.3% preferred to use their own term, 9.4% prefer not to say, 5.7% identify as bisexual and 1.9% as homosexual.

3.2% of respondents identified as having a disability and 1.9% would prefer not to say, which meant that 94.3% of respondents did not identify as having a disability.

The majority of attendees worked in one of three areas (56.6% and above): women’s rights, girls and women’s rights, SGBV and young feminist activism. However, the list was extremely wide-ranging and varied with expertise and experience on climate change, digital security, economic empowerment and trans* rights.

Finally, 86.8% were FRIDA grantees and 13.2% were not FRIDA grantees. In the majority of surveys completed, the attendees had participated in the Kenya convening (31.1%) followed by Thailand, Brazil and Jordan all attended by 22.2%. Mexico had been attended by 17.8% of the respondents and Turkey by 6.7% of the respondents.
WHAT DID WE FIND OUT?

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

‘Re-strategize, re-articulate and re-energise ourselves’

Overall, respondents were very positive about the convenings. They described the convenings as both tools to, “give us courage and confidence,” and restorative and re-energising spaces for activists to, “feel less alone, to feel free, to go dance.” Convenings were described as novel opportunities to network and learn from each other, especially around, “how it is different being a feminist in different parts of the world.” As one respondent shared, “we have a lot of stress and pressure and we need space to laugh, relax and bond.” The fun and recreation was important for people to feel, ‘energised’ and ‘rejuvenated’. However, the space was also ‘easy’ and ‘peaceful’.

Creating a ‘safe space’

It is important to use a broad definition of safety. A safe space is more than just the physical environment. The concept of safety was reinforced by the grantee partners and stakeholders and it was taken as a given that ‘safe space’ was a fundamental feminist principle, although ‘safe spaces’ can be interpreted differently. The majority of survey respondents indicated they felt completely safe at convenings (48.9%).
**Capacity strengthening**

Capacity strengthening in resource mobilisation emerged as a key expectation of the convenings. 45.2% of survey respondents rated resource mobilisation sessions as the most beneficial session across all the convenings analysed.

**FRIDA as a coordinator of convenings**

FRIDA is described by respondents as, “so much more than a donor,” although some respondents wanted to ensure that the process of organising convenings was, “half-half,” between FRIDA and in-country grantee partners or other allies and partners. They emphasised that perspectives of people in the country, “help you think in a different way (about) how the convening should be.”

**Contributing to the feminist movement**

There was a strong consensus in the surveys (87% of respondents), that these convenings contributed to feminist movement-building. Many of respondents (45.4%) felt the convenings had built their capacity to pursue feminist work in their country or region, “quite a lot.” One grantee partner commented, “being an army of young feminists that are confident and knowledgeable is a big contribution to the feminist movement.”
A. SAFETY AND SECURITY

“Security risks are increasing globally”

Overall recommendation: develop a clear safety and security plan for each convening. This needs to be clearly communicated to participants in different languages to ensure that everyone has access to the necessary information.

1. Risk assessments as standard practice for each convening. Individuals complete a risk assessment to identify the following:
   i) Travel risks (e.g. access to Embassy, visa application process)
   ii) Risks on arrival in country (based on where the meeting is being held – for example, will certain participants face additional scrutiny at airports based on their country of origin, racial identity, gender identity etc.)
   iii) Risks on return to their country

2. Contingency plan: based on the outcomes of the risk assessment FRIDA will need to have a contingency plan in place to change location of the venue or travel arrangements as necessary.

3. Safety and security team: it is recommended that there is a response team whilst participants are travelling to and from convenings. The response team could be available over email, the telephone, WhatsApp, Messenger (based on the requirements identified in the risk assessments). It is recommended that FRIDA asks all participants to download and use a secure app such as ‘Signal’ and use that rather than the aforementioned tools while attending the convening. This ensures that participants (and the convening) are secure from external monitoring.

4. Interrogating the meaning of safety: FRIDA should ensure that an exercise about safety is an integral part of the initial sessions of each convening. This exercise is an opportunity to establish how participants understand safety and to reflect on the questions: safety for and safety from.
B. PREPARATION BEFORE A CONVENING

*Overall recommendation:* present information about the convening (logistics, objectives, names of translators) well in advance of the convening to the advisors and participants in a number of different formats to ensure accessibility. Remind them a week before the convening of this information.

1. **Involvement of key stakeholders** including partner organisations well in advance of the convening: a briefing and risk assessment, about the convening and the country context in which the convening will be held, should be shared with advisors at least six weeks in advance of the convening.

2. **Clarity of purpose and objectives:** the purpose and objectives of the convening need to be communicated to participants well in advance and in a number of different formats including Facebook closed group, WhatsApp group, webinars (based on accessibility) and emails. Again – it is recommended that FRIDA suggests participants to use a secure messaging app such as Signal, to promote the safety of all.

3. **Ensuring the convenings do not happen prior to a renewal cycle:** it would be preferable that convenings are not conflated with the funding cycle and that they do not take place prior to a renewal cycle. This can be communicated in the purpose and objectives of the convening. FRIDA should remind participants that their engagement and performance at convenings has no bearing on the funding process and decisions.

4. **Participatory agenda setting:** the majority of participants wanted more sessions to be grantee/participant-led. FRIDA could conduct an initial online survey (including a rating system for preferences) to assess the content to be covered in the convening and then ask volunteers to lead one session of the convening. However, in the initial survey it is also important to include whether participants would like an expert session or a session with external facilitators or donors so that this can be included. FRIDA can present the participants with feedback from the survey to demonstrate that decisions made about the convening were based on recommendations from the attendees. It is important to consider that anchoring sessions around ‘female’ biological sex and bodily experiences, for example, can be a highly exclusive practice to those who do not identify with those bodily functions or experiences.14

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5. **Power mapping**: prior to the convening, explore the power map with participants (this could be done as part of the survey or a webinar) — who gets left out/marginalised/excluded (in their country)? This might be an opportunity for attendees to explore the power they have, the access they have, the privilege (it might be limited) they have. If all grantee partners are leading one session, this should ensure that at least all the voices of participants are heard. However, some attendees might need additional support to prepare for their session.

6. **Training translators**: FRIDA could arrange a one-day training for translators before the convening. The training should be focused on reflexive practice and self-reflexivity in translation. FRIDA can also provide a thorough briefing about the security risks to participants, the importance of safe spaces, the role of translators in creating or inhibiting safe space.

**C. BUILDING CONVENINGS**

“It was instantly gratifying to see different sisters, different types of feminism...that was educational...building networks would be almost impossible if you hadn’t met”

1. **Making more time**: if longer convenings are too resource intensive for FRIDA, offer opportunities for grantee partners to pool some resources, in order to extend convenings by a day or two. Alternatively suggest avenues where they can apply for travel grants or funds.

2. **Co-hosting**: co-host convenings with other donors and funders to ensure a wider range of participants.

3. **Focused events**: a focused one-day event — connected to another convening, such as AWID — covering one specific topic (e.g. resource mobilisation, communications, or monitoring and evaluation) might be more effective than two or three days with a very broad agenda.

4. **Thematic convenings**: consider thematic convenings based on input from the attendees. Ensure at least one critical skill is built upon at each convening — with follow up processes or materials to consolidate it.
D. WHERE CONVENINGS FIT

“Convenings are important, but we may need to re-think how these can fit into the larger strategic plan”

**Overall recommendation:** the convenings could be more strategic spaces and opportunities for grantees to develop country or region level strategies, set targets and develop plans for upcoming work.

1. **Providing access:** in consultation with participants, FRIDA could use the convenings as an opportunity to create access to key strategic networks, bodies and institutions in the regions where the convening is taking place.

2. **Strategic planning:** the convenings could also be an opportunity for strategic planning at an organisational, country or regional level. This links into the desire for more policy and advocacy sessions during the convenings.

3. **Regional or global:** FRIDA could consider focusing on regional convenings to ensure that the convening is context specific for participants and creates an opportunity for regional strategising, networking and alliance-building.

4. **Continuing to explore innovative approaches to documenting the process:** FRIDA needs to explore more effective approaches to documenting convenings. FRIDA could engage a grantee to support this process and possibly attend the convenings to document people’s thoughts and ideas (interviews) in a more visual way that could be shared online with all participants. There are safety and security concerns about audio recording sessions, however, many data is not being captured and this means that attendees often do not have a complete record of the convening. This documentation needs to be undertaken by a neutral observer rather than a friend or ally of FRIDA.

5. **Using existing structures and opportunities to the fullest:** FRIDA needs to use two of its existing structures more effectively: its network of key experts and the online hub, to support or compliment any convenings.
E. CONTRIBUTING TO THE WIDER FEMINIST MOVEMENT

"Being an army of young feminists that are confident and knowledgeable is a big contribution to the feminist movement"

Overall recommendation: FRIDA should ensure that convenings create an opportunity for attendees to plan how they will feedback and how they will use the skills/capacity strengthening to develop feminist work in their local context.

1. Accountability and transparency: accountability, as a core feminist principle, should be integral to the convenings. Participants could prepare in advance — with their organisation or collective — about their capacity gaps as an organisation/collective and design an information dissemination plan after the convening. If individuals apply for the convening, this could be part of the application process — it can also be used for follow-up.

2. Evaluating the indirect outcomes: FRIDA’s way of working has impacted on some participants and it would be interesting to explore — as an indirect outcome of the convenings — how grantee partners’ or advisors’ engagement with FRIDA has supported their organisational development or leadership. This is a unique feature of FRIDA and the FRIDA convening spaces so this needs to be harnessed and explored more fully.
F. CREATING CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN THE SPACES

“Other convenings focus on getting it done, but FRIDA gives us time to breathe....to reflect”

**Overall recommendation**: FRIDA should identify one or two grantee partners per region and focus on evaluating the impact of the convenings in their work. The evaluation can consider:

1. Relationships formed and sustained from the convenings;
2. Joint activities undertaken after the convening;
3. Sharing and disseminating of information from the convening to other feminists/WROs/HROs;
4. The individual empowerment and how that impacts the effectiveness and sustainability of their work.

F. MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

**Overall recommendation**: FRIDA needs to identify a key framework and tools for monitoring and evaluation that can be applied over a prolonged period of time to build a compelling evidence base for the importance and value of convenings. There are a number of M&E tools that could be adapted and used during convenings to evaluate their impact, including:

1. **Most significant change approach**: storytelling is clearly a theme within the FRIDA convenings and there were positive reactions to this methodology.
2. **Longitudinal study with individual activists**: this approach would be the most resource intensive, but could potentially provide the best evidence of the impact of the FRIDA convenings on wider feminist movement-building, as well as the impact on shifting perspectives within the donor community. One respondent commented, ‘FRIDA can table the issue of funder convened spaces for discussion with other funders. They can model how to interact with grantee partners for other funders.’
3. **FRIDA could identify two activists per region with whom to conduct a more in-depth study** to evidence the impact of FRIDA convenings on key identified outcomes including: organisational development and transformation (retention of staff, securing additional funding, implementing policies), organisational sustainability, partnerships or alliances formed to advance women’s rights/rights of marginalised communities, policy or advocacy work (the outcomes would be determined by the individual activist).
4. **Artivism to measure change**: the use of arts, poetry, theatre and television are having a resurgence. This is reflected in feminist spaces as well as in wider social movements. As AWID states, ‘arts and culture is increasingly the strategy and vocabulary that bridges the range of feminist and social justice experiences in powerful and visceral ways’. FRIDA engages extensively with art and culture in the convening, but these could also be used as M&E tools. For example, participatory video and digital storytelling are two tools that could be incorporated into the monitoring and evaluation process. FRIDA can also play a critical role in encouraging donors to recognise the value of these products as evidence of change and tools for evaluation, as valuable as ‘written’ content.

5. **Learning laboratories**: ‘Learning laboratories’ is an idea proposed by Lori Heise to increase learning around VAWG programming. FRIDA could consider supporting regional or local learning laboratories to share, strengthen networks and solidarity around promising practice. The learning laboratories or spaces could be used by FRIDA to measure long-term change.

6. **Linking into academic research**: more ethnographic and exploratory M&E (as above and more) can be conducted in partnership with academic researchers who are funded by government research grants. FRIDA could develop a relationship with a number of universities (preferably in the Global South) to support an ongoing evaluation of the impact of the convenings. This is an opportunity to monitor and demonstrate transformational impact.

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15 AWID quote

HOW COULD FRIDA WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY?

1. **Exchange programmes**: FRIDA could support more organisational or regional exchange programmes between feminist organisations. This could also support alliance and partnership building at a country and regional level, which many respondents mentioned they wanted.

2. **Local level capacity-strengthening**: one respondent suggested that FRIDA advisors could offer organisational level support. This could be tailored to meet the needs of organisations, but there are numerous examples of mentoring and coaching processes (Positive Vibes in Southern Africa), of which convenings are just one element.

3. **Supporting collaborative and alliance building work between collectives/groups/organisations**: a large part of advancing an issue is mobilising diverse groups and peoples with a shared interest in the goal. The strategy is to build alliances within and across movements. Through supporting grantee partners FRIDA can develop a mechanism that promotes collaborative work between groups. In addition to resourcing such collaboration and alliances it would also be useful for FRIDA to share and develop a framework that can help to inform how the collaborations are developed. This process should be owned by grantee partners and the type of relationship determined by the grantee partners themselves, however, FRIDA could use convening spaces to establish the terms of the collaboration.17

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17 Comment from Rudo Chigudu.
HOW COULD CONVENINGS BE MORE EFFECTIVE?

1. **Shared learning:** this review has demonstrated clear strengths in FRIDA’s approach to convenings. Many participants commented on the space and time that FRIDA convenings allowed for reflection as well as relaxation. The importance of these aspects cannot be undermined. Therefore, FRIDA should promote a model of co-hosting with other organisations and donors in order to share best practice about running effective and impactful convenings that do not just ‘get things done’.

2. **Capacity strengthening in convenings:** the convenings need to focus on strengthening capacities in one area so that all participants are able to participate and benefit equally from the convening. If a regional convening has one area of focus, based on the context analysis, this will also support organisations to decide who should attend — for example, a project manager or finance officer.

3. **Creating access:** respondents mentioned the importance of inviting UN and bilateral organisations to the convenings. Whilst this view might not be shared by all participants, many respondents mentioned the importance of the convenings creating opportunities to access decision makers and funders so the convenings would be a critical opportunity to invite them.