

LETTING THE MOVEMENT DECIDE

FRIDA
GRANTMAKING
REPORT



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This report is dedicated to all the young and not so young feminist activists who have been part of FRIDA's grantmaking model over the years that have shared their experience, innovation and creativity, and trusted us to make the process just, transparent and meaningful. Their feedback is continually considered and applied to make the model stronger. Young feminist groups are not only participating in the decision making process of grants, but also how the participatory grantmaking process is built, implemented and then rebuilt. The voices, perspectives, dreams and critique of young feminists activists remain our compass of how to ensure our work is relevant to their struggle and it will continue to guide us in adjusting our grantmaking model to respond to their realities.

Executive summary



Las Impertinentes,
Guatemala, FRIDA
Grantee Group
since 2014

FRIDA | The Young Feminist Fund was created by young feminist activists, their allies, and key organizations, namely, Association of Womens Rights in Development (AWID) and Central American Womens Fund (FCAM), from the women's movement to fund brave activism led by young women, girls and trans* youth.¹ FRIDA staff, Advisory Committee, Board Members, applicants, and grantees are part of diverse global feminist movements, and the organization's structure is designed to be informed by and accountable to those movements.

The fund uses a model of participatory grantmaking in which the young feminist activists who apply for grants decide together who will receive funding - the first application of this model in a global context. FRIDA's funding model is designed to fuel emerging leadership, respond dynamically to the rapidly changing on-the-ground realities of the most impacted communities, offer transparency of both process and outcomes, shift traditional power dynamics in philanthropy, and function as a hub of learning and knowledge development for broader feminist and philanthropic communities.

This report was written by Ezra Berkley Nepon and Matthew "Matty" Hart of The Lafayette Practice (TLP),² advisors on philanthropy, strategy, and management.

Building on TLP's experience, FRIDA and TLP launched a Grantmaking Model Evaluation of FRIDA's work in February 2015. The aim of the evaluation is to assess, after three grant making cycles, FRIDA's impact and effectiveness in supporting young feminist groups. This resulting report serves to document FRIDA's practices, test FRIDA's assumptions on the model's impact, and offer recommendations for improvement. Many key learnings have already been used to adapt the model.

This report utilizes existing materials on FRIDA's grantmaking model, including outreach and internal documentation,³ and a number of interviews with FRIDA staff, advisors, founders, grantees, and applicants.

1. Trans* is an abbreviated term using an asterisk (which acts as a "wildcard" in online search engines) to reflect the wide diversity of gender identities and experiences held within the Transgender umbrella.

2. <http://www.thelafayettepractice.com/>

3. Documents utilized for this report are listed in the References section.

Documenting the Grantmaking Model and What Has Been Achieved So Far

FRIDA uses a participatory grantmaking process that puts decision-making in the hands of young feminists themselves as agents of change, and aims to shift traditional power relations between funder and grantee. After applicants submit their proposals, a clear set of priorities guides the eligibility screening process led primarily by FRIDA's Global Advisory Committee. Once proposals pass the eligibility test, they move into the voting stage led by applicants themselves, with applicants unable to vote for themselves. This means that applicants who meet the selection criteria vote on other applications in their region, in their language, and collectively decide where funding goes.

The voting results are then tallied and staff/advisors conduct a due diligence process to confirm the accuracy of nominated grantee applications. The final selection of grantees is announced, and grants are paid to groups. From here, successful groups participate in welcome calls, mid-point check-ins and a final review over the course of the one-year grant period. All groups have the potential to submit a renewal proposal.

Grantee feedback to FRIDA's application process is positive, with applicants praising the ease and uniqueness of the model.

In three grantmaking cycles (2012-2014), **FRIDA has awarded \$437,000 in grants to 57 young feminist organizations**. In the 2014 Fiscal Year, **FRIDA made new grants to 25 new groups**, and renewed funding to 22 former grantees, representing 46 countries. **FRIDA has received over 2,000 applications**, vastly outnumbering early expectations, and demonstrating that young feminists are indeed organizing around the globe and looking for funding.

Over the years, FRIDA has focused on improving outreach to increase the percentage of applications that meet criteria and are able to participate in the applicant voting process. The first grantmaking year, 2012, had the highest number of total applications, but only 14% fit the grantmaking criteria and went on to vote. In 2013, with the addition of an initial criteria-check into the online form, total application number dropped almost in half, but the percent moving on to voting rose to 38%. In 2014, the total application number grew significantly while also increasing the number of applications that moved on to voting - now at 43%.

Assessing the Model's Impact and Effectiveness, and Making Recommendations for the future

The main section of this evaluation explores FRIDA's own evolution, the questions FRIDA is facing in its current phase of development, and recommendations going forward. This section is structured around the FRIDA acronym, which stands for: Flexibility, Resources, Inclusivity, Diversity and Action.

Flexibility

*"What I love the most about FRIDA - having been part of FRIDA from its conceptualization to it being an actual fund - is that FRIDA is willing to try things. It's willing to do that kind of reflection and say this didn't work, this is how we can make this process stronger. I think every year we are learning about how to do things better."
(Amina Doherty, FRIDA Founding Coordinator)*

As a new dynamic fund, FRIDA has demonstrated a strong willingness to experiment, receive ongoing feedback, and maintain a constant flexibility. The report documents two examples of FRIDA's flexibility, the history of changes and suggested adjustments in the Advisor and Applicant Voting processes.

Resources

As a women's fund, FRIDA is dedicated to raising and re-distributing financial resources while also mobilizing and catalyzing non-financial resources in a model they call "Funding-Plus." The non-financial resources offered as part of the grant with FRIDA include:

- Exclusive access to online networks through online spaces, emails, and phone calls. This includes access to the specially designed FRIDA Hub - a global online networking platform
- Invitation to attend and organize convenings of young feminists
- Opportunities to visit other groups through solidarity exchanges



While grantees are connected in multiple ways through FRIDA, the wider network of grant applicants are not yet able to build networks through FRIDA because the voting process is anonymous (voters don't see organizational names or contact information). This anonymity is maintained due to multiple concerns including safety/security needs and avoiding conflict of interest. However, many applicants have come to FRIDA with requests to be connected with other applicants after the grantmaking process, and FRIDA facilitates these connections on an adhoc basis. FRIDA staff would like to increase the opportunity for applicant connections, possibly through creation of online directory or spaces that would enable groups to maintain security protocol.

Another major resource the grantmaking model offers is the capacity to collect and share data. Many interviewees spoke to a sense of both opportunity and responsibility to use the grant application data as a source of analysis that can benefit the wider movement. Interviewees spoke of how they could utilize FRIDA's data to advocate for increased funding, and better targeted funding, within wider philanthropic spaces.

A few key technology improvements are underway in order to better harvest and analyze FRIDA's data. This includes improving the online application system and building an integrated database system on Salesforce.

Lastly, one of the grantmaking models most significant resources is what it can offer to the future of philanthropy by changing expectations on who decides and how donors and 'grantees' work together. In other words, FRIDA's model also expands the space for challenging exclusivity in philanthropy, not only for young feminists, but for everyone affected by it.

Inclusivity

As a participatory grantmaking fund, FRIDA is designed to reflect a value that the Disability Rights Movement has defined as "nothing about us, without us." Because FRIDA focuses on activism led by feminists aged 18 – 30, young feminists must make up the leadership and decision-making center of the organization. This must include a representative diversity of regional, ethnic and racial backgrounds and identities, and gender and sexual identities and expressions. Furthermore, this inclusivity for the grantmaking model means reaching groups that have never been funded before.

Despite great overall outreach success, grant applications have been regionally imbalanced. The Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region stands out with application numbers declining each year (although the number of grants awarded to the MENA region has increased each year).

Diversity

Diversity is one of FRIDA's most prominent characteristics in the grantmaking model. In its criteria, it defines 'feminism' broadly to include a range of definitions and prioritizes marginalized populations. FRIDA also accepts applications in seven languages: English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Portuguese, Mandarin and Russian, with other languages likely to be added in coming years.

At the same time, they were aware of the specifics of the work ahead to increase diversity in underserved regions, and bigger questions about how diversity actually plays out within the grantee, advisor, and staff community regarding identity, issue representation, age, and access to technology.

Action: Recommendations from The Lafayette Practice

FRIDA strives toward a more responsive, democratic and inclusive philanthropy while situated at the intersection of today's most complicated battles for community and individual self determination, safety and security. Based on The Lafayette Practice's interviews and analysis of FRIDA's grantmaking model and our research in the wider field of participatory grantmaking, they offer the following recommendations

1. Upgrade Data Systems

Receiving over 2000 proposals from young feminist organisations, over 50% of them never having received or even applied for funding, FRIDA is in a unique position to analyse and share this data in real time. Security and safety of this data is also key. This data can be used by FRIDA to identify trends and gaps, improve the participatory model, to share publicly to funders, and the feminist movement and to inform ongoing advocacy on for increasing more and better funding for young feminist organising.



Colectiva Feminista Rabiosa, Argentina, FRIDA Grantee Group since 2014

2. Increase Participation/Collaboration Opportunities

FRIDA practices multiple strategies to support links and collaborations between young feminists, such as online platform, physical gatherings at the global and regional level, and solidarity Exchanges, but the overwhelming sense is that they should increase and scale such initiatives. FRIDA has a role to catalyze shared learning and connections between young women from diverse movements, where possible FRIDA should explore how to connect applicants after the grant process completes, fund more collaborations between grantees, be more deliberate in sharing and identify opportunities or strategies to involve previous grantees in all processes of the organization.

The question remains, with their far reach to diverse grassroots young feminist led organisations, how can FRIDA support young feminists to redefine virtual movement building in a meaningful way, resourcing the creation of spaces where young feminists can interconnect and forge common agendas, without being the donor coordinating these spaces.

3. Consider/Evaluate Adjustments to the Voting Model

This report provides many creative ways to modify and adapt the voting process, these include; Consider adding one or more grantee slots that will be chosen by staff or advisors, consider issue quotas and explore issue based voting, and or virtual voting. Many of these strategies which have been incorporated in the 2015 grant making cycle.

4. Scale Up

FRIDA is doing excellent work, and there is scope to grow, with more and larger grants distributed; more advisors, more outreach; more opportunities for connections and collaboration between grantees; more opportunities for FRIDA and FRIDA's grantees to impact wider movements. Looking at the history of FRIDA's first five years, we are confident that the organization will continue to learn, grow, and increase its impact with the same thoughtful and revolutionary intentions that were present in its founding vision and have maintained throughout its evolution

The Young Feminist Fund exists to advance young feminist activism and social justice around the globe.

This report was written by Ezra Berkley Nepon and Matthew “Matty” Hart of The Lafayette Practice (TLP),⁴ advisors on philanthropy, strategy, and management.

In 2014, TLP evaluated eight participatory grant making models and published “Who Decides: How Participatory Grantmaking Benefits Donors, Communities and Movements”,⁵ following it up in 2015 with “Funding Free Knowledge The Wiki Way: Wikimedia Foundation’s Participatory Grantmaking” on the Wikimedia Foundation’s grant making methods.

Building on TLP’s experience, FRIDA and TLP launched a Grantmaking Model Evaluation of FRIDA’s work in February 2015. The aim of the evaluation is to assess, after three grant making cycles, FRIDA’s impact and effectiveness in supporting young feminist groups. This resulting report serves to document FRIDA’s practices, test FRIDA’s assumptions on the model’s impact, and offer recommendations for improvement.

This report utilizes existing materials on FRIDA’s grantmaking model, including outreach and internal documentation,⁶ and a number of interviews with FRIDA staff, advisors, founders, grantees, and applicants.

TLP’s Ezra Berkley Nepon conducted nine interviews with FRIDA staff, advisors, and founders:

Angelika Arutyunova, Special Advisor to FRIDA Board

Ana Criquillion, Special Advisor to FRIDA Board

Mariam Gagoshashvili, Former Advisor / Member of founding Advisory Committee / Advisor support team

Jovana Djordjevic, FRIDA Program Officer, Grantmaking and Operations

Amina Doherty, FRIDA Founding Coordinator

Betsy Hoody, Former Advisor / Member of founding Advisory Committee

Ruby Johnson, FRIDA Co-Director

Nadine Moawad, Former Advisor

Perla Vasquez, Advisory Committee (Latin American and the Caribbean Region)

FRIDA consultant Rishita Nandagiri conducted four interviews with grantees and/or applicants:

The Bussy Project (Egypt)

Gay, Lesbians, and All Sexuals Against Discrimination (Barbados)

Radical Queer Affinity Collective (Hungary)

Women’s Health and Equal Rights Initiative (Nigeria)

4. <http://www.thelafayettepractice.com/>

5. The report was published in April 2014 and includes the following eight funds: Disability Rights Fund, FRIDA | The Young Feminist Fund, GMT Initiative, HIV Young Leaders Fund, International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC) HIV Collaborative Fund, Red Umbrella Fund, Robert Carr Networks Fund, and UHAI - the East African Sexual Health and Rights Initiative.

6. Documents utilized for this report are listed in the References section.

FRIDA History



Members of FRIDA's First Grantee Groups meeting at the AWID Forum in 2012, Istanbul, Turkey

FRIDA's roots can be traced back to April 2008, at a funding meeting coordinated by the Global Fund for Women and Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) in Marrakech, Morocco. Germinating the idea of a young feminist fund, the discussion centered around four key factors:

- The emergence of young feminist activism in all corners of the world and the resource needs that stem from this growth and expansion;
- The funding gap felt by young feminist organizations alongside rising interest by a number of large donors in funding girls and young women;
- The urgency of advancing sustainable alternatives and response to the daily violations of young women and girls' rights which impact them individually as well as society at large;
- The need to mobilize new resources and expand existing resources to support the groundbreaking work being done by women's rights organizations and movements worldwide, including young feminists.

To generate ideas and test the vision for the fund, AWID collaborated with the Central American Women's Fund (El Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres, FCAM). FCAM's extensive experience employing an inclusive model of supporting young women-led activism in

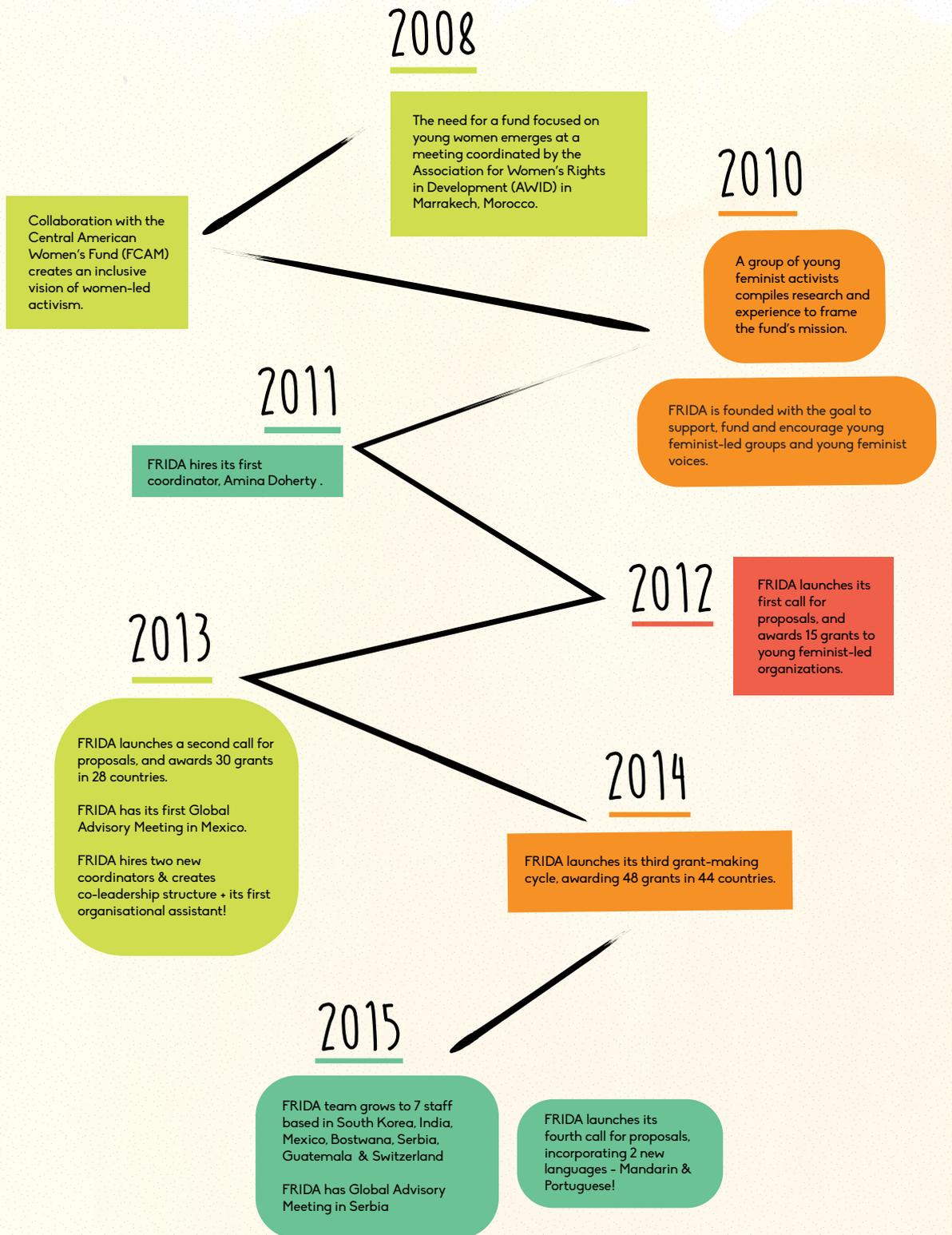
Central America offered a model of participatory grantmaking that became the basis for FRIDA's. FRIDA's design also emerged from global background research that included interviews with stakeholders within the women's funding community, philanthropists, international development agencies, feminist networks, as well as young women working on the ground in different parts of the world, with an emphasis on the Global South. In 2010, a global survey of young women's organizations received response from hundreds of activists sharing their experiences around funding models and recommendations for the new fund. Later that year, a group of young feminist activists and other feminist allies brought this knowledge and analysis together to frame the founding design and strategy of FRIDA.⁷ The core values of flexibility, resources, inclusivity, diversity, and action reflect FRIDA's analysis, purpose, and vision.

Since its founding, FRIDA has been supported and incubated by a number of organizations, with intention for the fund to eventually become an independent institution. AWID and FCAM have provided financial and in-kind support, and The Tides Foundation has acted as the fiscal sponsor and financial home, with FRIDA as a Collective Action Fund within the Tides Foundation, thus handling payment of FRIDA's grantmaking while the substantive decision-making and priorities remain independent. In 2014, FRIDA began a graduation process requiring many structural shifts, including the creation of its first Board of Directors and independent legal registration, having recently registered in Panama.

7. The above history is taken from FRIDA's documentation at <http://youngfeministfund.org/about-frida/history/>

Timeline

FRIDA was founded to support ground-breaking work from women's rights organizations and movements - worldwide.



FRIDA Grantmaking

Understanding the model

FRIDA uses a participatory grantmaking process that puts decision-making in the hands of young feminists themselves as agents of change, and aims to shift traditional power relations between funder and grantee. This means that applicants who meet the selection criteria vote on other applications in their region, in their language and collectively decide where funding goes.

FRIDA provides general operating grants of up to \$5,000 USD to groups founded or led by young women or trans* youth (under 30 years). FRIDA prioritises applications from groups, networks, or collectives based in the Global South regions of Asia and the Pacific; Central, Southern, Eastern Europe and Caucasus and Central Asia; Latin America and

the Caribbean; Middle East and North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa. In keeping with FRIDA's stated aim of responding to the gaps in funding for young feminist-led groups, FRIDA's application criteria requires groups to have been founded within the last five years, and to work on:

- Advancing and defending women's rights from a feminist perspective;
- Improving the lives of young women/trans* youth at local, national, regional or international levels;
- Inclusive organizing, collective action and feminist movement building;

FRIDA's Funding priorities

EMERGING GRASSROOTS GROUPS

SOCIALLY MARGINALIZED WOMEN

- Refugees
- Ethnic, national and caste minorities
- Women living in armed and post-conflict zones
- Urban poor
- LGBT women
- Women living with HIV/AIDS
- Sex workers
- Women with disabilities

Issues that haven't received funding before

REMOTE UNDERSERVED AREAS

Creative and innovative social activism strategies

- Art
- Culture
- Social Media
- Poetry
- Music

Grantmaking



FRIDA's grants support:

- Innovative ideas for coalition and movement-building engaging a broad cross-section of young feminist activists.
- Core funding to cover overhead and general operating costs.
- Start-up initiatives meaning that we will provide funding to help start an activity in the hope that it will then become sustainable.
- Efforts to mobilize and amplify young women's voices to become more integrated in broader women's movements.
- Structured exchange of experiences, lessons and strategies towards sustaining vibrancy within young women's movements locally and more broadly
- Local, regional or international advocacy efforts to promote women's rights.

FRIDA grants also enable grantees to access capacity building support intended to strengthen the participation and leadership of young feminist activists, including additional funds and opportunities to network and connect with grantee partners and other young feminist activists online and in person.

FRIDA grants can be used for general support and/or projects over a period of 12 months, and they are open to renewal. All grants are awarded as flexible funds and core support, which encourages groups to define their own budgets and dedicate funds to where it is most needed. In particular, FRIDA's grants can be used to cover often-traditionally and increasingly underfunded areas like overhead and general operating costs. Groups do not have to be legally registered in order to apply for a grant.



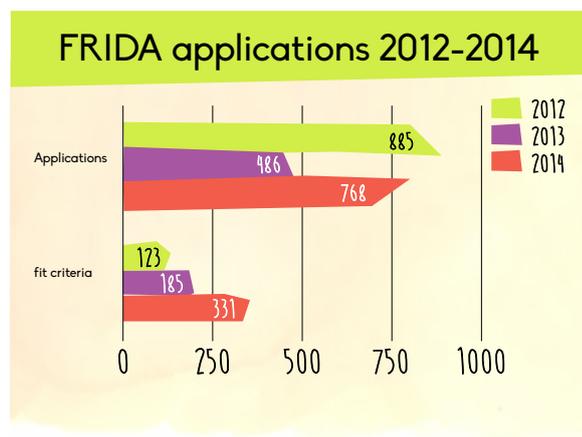
La Red de Mujeres jóvenes indígenas y Afromexicanas (REMJINA)
FRIDA Grantee Group since 2014

Grantmaking outcomes

In three grantmaking cycles (2012-2014), FRIDA has awarded \$437,000 in grants to 57 young feminist organizations. In the 2014 Fiscal Year, FRIDA made new grants to 25 new groups, and renewed funding to 23 former grantees in 46 countries.

FRIDA has received over 2,000 applications, vastly outnumbering early expectations, and demonstrating that young feminists are indeed organizing around the globe and looking for funding. How did FRIDA reach so many groups that were not previously on the philanthropic radar? "One answer," says Betsy Hoody, "is that the technology had shifted since many women's funds were started. FRIDA reaches young people by circulating the call for proposals via social media as well as sharing it with youth networks and women's funds."

Over the years, FRIDA has focused on improving outreach to increase the percentage of applications that meet criteria and are able to participate in the applicant voting process. The first grantmaking year, 2012, had the highest number of total applications, but only 14% fit the grantmaking criteria and went on to vote. In 2013, with the addition of an initial criteria-check into the online form, total application number dropped almost in half, but the percent moving on to voting rose to 38%. In 2014, the total application number grew significantly while also increasing the number of applications that moved on to voting - now at 43%. Program Officer Jovana Djordjevic attributes these improvements in part to increased staff capacity, which in turn gave staff and advisors the opportunity to prioritize outreach and get started earlier in the grantmaking timeline.



FRIDA Living Up to Its Core Values

FRIDA's Values



FLEXIBILITY

We use flexibility to turn feedback into meaningful changes.



RESOURCES

We mobilize multiple forms of resources to achieve our goals.



INCLUSIVITY

We lead with young feminists at every level of our organization.



DIVERSITY

We gather a diverse group of grantees and leadership.



ACTION

We achieve social transformation through action.

Flexibility - Resources - Inclusivity - Diversity - Action

FRIDA was founded to address gaps and disparities in both the global feminist movement(s) and the philanthropic sector. These issues reflect ongoing struggles throughout global movements situated at the intersection of today's most complicated battles for community and individual self determination, safety, and security: inequality regarding distribution of resources; lack of representation and leadership by those most impacted; the intersections of sexism, ageism, and other oppressions.

FRIDA relies on its core values of Flexibility, Resources, Inclusivity, Diversity, and Action to guide its grant making:

- **Flexibility** - a commitment to seeking feedback from those most impacted, integrating that feedback into meaningful changes as the organization evolves.
- **Resources** - the focus is on mobilizing multiple forms of resources to young feminist movements, from financial support to representation at regional and global meetings to capacity development of all kinds.

- **Inclusivity** - every level and decision-making structure of FRIDA is led by young feminists, from staff to Advisors to Board Members, to applicants choosing grantees. Inclusivity also necessitates attention to access issues.
- **Diversity** - FRIDA works to ensure diversity of grantees and FRIDA leadership across identity, region, language, technology-access-divide, issue and all other areas.
- **Action** - FRIDA's work is centered on supporting young feminist movements to achieve social transformation through action.

After five years and three grantmaking cycles, FRIDA has the necessary experience to offer and share analysis, critique, and an example of an alternative model. The following sections explore FRIDA's own evolution, and the questions FRIDA is facing in its current phase of development. This section is structured around the FRIDA acronym.

Flexibility

"What I love the most about FRIDA - having been part of FRIDA from its conceptualization to it being an actual fund - is that FRIDA is willing to try things. It's willing to do that kind of reflection and say this didn't work, this is how we can make this process stronger. I think every year we are learning about how to do things better."

Amina Doherty, FRIDA Founding Coordinator

FRIDA's grantmaking model was designed not only in response to limitations in previously existing resources, but also in the context of 21st century culture and technology. In this way, FRIDA is an altogether new resource and as a result FRIDA's evolution requires willingness to experiment, receive ongoing feedback, and maintain a constant flexibility.

FRIDA builds feedback opportunities into each grantmaking voting cycle, regular surveys, and other processes. For instance, following the first grantmaking cycle in 2012, FRIDA initiated a Grantmaking Feedback process that resulted in a report with detailed feedback which greatly influenced the evolution of the model.

FRIDA has grown from one staff person to seven since establishment, the organization's infrastructure has evolved, and the grantmaking process has also changed each year. Here we explore two examples of FRIDA's flexibility, the history of changes and adjustments in the Advisor and Applicant Voting processes.

Advisor Process Evolution

Since FRIDA's founding, a global committee of young feminist activists have played a core role in creating and building the organization. The FRIDA Advisory Committee members⁸ are based in different regions of the world, and play a leadership role by providing advice and ideas, in particular linked to FRIDA's grant making, capacity development for grantees and regional outreach. Advisors are selected through an Open Call and they commit to work with FRIDA for two years or more.

Advisors score and comment on applications based on FRIDA's core values, funding priorities, and knowledge of regional needs. Each advisor screens applications from their region and/or language capability, and (where necessary) researches groups to confirm information about applications. Advisors are not invited to make recommendations on proposals for funding, only to eliminate applications that do not meet the Fund's criteria.

FRIDA Advisors also participate in activities throughout the year, including Design and Coordination of Grantmaking, Alliance-building and constituency development, Resource Mobilization, and Communications. Advisors play a key role in creating regional strategy and in regional outreach, spreading the word about FRIDA and encouraging young feminist groups to apply, mentorship and support of regional grantees, and participation in fundraising efforts. The Advisory Committee is a voluntary position.

FRIDA also has a number of working groups made up of advisors, staff, and sometimes grantees or past grantees. Working Groups include Resource Mobilisation, Capacity Development, Security, and Selfcare.

Grant Selection Criteria

The role of advisors in the qualification stage is to review applications against the selection criteria, not assess whether the proposal should receive a grant.

In our interviews, conversation often returned to the importance of creating and ensuring the use of consistent criteria for advisor prescreening, especially because each application is reviewed by only one advisor and there is little structure in place for oversight of advisor choices. Establishing consistency is a challenge given the international scope of the process, with all advisors working remotely, and potentially reviewing up to 30 proposals each. Co-Director Ruby Johnson stated that, "the advisor first-round process is the most contentious. Volunteers, who are in the movement, bring their own perspectives. This part of the process needs quality control." Therefore discussion and debate is really important at this stage.

One challenge is that advisors likely have a diversity of opinions on whether a project is, in fact, feminist. These kinds of judgment calls require knowledge of specific cultural context, and FRIDA therefore asks advisors to refer decisions to the voting process so that it is always the young feminist applicants that have the final say.

8. For a list of FRIDA Current Advisory Committee see <http://youngfeministfund.org/about-frida/advisory-committee/>

Flexibility

In 2014, FRIDA recruited new advisors, increasing the committee to expand the organization's reach and meet the demands of regional proposal numbers, and simultaneously a number of founding advisors moving on after multiple years of service. Longtime advisors were able to orient and mentor the incoming group with explicit emphasis on how to evaluate applications, including use of a new grant scoring tool that asks a series of yes/no questions about whether groups meet FRIDA criteria and priorities. In addition, where previously advisors were given a goal number for choosing how many applications would go to vote from each region, in 2014 advisors were instead instructed to accept all that fit the criteria, and FRIDA designed the voting process (assessing regional and subregional voting groups) to fit that number. As a result, in 2014 more groups than ever before made it to the voting round - almost double 2013's number.

Applicant Voting Evolution

"This isn't just about empowering young feminists as grantmakers but also about giving those groups the birds-eye view of grantmaking that usually sits within foundations, and allowing them to see the breadth and the range of what's happening within their country and across the region."

(Betsy Hoody, Former Advisor, part of founding Advisory Committee)

Interviewees reflected multiple stories of groups using innovative methods for collaborative decision making as FRIDA voters. However, people also noted that there is little oversight on what each applicant group's voting process entails. Mariam Gagoshashvili wondered, "Is it a collective process in their organizations, or is it the leader, or one or two people who decide who that organization will be voting for?" She continued, "I've seen in FRIDA that it really depends who is voting, and the groups that gets the funding - sometimes it's just [a difference of] one vote. I don't feel that it's the most fair way. It doesn't mean that these are the groups that really need it or deserve it, or have best capacity to do it."

Interviewees recommended a few options to experiment with consensus based grantmaking, including the possibility of voting via video meeting (as AWID sometimes does), and offering pre-voting video call-in workshops for new applicant groups to learn about different models groups have used in their voting process, highlighting a range of "best practices" examples.

One interviewee also recommended shifting funding to support collaborations between groups, encouraging FRIDA to consider giving larger grants for such projects.

Some of FRIDA founders initially intended to have current grantees vote in the second grant cycle, and onward from that point, as Central American Women's Fund grantees do. However, this was not implemented and remains controversial due to concerns about disrupting anonymity. Interviewee Ana Criquillion advocated that grantees should be re-integrated into the voting process both because they are intimately familiar with FRIDA's goals and trajectory, and because it would increase grantees' ownership of the organization. Furthermore, Ana Criquillion would like to see FRIDA's grantees making decisions on most of the important areas of FRIDA's work. For instance, participating in decisions such as setting the regional quotas, and participating in FRIDA fundraising.

Address the Limitations of Democracy

Interviewees widely shared an awareness that the current voting model lacks outlets to work-around the fact that not all issues are equally supported by voting groups. What to do about the reality that many voters may not be aware or supportive of all of the diversity within feminist movements? For example, interviewees referred to hearing from a Trans group in Mexico City who had applied for multiple years and not been chosen. The group questioned whether it would even be possible to have a different outcome in this voting model.

In an interview with members of an LGBT group from Barbados, members spoke about how they have now multiple times made it to the second round without receiving a grant, and they attribute this to the impact of homophobia on regional voters.



Fe-Male, Lebanon.
FRIDA Grantee Group since 2014.

"Feminist organizations often don't see the intersectionalities or the use of LGBT advocacy to their work, or working hand-in-hand, because of the homophobia that's still exists - at least in the Caribbean region, I can't really speak for other regions that may be more open to LGBT rights and sexual minorities. I attribute us not getting past a certain stage [in the grantmaking process] because of the perception of LGBT and a response of "What are you doing here? This is a feminist funder!"
(Barbados- Gay, Lesbians, and All Sexuals Against Discrimination)

In a scan of survey comments by FRIDA applicants, those voting generally report that FRIDA's regional voting method functions in a relatively non-competitive model in which all groups share an experience of collaborative movement-building. Similarly, an interviewee from The Bussy Project (in Egypt) reported: "I didn't really look at it as competition, I looked at it more like I knew multiple groups would be getting funding and I chose groups I thought would work best with my own group, where we could benefit from each others' resources."

Still, it is important to acknowledge this sense of regional solidarity can be undermined if real or perceived discrimination factors into which groups receive grants. Members of the same Barbados LGBT organization added, "We're competing, so it doesn't really foster solidarity when there's a winner and there's losers."

Given these disparities, how can the voting process be adjusted to give all groups a more fair chance, and ensure an environment supporting solidarity and movement building between applicants? A few suggestions that came up in our interviews:

- **Creating a few targeted issue-based voting groups, in addition to the primary regional voting model. Or, adding issue-area quotas. This would function essentially as an affirmative action strategy.**
- **Adding one or more grantee slots that would be chosen by staff or advisors based on agreed priorities to ensure diversity. [as FCAM does].**
- **Adding another step to the due-diligence process, looking at the results to assess trends and reporting back to voters as a quality-control.**

Resources

"There is a lot of trans-national, cross-regional connection happening, and I think that's key to FRIDA's movement building, because movements cannot be confined to the borders of one country."

**Mariam Gagoshashvili,
Former Advisor, part of
founding Advisory Committee**

FRIDA is dedicated to raising and re-distributing financial resources while also mobilizing and catalyzing non-financial resources in a model they call "Funding-Plus."

FRIDA uses three overall approaches in its capacity development work:

1. **Trust young feminists to be experts of their own reality.** FRIDA engages with groups directly to enable them to define their own strengths and weaknesses. Additional funds are provided for groups to invest in their own organization's capacity development, from trainings and registration fees to hiring consultants and buying equipment. Similarly, FRIDA enables groups to develop their capacities through experiences, supporting groups to participate in and attend specific philanthropic and/or movement-building spaces.
2. **Create a community of learning for grantee partners and young feminists within the broader movement.** This community is built on supportive relationships and the exchange of ideas, experiences, and expertise. FRIDA encourages and provides virtual and physical spaces for groups to meet each other at national, regional, and cross-regional levels.
3. **Facilitate links and partnerships between its grantee partners and other constituents, including FRIDA's advisors and other social justice organizations and activists.**

In this section, we look at some of the specifics of FRIDA's work to create and support connections between young feminists; to analyze and share grantee and applicant data to more widely inform and influence movement strategy and philanthropic resources; and to flip the power dynamic of traditional philanthropy.

Perspectives of FRIDA Community

"All the groups review the proposals for other groups in the same language, but it's not only about Spanish or English language, it's about the political language. So you can see in the proposals, for example, different ways to create projects against the issue of rape in the streets. These groups discover the different points of view about feminist politics, and different strategies." (*Perla Vasquez - Member of FRIDA Founding Advisory Committee and current Board Member*)

"I think FRIDA particularly helps young people starting a new initiative to understand that the issues you're going to face are common challenges. That you're not alone, this is not an exception, this is a systematic issue of ageism in funding, in networking, and in opportunities. And there's been a lot of thought put into how we can challenge and resolve [those barriers]." (*Nadine Moawad*)

"For us, the biggest positive impact of FRIDA's grantmaking model is that we have access to a lot of different groups all over the world... The politics we follow is to reclaim space and the FRIDA funding really allowed us to have a tangible, safer space for ourselves to develop and work together and do actions, because there's a huge lack of space for women and trans* and queers to come together. Space is a resource and FRIDA enabled us to have this and supported it, and from there, we now have an established a network and connections to continue with it without having the space anymore." (*Budapest - Radical Queer Affinity Collective*)

"When we were applying, it was interesting to see that there was another Nigerian organization applying, and to see what work they were doing. You might think that because we're in the same country we would be connected somehow but- yes, we're women's organizations but we don't necessarily work with the same target group of women, and it's nice to know that there's an organization out there that does this work and if I had wanted to get in contact with them I could go through FRIDA to do that." (*Women's Health and Equal Rights Initiative, Nigeria*)

Resources

Online Networks

Once groups are chosen as FRIDA grantees, they gain access to multiple online connection methods: FRIDA's grantee email announcements list and a private Facebook group for all grantees and advisors. The Facebook group has served as a resource for posting upcoming calls for proposals, sharing resources and other funds to apply to, and groups also share info, pictures, and sometimes ask questions. At the end of 2014, FRIDA launched a "FRIDA Hub" global online networking platform. Still in development, the Hub is intended as a space for resources, webinar and training sessions and discussion groups around key issues, with organizations grouped together for networking based on region, and an intention of buddy-system for new and older groups.

Convenings

One element of FRIDA's commitment to capacity development is supporting grantees to attend international and regional events. FRIDA has had two global convenings, bringing together all of their grantees. The first was held in connection with the 2012 AWID International Forum in Istanbul, Turkey. The second was held in Chiang Mai, Thailand in 2014, linked to the Asia Pacific Feminist Forum. This convening brought together representatives from 25 groups that FRIDA currently funds across 22 countries in 5 regions. This was the first time both cohorts of FRIDA's two grant cycles came together in a face to face meeting.

A third global convening is planned to coincide with the AWID 2016 Forum in Brazil. Global convenings are devised through a participatory process where grantees identify priorities and staff work with them to design sessions.

Responding to grantee feedback, FRIDA is currently in the process of designing regional convenings, intended as opportunities for grantee networking and capacity development.

"I want to see more online conferences and networking opportunities to promote connection and networking among the grantees. We have to give them the possibility to strategize together, to see what they have in common, to set up some common priorities and go from there. FRIDA could not do all of this the first three years. It takes time - but this is where I think we should go."
(Ana Criquillon, Special Advisor to FRIDA Board, and part of FRIDA Founders)

"In the convenings, it was just mindblowing to me how young feminists from such different parts of the world were able to not only share strategies but also brainstorm for ways they could address the same issues, while recognizing that the contexts are different. To be able to have that physical connection, to be able to travel, to be able to share space in and of itself is really innovative and really important. Particularly if we're thinking about how we establish solidarity, thinking about the ways in which we articulate and understand and share each other's feminism."
(Amina Doherty)

Calls

Grantees join group welcome calls (usually video calls when technology permits) at the beginning of the grant year, usually with two or more groups as well as staff members and regional advisors. There are mid-point check-in calls, again with multiple groups to create space for shared accountability, sharing experiences, and problem-solving together. There are also ad-hoc calls with groups that come up against issues in their organizing, including advisors from the region. Depending on internet connectivity and other technology issues, these calls work very well in some areas and they are extremely challenging in others.

Inspired by two groups that modelled this on their own, FRIDA has also launched a program of "solidarity exchanges," where groups will visit each other to learn about each other's works within their real context. FRIDA staff or advisors occasionally visit grantees as well.

Limited Applicant Networking Opportunities

While grantees are connected in multiple ways through FRIDA, the wider network of grant applicants are not yet able to build networks through FRIDA because the voting process is anonymous (voters don't see organizational names or contact information). This anonymity is maintained due to multiple concerns including safety/security needs and avoiding conflict of interest. However, many applicants have come to FRIDA with requests to be connected with other applicants after the grantmaking process, and FRIDA facilitates these connections on an adhoc basis. FRIDA staff would like to increase the opportunity for applicant connections, possibly through creation of online directory or spaces that would enable groups to maintain security protocol.

Capacity to Share Data

"FRIDA is able to collect a goldmine of data from the grantmaking processes. We hold a responsibility to bring it back to the people, and say "Here's what we're learning, here's what we know about the movement," so they can come back to FRIDA and say "Ok, now that we know how many proposals you receive, how many groups you have been able to fund, what you were able to do, here's where we want you to contribute more." How to build that, I think, is the next level." (Angelika Arutyunova, Special Advisor to FRIDA Board, and part of FRIDA Founders)

Many interviewees spoke to a sense of both opportunity and responsibility to use the grant application data as a source of analysis that can benefit the wider movement. Interviewees spoke of how they could utilize FRIDA's data to advocate for increased funding, and better targeted funding, within wider philanthropic spaces.

Interviewees also recommended partnering with other young feminist activist programs or with other researchers to both improve the design of FRIDA's application and harvest the information that comes from it to draw conclusions about the state of young feminist activism on a more regular basis.

A few key technology improvements are underway in order to better harvest and analyze FRIDA's data.

FRIDA's Online Grant Application Submission Form has changed each year [2012 was Google Forms, 2013 SurveyGizmo, 2014 SurveyGizmo with changes to the back end]. Interviewees expressed desire for a platform more tailored to FRIDA's needs, both including increased information security.

FRIDA is also in the process of building an integrated Salesforce database to track applicants, grantees, donors, and other relationships. Until recently, there has been no way to track applicant organizations across the years and grantmaking cycles. FRIDA staff are working to increase capacity for the online survey form to feed directly into the database and otherwise automate the process of collecting and analyzing data, while also creating a more rigorous system of checks and balances to ensure that no data will be missed or lost in the application or voting processes.

Changing Expectations of Philanthropy

"I don't like connecting FRIDA's work to 'empowering young feminists' because I want to connect it to challenging the current funding system and hopefully actually empowering funders. Groups on the ground have certain understandings of their problems and

analyses of their situations that we will never have. So they're actually empowering us, right? There's no way FRIDA would do anything at all with its money if it weren't for the groups on the ground doing their work. How does FRIDA understand its power and privilege in terms of funding, in terms of access to spaces that others may not have, how to leverage that for the groups? As a funder, that's not empowerment, that is your job." (Angelika Arutyunova)

Amina Doherty reflected on how, as a young woman (in her early 20s) working in a human rights family foundation, she was able to access conversations about funding and movement strategies that she was never invited to join as an organizer. As a young woman of color, she says, "it was very apparent to me that there was no one else like me in those kind of spaces." At FRIDA, she says, "we wanted to change that. FRIDA has made an effort to democratize grantmaking and philanthropy in a way that I don't think has been done before globally, particularly for young feminists. It has enabled young feminist groups to understand the kinds of questions donors ask, which ultimately strengthens the way they are able to mobilize resources, even outside of FRIDA. If you know and understand the questions that donors ask, it helps you write stronger proposals, that's a fact."

In addition to gaining insights that enable groups to mobilize resources, FRIDA's model also expands the space for challenging exclusivity in philanthropy. Amina adds, "People are beginning to say 'Why can't we be involved in the process in this way? Why aren't you considering things in a more participatory way.' And I think that we've begun to see things shift in a way that more and more donors are looking towards participatory processes, and looking towards ways in which they can actually learn from their grantees. I think that FRIDA has made huge inroads in that regards by shifting the mindset of more traditional donors."

Ana Criquillion added that, coming from the FRIDA experience, young feminist groups are able to be "more demanding of a more respectful and horizontal relationship between themselves and their donors, and wanting their donors to actually respect their own agenda."

"It really inspiring to work with FRIDA. It's the first time that I encountered such a grantmaking model. We all totally looked to FRIDA and said 'This is how we want to work together. This is what feels right for us. This is how we feel empowered. This fits with the way that we're working and with our structure. If this capacity for dialogue is not there then we don't want to apply for money'." (Budapest - Radical Queer Affinity Collective)

Inclusivity

"FRIDA is the most empowering grantmaking model I've ever seen. Because it is a participatory grantmaking model, it really recognizes the agency of young feminists. Young people and feminists have been so marginalized and stigmatized, and the traditional models of giving have perpetuated this notion that the grantees are the recipients of aid and are passive, recipients-only, and that's it. Here, we have opportunities for people to express their agency and be the drivers of change, and to transform this very traditional donor-grantee relationship."

**Mariam Gagoshashvili,
Former Advisor, part of
founding Advisory
Committee**

As a participatory grantmaking fund, FRIDA is designed to reflect a value that the Disability Rights Movement has defined as “nothing about us, without us.” Because FRIDA focuses on activism led by feminists aged 18 – 30, young feminists must make up the leadership and decision-making center of the organization. FRIDA also practices its commitment to inclusivity by ensuring leadership include a representative diversity of regional, ethnic and racial backgrounds and identities, and gender and sexual identities and expressions. FRIDA’s definition of “feminist” is also intended to include trans* participation.

This section explores the capacity-building and movement-building dynamics of participation in FRIDA’s grantmaking process, and the successes and challenges of FRIDA’s outreach efforts to address access issues.

Direct Representation

At FRIDA, the medium is the message. The work is shared and owned at all levels by people personally connected to the movement that is being funded and supported through FRIDA grantmaking. As Nadine Moawad explained, rather than adults saying “we need to educate more girls,” the problems and solutions are identified by the young feminists themselves.

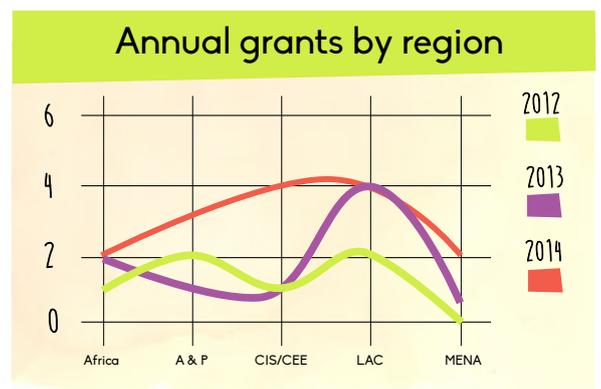
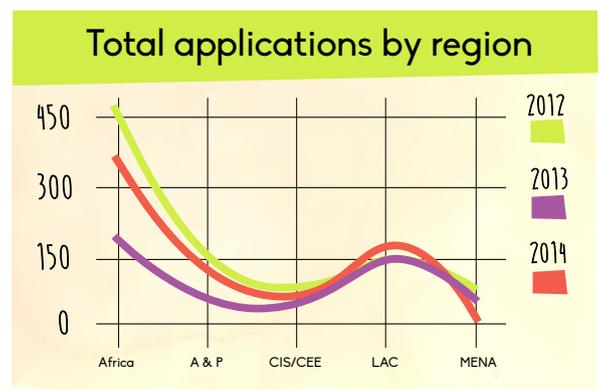
Perla Vasquez reflected on the ways that the voting process can demonstrate that “a democratic process is possible” as group members join together in a practice of direct decision making that is not an idealistic exercise, but one that yields results in the movement. She adds that when she has spoken to groups that weren’t selected but had voted for groups that were, they were happy about the results and felt accomplishment.

First Funding Opportunity

Because FRIDA prioritizes funding groups that have been around for less than 5 years and those with smaller budgets, it’s often a group’s first grant. Nadine Moawad adds that young feminists often face a funding barrier because “if a group is new, you haven’t demonstrated capacity or outcomes. But a lot of great organizations started as a few young women getting together and beginning something.”

Outreach and Accessibility

Despite great overall outreach success, grant applications have been regionally imbalanced. The below lefthand chart breaks down the total application number by region, demonstrating a continued trend of highest application numbers in 2012 applications, dropping in 2013, and then rising again in 2014.⁹ The MENA region stands out from this pattern with application numbers declining each year. However, as the bottom chart demonstrates, the number of grants awarded to the MENA region has increased each year, which indicates an increase in applications that match FRIDA’s criteria and priorities.



9. As previously noted, this drop in the second year was due to adding a Grant Criteria Self-Selection Tool as the first step in the application process.

Diversity

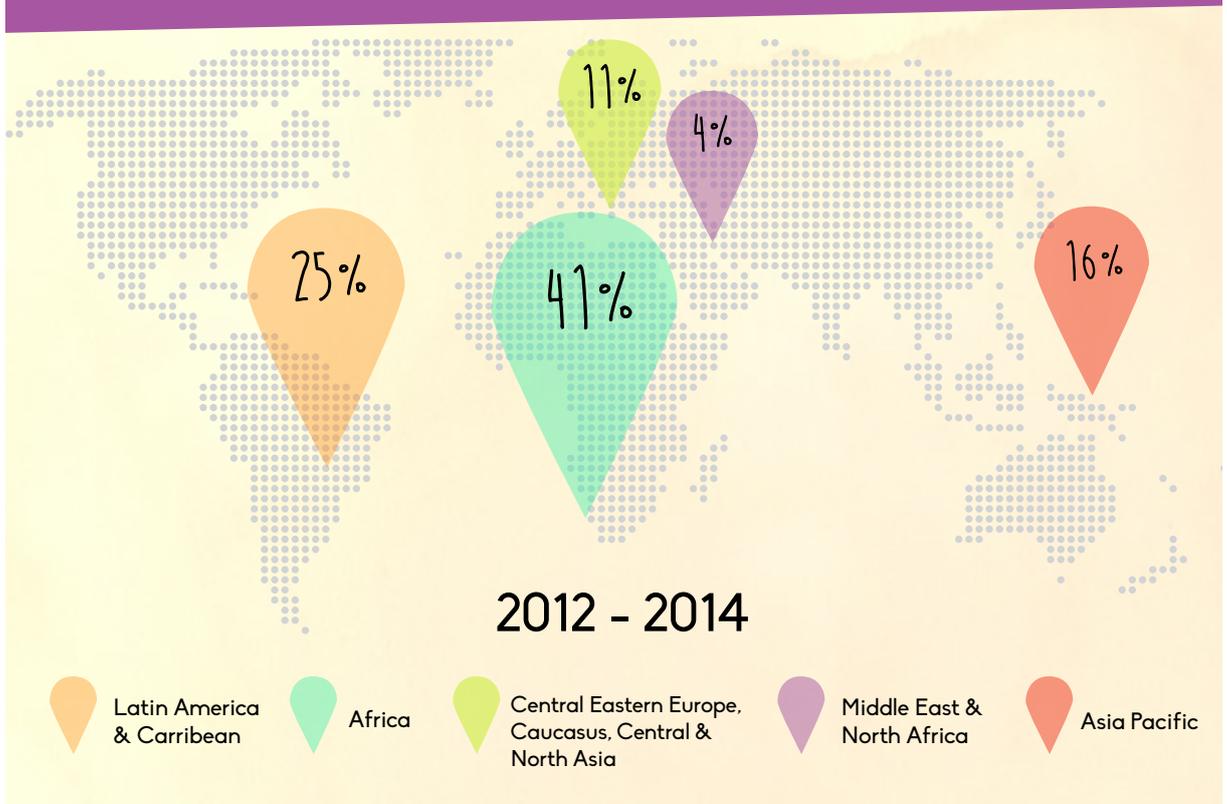
"Technology had shifted since many women's funds were started. FRIDA reaches young by circulating the call for proposals via social media as well as sharing it with youth networks and women's funds."

Betsy Hoody, Former Advisor, part of founding Advisory Committee

As many of the interviewees stated, Diversity is a clearly stated value and priority. From FRIDA's "Grantmaking Tools" document:

- FRIDA uses the term 'feminist' broadly to refer to individuals working within women's movements or in other social movements to promote and work towards the safety, equality, justice, rights and dignity of girls, women and other marginalized groups.
- FRIDA emphasizes feminist principles throughout all of its work. These principles include: non-hierarchy, collectivity, participation, diversity, and inclusion.
- FRIDA prioritizes groups from the following communities: refugees, ethnic, national and caste minorities; rural and urban, poor women; those identifying as lesbian, bisexual, transgender; women living with HIV/AIDS; sex workers; women with disabilities; women living in armed conflicts and post conflict zones.

Where our grant applications come from



Diversity



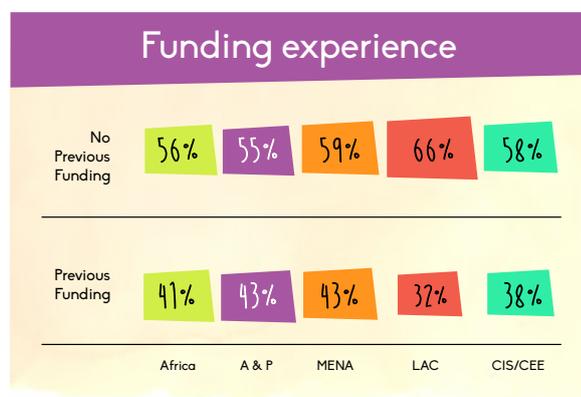
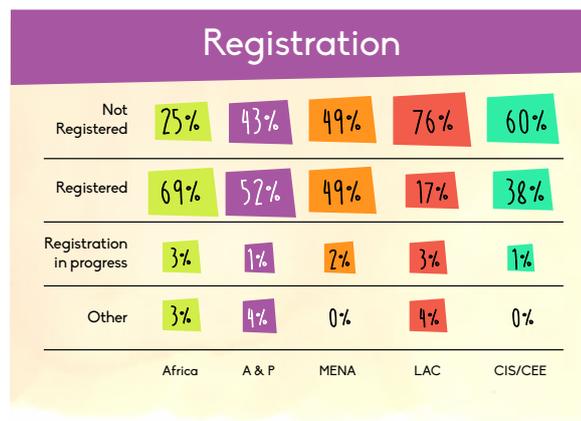
Young Feminist Movement (Y-Fem), Namibia, FRIDA Grantee Group since 2012

FRIDA also accepts applications in seven languages: English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Portuguese, Mandarin and Russian, with other languages likely to be added in coming years.

How does this work out in practice? What are the dynamics and challenges that arise while attempting to practice direct democracy in a global environment rife with inequalities?

FRIDA receives applications and distributes grants in a model designed to support regional and national diversity. The chart on the previous page indicates total percent of applications over three years for each region. [MENA is 4% and Global North, which is not one of FRIDA's prioritized regions, is 3%]

Of these applicants, 59% reported that they had received no previous funding, and 47% reported that their group was not registered. An analysis of key issues chosen by applicants showed 24 issues chosen by at least 5%. Key issues in all regions include human rights in general, women's empowerment, gender equality, and Sexual and Gender based violence.



* Percentages adjusted to correct total greater than 100%

Diversity Challenges

Interviewees consistently reflected that FRIDA demonstrates its commitment to diversity. At the same time, they were aware of the specifics of the work ahead to increase diversity in underserved regions, and bigger questions about how diversity actually plays out within the grantee community.

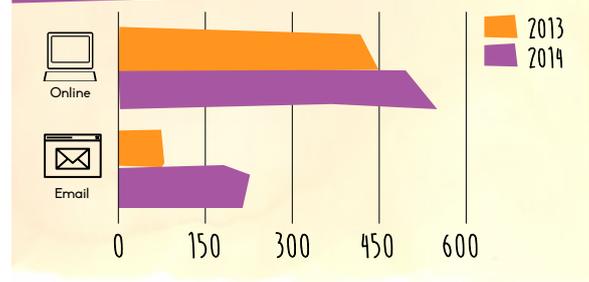
One recommendation was that as FRIDA grows in staff capacity, it could aim to have an advisor in every country where it works. At Global Fund for Women, they have about two advisors per country, often more. But, says Mariam Gagoshashvili, "even that is not a guarantee that you can reach out to the most marginalized groups who are really excluded from public spaces, who are in removed areas, remote villages, rural areas, or are really underground because of their gender identity or sexuality and they can't really be on the radar."

Further, interviewees raised the questions of "diversity to what end?" If FRIDA funds a diverse spectrum of organizing ranging from (in the interview example) a group organizing within their religion and an anarchist group, does this contribute to the diversity of the movement or does it support conflicting movements? One interviewee recommended that FRIDA engage in a process of reflection to create a clear definition of the type of organizing and the type of change they want to support.

Age

FRIDA has an age policy limiting internal leadership roles to young feminists under age 35, mirroring the grantee age criteria (until recently the limit was age 30). However, as interviewees pointed out, age is not a stable identity. As grantees, staff, and volunteers age out of the organization, what are the structures to make sure the transitions are effective and the institutional memory transfers? One current example is that Angelika Arutyunova and Ana Criquillion (both over 35 and key participants in FRIDA's development from the beginning) are working with the new Board of Directors in an advisory capacity in order to support the transition to FRIDA as an independent organization.

Application methods 2013-2014



Technology

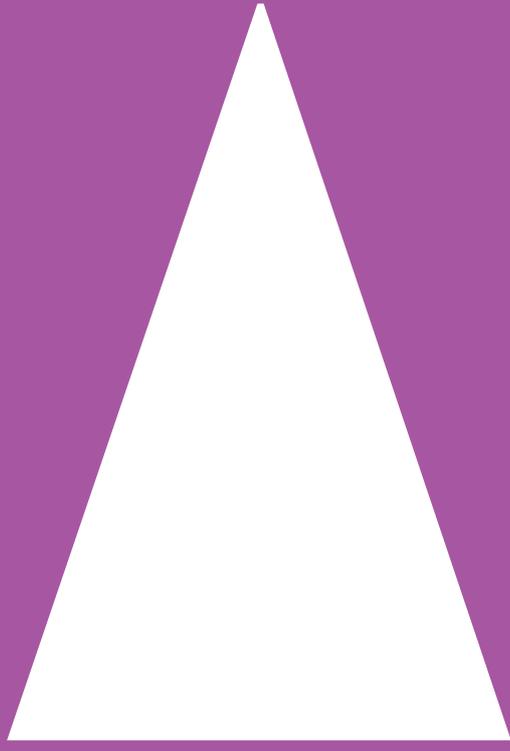
FRIDA consistently grapples with the issue of technology access. FRIDA's application process and voting process happens online, but internet access may be inaccessible or limited for many young feminists in the Global South, especially those in rural areas. "As FRIDA we can't fix the issue of technology access, but it's something that we can consistently work on to make our processes better, so that we can address those kinds of disparities and challenges," says Amina.

As it currently stands, groups can also mail or fax applications or voting results, but this is rarely done. Many groups send in their applications by email, but the staff also juggle access issues with the concern that emails require vastly more labor to convert into format for the voting process - and there is more possibility for error in the process.

A look at FRIDA applications between 2012 - 2014

The bulk of applications came from Africa, LAC and Asia-Pacific. All were established in the past 5 years and had girl, young women or trans* leadership under 30 years old. 48% of organisations were not registered. Registration is much more common in Africa and much less common in LAC. Of the applicants to FRIDA over a three year period, 39% had never received funding. Most organizations have not had previous funding, especially in LAC.

Action



Recommendations from The Lafayette Practice

FRIDA strives toward a more responsive, democratic and inclusive philanthropy while situated at the intersection of today's most complicated battles for community and individual self determination, safety and security. They have achieved a groundbreaking model which has already shown meaningful impact and benefit for global young feminist movements, and they have reached a plateau of experience and capacity that invites and enables a new level of strategy to more fully apply the mission and ethics of the organization to the infrastructure of the work. Based on our interviews and analysis of FRIDA's grantmaking model and our research in the wider field of participatory grantmaking, The Lafayette Practice offers the following recommendations.

Upgrade Data Systems

Given that FRIDA receives "a goldmine" of data in each grantmaking cycle, often hearing from groups that are unknown to other grantmaking and NGO networks, it is crucial that FRIDA now step into a more prominent role to identify emerging trends, inform the advisors and voters, and report to the broader philanthropic community. FRIDA must prioritize developing a new level of rigor and discipline around these systems in order to influence the broader philanthropic community about young feminist issues and the funding gap affecting them. FRIDA is in a key position to broadcast emergent, notable trends in young feminist work globally, and to take a leadership role in how larger institutions identify, discuss, and represent that movement in international spaces.

Additionally, we believe that clarity coming from analysis of the applicant and grantee data will offer a data-driven path to increased equity in the distribution of resources, both within FRIDA grantmaking and in the field of global philanthropy.

TLP Recommendations:

1. Ensure that FRIDA data-collection is in line with industry security standards regarding high-risk grantmaking.
 - a) Re-evaluate grant application surveys to remove any unnecessary requests for sensitive data.
2. Strengthen data systems to improve integration with grant application surveys, and reporting capacity.
3. Ensure that planned analysis of previous grantmaking cycle data will identify regional and issue-area application and funding trends.
 - b) Consider partnership with other organizations or researchers for joint analysis.
4. Evaluate funding trends to identify areas requiring adjustment to the grantmaking and/or voting methods.
5. Share findings with young feminists and philanthropic communities.
6. Strategize to use data findings to advocate for increased funding and better targeted funding for global young feminist activism.
7. Build annual data analysis, reporting, and related method re-evaluation into the strategic plan and annual workplans.

Action



Young Feminist Organization, Philippines,
FRIDA Grantee Group since 2014

Increase Participation/ Collaboration Opportunities

FRIDA already has many strategies underway to increase participation between grantees, including the FRIDA Hub, a plan for Regional Convenings, Solidarity Exchanges, and a re-design of the Monitoring and Evaluation Process to center collective indicators. Still, our interviews identified multiple areas of FRIDA grantmaking process that don't yet fully reflect the same level of participation as the overall model, and areas of outreach that have not been consistently successful. Addressing these areas will deepen FRIDA's capacity for catalyzing shared learning, equitable representation, and connection between groups.

TLP Recommendations:

1. Identify opportunities or strategies to involve previous grantees in all processes of the organization. For instance:
 - Setting regional quotas.
 - Voting in new grantmaking cycles.
 - Participating in the grant renewal process.
2. Include Grantees and Advisors in FRIDA fundraising.
3. Identify opportunities or strategies to connect grant applicants who do not move to the voting rounds.
 - Consider (optional) regional video conferences or workshops.
 - Consider creating an announcement listserv or online network space (again, optional) through which all FRIDA applicants can share information with each other.
4. Consider funding collaborations between grantees.
5. Increase transparency of the grantmaking process and roles on the updated FRIDA website, including an updated infographic representing the grantmaking process, explanation of the roles and responsibilities of Advisors, and the list of Board Members.
6. Increase outreach capacity.
 - Improve outreach to groups in under-represented regions.
 - Expand number of advisors in under-represented regions.
 - Expand outreach media (for example: a video featuring current grantees.)
 - Identify focused outreach opportunities beyond the global women's movement (labor movements, sexuality movements, trade movements, environmental movements...)
7. Identify a formal role for supporters over 35 to work in collaboration with FRIDA community in intergenerational feminist community.



New Waves - Young Women's Leadership Network, Cambodia, FRIDA Grantee Group since 2014

Consider/Evaluate Adjustments to the Voting Model

Interviewees often spoke of the challenges of FRIDA's model as an imperfect decision-making tool. How to ensure that culturally marginalized groups have the same opportunity to be chosen for a grant? How to ensure that group voting processes reflect FRIDA values? The interviews also provided many creative possible solutions, reflecting an ongoing conversation about these issues within FRIDA leadership.

TLP Recommendations:

1. Use data to identify excluded areas:
 - Assess regional quotas and consider adding issue-area quotas if necessary.
 - Explore creating targeted issue-based voting cohorts.
 - Consider adding one or more grantee slots that will be chosen by staff or advisors, as FCAM does.
2. Increase collaborative dynamics of voting:
 - Consider - where feasible - voting via video meeting, as AVID sometimes does.
 - Pre-voting (video) workshops for new applicant groups to learn about different models groups have used in their voting process.

Scale Up

The interviews reflected a consistent theme: FRIDA is doing excellent work, and people want more of it. More grants and larger grants distributed; more advisors, more outreach; more opportunities for connections and collaboration between grantees; more opportunities for FRIDA and FRIDA's grantees to impact wider movements.

To achieve these goals, FRIDA is on a path to achieve full independence from fiscal sponsor/incubating institutions, and must build internal infrastructure that can scale up to meet these visions, including formalization of grantmaking policies that can ensure consistency of practice across diverse regions.

And, while FRIDA's leaders and community are enthusiastic about the organization's growth, there is also recognition of the need for attention to details, a need to balance quantity and quality.

Looking at the history of FRIDA's first five years, we are confident that the organization will continue to learn, grow, and increase its impact with the same thoughtful and revolutionary intentions that were present in its founding vision and have maintained throughout its evolution

Conclusion

By Rishita Nandagiri

Since 2010, FRIDA has grown in leaps and bounds - as a feminist grantmaker, in supporting young feminist activists, and in contributing to stronger, more connected movements. Since its inception, FRIDA has responded positively to feedback from applicants, grantees, and advisors; tweaking and tailoring its systems and processes to best serve and support young feminist activism. This hands-on process has led to a great deal of experiential learning and goes a long way towards explaining FRIDA's unique model and achievements.

Some of the key takeaways from this report include:

FRIDA's grantmaking model fosters connections between young feminists, and supports feminist movement building

FRIDA's participatory grantmaking model does not just challenge traditional funding relationships, it heightens a sense of solidarity and accountability amongst young feminists through its horizontal model. An analysis of applicant comments after voting (2013 and 2014) reflects that the model plants the seeds for a community of feminist practice that relies on shared learning, and trusting young feminists to know their own issues and be the experts of their own realities.

By creating a sense of accountability to the community that has collectively placed their trust in the skills, visions, and abilities of the grantees, the model enhances a sense of "belonging" to larger movement building efforts. Applicant feedback shows that the model shifts their perceptions of grantmaking, especially when it is their first every grant application, embodying not just the feminist values of solidarity and support, but also subverting an implicit system of competition.

A FRIDA applicant shares, "It bolsters the spirit of sisterhood, empowerment, and sense of being part in the process of building networks of women's rights groups. Each one of the shortlisted proposals was a joy to read through. They left our group entirely inspired and motivated for our future work. Mostly, it showed us that we have allies and friends in the region who we can collaborate with in future endeavors."

FRIDA also connects its grantee partners, and other feminist organisations and partners through convenings, solidarity visits, regular Skype calls, and its online platform the 'FRIDA hub.' Feedback from applicants clearly reflects their yearning to connect with each other across contexts, cultures, and challenges.

FRIDA embodies reflexivity in practice

FRIDA's commitment to reflexivity is evident in the constant innovating of their own model, and their ways of working, and is embedded in FRIDA's grantmaking and organisational practice, infusing their decisions and approaches. This report is one such example of reflexivity in praxis.

FRIDA's strength lies in its ability to consistently reflect and tweak its model to best support and nurture young feminist organising across the world. Building upon this report, FRIDA is able to pinpoint specific actions to strengthen and streamline its work, assess grantee and applicant experiences, and continue to flip the question; asking, "what do we do for each other?"

FRIDA has grown exponentially in scale over the last five years - what does growth look like for the next five years?

The FRIDA team has grown from one to seven staff members, with the team based virtually around the world. The advisory committee has also expanded, now comprising 46 activists from five regions; with five of them taking on specific roles as 'thematic advisors.' The number of young feminists groups funded has also grown from 15 to 57, expected to grow again by the end of 2015.

As FRIDA continues to grow, it is taking its first steps on a path to independence, one of the key expectations is for FRIDA to scale-up and expand the model to reach more young feminist activists. This, however, is fraught with many tensions and questions such as how do they balance quality and quantity; requiring FRIDA to consider the implications of scaling-up and whether it enhances the model or if it will lose something unique and crucial in the effort.



As FRIDA contemplates the next five years, there are a few challenges to confront

The report reflects some of the challenges that FRIDA has faced over the last five years and the ways in which it has navigated them. Some of the questions that FRIDA will contemplate in the years ahead are:

Diversity and Outreach: Interviewees have all been unanimous in their appreciation for FRIDA's inclusivity and commitment to diversity. However, FRIDA's outreach to marginalised or remote communities, countries or areas that are underserved can still be strengthened. In addition, interviewees raised the question of "diversity to what end?"; calling for a nuanced approach to feminist movement building and support.

Technology and Access: Over the last five years, FRIDA has grappled with technology and access issues. This is true not just in FRIDA's efforts to reach collectives and communities outside the remit of the Internet, but also in how it works with technology itself. FRIDA is currently in the process of updating its systems to comply with industry standards, considering digital security and safety, and exploring other outreach options.

Data Systems and analysis: FRIDA receives hundreds of applications from emerging grassroots young feminist organisations from all corners of the world each year. Over 50% of these organisations have never been funded or never applied for funding before. Given the number of applications that FRIDA receives each grantmaking cycle, FRIDA has access to huge amount of data.

Connecting with new groups that are unknown to the funding community, it is crucial that FRIDA now steps into a more prominent role to identify emerging trends, and disseminate to the broader philanthropic community and use data findings to advocate for increased funding and better targeted funding for global young feminist activism. This requires that FRIDA set up more rigorous data collection and analysis systems. Something that is underway, with the first wave of dissemination is the FRIDA and AWID Young Feminist Activist Fieldscan. To be released in early 2016.

Voting System: While interviewees speak appreciatively about the participatory grantmaking model and its strengths, they also recognise that the voting system is imperfect and can privilege certain groups or priorities over others. One of the recommendations is for FRIDA to utilise the data to identify excluded areas, consider quota systems, or create issue-based voting cohorts. There are also suggestions to consider other ways of enhancing collaboration- through video calls, ore pre-voting videos to learn about different voting models. The questions posed and suggestions shared reflects an ongoing conversation about these issues within the FRIDA leadership, and the larger FRIDA community.

What next



FRIDA Team in Serbia 2015

A note from FRIDA Team

Since the initial findings of the report, we have incorporated many of the recommendations already:

- Incorporating applicant feedback into FRIDA's 4th grantmaking cycle by expanding the application languages to include Portuguese and Mandarin, hosting a live Q&A via Twitter, running a number of outreach events in new countries such as Papua New Guinea, Fiji, and successfully conducting 'how to apply for a grant' webinars in Spanish, English, and French.
- In June 2015, FRIDA held a Global Advisory Meeting where advisors discussed regional quotas strategies for reaching under-represented groups, in order to create a FRIDA Grant making strategy and policy.
- An increase in the number of applications from underrepresented areas or groups through more concerted outreach work.
- Expanding FRIDA's advisory board, leading to a clearer and more transparent criteria and grantmaking policy, decreasing the number of ineligible applications in the next grantmaking cycle.
- Improving data security through a more robust application form, and implementing additional safety measures for FRIDA's online platforms.
- Using Salesforce database software to organise and streamline applicant and grantee data from across the grantmaking cycles. In addition, FRIDA can now systematically collect data to track thematic focus areas, strategies that groups use in their work, as well as the specific populations they focus on to identify underfunded or overlooked areas of intervention, and, if needed, assess regional quotas or issue-area quotas or other related voting models.
- Connecting applicants across regions and thematic priorities after voting, building on the sense of solidarity and allies that applicants have reported.
- Working on a Field scan of the state of young feminists organising with AWID Young Feminist Activism Project, that will be released in early 2016, based on analysis of 3 years of FRIDA application data plus a survey with over 800 respondents.

FRIDA's grants support:

- Innovative ideas for coalition and movement-building engaging a broad cross-section of young feminist activists.
- Core funding to cover overhead and general operating costs.
- Start-up initiatives meaning that we will provide funding to help start an activity in the hope that it will then become sustainable.
- Efforts to mobilize and amplify young women's voices to become more integrated in broader women's movements.
- Structured exchange of experiences, lessons and strategies towards sustaining vibrancy within young women's movements locally and more broadly.
- Local, regional or international advocacy efforts to promote women's rights.

FRIDA's grants will NOT support:

- Groups or organizations that display an intolerant attitude towards others on the basis of age, religion, sex, race/ethnicity, disability, class or sexual orientation.
- Organizations working *with* young women and trans youth but *led by* individuals over 30 years of age. FRIDA does not fund youth "programs" of existing organizations — FRIDA funds youth-led groups.
- Scholarships, internship or school fees (including Doctoral or other research)
- Groups with budgets over \$25,000 USD
- Proposals submitted by individuals, government institutions, political organizations or religious groups.
- Groups that focus only on the provision of direct services (e.g. community literacy, formal education, technical training, craft or health care etc).
- Groups that focus on income generating activities.
- Groups based in the following highly-industrialized countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States.

References

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- FRIDA Grant Application feedback - 2012, 2013 and 2014
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Flexibility Resources Inclusivity Diversity Action