



# Shared knowledge, collective power

FRIDA  
ACCOMPANIMENT  
PROGRAM



FRIDA | The Young Feminist Fund  
Flexibility Resources Inclusivity Diversity Action

FRIDA's funding + model integrates an accompaniment program between advisors and grantee partners. The program is designed to strengthen mutual connections, shared learning, experimentation, innovation and leverage knowledge and resources between young feminists. The pair will co-create a project that enhances the work of the 'mentee' organization over a one-year period.



# 1 Background

## Who is FRIDA?

FRIDA | The Young Feminist Fund is the only youth-led fund focused exclusively on supporting global young feminist activism to advance social justice movements and agendas. FRIDA was created to bring new resources and opportunities to young women and trans\* youth globally. We believe that supporting young feminists is key to the expansion, rejuvenation and sustainability of women's movements and organizations, both now and in the future. By mobilizing resources and strengthening the participation and leadership of young feminist activists globally, we contribute to stronger alliances between feminist rights movements and other social movements to advance human rights and social justice agendas. For more information check out FRIDA website: [www.youngeminisfund.org](http://www.youngeminisfund.org)

In 2017 FRIDA is funding over 100 [grantee](#) partners in over 70 countries. These grantee partners are emerging organizations, created in the last five years, led by young women, trans\* youth or girls under the age of 30 years. Many informally organized, with over 50% not legally registered and having never received funding before. Many groups draw on horizontal or participatory leadership styles and practice transformative feminist leadership alternatives to inform their work. FRIDA invokes a funding + model means we are committed to supporting the leadership development and strengthening the capacity of these groups in addition to providing direct funding. The Accompaniment program, officially launching in 2017, is one of the key ways we provide this solidarity and support.

# 2

## FRIDA Accompaniment Program Overview

### Rationale for design

Based on interest from both grantee partners and advisors and a three-month pilot project, FRIDA is implementing an accompaniment program to drive rich learning and capacity development experiences for young feminists in its community. The decision to create this program was based on demand from grantee partners and advisors for increased one-to-one engagement and support and clearer mechanisms to connect with the diverse and growing FRIDA community. This program is a key component of FRIDA's broader capacity development strategy for grantee partners and to enable collaboration and networking between young feminists. The accompaniment program aims to build meaningful connections and support systems for grantee partners, cultivating a relationship of trust with a FRIDA advisor, and to support the grantee partner to better navigate the FRIDA community to access diverse learning opportunities, resources and networks.

### Pilot Program held in 2016

Given our commitment to experimentation and reflexive design, this current accompaniment model is the second iteration the 3-month mentorship pilot held in 2016 with 5 mentors/mentees from across 5 regions. This pilot has informed the current design and approach of this program. Core shifts in the approach since the pilot include; the creation of a compensation/ stipend structure for companions to recognize their contributions as a volunteer, resource allocation for person visits between the collective and the companion, a dedicated staff member to support coordination, and many specific tweaks to matching and the overall design.

### Core values of the model

In developing the accompaniment program FRIDA considered its core values in asking the following questions:

- » **How to create a program that does not reinforce the donor / grantee power dynamic?**
- » **How to harness the amazing network of experience and passion that already exists?**
- » **How to effectively match up grantee partners with talented and innovative individuals who want to give their time to support and learn from young feminist organizing?**

FRIDA firmly believes in the importance of an accompaniment model that breaks down the traditional relationships and unequal power relationships between grantee partners and advisors. This involves challenging the standard language 'mentor' and 'mentee' and reclaiming and finding alternative ways to name an exchange grounded in shared knowledge and power. For now; the 'mentor' will be referred to as the companion and the 'mentee' - the collective/grantee partner, however throughout the life of the program we encourage you to work with us find new ways to define this relationship, as we see this program as a living, breathing organism.

Our accompaniment program brings a feminist and political model which is built on a commitment to equal, honest, and open communication. Both companions and collectives are encouraged to challenge the status quo of traditionally hierarchical mentor/mentee relationships, and what it means to be an "expert" by acknowledging oppression and privilege, and value each other as bringing knowledge and learning to the relationship. While groups bring their unique perspectives and contributions, companions play an active role in this learning exchange experience and both work side-by-side on projects.

# 3

## Capacity Development Priorities

The pillars below represent the areas of overlap between FRIDA priorities and expressed grantee needs. This in many ways represents the substance or content that many of the grantee partners and companions will be working on.



## a. Resource Mobilization and communication

FRIDA's goal to enhance collectives of young women activists' access to other resources overlaps clearly with the needs of grantees to improve their resource mobilisation skills and gain access to larger funding to facilitate their work. This improves the sustainability of their work as well as the scale at which they are able to work.

## b. Internal organising and strengthening

Young women's collectives need strong internal structures in order to be sustainable as well as anchor strong and vibrant movements. Strong structures as well as clear and transparent ways of organising enable trust building that is essential for a strong movement. Part of strengthening organising involves values and institutional culture that is healthy and nourishes team members. A culture that celebrates work done, reflects on the past, is built on trust and truth telling. Internal organizing and strengthening also includes looking at grantee partners overall governance structures and financial management even though grantees may be unregistered and informal. This will help grantees assess whether they require systems and controls to manage their finances and perhaps strategic and operational plans to guide their work.

## c. Security and Wellness

FRIDA recognises that in feminist work, wellbeing and safety are political acts for women, girls and trans\* youth, and as such prioritises these areas for grantees. Often the work taken up by grantees is dangerous and possesses a variety of risks to the wellbeing and security of individuals as well as the collective organising. For this reason grantee partners also feel that in order for them to practice their activism it is essential to have security measures as well as wellbeing strategies in place. Wellness goes beyond external security threats, emotional, psychological, intellectual and physical well-being of members of a collective is key to the effective functioning of the collective.

As part of this accompaniment program, companions will support collectives to develop organizational security plans and will refer the groups to any other Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRD) network/organization when grantee groups face physical or digital security issues or when safety is a key priority for grantee groups. FRIDA will provide advisors with a list of referees and with any additional assistance and advice for the development of safety strategies.

Additionally, this accompaniment program will ensure the individual and collective well-being of both grantees groups and advisors. For this purpose, companions/collectives will commit to the following basic FRIDA working principles:

### Core principles and practices:

- » **Check** on each other's time zones all the time. The best part of working in different time zones is that someone or the other is always working. So, in a way, we are all connected despite being miles apart, geographically. But it does not mean we all work at the same time, so is important to know when people are sleeping, having a life and not working. And please, **do not work crazy hours.**
- » **Be mindful** about how the person you're trying to communicate with likes to communicate.
- » **Give and receive feedback** in an open, curious and non-defensive way.
- » **Don't stay silent.** If you've got something to say, good or bad, say it. We can only improve if you raise your concerns.
- » **Create** your own deadlines and stick to them. Inform others in advance in case you cannot meet the deadline on time or require some more time to finish the task. We are all humans and not machines.
- » **Take calculated risks**, have fun when you take them, acknowledge failure and any lessons you learned from there and document them somewhere for your own good and betterment. Never stop learning and unlearning from each other.
- » **Be kind.** Be kind to yourself and to your FRIDA community. Kindness goes a long way in ensuring that everyone is loved and supported all the time.

- » **Stop.** And celebrate what you have achieved and accomplished at the end of every working day. Allow none to pamper you except you, yourself. Have an extra glass of fine wine or an extra bite of chocolate cake. You deserve it. Every single day.
- » **Maintain** an open communication with each other. Transparency is key to a healthy working atmosphere. Everyone should know what you have been up to (work-wise only!) :-P
- » **Respect** diversity of languages. Not everyone comes from a background that allows them to be comfortable in the English language. Every language is beautiful and we love having so many in the same space at FRIDA.
- » **Use smiley faces** :) :P :D =) in your communication. It lightens up the mood and makes the reader feel more at ease. Use phrases like “no worries” “no problem” “no issues” to constantly ensure that the person reading your mail does not get bogged down or unmotivated.
- » **Value** your private time. Remember to stick to your decided working hours as much as you can and not work before or after that.
- » **Prioritise self-care and security** - block time for your own self preservation, self-care and wellness moments, listen to your body, do not push your limits physically or mentally. FRIDA needs you healthy and happy, as does the feminist movement. Your contributions are too important not to have you balanced and not burnt out. If you feel you need time off - for mental or physical health - take it before it gets too late.

As since we are spread all over the work and the most part of the accompany process will be taken online or from the distance, FRIDA encourages that during the learning visit, companions/collectives do a recreational activity together. FRIDA strongly believes that the companion/collective relationship will be strengthened if both actors will attend and participate in any wellbeing activity together.

#### **d. Organising tactics and themes**

This component is critical for both FRIDA and grantee groups. In order to have an impact the strategies and tactics used become essential such that sharpening these skills is a necessity. It is as much in FRIDA's interest that its grantees succeed in their work as it is for the grantees themselves.

# 4

## FRIDA Accompaniment Program – Step By Step

The accompaniment process will span a period of 1 year months. Current grantee partners will start the accompaniment program in January 2017. Up to 30 grantee partners will be part of the first cohort of the accompaniment program, with the intention to increase the number of mentees in the following years, so that every FRIDA grantee partner has the chance to benefit from this opportunity. This will however be pending an evaluation and review on the experience and effectiveness.

### a. Before ‘accompaniment begins’ the Matching Process

FRIDA’s matching system collectively analyzes the priority needs of grantee groups and the skills and capacities of FRIDA’s advisors. The information is collected, analysed and regularly updated from the following sources:

- 1 **Data collected from Advisor Mentor Survey and Capacity Development Grantee form. The Capacity Development form will ask for specific area/s or projects that grantees would like specific assistance on, and will also highlights the strengths of the groups.**
- 2 **Grantee partners M&E reports (mid-term reports, final reports and renewals proposals).**
- 3 **Advisors biographies, outlining professional background and areas of expertise. Prospective companions draft a short biography and send it out to the FRIDA team beforehand.**

FRIDA believes that including grantee partners in the decision-making process positively affects the relationship with the companions as well as their overall investment in the program. Therefore, groups have access to the advisors’ biographies and forms, and make a selection of the three advisors they consider would meet best their needs and priorities. Advisors will also choose their 3 top collectives. Afterwards, FRIDA will match advisors and groups, taking into account the priorities needs but also the decision made by grantee partners.

Advisors will also lead the matching process with the support of FRIDA staff. Before the new FRIDA grant cycle starts, and help FRIDA in matching with appropriate mentees. FRIDA strongly believes that this involvement of advisors from the very beginning of the process strengthens their commitment to the mentoring program.

Advisors will be matched with grantee partners based on skills and experience on the capacity development needs identified by mentees as well as on people's language, geographical location and key choices made by grantee partners. When language is a barrier for grantee partners, they will be matched with an advisor who speak the same language who will be the main of contact between the grantee group and any other skilled member of the FRIDA community / organization / network.

If at any point of the accompaniment program either the group or advisors have any issue with their partner, we strongly advise to communicate the issue openly and to contact FRIDA in case of any additional support. If the companion/collective are not happy with the matching and would like to change, please communicate to the FRIDA Capacity Development Officer as soon as possible, so that you could be re-matched with a new partner. If your companion/group is not finally who you expected, FRIDA firmly recommend you to give your partner a chance before requesting any changes. You would never know how beautiful and enriching relationship could be sparked from this matching!

## Orientation Phase:

The orientation phase entails a series of individual calls with the FRIDA Capacity Building Officer, in which advisors will learn about their role and will have a clear idea of their responsibilities as companions. Companions will gain a better understanding about the different phases of the Accompaniment Program and the Monitoring and Evaluation methodology. FRIDA Capacity Building Officer will provide them with more detailed background about their mentees, will explain how to develop a strategic plan in a collaborative way with the mentees and will try and resolve doubts around the mentorship program.

**'Want to Know More - Meeting' - FRIDA Capacity Building Officer +Interested advisors:** Advisors who are interested in joining this program and would like to learn more about it could schedule a call with FRIDA Capacity Building officer. Once collectives and companions are matched, future companions will personally meet up with FRIDA staff to gain more information about the background, activism and priorities of their groups. In this call, companions will have a space for doubts sharing.

In addition to this online orientation phase, FRIDA will organize a virtual training or, if funding allows, an in-person training for all companions that are part of the 2017 accompaniment program. In this training advisors will be able to connect and build a FRIDA companion community, learn key skills of a companion and some communication tips as well as agree upon certain FRIDA mutual agreements.

More details about this introductory call below.

### b. During 'accompaniment Program Cycle'

## Introductory Phase

Following the matching process, companions will initiate communication with their collective. All the agreements are for a one-year period, should a mentee feel more time is required they can contact the FRIDA team and mentor to explain their need for an extension which will be considered by the FRIDA team and responded to.



## 'Warm Welcome call' - FRIDA Capacity Building Officer + Mentees + Mentors:

Companions invite the grantee group to join a first call jointly with FRIDA Capacity Building Officer. The program will be introduced to both companion and collective. Companions set up a planning call with the mentee to gain a better sense of who the group is and what their needs are. This first call is the initial sketched out accompany plan and the very first beginning of a long-term and trusting relationship. When possible, an in person meeting will be set up.

Collectives and companions will work together in the design of a one year joint work plan<sup>1</sup>. The work plan will serve as a guide to reach the goals and specific expected outcomes identified by the key actors. They should commit to and develop a clear mutually agreed action-plan, establish the best way to communicate, create goals to be reached and have a joint agreement on timeframes.

Once Collectives and companions have clarified details of the joint work-plan, where necessary, the mentee will be matched with a resource/skills support person/organization with whom they will share the details of the accompany plan and agree on process with the resource/skills individual/organization.

- . **1 Companions:** This is an exciting period of learning also filled with challenges, do not hesitate to share with FRIDA team if you feel unsure. This process is a team effort to provide the best mentorship experience for groups, you are not alone in this. What might feel like failures could be important learning points for future planning, there is no such thing as failure there are just moments to pause and re-strategize.
- . **2 Groups:** The success of the accompaniment process relies heavily on the enthusiasm of the mentee as well as their articulation of needs. If you are uncertain at any point during the accompaniment process do not hesitate to ask the mentor or FRIDA team for clarification.

Collectives and companions will use different means of communication: emails, online calls through Skype, Hangouts, or any other virtual (and secured) platform. They will decide the best way of getting in touch, according to their availability, preferences and needs. Therefore, collectives and companions should agree upon how often they will be in touch and which will be their main means of communication.

Based on time, resources allocated and needs, collectives and companions will participate in a shared and facilitated learning experience such as a workshop, a global or regional conference or training. It can also be a learning structure visit to the group, so that for a few days, collectives/companions can work together, build stronger relationships, and exchange resources and skills while spending valuable and also free time together. FRIDA believes that these learning sharing experiences enhance a collective and companion relationship.

<sup>1</sup> See Strategic Work Plan Template in ANNEX 'A'

# 5

## Roles and Responsibilities

### a. Role description of Companion (Advisor / 'mentor')

The companion is a FRIDA advisor who is committed to advancing local forms of human rights and social justice through a willingness to support the initiative of growing feminist collectives. The companion has experience in social movements and activist organizing and is willing to share this knowledge. The companion is an individual that understands that the accompaniment process is a process of reciprocal learning and is not threatened or intimidated by this idea. A passionate and committed individual in their own right the companion will support the collective to exercise their own agency in advancing the feminist discourse of their organization/collective. The companion listens attentively to the needs of the collective and as much as possible also pays attention to unarticulated needs and gaps in knowledge or experience of the collective.

This is in order to best support the collective to enhance the skills they lack and to increase efficiency towards advancing the cause of their organization/collective. The role of companion requires patience and attentiveness as well as an openness to connecting with the collective. Given that the personal is political it is unlikely that a companion can have a meaningful impact on the work or an organization/collective without engaging the individuals that constitute it. While the accompaniment process is about building skills and enhancing capacities it is also about recognizing the individuals that drive these machineries of change and ensuring that they do not burn out or degenerate into toxic space that reproduce within themselves that which they seek to change in the world.

The expertise of the regional companions will vary from individual to individual and where there are skills gaps resource/skills person/companions will be on hand for support. What is most important is that a companion be an individual with an awareness that organisations and collectives are not self-sustaining machines, they are run by individuals and by mechanisms created by individuals and the companion is there to support the wellbeing of individuals as well as the mechanisms that enable them to be most productive without sacrificing their values.

### Responsibilities

- » Familiarisation with the collective and collective organisation to which one has been matched
- » Initiation of dialogue with collective
- » With the input of the collective develop a work-plan with activities and timeframes to carry out over the one-year period (a template will be provided)
- » Connect collective to other advisors/people/organizations with specific skills required by the collective
- » Adjust work-plan and activities where necessary to ensure effective accompaniment process
- » Submit mid-term and final term report, and attend quarterly check-in calls.
- » Engage in ongoing communications and updates with collectives through calls/emails
- » Ensure that the accompaniment process is enjoyable and meaningful for self and collective
- » When funding, time and resources are available, companions will participate on a learning experience or structured learning visit over the accompaniment cycle.
- » Provide the FRIDA team with quarterly updates on the accompaniment process.
- » Let FRIDA staff know as soon as possible if you have any problem connecting with the collective.

## **b. Role of the Collective [FRIDA Grantee Partner – ‘Collective’]**

The collective is the real driver of the accompaniment programme. They are the reason the programme exists. They are a social justice driver in the community work they are engaged in. The collective is the passionate and enthusiastic collective who is seeking support to improve certain skills or develop knowledge that enhance the work of the organisation/collective and its members. The collective must be committed to the process and put in the time and energy required to make the programme a success. The collective is an active participant in framing the activities for the work-plan.

### **Responsibilities**

- » Invest time in reflecting on the knowledge and skills gaps for which support is needed
- » Write up the kind of support that is needed and set aside time for carrying out the accompaniment activities
- » Co-create a work-plan of activities for the year with the regional mentor
- » Respond to communication from mentor in a timely manner and initiate communication with mentor and FRIDA team when necessary in between scheduled communication
- » Submit mid-term and final term report, and attend quarterly recapitulation calls.
- » Engage in ongoing communications and updates with mentors through calls/emails
- » Ensure that the accompaniment process is enjoyable and meaningful for self and mentor
- » Commit to the accompaniment process and make efforts to ensure its success
- » When funding, time and resources permitting collectives will participate on a sharing learning experience or a learning visit with the mentor.
- » Provide the FRIDA Capacity Building Officer with quarterly updates on the accompaniment process.
- » Let FRIDA Capacity Building Officer know as soon as possible if you are having any problem connecting with the collective.

## **c. Role of FRIDA staff**

The FRIDA Capacity Development Officer will supervise and coordinate the overall program and provide key support to both companions and collectives, all logistics, such as weekly/monthly tasks and dates, should be directly arranged by companions and groups.

### **Responsibilities**

- » FRIDA Capacity Building Officer provides support to both collectives and companions whenever they need throughout the program.
- » FRIDA Capacity Building Officer share more resources (toolkits, grants info, trainings, etc.) with collectives and companions through HUB online platform, social media and direct communication with the key actors.
- » FRIDA Capacity Building Officer leads the orientation phase with companions and facilitates the welcome call.
- » FRIDA Capacity Building Officer participates in the check in meetings every four months.
- » FRIDA Capacity Building Officer and MEL Officer are responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the accompaniment program.
- » FRIDA Capacity Building Officer supports collectives and companions who participate in a learning visit, as needed.

# 6

## Timeline

### Time commitment:

12- month accompaniment cycle

25 Renewed Grantee partners:

January 2017 - December 2017

### January - February 2017:

Expression of interest collectives and companions

### March- April 2017:

Matching Process is completed

### April - May 2017:

1. Orientation process, initial co-creation calls and familiarization
2. Production of detailed work-plan

### May - December 2017:

Continue resource/skills based work with companion. Possible visit to collective by the companion.

### Quarterly MEL:

Quarterly updates from collectives and companions and check in calls.

### March 2018:

Finalization of agreed activities as per work-plan, production of brief evaluation. End of mentorship period 2017.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Recruitment process	■	■													
Matching process			■	■											
Orientation & Introductory Phase				■	■										
Joint Work-Plan Planning				■	■	■									
Accompaniment process				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Learning visits				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
Quarterly updates & calls							■	■				■	■		
Final Report															■

# 7

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation plays a key role throughout the accompaniment program. As part of the monitoring plan, FRIDA will have regular communications with each collective and companion to assess the progress of their work. Quarterly check-in calls will be organized between FRIDA Capacity Building Officer and collective-companion groups.

Whenever it's needed, either collectives and companions can schedule separate calls with FRIDA staff. Besides, we will develop a mid-term form to be submitted by collectives and companions at the midst of the program. This will allow FRIDA to collect information towards the progress towards reaching your goals, and will allow both collectives and companions to provide FRIDA with feedback on any improvements or changes to be made throughout the mentoring program. The mid-term report will be shared with mentor-mentees groups by June 2017.

On the other hand, collective-companions groups who do a learning visit or attend any training or conference together, will share their reflections after the travel through an online survey. This allows FRIDA to assess the effectiveness of these in person learning opportunities and the importance to build trusting relationship while it helps us to collect data and track the progress of your work.

At the end of the cycle of the mentoring program, FRIDA will assess how effective the collective work of collective-companions groups have been, through the reflections from each collectives and companions collected by a final survey and a final interview/call. These will contribute to better understand of what areas to improve and will enable us to make this program more efficient and effective. In addition, it will allow us to collect stories of change and learning from collectives and companions. The final form will be shared with the groups by December 2017.

# Annex A

## Joint work-plan - template

This joint work plan is designed as a template to be adapted as needed by each collectives and companions at the start of the accompaniment relationship. It will provide you with some guidelines to support the analysis your priorities and strategies as well as to evaluate and monitor your achievements. You can build your own joint work plan based on your activism, capacity building priorities and your own creativity.

### Steps to develop your joint work-plan:

1. Identifying information
  - » **SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats Analysis): Focus on both the external environment (such as trends in politics, social/ economic context, the situation with collectives/partners, etc.) and the internal organization (governance, finances, programs and activities, etc.)**
  - » **Discussion the SWOT analysis: Critical issues, potential tactics and solutions, identification of priority needs and skills, etc.**
2. Create your Plan 2017
  - » **Write goals for each area of action/capacity development priority for your project/group. Under each goal, develop objectives that are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound). Each objective should have an implementation plan (with deadlines and a lead person).**
  - » **Develop your one-year plan to achieve those goals, including tactics, deadlines, timeline, support needed, etc.**

### Joint Work-Plan Template:

- » **Mission**
- » **Vision**
- » **Values**
- » **Goals and Strategies**
- » **Development of Mentorship and Leadership Skills**

(Briefly describe plans for how the companion will support in the groups' development of the skills and create a structured plan on how your skills are to be acquired)

- » **Resource that will be provided to support collectives**
- » **Plans for ongoing accompaniment meeting**
  - Collectives and companions meeting frequency and means of communication
  - Plan for scheduling these meetings, including summing-up calls with FRIDA staff
- » **Timeline of activities, trainings and other prospective strategies (include when possible a training, conference or workshop where both mentor/mentee can participate together, or at least one learning visit).**
  - Monitoring and Evaluation of the Joint Work-Plan