



RESOURCING CONNECTIONS

REFLECTIONS ON FEMINIST PARTICIPATORY
GRANTMAKING PRACTICE

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Introduction

This report emerged as part of a three-year long documenting process of FRIDA's participatory grantmaking model. It gathers our learnings in a comprehensive resource that can act as a compass for the next phase of this grantmaking model's journey. The time that it asked from us is exactly the time needed to process important conversations and all learnings and experiences. Having conversations with the young feminist community about participation in physically divisive times has brought new meanings to our practice. It has reminded us that our lives are interconnected and that different realities coexist not that far away from one another. It has expanded our perception of what we already know and brought to our awareness where we still need to grow. This perspective has created new life-enhancing opportunities to radically transform how we share movement and community space and the planet with each other. At the same time, it has reminded us that the power of feminist movements is rooted in authentic connections that can transgress borders and feel potent and tangible even in virtual spaces. As we are coming back to the community physically and virtually, these spaces for participation as feminist movements become even more intentional and sacred. The art of connecting to birth ideas and strategies into action is the most valuable resource of feminist movements. Therefore, a feminist funding mechanism needs to also have the same intention to cultivate critical connections between feminist organizers and resource the feminist movements at the source of their power.

As we reflected on our participatory grantmaking model, we also needed to reflect on FRIDA's role and responsibility when we create and facilitate space for participation, connection and closeness in our processes when there are both movement synergies and misalignment. We needed to name truths about the interlocking systems of oppression that build inequity and dynamics of power into our movement webs and expand distances between us. We learned from feminist movement caring practices where we needed to reflect on the complexities of this model to truly embody its values.

We entered this research process with full openness to the notion that the grantmaking model that we have been developing for many years and held close to our hearts might require a deep transformation. As part of our ongoing learning process, we wanted to uplift and solidify what has brought joy in this process, as well as to change and compost anything that needs to be left behind. The knowledge that we are sharing in this report is tentative and ever-evolving because our realities might shift and ask for change again in the future. However, there are feminist principles and values that will always guide FRIDA's grantmaking model and help us to facilitate a transparent, equitable and diverse young feminist movement-driven participatory process that brings organizers closer to each other.

This report attempts to capture all the pieces of FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process and the vastness of young feminist knowledge and experience. It goes beyond a participatory funding toolkit and instead dives deep into self-reflection about the politics, principles, and values that are built into this participatory grantmaking practice. As part of our accountability to the young feminist movements, we are sharing in more detail about the mechanism behind this model, its benefits as well as challenges and limitations.

All people involved in creation of this report are feminist activists from the Global South and East. We hope to not only shift the power dynamics surrounding funding decisions, but also to decentralize narratives about who holds knowledge about and solutions for transformative community participatory practices. This report is dedicated to all young feminist collectives that have ever applied to FRIDA, supported their peers with their time and presence and trusted us to facilitate this process. These learnings will guide FRIDA's feminist participatory grantmaking practice to resource young feminist organizing, wellbeing and connections and we will continue to report to the young feminist movements about how we implement them.

LANGUAGE JUSTICE

We acknowledge that even though our grantmaking process is facilitated in multiple languages, the language we use to communicate our work to the world is English. This language is not only overrepresented in our communication, but it can also introduce concepts that shape our imagination and how we envision our organizing, impact and transformative change that do not necessarily speak to the realities of our communities across different contexts. The domination of one language can also impose culture-specific concepts that might not accurately describe movements' organizing experience. This can further create immense power dynamics that prioritize one knowledge source over others, as the language used in funding processes has the power to set agendas and direct our strategies and our work. This report also contains concepts that allow us to communicate some ideas more quickly with the philanthropic community, but those same concepts don't necessarily translate to the Global South and East socio-political contexts. Feminist organizers are continuously asked to translate their realities to the language used within philanthropic frameworks, which is sometimes too narrow to fit their vision. This report is written by non-native English speakers and we understand the challenge of language accessibility and representation. For this reason, we kept some concepts descriptive in the report, and we will build an online glossary on FRIDA's web page that we will also expand over time. This report will be translated to other languages that FRIDA operates in and it would be adopted accordingly.

INSPIRATION BEHIND THE DESIGN

For the design of this report, we have drawn inspiration from fungi and mycorrhizal networks, which all life on the planet is connected to and depends on. These webs interact with and build complex relationships with other plants, and they can transport information across their wide network. These relationships are intimate and also complex, and some exchanges feel more generative than others—some might even feel competitive or interdependent. There is so much that we can learn from these networks, including how they interconnect and exchange and sustain themselves. This inspiration has been brought to life in analogue artwork and drawings by Marina Milanovic and Diana K Curry.

IT TAKES A FEMINIST VILLAGE! APPRECIATION TO FEMINIST COMMUNITY GLOBALLY

This report includes conversations, stories, memories, knowledge, and experiences from an expansive community of feminist activists who have been part of creating FRIDA over the years. FRIDA would not exist today without the intentional participation of feminist activists across the world who gifted their time, knowledge, and love to create this young feminist fund. We hold deep gratitude for every feminist activist that has been part of the FRIDA Global Advisory and Grantee Community, and who continuously show up to FRIDA's participatory process believing in their impact. We are also grateful to the staff members who get to support this process every year and bring their young feminist expertise into it. We are grateful to all young feminist collectives who have been part of FRIDA's grantmaking process, and who shared their feedback and dreams for FRIDA's future. Also, big appreciation to our teachers, those that came before us and those that we continue to learn with within the network of feminist funds globally that have shared their knowledge and strategy spaces with us.



HOW WE LEARN FROM PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING PRACTICE

A participatory grantmaking process that involves young feminist organizers in staff, Advisory and grantee community, as well as young feminist collectives that apply, allows us to learn together with feminist movements and co-create knowledge, expertise and solutions together. We get to reflect and learn during each stage of this process, and this knowledge shapes and nourishes our programmatic work, how we plan, distribute and mobilize resources, and how we communicate our vision, commitments and learnings with the world.

FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process creates a space for learning, exchange and feminist movement connection and carries these values in each stage of the process. In our most recent report on FRIDA's participatory grantmaking approach, Letting The Movements Decide (2015), we gathered some insight on what was working and what needed to change in the participatory grantmaking model for our open call for applications. From 2015 onward, FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process has been modified based on the feedback gathered from the participants in that report, together with the data from our internal evaluation in each cycle. Today, we are reflecting more on what we have achieved so far and what possibilities exist for the future of this model.

How FRIDA Adopted Recommendations from the 2015 PGM Report



DIVERSITY AND OUTREACH:

We have co-created regional and thematic funding strategies that guide us in facilitating an intersectional participatory approach for each of the regions where FRIDA funds. These tailored strategies help us understand what conditions we need to set up for certain communities to access FRIDA's application process. We simplified and improved our grantmaking, identified gaps and became more intentional in our communication and outreach process. This has resulted in much more of underfunded radical young feminist organizing receiving support from FRIDA and even recognizing FRIDA as a potential funder that can support their work. In the future, we hope to have more on-the-ground outreach and further improve the accessibility of the model.

TECHNOLOGY AND ACCESS:

One of the biggest changes to our model since 2015 is that we reimagined how to bring a participatory grantmaking model to life on an online platform. We have moved away from unsustainable tools like Excel sheets and designed a comprehensive system that supports our grantmaking process at every stage. For now, the model is hosted via the [SmartSimple](#) platform, and is set up with multiple portals for different communities participating, which facilitates communication across the platform. It was key for FRIDA grantmaking staff to be involved in the design, and to put a lot of thought into each stage of our grantmaking process. We ensured that the platform is available in all languages that we work in and that groups can keep track of where their applications are in the process. The platform connects all stages of the process from application, to the Peer Review Panel process, to applicant voting, to cross-communication and due diligence, as well as grant payments.

Before this change was made, the process took up a lot of our time because the tools and systems that we were depending on were not set up for such a complex participatory process. We have since learned that the system that hosts a participatory model of grantmaking is critical for saving us time, which we can now direct to providing more care and intention to the process.


DATA SYSTEMS AND ANALYSIS:

FRIDA has published many reports on young feminist organizing and trust-based funding, and created our strategic plan together with young feminist organizers. As we got to learn more about FRIDA's role in global philanthropic advocacy, we have improved our data analysis systems through a new strategic MEL framework, and our grantmaking evaluation process. We have created participatory funding strategies where data and information from grantmaking cycles flows across our work and informs the way we support young feminist organizing. The data that we receive supports us in the long-term to make movement-informed decisions, even when movements don't have capacity for direct participation.

VOTING SYSTEM:


Since 2015, we have made many changes to the voting process and to how voting groups are organized. We have created a comprehensive voting system that can navigate complexities while still supporting meaningful connections and the funding of diverse young feminist organizing. There is also another layer of review of the final decisions, which helps to support groups that might face disadvantages in the voting process. We reflect on the voting mechanism in this report as well, and we intend to change this system in the coming years.

SUSTAINABILITY OF FRIDA'S GRANTMAKING MODEL:



From its inception until 2020, FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process has been managed, facilitated and designed by one staff member. This role involved designing and improving the grantmaking process, setting up the systems and technology to hold it and managing each stage of this process. It also involved facilitation of participation from the Advisory Committee, young feminist collective applicants and grantee partners, as well as participation from other FRIDA staff. We recognize that it was an unsustainable way of managing this process and that it was incompatible with the values and principles that we hold. FRIDA's budget has affected how we could grow our internal systems while also maintaining our commitments toward young feminist movements. Today, there are multiple staff members managing this process, however we are still exploring how we can support the sustainability of this approach by decentralizing knowledge and ensuring that we don't depend on one person to hold the history and details of the process.

What are we exploring in this report?



Even after a decade of participatory grantmaking practice, we engage in every grantmaking cycle with curiosity and with full openness to the notion that what we have been planting and nurturing might no longer be serving young feminist movements. We have asked the young feminist community of applicants, grantee partners and FRIDA advisors what segments of FRIDA's model brought joy and excitement, and what they found challenging and think should be assessed or changed in the future. This is a report back to young feminist communities about what we have learned in our grantmaking from 2015-2021, and how FRIDA will move forward with this collective knowledge.

We have collected data from application forms, feedback forms, voting forms, feedback on the voting and about FRIDA's process, email communications and Q&A, outreach processes, regional strategies, grantee data and other FRIDA research and reports. All the data that we have received has been read with a feminist intersectional lens and with an understanding of how interlocking systems of oppression influence our data. We will also be sharing findings beyond numbers. We have learned that numbers reveal the success of this participatory model, but that the barriers even just a couple of groups could experience around access, bias and capacity can challenge the advantages of using numbers. We wanted to go deeper, questioning what participation means to the young feminist collectives that we exist to support and what the impact of this model could be on those that participate.

**THE KEY QUESTIONS WE
HAVE BEEN ADDRESSING:**

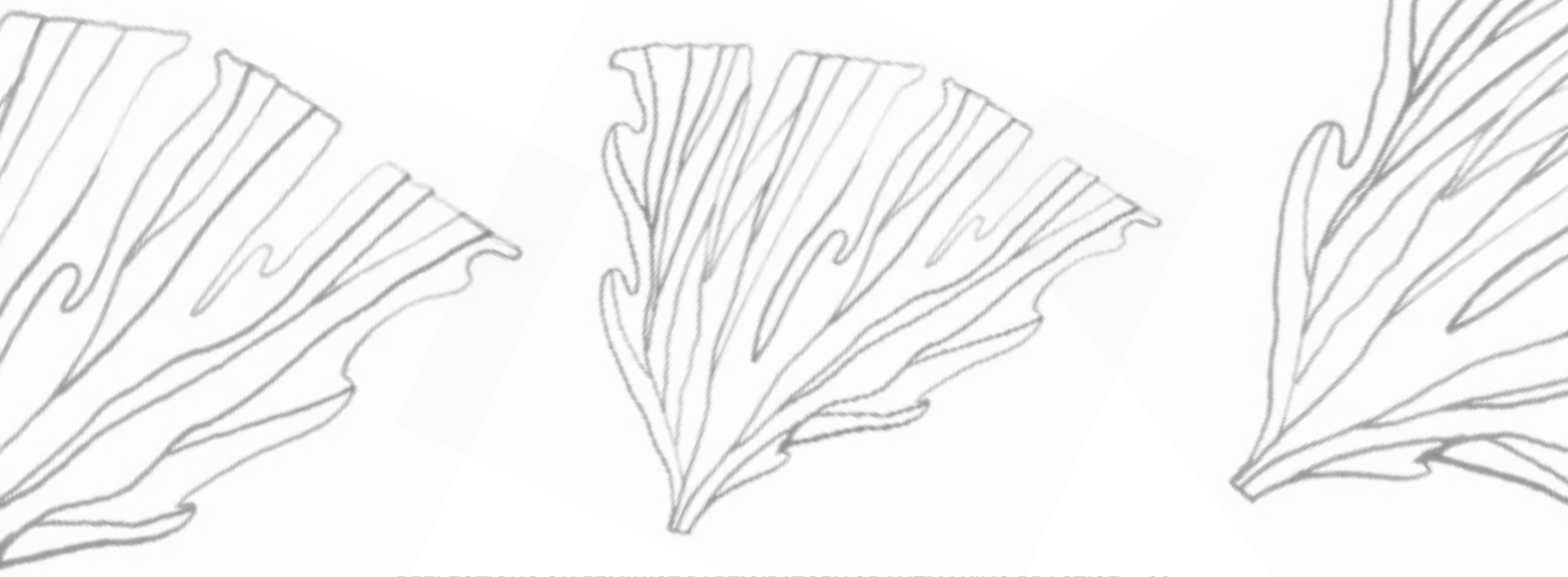
✿ What is the impact of funding practices where communities decide what is important to fund in their organizing context? What are the challenges and complexities of participation and connection, and how can we address them?

✿ In what ways can a participatory grantmaking practice provide a space for young feminist collectives to connect, practice solidarity and build movements? What FRIDA needs to change to make this process more intersectional?

✿ What are young feminist solutions to transforming power structures in philanthropy and distribution of resources? What do young feminists envision a feminist funding mechanism would look like? What tools are young feminists using to address and advocate for change in power structures? How are young feminists collaborating with other groups and how do they involve communities in their work?

✿ What has shifted in FRIDA's grantmaking model and grantmaking strategy during our years of facilitating a participatory model, and how has involvement of the communities we fund reshaped the FRIDA model? How has FRIDA's grantmaking model evolved over the years and where does it still need improvement?

✿ What are the technical, political and ethical aspects of FRIDA's participatory model and its impact? What are the limitations of this model? What solutions exist for improvement? What are the challenges of implementing a participatory model of grantmaking, and what structure do we need to put in place to practice feminist values while facilitating a participatory process?



KEY LEARNINGS:

What we have learned confirms that FRIDA's grantmaking model aligns our decision-making with feminist values and principles and fulfils its main purpose—building movement connection, power and mutual accountability:

- Feminist participatory decision-making models are already a feminist movement practice and the vision movements have for a feminist funder.
- Participatory grantmaking deepens our understanding of diverse perspectives and realities and how to most effectively support young feminist organizers across political, social and economic contexts.
- Movement-building in an online space is possible. Facilitating meaningful connections and aligned visions allows us to uplift and be present for each other across geographies.
- After connecting with the impact of their participation, groups are more willing to participate in another of FRIDA's internal participatory processes and to apply participatory strategies in their own work.
- Recognizing a common vision that we are interconnected, and that sharing community and being in right relationship matters, challenges competitive mindsets.
- Meaningful and accessible participation allows for young feminist groups to learn and connect with each other and to develop awareness about belonging to a larger movement. This experience has the potential to expand our empathy, compassion and solidarity toward peer feminist organizers.
- Connection and misalignment can happen simultaneously in a movement-led participatory process. This requires a flexible, caring structure to act as a compass that points to the values that we seek to practice throughout the process.
- Transparency and clarity are key to building meaning into participatory processes facilitated by funders, and are clear intentions and principles that shape feminist participatory practice.
- It is important to maintain an intersectional lens and to put in concrete efforts to increase the accessibility of our process, including through languages, outreach, community involvement, and the accessibility of our application form. This practices can diversify the outcomes of the process and make the participation meaningful
- To be truly participatory, we need to continuously reflect on the accessibility of our processes and build conditions for equitable participation.
- Movement solutions about participatory processes are different across contexts, and the movements processes are serving should be part of their design.
- Establishing sustainable systems and comprehensive movement-informed strategies that hold all pieces of a participatory process together help us move at a quicker pace.
- Young feminist organizers want to be part of decisions about funding priorities and strategies, but there need to be conditions in place so that their participation is connected with the process as much as with the outcomes.



What can you find on these pages

RECOMMITTING TO A FEMINIST PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING PRACTICE

The key findings have helped us articulate the grounding principles of our participatory practice as a feminist fund. These values have always existed, but they are now solidified as part of the structure and principles under which this model operates. In this section, we reflect on the structure that holds those values and allows them to express themselves and shape this process.

FRIDA'S PARTICIPATORY FUNDING MODEL : HOW DOES IT WORK?

FRIDA's participatory grantmaking is quite complex, and we wanted to ensure that each stage of the process is explained in detail. This is an important section for getting a comprehensive understanding of the model in order to connect with young feminist community feedback, as well as FRIDA's reflections, learnings and paths forward.

YOUNG FEMINIST COMMUNITY EVALUATION OF FRIDA'S PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING MODEL: FEEDBACK, LEARNINGS AND POSSIBILITIES

In this section, we share the main findings from the feminist participatory research that has been carried out by co-researchers—young feminist activists from FRIDA's advisory, grantee partners and staff, and external consultants. These findings have informed all other sections of this report.

FRIDA REFLECTIONS ON YOUNG FEMINIST COMMUNITY FEEDBACK & WAYS FORWARD

In this section, FRIDA is sharing internal reflections in conversation with findings, questions and concerns that have emerged from the research. FRIDA will also clarify the rationale behind some decisions in the design of this model. These decisions are informed by the data we have received about the impacts of this process that are not always visible, as well as the challenges that guide our future dreams and visions for this model.

Participatory Research Team

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¹ Jovana joined FRIDA in November 2013, and she was managing, developing and facilitating FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process until December 2020. This report is also part of her knowledge documentation and transition process. Veronica is now leading FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process with a growing grantmaking team that will be aligning FRIDA's model with young feminist community feedback and recommendations.

RECOMMITTING TO A FEMINIST PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING PRACTICE





RECOMMITTING TO A FEMINIST PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING PRACTICE

THE BEGINNING OF FRIDA'S JOURNEY TO CREATE A PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING JOURNEY

FRIDA | Young Feminist Fund emerged from the collective vision of feminist activists² across generations and from around the world who understood the urgent need for a fund that centres its mission around the experience, expertise and needs of young feminist organizers.

FRIDA exists today because of the power of feminist organizers to dream up possibilities and transform them into being through collective visioning and action. The formation of a young feminist fund like FRIDA as a movement solution reminds us what is possible when feminist movements have the resources to lead, dream and decide along the many possible paths to liberation and justice.

From the beginning, we wanted our funding practices to nourish the sustainability of life and the vibrancy of feminist movements. As we developed our grantmaking process, we looked for tools and practices that already lived within feminist movements. Community-informed and -led decision-making processes have always existed across intersectional social justice and community organizing, and they have been reshaped and refined by generations of organizers who are challenging power-over approaches and centering the vision of those impacted by decisions.

To make the most of limited funding³, feminist organizers have also continuously needed to dream up new ways to persevere, including creating alternative streams of resourcing through mutual aid, solidarity economies and direct action. **This autonomous organizing has unveiled all the ways in which our relationships and connections alchemize abundance. The ability to come together and create feminist networks of support is our most valuable resource that sustains our activism. These feminist organizing tools and practices taught us that feminist activists need funding mechanisms that are receptive to the diversity of feminist organizing and built with purpose to resource movement connection.** It was clear that this would require a different approach from traditional top-down philanthropy. Feminist movements

² About [FRIDA](#)

³ Today only 2% of all the funding dedicated to gender equality goes to women's and LGBTQI+ organizing which leaves key drivers of radical change vastly underfunded. [Watering the Leaves](#), [Starving the Roots](#)

therefore created their own funding mechanism that would support the connection, agency and autonomy of feminist organizing within the feminist movement ecosystem.

We know that “revolution will not be funded”⁴ and that the funding is not what makes social movements persist in their fight for justice, freedom and liberation. Still, oppression is well resourced and extractive capitalist systems are sustaining and thriving on inequalities, imposing also economic barriers to lives in dignity, safety and justice and exhausting movements’ capacities and resources. For autonomous, self-resourced movements to thrive, we need to fight those systems and transform how we think about and distribute resources. We need to continue to leverage funds that enable feminist movements to organize, resist and move towards to the feminist future we are dreaming up. Financial resources are needed to protect feminist organizers’ safety and well-being in volatile environments that can shift overnight. However, those resources also need to be in alignment with the needs, interests and lives of movements and detached from top-down funding approaches. How funders distribute resources, rather than just the resources themselves, can bring feminist movements closer to each other or deepen silos that are traditionally built through donor-driven agendas and interests.

Feminist organizers need resources that are flexible enough to move with them, change direction when they need to and support all the diverse strategies that accompany their visions for transformative change. Financial resources also won’t be as effective in isolation from other non-financial means of support, so we must fund in ways that are bold, diverse and creative, and that allow movement connections to be fortified in the process.

As a self-led fund created by and for young feminist activists, FRIDA is attuned to young feminist organizers’ needs for funding that holistically supports their sustainability and well-being. In order to align our strategies with this commitment, we created a grantmaking model that would mirror the feminist values of solidarity, accountability, exchange and caring connections. We are committed to creating and continually adapting systems and practices that reflect these values.



As feminist funders, we often mirror emerging feminist movement solutions in our practices and strategies. The opportunity to learn from the feminist activists of **the Association for Women’s Rights in Development** and other feminist funds and organizations has been critical for FRIDA’s growth. FRIDA adopted its first participatory grantmaking model from **Central American Women’s Fund** and that participatory approach has been an integral part of FRIDA’s funding practice ever since. FRIDA’s grantmaking model has significantly changed since then in response to the needs of a multilingual, cross-thematic global participatory decision-making process, however the feminist values and principles behind it have not changed, just been reinforced.

⁴ Referencing the title of *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded* - INCITE! [Women of Color Against Violence INCITE!](#)

GROUNDING OUR PRACTICE IN FEMINIST VALUES AND PRINCIPLES



To transform, dream and envision transformative funding practices, we need to be able to name them, live them and embody them as everyday practice in our work. Global philanthropy might not have a shared interpretation of what community involvement in a participatory decision-making process should look like, and many funders might hesitate to define it at all to avoid limiting its potential to only what we can imagine at the moment. **However, while we leave this concept open for growth, reflection and change, we also need to acknowledge that a lack of clarity and transparency in our processes can lead us as funders to hold onto power over the communities we exist to support.** When agreements and definitions around the core values of participatory grantmaking strategies are loose or vague, funders largely still get to decide who is invited to participate in which organizational processes, at what stage and under what kind of conditions.

Without a deep understanding of the ethics of participation, and how privilege and oppression shape our realities and our own relationship to power, participatory processes can serve as instrumentalization, optics, and without a real decision-making power for the communities involved. This further increases mistrust in participatory processes handled by funders and instead of bringing organizers together, it could potentially cause further exclusion of communities, frictions in social justice movements, and perpetuation of harm towards those whose expertise these processes should be designed to amplify and protect.

The participatory grantmaking journey for FRIDA meant simultaneously and continually building new systems and integrating learnings from each grantmaking cycle. In this constant motion, some essential principles and values of our processes could have been overlooked in building the mechanics. **We recognize that to fully embrace a movement-directed grantmaking approach that is flexible, creative, and reflective, we need to articulate the guidelines we use to mirror the feminist practices, values, and principles that we aspire for in our work.**

To meet that need, this report articulates the principles that will guide us through all the possibilities of a feminist participatory grantmaking process and help us reflect on where we are at, where we dream to be and what we need to practice on our way there as a fund. As these feminist principles of participation expand and reshape with new learnings and experiences over time, we are grounding our practice in the following commitments:

- YOUNG FEMINIST ACTIVISTS FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH AND EAST ARE CO-DESIGNING AND DIRECTING FRIDA'S GRANTMAKING STRATEGY, GRANTMAKING PROCESS AND DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES AS PART OF THE STAFF, BOARD AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AS WELL AS GRANTEE PARTNERS AND THE BROADER YOUNG FEMINIST COMMUNITY.



- FRIDA'S PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING MODEL WILL ALWAYS EVOLVE TO MIRROR THE FEMINIST PRINCIPLES OF INTERSECTIONALITY, SOLIDARITY BUILDING AND EXCHANGE.



- THE MODEL ENCOURAGES ACCOUNTABILITY PRACTICED WITHIN MOVEMENT SPACES AS WELL AS FRIDA'S ACCOUNTABILITY TOWARD YOUNG FEMINIST MOVEMENTS.



- FRIDA'S APPROACH TO GRANTMAKING IS ROOTED IN TRUST AND SUPPORT FOR THE HOLISTIC WELL-BEING OF YOUNG FEMINIST MOVEMENTS.

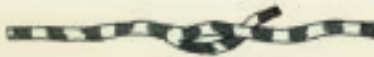


FRIDA'S PARTICIPATORY APPROACH IS AN EVER-EXPANDING UNIVERSE THAT REFLECTS, EVOLVES AND EXPLORES NEW WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER THAT ENGAGE WITH

- CONTRADICTIONS AND BUILD CONDITIONS NEEDED FOR CONNECTIONS TO EMERGE.



- FRIDA EXAMINES ITS OWN POWER AND POSITION IN RELATION TO FEMINIST MOVEMENTS AND IS COMMITTED TO EMBODYING DECOLONIZED PRACTICES OF RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION.



- FRIDA LEARNS WITH THE COMMUNITY AND REPORTS BACK TO THE COMMUNITY. YOUNG FEMINIST PRESENCE, FEEDBACK AND GUIDANCE IS EMBEDDED IN FINAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION.



- FRIDA WILL COMMIT RESOURCES AND KNOWLEDGE TO CO-CREATE AND MAINTAIN A STRUCTURE THAT HOLDS SPACE FOR GENERATIVE CONFLICT AND EXPANDS ACCESS AND CAPACITY FOR PARTICIPATION.



- FRIDA COMMITS TO EXPANDING ITS MODELS OF SUPPORT WHILE EXAMINING ITS OWN CAPACITY TO ENSURE THOSE MODELS ARE SUSTAINABLE.



- FRIDA WILL BE A SPACE FOR BRAVE DREAMING ABOUT WHAT IS POSSIBLE. WE WILL EXPLORE DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES, WITH THE RECOGNITION THAT THEY MIGHT NOT ALWAYS WORK. WE STAY ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE MISTAKES THAT UNCOVER NEW LEARNINGS AND APPROACHES, AS WELL AS FOR REPAIRING THOSE MISTAKES.



WHAT WE HOPE TO MANIFEST THROUGH A PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING PRACTICE

The intention of FRIDA's grantmaking model is to support and grow the collective power and leadership of young feminist organizers to make decisions about the politics of funding distribution, to resource each other's activism, sustainability and resilience, to learn and exchange knowledge and to build connections and witness their work as part of broader feminist movements. Through this process, young feminists make and guide decisions about what feminist strategies should be prioritized in their contexts and customize the criteria, methodology, and principles of the grantmaking model. At the same time, the participatory grantmaking process is an important learning mechanism for FRIDA that directs other aspects of our work⁴ and aligns our strategies with young feminist movement priorities.

WHAT WE HOPE TO CHALLENGE AND CHANGE WITH A PARTICIPATORY WORLDVIEW

Neoliberal capitalism thrives in power-over structures that keep decision-making in the hands of those with privilege, access and wealth. These systems continue to grow their dominance by investing in the exclusion, disconnection and marginalization of communities, keeping people out of decision-making processes that concern their life, well-being and the land they inhabit. These power-over approaches occur within philanthropy and institutional giving, as grantmaking institutions hold power over the distribution of funding and the narratives and agendas their funding enforces.

We acknowledge that as a philanthropic institution, FRIDA also partakes in a larger non-profit industrial complex. Opening our organizational and funding processes to community participation is a responsibility that we hold as a feminist fund accountable to the young feminist organizers and the values we strive to put into practice. FRIDA is committed to shifting the funding paradigm by establishing grantmaking approaches that would decentralize its power over funding priorities and uplift the power of movement knowledge and solutions. We want to amplify practices that have the potential to resource feminist intersectional movements abundant in relationships of accountability, care, mutuality, collective power and solidarity. Participation means being in interaction and creation with all life around us. It is the principle on which we commit to co-creating feminist futures together with young feminist movements.

⁴ Resource Mobilization Policy, Strategic Plan, MEL Framework, Conflict of Interest Policy, Safeguarding Policy etc.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO PRACTICE PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING

Regardless of how FRIDA's grantmaking model shifts in the future, we are committed to an intersectional feminist participatory practice and to continuously exploring new ways for young feminist activists to connect with and participate in all of FRIDA's institutional processes, beyond just grantmaking. However, that doesn't mean that everyone would always need to take the time to participate in every decision-making process. **Participation is not only essential during any final decision-making, but also during the creation of processes. We also use feminist participatory approaches across FRIDA to help us move beyond just the concepts and philosophies of participation and into clear action and embodied practice. Young feminist visions are embedded into FRIDA's institutional processes so that community input is always driving our decisions.** We also involve young feminist activists from grantee, advisory and staff communities in knowledge creation and decision-making processes about governance, strategic planning and resource mobilization, which keeps FRIDA accountable to the community it exists to support.



PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES CAN BE COMPLEX

Participation is an organic way of connecting and interacting with others, the planet and all life around us. We come together in a community, build relationships of safety and belonging and co-create and sustain life and practices through interconnectedness and participation. However, interlocking systems of oppression maintain social exclusion by giving those in power the ability to determine who has the right to participate in what kind of processes. The root causes of inequalities are deeply embedded in our communities on systemic, structural and interpersonal levels. Those systems of oppression affect how we think, dream and stand in community with one another. As deeply as we are interconnected across solidarity networks in feminist

movements, so too are the webs of oppression around us that we live within and seek to dismantle. We do not romanticize the meaning of participation or underestimate how much power it has in both life-affirming and harming practices. Participatory processes can perpetuate harm when they lack concepts of accountability, transparency, equity, and justice at their core. **We acknowledge that a thoughtful structure rooted in intersectionality, contextual analyses and the capacity to hold complexities must be present in order to facilitate authentic participation and connections. FRIDA is committed to investing time, resources and knowledge to continuously re-imagine and build upon the structure that holds our participatory grantmaking process and to analyze the nuances of how power operates within it.**

PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES REFLECT ON POWER IN ALL ITS FORMS

Participatory grantmaking processes alone don't inherently subvert or challenge the core power dynamics and inequities in donor-grantee relationships. Even in FRIDA, where young feminist activists from the regions where we fund hold decision-making power across our organizational structure and governance⁵ we also need to reflect on our position and power as a feminist funder in relation to young feminist movements. **We reflect on the forms of power that young feminists hold within FRIDA's governance body and its transformative potential to co-create practices that move us closer to the feminist futures. At the same time, we need to relate to this power in a way that doesn't perpetuate internalized systems of oppression that redirect us from our mission.** FRIDA also needs to consider how we practice power in how we build our systems of support and programs, how we structure reporting requirements, how we recruit staff, board and advisory members, how we build trust and access for grantee partners to seek support, etc.

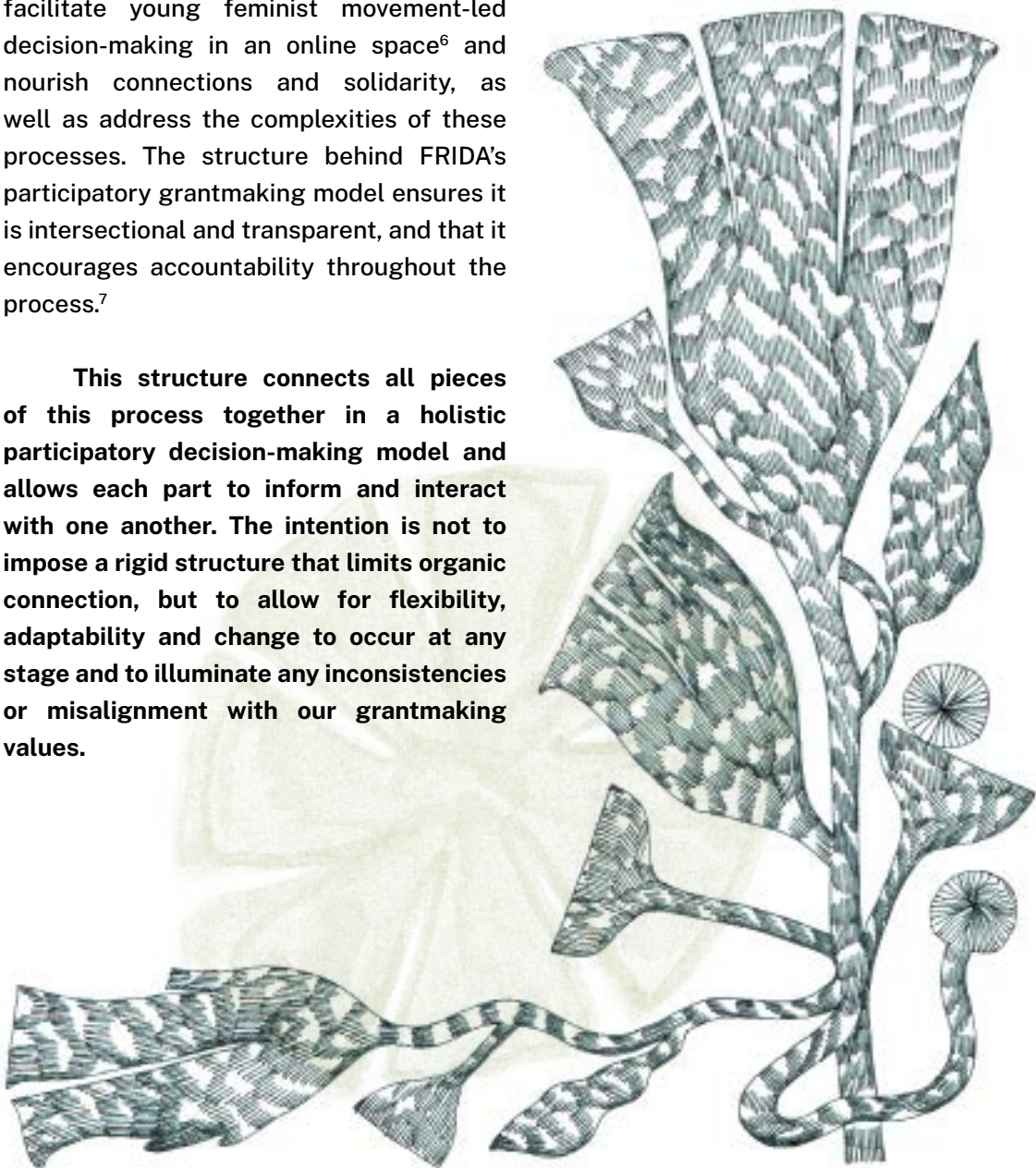
The intention of the participatory governance structure and across FRIDA's programmatic work is to decentralize power over different decisions and ensure that a diversity of perspectives and experiences are considered. **Because we intend to support threads of feminist connection across generations, movements and geographies, we seek out exchanges, learnings and practices that would highlight the power inequities that exist in our work, where those inequities come from and what they are trying to sustain.** FRIDA has a responsibility to examine the power dynamics that shape its processes and to channel power in ways that build the power of the collective with young feminist movements. Instead of holding the power of deciding how resources are distributed, FRIDA can use its power and access to co-design and facilitate accountable participatory grantmaking practice with young feminist organizers that can also transform the potential of these resources.

⁵ Young feminist activists are part of FRIDA staff, Board and Advisory Committee

PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES THRIVE WITHIN AN INTENTIONAL AND FLEXIBLE STRUCTURE

As a feminist fund, when we create space for young feminist communities to participate in our grantmaking, governance and strategy creation, we need to examine every corner of our participatory model to identify its challenges and limitations. Community-led participatory processes require a deep understanding of the conditions needed for meaningful community participation and engagement to occur. FRIDA is committed to maintaining an intentional structure that can facilitate young feminist movement-led decision-making in an online space⁶ and nourish connections and solidarity, as well as address the complexities of these processes. The structure behind FRIDA's participatory grantmaking model ensures it is intersectional and transparent, and that it encourages accountability throughout the process.⁷

This structure connects all pieces of this process together in a holistic participatory decision-making model and allows each part to inform and interact with one another. The intention is not to impose a rigid structure that limits organic connection, but to allow for flexibility, adaptability and change to occur at any stage and to illuminate any inconsistencies or misalignment with our grantmaking values.



⁶ We need to emphasize that FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process is facilitated online and that there are systems designed to hold this space

⁷ Explained in detail in the chapter about FRIDA's participatory funding model

BUILDING ACCESS AND CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN OUR PROCESSES

In the context of philanthropy, participatory decision-making processes can be a transformational practice, but they can also further inequalities, distrust and disconnection if the conditions for active participation of those involved are not addressed. Community decision-making processes not only require willingness and time from people who take part in them, but also an intentional support system in place to foster their active participation. Communities show up to the participatory process with all the parts of their reality, experiences, stories and backgrounds, all of which are complex, nuanced and diverse. **Participation in a donor-facilitated process could impose barriers for some participants if the grantmaking systems have not been designed with intention and with understanding about what support and conditions are needed for them to participate.** If a funder designs their participatory grantmaking processes without considering the pre-existing disadvantages that some communities face, participants from those communities may experience disappointment and decide not to participate in the future. They may feel like their participation doesn't matter, or even question whether they should be part of the decisions at all. It is often the most impacted communities who are left out of the decision-making processes that concern them. **The unattainable requirements ask them to mobilize an inequitable amount of their internal resources to show up and participate in a process that doesn't recognize their experience — barriers include language and internet access, complex application forms and selection processes, administrative and financial documents, etc.**



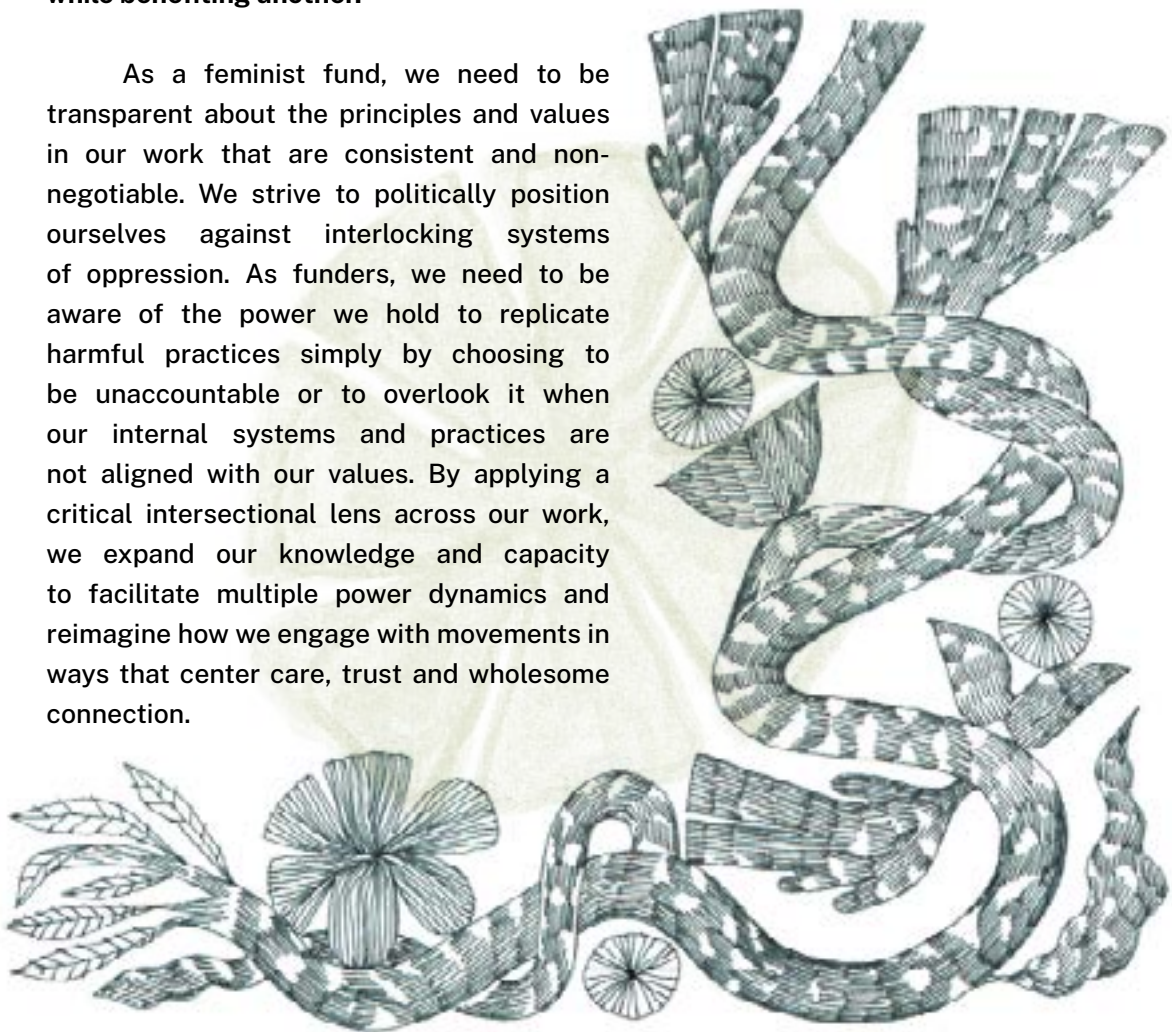
Learning how to engage with the complexities of participatory decision-making methodologies requires its own preparation and pace. As participatory funders, we need to honor these practices with flexibility, adaptability and time. It is important that funders reserve the time needed to address the challenges of their funding model and build knowledge and alternatives together with the communities they support. We need to be receptive to community feedback and to meet the needs of people who are engaging in our processes. Meeting those needs can include, but is not limited to, using simplified and accessible application formats and language, providing translation and guidance throughout the application process, minimizing complex technology, supporting those without internet access, offering financial compensation for participants' time, etc. **Our strategies must be creative to continuously build conditions and access for diverse communities to not only be part of, but also feel ownership within, funders' participatory decision-making processes, and that their experience and contributions are acknowledged and valued.**

INTERSECTIONALITY AT THE FOUNDATION OF THE PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING PROCESS

Since FRIDA adopted a participatory grantmaking model, each grantmaking cycle has posed new questions and reflection about what meaningful participatory decision-making processes look like in each of the contexts where we fund.⁸ For participatory grantmaking to be effective in reaching diverse communities, the decision-making needs to be built using an intersectional lens that unveils interlocking systems of oppression and their multilayered manifestations. Intersectional approaches expose inconsistencies within our model and shed light on who is missing from our grantmaking process and what we need to change in our approach.

We hold an ongoing commitment to build within our participatory processes a brave space for engaging with complexities and understanding how multiple systems of oppression could obscure dynamics of power and privilege, limit visibility and access, and build up bias, exclusion and discrimination towards one community while benefiting another.

As a feminist fund, we need to be transparent about the principles and values in our work that are consistent and non-negotiable. We strive to politically position ourselves against interlocking systems of oppression. As funders, we need to be aware of the power we hold to replicate harmful practices simply by choosing to be unaccountable or to overlook it when our internal systems and practices are not aligned with our values. By applying a critical intersectional lens across our work, we expand our knowledge and capacity to facilitate multiple power dynamics and reimagine how we engage with movements in ways that center care, trust and wholesome connection.



⁸ FRIDA is accountable to review the systems and structure behind the participatory process and to learning with and from the young feminist organizers in FRIDA's Advisory Committee, grantee partners, applicants in each cycle and broader feminist knowledge production on interlocking systems of oppression in each context where we provide funding

PRACTICING FEMINIST SOLIDARITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Participatory grantmaking should not be practiced as a way to remove funders' responsibility over resource distribution and place that responsibility instead onto movements they are supporting. Funders are still responsible for how they design and facilitate their participatory grantmaking processes, how they choose to engage the communities they serve and where they draw limits of comfort in power-sharing. As participatory funders, we need to commit to practice active accountability and transparency about our process towards the movement we support.

Historically, as part of the non-profit industrial complex, funders have attached many accountability requirements to the resources directed to social justice movements, while the power over resources allowed for no reciprocity. **This uneven power dynamic has been enforced through overwhelming reporting requests that ultimately divert grantee partners from reporting to each other about their work as part of collective accountability, knowledge-building and exchange.** Inequitable distribution of resources and funding practices across geographies have narrowed the capacity for movements to be accountable to each other, increased competition over resources, limited interdependence and space to build sustainable solidarity networks. On the other hand, participatory grantmaking processes have the potential to shift this practice and cultivate accountability and relationships of reciprocity and collaboration, involving increased transparency and decision-making about the resources within movement spaces.⁹ FRIDA is devoted to facilitating participatory grantmaking processes that encourage connection, exchange and mutual accountability among young feminist organizers who are a part of it. **FRIDA also stays accountable to young feminist movements by keeping its key processes open to young feminist participation, practicing transparency in our funding, governance, finances and resource mobilization, as well as reporting back to the movements about the outcomes of those processes.**



TRUST AS AN OUTCOME, NOT AN ASSUMPTION



In alignment with our values, FRIDA practices transparency at each stage of the grantmaking process, including sharing data and learnings back with the young feminist activists who participate. Also, we need to be transparent about the information that we can't share in order to protect the confidentiality and safety of the activists we support, particularly depending on their regional and cultural context. Transparent grantmaking processes that hold many confidentiality and accountability complexities are not easy to implement, however. They require active trust-building between the funder and the community they support.

Even if we feel our processes are values-aligned, we as funders should not expect that organizers will show up with radical trust in funder-facilitated participatory processes. **Interlocking systems of oppression deeply affect our lives, communities and relationships, and many young feminist collectives show up with an expectation that systemic oppression will also show up in FRIDA's grantmaking processes.** The expectation of trust as implicit rather than something that must be mutually nurtured and shaped is also connected to the power dynamics in donor-grantee relationships. As funders, we can expand trust only by demonstrating our accountability through action and daily practice. We need to be vulnerable and transparent in reporting back to movements about our work and the challenges we face, and we need to honor the time and the effort it takes for trust to be built and in many cases restored. If we practice transparency and accountability towards the movements we support we enable more equitable exchange. **Trust-building is a long-term process, one that invites us to experience new possibilities and funding strategies where we create and remodel solutions together with the movements we support.**

FRIDA is committed to building close trust-based relationships with young feminist collectives, and to celebrating our successes and addressing our challenges transparently. **A mutual trust-based relationship invites us to share our internal challenges and struggles as funders and as grantee partners, trusting that we will be met with compassion, care and support, and to nurture relationships of respect and mutuality that are rooted in true allyship.** For instance, many grantee partners have felt safe to transparently address challenges in their organizing directly with FRIDA, knowing that they would still receive support and that their funding wouldn't be questioned.



MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION STRENGTHENS MOVEMENT CONNECTION

In FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process, young feminist collectives get to read and learn about, as well as support, each other's work. FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process creates a peer movement space where young feminist collectives can experience a sense of collective agency by informing and directing funding priorities in their context, and by building relationships of mutuality and shared accountability with one another. Young feminist collectives get an opportunity to learn from each other's realities and strategies and build on each other's visions of organizing toward freedom and justice. Through this process, young feminist collectives can connect with diverse feminist movement solutions and approaches and deepen their knowledge about realities different from their own. A successful participatory grantmaking process for FRIDA would allow for an abundance of pathways, strategies and transformative feminist approaches to be in conversation with and inspire one another. If it fosters the right connections and exchange, a participatory grantmaking process can generate a space for young feminist collectives to recognize themselves as part of vibrant, expansive feminist movements where every group, initiative and action is contributing to one another and therefore magnifying the collective power. **A meaningful participatory grantmaking process allows collectives to be in relationship with the outcome of their participation and witness not only the direct outcomes of their decision-making, but also how this ethos and practice could translate to feminist movement alliance.** The movement building and exchange that FRIDA's participatory decision-making process seeks to support have the potential to expand beyond FRIDA's grantmaking process and to become embodied practices that young feminist collectives bring into their own communities.





HOLDING SPACE FOR THE COMPLEXITIES OF PARTICIPATION

Even though we strive to build participatory grantmaking processes that encourage affirming connections and enhance collaboration, we recognize that this does not mean that they will be free of disconnection, competition and friction. Meaningful connections and misalignment can occur simultaneously and interchangeably. Diverse perspectives and strategies about how to arrive to the futures we envision collectively can co-exist in the same movement space. Movements for justice are not homogenous in their organizing, and people arrive to them with different lived experiences and backgrounds. Systems of oppression are deeply present in our lives and can affect us in similar or unique ways, which can manifest in our collaborations, visions and strategies. These complexities and contradictions are present in any participatory decision-making process and need to be addressed and facilitated with care.

As a participatory funder, FRIDA has the responsibility to engage with the complexities of our processes with a restorative approach that prevents the perpetuation of harm, without deepening frictions. **The intersectional lens increases our capacity for creative intervention and allows us to hold space for generative conflict by helping us understand conflict's origin, where it wants to move us and what it asks us to grow. An accessible, transparent participatory decision-making model allows us to experience the power of interconnectedness, as well as its complexities.** However, it also provides tools of support when violence and abuse happen, and guides us in the restorative justice process. Therefore, having a structure behind any participatory grantmaking process allows for funders to approach difficult questions with curiosity about what there is to be learned and how to integrate those learnings in the future.

PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES ARE CO-CREATED BY AND FOR THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE

FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process and systems are facilitated and co-developed by young feminist activists from FRIDA's focus regions. Young feminist movements are abundant in knowledge, experience and strategies, and together we can dream up solutions for a participatory grantmaking system that serves these movements and mirrors feminist values. Young feminist leadership in the design of FRIDA's participatory grantmaking model has been critical to address diverse perspectives, needs and realities. If a participatory decision-making process doesn't involve the communities it is serving in its strategy and system design, it might not identify and address the needs, dynamics and nuances of those communities' lived experiences. Furthermore, it can also perpetuate the same hierarchies of knowledge dominance and production that have long existed within philanthropy. A decision-making process in which young feminists participate must be built and facilitated with their expertise, ideas and solutions at the center. By following this principle, young feminist visions and experiences are integrated across FRIDA's organizational structures, and decisions made are always resourced by their knowledge and experiences.

LEARNING TOGETHER AND REPORTING BACK TO YOUNG FEMINIST MOVEMENTS

FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process is an ever-expanding universe for learning and reflection. We listen to and welcome community feedback as a blessing that encourages new ways of thinking and moves our processes, systems and strategies closer to the young feminist movements that we exist to support. We see impact and value in processes that allow us to continuously learn, reflect and change our practice as a fund.

FRIDA incorporates space for feedback and change at every stage of the process, and apply learnings across our strategies, including stepping away from practices that we have outgrown. After each cycle, we collect learnings and evaluate the principles that our participatory model seeks to align with. We review where the model needs to change, adapt and expand. Changes in the organizing contexts of young feminist collectives can shift unpredictably and we must ensure our grantmaking systems

are dynamic, flexible and ready to adapt. FRIDA commits to being daring and curious about exploring different models of movement participation and engagement in our processes, as well as to being accountable to young feminist movements while we implement them.

The data that we receive from young feminist organizers globally belongs to those movements. FRIDA commits to using this data responsibly, and to sharing this collective wisdom and knowledge with movements by reporting back.



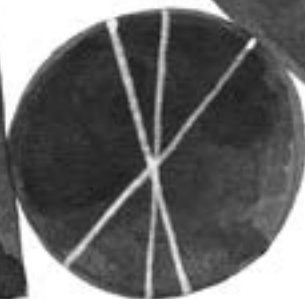
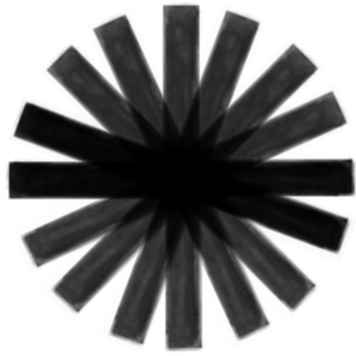
Feminist movements are composed of individual and collective relationships that create a lasting base for our activism. We strive to embody feminist practices that we want to see unfold. If our funding model is values-aligned with our funding strategy, the resources we provide could unlock new possibilities and outcomes. Together with young feminist organizers, we are practicing approaches and setting intentions for what we want to see replicated in the world. We get to test alternative mechanisms around the resources and values on which we hope to build our futures and learn in real time what we need to be mindful of on our way there.

SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES

Overtime, FRIDA has gathered a lot of knowledge and experience that hasn't been always easy to document, share and implemented in each grantmaking cycle when staff members who hold this process transition out of FRIDA. It is a long and overwhelming process for all this knowledge and history to be collectivized and shared from one staff member to another. All the pieces of information that sustain this model are important to share and build into holistic practices that are easy to replicate in each cycle. FRIDA commits to a participatory model that is curious, ever-evolving and adaptive to the young feminist community's needs. This commitment also implies that we need to evaluate and strengthen our internal capacity to practice the principles behind our participatory model. FRIDA seeks to listen inward while being attentive also to movement needs, so that we can remodel our systems internally to sustain this practice for the long haul.



FRIDA'S
PARTICIPATORY
FUNDING MODEL:
HOW DOES IT WORK?

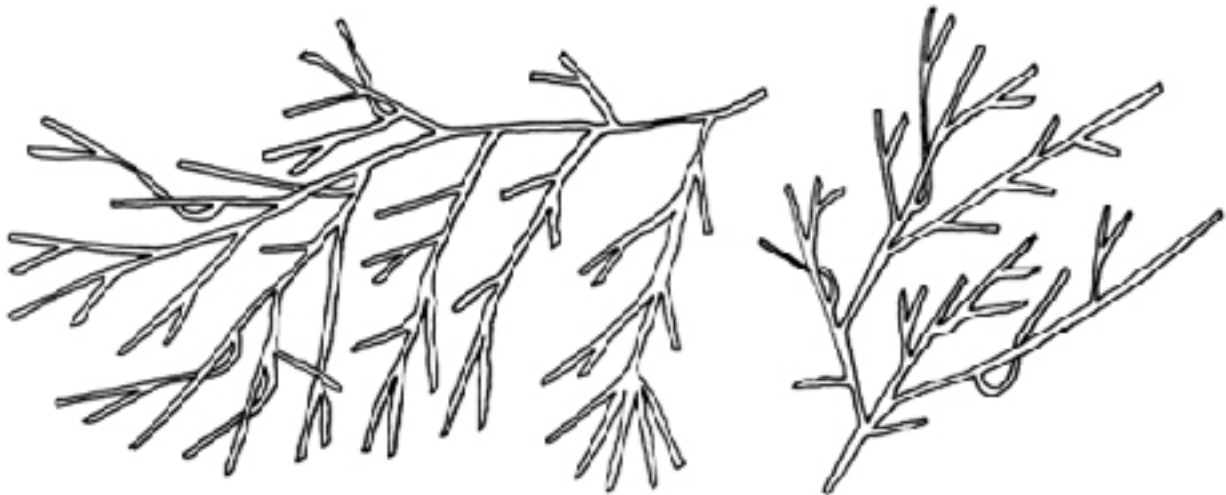


FRIDA'S APPROACH TO SUPPORTING YOUNG FEMINIST ORGANIZING

FRIDA'S GRANTMAKING STRATEGY

FRIDA | The Young Feminist Fund is co-created by feminist movements to provide flexible, multi-year financial support, capacity strengthening, and space for movement connections to young feminist collectives across regions¹⁰, thematics, and strategies. FRIDA supports young feminist collectives to build solidarity networks across movements, exchange knowledge and practices and co-create advocacy initiatives. FRIDA applies participatory decision-making practices across the fund and all of its grantmaking. Not only are young feminist communities part of resource allocation decisions, but they also decide how FRIDA's grantmaking process can best support the needs of the young feminist community.

FRIDA's grantmaking strategy is created in conversation with young feminist organizers and mirrors the organizing needs and practices of young feminist movements. It includes all the ways in which FRIDA provides financial and non-financial support to young feminist organizers. This strategy allows us to be flexible, creative and reflective about new ways in which we can provide holistic support to young feminist movements¹¹. ***Feedback and analysis following every open call for applications informs this strategy, as well as our ongoing communication and reflection with grantee partners, advisors and the broader FRIDA community.***



¹⁰ Southwest Asia and North Africa Western, Eastern, Central, and Southern Africa, Central, Southeast and East Europe, Caucasus and Central and North Asia, South, Southeast, and East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean

¹¹ FRIDA funding criteria <https://youngfeministfund.org/how-to-apply/>

FUNDING PLUS MODEL

FRIDA is committed to supporting young feminist collectives through a funding plus model and intends to provide **renewal support over the course of 3-5 years** to all awarded groups. All groups who apply and are accepted during FRIDA's open call for application receive a flexible, core support grant. After receiving their first grant and submitting their End Cycle Report, each group receives an increased renewal grant that can be multi- or single-year, depending on the preference of each group. Core and capacity strengthening grants are offered to all grantee partners and are incorporated into our budget projection for each group 5 years in advance.¹² Grantee partners can also apply to receive **travel, collaboration, and other thematic grants**, and can also take part in **an accompaniment program** to seek or provide peer capacity strengthening support. After 5 years, or earlier if requested by the group, each grantee partner has access to **a grantee transition program** that offers transition grants and tailored capacity strengthening support. This program is intended to enable sustainable transition and growth to groups in the way they envision it, and to join the FRIDA alumni community.

GROWING TRUST AND FOSTERING RELATIONSHIPS

FRIDA's program team has **a focal point structure** where a staff member supports groups in their regions throughout their grantee journey with FRIDA. FRIDA is committed to creating a space where young feminist collectives can share their challenges, learnings and successes equally and receive holistic support. To cultivate and nourish trust-based relationships with young feminist organizers our strategies and decision-making processes need to *be transparent and open for reflection, feedback and change of our approaches*.

PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING APPROACH

All FRIDA's grantmaking is facilitated through a young feminist community decision-making process. Open Call for Applications is the most complex process with applicants, grantee partners and young feminists from the Global Advisory Committee participating in this process. However, other types of grants have the conditions and needs for various community decision-making approaches.

¹² The initial core grant at the moment is USD 7000. The capacity strengthening grant is USD 2500.

OPEN CALL FOR APPLICATIONS PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING MODEL

FRIDA'S OPEN CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

FRIDA's open call process is a *cross-regional, cross-thematic, multilingual application process for young feminist organizers that involves multiple peers reviewing stages*. In order to sustain FRIDA's funding plus program and accompany the journey of each grantee partner, we invite young feminist collectives to apply in *an open call for applications* every two years. The time between cycles also allows the grantmaking team to reflect and incorporate all critical feedback, contextual analyses, and updated analyses on support for underrepresented groups. We take these reflections to the next grant cycle, regional work strategies, and across FRIDA's organizational work. We discuss with the advisory committee the needs in each region, co-develop strategies that respond to these needs, and even recruit advisors in specific areas of work.

- **REGIONAL STRATEGIES** are co-designed with each regional advisory committee and are a guiding lens to understand contexts, needs, gaps, opportunities, and challenges in all regions where FRIDA funds. This lays foundations for FRIDA's regional and thematic outreach plan and ensures that FRIDA's call for applications is both accessible and attuned to complexities.

- **OUTREACH PLANS** are co-designed by staff and advisory committee members before each call for applications to ensure that we have tools in place to reach out to young feminist communities. From ongoing focused online communication in 7 languages to webinars and local events to learn about the application process, the many outreach tools we use ensure that we learn about the conditions of groups in different contexts and how they need to be supported in the application process.

WHO IS PART OF THE FRIDA PEER REVIEW PROCESS?

In FRIDA's participatory grantmaking model, young feminist activists who are part of FRIDA's advisory, staff, and grantee partner community, as well as young feminist activists who have applied for grants, have roles in the community decision-making process.

FRIDA GLOBAL ADVISORY COMMUNITY

FRIDA's Global Advisory Committee is also organized regionally and consists of young feminist activists based in the regions where FRIDA funds. FRIDA was created by young feminist activists who formed the original advisory committee, which supported all of FRIDA's operations in its early stages. All young feminist activists from FRIDA Global Advisory Committee are part of the Peer Review Panel in the open call for applications in their respective regions. Regional Advisory Committee members are selected every two years by outgoing advisors and FRIDA staff members through an open call for applications.

GRANTEE PARTNERS

Grantee Partner collectives that have been part of the FRIDA grantee community for more than one year can express interest to participate in the open call for proposal process and join the Peer Review Panel and review proposals in their region.

YOUNG FEMINIST COLLECTIVES - APPLICANTS

All young feminist collectives that apply for FRIDA funding during the open call for applications and that fit FRIDA's funding criteria get to read proposals in the voting process in their region and vote for the groups they feel should be supported with funding.

FRIDA STAFF MEMBERS

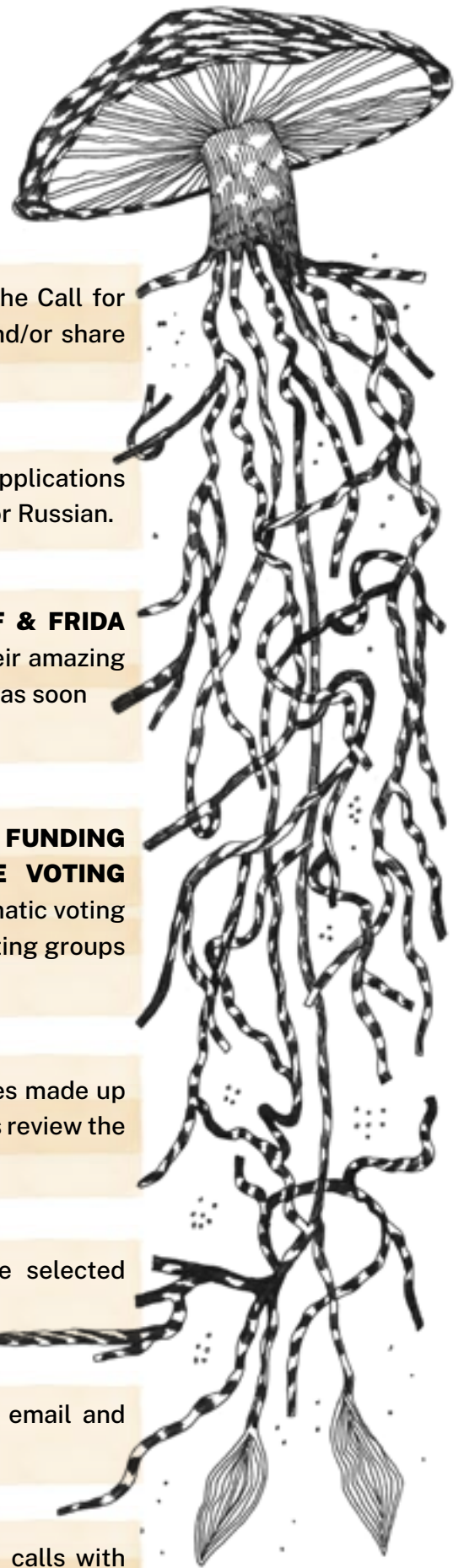
As a self-led young feminist fund, the majority of staff members are young feminist activists from the regions where FRIDA funds. FRIDA grantmaking staff designs the entire participatory grantmaking process and reviews final grantmaking decisions with the Peer Review Panel. FRIDA's staff from other teams can be part of the open call for applications to review if groups fit FRIDA's funding criteria and to support the due diligence process. However, they are not making final decisions about which groups receive the grant. FRIDA staff can contribute with knowledge about their context, but they are not part of the Peer Review Panel.



Who gets the grant?

FRIDA'S GRANTMAKING PROCESS EXPLAINED

- 1 — **CALL FOR APPLICATIONS OPENS!** FRIDA opens the Call for Proposals, young feminists across the globe apply and/or share the call widely.
- 2 — **APPLICATIONS ARE SUBMITTED!** Groups submit applications online in Spanish, French, Portuguese, English, Arabic or Russian.
- 3 — **APPLICATIONS ARE SCREENED BY FRIDA STAFF & FRIDA STAFF & PEER REVIEW PANEL.** Groups continue their amazing work on the ground and receive feedback from FRIDA as soon as the screening process is complete.
- 4 — **YOUNG FEMINIST GROUPS THAT FIT FRIDA'S FUNDING CRITERIA ARE INVITED TO BE PART OF THE VOTING PROCESS!** They are a part of subregional and/or thematic voting groups and they vote for the 5 applications in their voting groups to receive funding!
- 5 — **FINAL DECISIONS!** Regional Peer Review Committees made up of FRIDA Staff, Advisors, and current grantee partners review the voting groups and the top voted groups.
- 6 — **DUE DILIGENCE PROCESS!** The references of the selected groups are contacted in a due diligence process.
- 7 — **GRANTS ARE AWARDED!** Groups receive an award email and work with FRIDA staff to receive the grant safely.
- 8 — **ENTER THE FRIDA - VERSE!** Groups have welcome calls with FRIDA community members and become a part of the FRIDA community.



Step 1 — YOUNG FEMINIST COLLECTIVE SUBMIT PROPOSALS

GENERAL APPLICATION PROCESS

Young feminist collectives from FRIDA's focus regions can submit their applications in seven languages¹³ through an online platform that currently facilitates all stages of FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process. Groups can log into an applicant portal and work on their application until they are ready to submit it. They can track each stage of the review process on the platform. The platform is accessible on all devices. If a group is unable to apply online they can submit their proposal in another written format.

At the moment, FRIDA *only accepts proposals in writing*. We know that other formats might be more engaging and more familiar to some, but so far written proposals have allowed for the most consistency in the community voting process. This also ensures that groups can read proposals at their own pace and translate text to local languages when needed.

Before submitting their proposal, *all groups complete a short questionnaire to confirm if they group fit with FRIDA's funding criteria*. If confirmed, the group receives access to the application form and if not, they receive a message that explains again FRIDA's funding criteria. If a group who receives this email still thinks they do fit the criteria, they can reach out to FRIDA to share more information and get access to the application form.



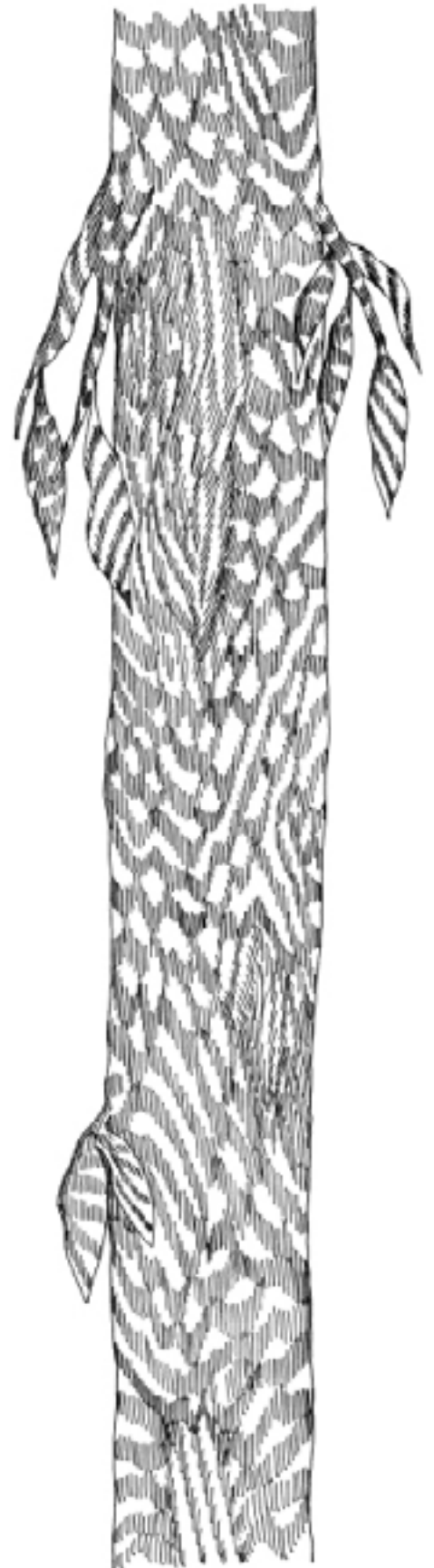
¹³ Arabic, English, French, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish and other

INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROCESS

Applicants are also informed that this is a participatory grantmaking process where *parts of their proposals will be shared with fellow young feminists as part of FRIDA's peer decision-making process*. They are informed that they can share their work in whatever way is most comfortable for them (without needing to use NGO jargon, for instance). Each stage of the process is explained in a downloadable application pack¹⁴ in seven languages. The parts of the application form that would be shared in the applicant peer review process is marked and the groups are asked to not share *the name of their group or any other information* such as links that might jeopardize the group's anonymity. Applicants can indicate if there is information they would prefer not to share in the peer review process but would need FRIDA to be aware of and they can also share if they have any safety concerns about the process.

CONFIRMATION OF PARTICIPATION

Applicants *confirm if they are willing to take part in a participatory grantmaking process*. If they choose to participate, they receive a timeline with each stage explained. We also share all information in the preferred language of the group. We want to ensure that groups have information about FRIDA's criteria and overall grantmaking process so that they can make an informed decision about submitting their proposal to FRIDA. All groups can at any point decide not to take part in it or to withdraw their application.



¹⁴ https://youngfeministfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Frida-D1_EN_004.pdf

Step 2 — PEER REVIEW PANEL READS APPLICATIONS!

WHAT IS A PEER REVIEW PANEL AND WHO IS PART OF IT?

In every open call for applications, FRIDA receives over 1,000 applications. Once the call for applications is closed, FRIDA grantmaking staff assigns proposals to **the Peer Review Panel** for initial review if the proposal fits FRIDA's criteria. The Peer Review Panel is composed of *young feminist activists from FRIDA's advisory community and current grantee partners who have agreed to participate in reviewing applications from young feminist groups from their region*¹⁵. The Peer Review Panel is organized regionally, and the review process is held in English and Spanish. Advisors and grantee partners that are participating in the Peer Review Panel for the first time receive training from FRIDA grantmaking staff and advisors on FRIDA's participatory grantmaking practice, process, values.

HOW DOES THE PEER REVIEW PANEL REVIEW PROPOSALS?

The Peer Review Panel members *are assigned proposals through a secure online platform*. Through this platform, they can see all applications assigned to them and communicate with other members of the Panel. FRIDA staff assigns proposals to panel members based on the region/country/thematic of the group and the affiliations of members. *Each application is reviewed by two members of the Peer Review Panel*. At this stage, they only evaluate whether applications fit FRIDA's basic funding criteria and can move to the next stage. There is a review form that the *Peer Review Panel* can complete about each of the groups they review. The form consists of brief checklists for easier allocation of proposals to the next stage (Voting Groups)– in this stage, they record, for instance, whether a group is self-led, working on underfunded issues, an informal group, or a larger organization, etc.



¹⁵ Everyone in the peer review committee is financially compensated for their time.

In the review form, The Peer Review Panel can share more information about the group, their members, and their work if they are familiar with it. This information is available only to the Peer Review Panel and FRIDA grantmaking staff to support the organizing of the voting and the due diligence process.

HOW FRIDA PROTECTS CONFIDENTIALITY WITHIN THE PEER REVIEW PANEL

Before entering this process, *the Peer Review Panelists sign a confidentiality agreement* where they commit to discussing the proposals reviewed only within the Peer Review Panel. Before reviewing applications, we ask Peer Review Panelists to share with FRIDA if they are part of any group or if they closely collaborate with any group that has applied for funding in that cycle. In general, if a panelist is part of a group that has applied, they can't be part of the screening process. Therefore, they must share this information with FRIDA staff before applications are assigned. This is to protect the anonymity of all groups in the second stage of the process, where groups review each other's proposals and vote on each other.

If panelists are not part of a group, but they know them, we ask that they share that with FRIDA and other panelists so we can ensure that the group's proposal is assigned to someone else to review. The panelist can still review and comment on other applications. In other cases, when they know of a group or their work but are not closely affiliated with them, they can still review their proposal. Each proposal is screened by at least two Peer Review Panelists and/or a panelist and a staff member so that a group's application doesn't rely only on one panelist's feedback.



Step 3 — YOUNG FEMINIST COLLECTIVES APPLICANTS READ, COMMENT, AND VOTE

WHAT DOES THE APPLICANT VOTING PROCESS LOOK LIKE?

All groups that are aligned with FRIDA's criteria are part of the voting process. Generally, every cycle *up to 500 of the approximately 1,000 proposals we receive fit the criteria* and are part of the applicant voting process. Once the Peer Review Panel confirms that groups fit FRIDA funding criteria, the grantmaking staff designs **the voting process**.

This process is designed differently in each region, based on the feedback from previous cycles, advisory comments, and regional strategies that the FRIDA community has created to deepen the understanding of the young feminist organizing in each context. FRIDA strives for a process that can hold complexities and respond to the needs and challenges that groups might face. For instance, the voting can be organized sub-regionally taking into consideration thematics, geopolitics, language justice, and access. We also consider the fact that some groups have more experience and access to submit their proposal to FRIDA, so we take this into consideration when creating voting groups.

FRIDA grantmaking staff create **voting groups** within the online platform for each region. After the voting groups are designed, the application summaries from applicants' proposals are automatically generated and assigned to their respective voting groups in each region. Each region has up to 15 voting groups, each containing up to 15 voting summaries. The voting summaries are anonymized and consist of responses to the following questions:

- PROPOSAL ID/ COUNTRY/ THEMATIC THEY WORK ON
- WHY AND HOW WAS YOUR GROUP FOUNDED?
- WHAT IS YOUR GROUP'S MISSION?
- SHARE THE MAIN ACTIVITIES YOUR GROUP HAS CARRIED OUT IN THE PAST. IF YOU ARE JUST STARTING, WHAT ARE THE MAIN ACTIVITIES YOU HAVE PLANNED?
- HOW WILL YOUR GROUP USE THE FRIDA GRANT?



The groups also receive *an email with a timeline, Voting Guidelines, and a guide on how to review proposals on the online platform* in the language they applied in. We share information about the groups that FRIDA is currently supporting and encourage groups to have language access in mind when voting—not every group can present their work with the same language proficiency, so groups should more strongly consider the work and communities that they feel are important to be supported in their context, rather than eloquence of language.

The groups are again reminded that they are participating in a peer review process where their anonymized proposal summary will be shared with other young feminist organizations in their region. The groups have an opportunity to communicate with FRIDA any concerns they might have about the process or to let us know if they won't be able to take part for any reason.

HOW CAN APPLICANTS SUBMIT THEIR VOTES?

In the voting stage, ***applicants read anonymous proposal summaries assigned to their voting group and can choose to vote for five groups.***¹⁶ The voting is not hierarchical, and the applicants can't vote for their own group. When voting, the young feminist groups share a brief background for their selections and why they would prioritize funding for the work of the groups they vote for. They can also share any questions, concerns, or comments about any of the proposals in their Voting Group to add to the due diligence process in case that specific group receives a high number of votes and is considered for funding. *The applicants can also express interest in connecting with any of the groups that have been part of their voting group.* We also ask the groups if they would like to be connected to other donors in case their proposal is not selected.



¹⁶ In each region voting groups can have from 10 to 15 proposal summaries for applicants to read and vote for. Applicants can only vote within their voting group and they need to vote for up to 5 proposals.

Step 4 — FINAL DECISION AND GRANTEE ANNOUNCEMENT

HOW ARE THE FINAL DECISIONS MADE?

After groups submit their votes, *the Peer Review Panel and FRIDA's program staff review the voting results in their respective regions*. There is a conversation within the Panel in each region about how groups have voted, their voting feedback, and any dynamics that might have arisen in this process—for instance, how underrepresented groups and those with little or no access to funding are reflected in the votes. At this stage, *the Peer Review Panel comes together online to discuss the results* and confirms that the groups with the highest number of votes can continue into the due diligence stage. The panelist can also identify and share any potential bias or contextual dynamics that have occurred during the voting and make decisions on how to move forward with the final votes. If some groups have the same number of votes and only one can be awarded, the Peer Review Panel makes this decision based on previously applied analyses from the voting process, FRIDA's regional strategies, and evaluation from the previous grantmaking cycle.

In case the Peer Review Panel reports any gaps in the voting process or groups that come from underrepresented priority communities have not received high vote counts, the Peer Review Panel in each region can collectively make a decision to move that group to the due diligence stage along with the highest voted ones. The applicant votes are prioritized in the decision-making process, however, the Peer Review panel can award additional grants in each region.

HOW MANY GROUPS CAN RECEIVE A GRANT?

FRIDA shares with the community the number of groups that are participating in the voting process in their region, the number of Voting Groups, and the number of grants that are allocated to each region and sub-region. We ensure that there is a regional balance in grant and



budget allocation. Understanding the imbalance in philanthropic giving and funding commitments across different regions, FRIDA's regional strategy points out the gaps and underfunded contexts and thematic in individual regions and FRIDA can allocate a higher number of grants in those contexts. *In each region, there are usually about 7-12 Voting Groups, each receiving up to 15 proposals to review. Depending on the number of the Voting Groups, at least one group from each Voting Group goes on to receive grant.*¹⁷

HOW DO WE CONFIRM IF THE HIGHEST VOTED GROUPS FIT FRIDA'S FUNDING CRITERIA?

All groups considered for a grant go through **a due diligence process that takes two weeks or longer**. The due diligence process is done by FRIDA staff and it is as part of FRIDA's accountability towards all the young feminist organizers that are part of the voting process. FRIDA needs to ensure that funds are supporting the organizing and work of young feminist groups selected through the peer review process. FRIDA is committed to funding young feminist groups that are self-led so we get in touch with groups to receive more information.

REFERENCE REQUEST: We inform the highest voted group that we will contact the references they provided in their application. We understand that many groups are newly established and can't provide references from previous funders, so we also ask them to provide references of individuals and/or organizations connected to feminist organizing in their context that can share more about their work.

LOCAL PARTNERS: Advisory committee members and FRIDA staff can also contact local partners or sister funds to collect more information about the group.

CALLS WITH GROUPS: In some cases, we have a call with a group to better understand their work, structure, and leadership.



¹⁷ The grants awarded can go up to 4 per each voting group.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A GROUP IS SELECTED TO RECEIVE A GRANT?

Once the due diligence process is complete, *all awarded groups receive an email again explaining the process of how their grant is selected and are invited to share any notes of love, solidarity, and appreciation with the groups that voted for them.*

The groups that were not selected in this cycle receive an email with a list of the groups that were awarded in their voting group and we share other potential funding opportunities. When there is a possibility to be funded by some FRIDA's partners we ask the groups to share their application with other funds. At the moment, we are also building a system that would facilitate connection among the groups that have expressed that they would like to be connected with the young feminist collectives from their voting group.



YOUNG FEMINIST
COMMUNITY EVALUATION
OF FRIDA'S PARTICIPATORY
GRANTMAKING MODEL:
FEEDBACK, LEARNINGS
AND POSSIBILITIES



YOUNG FEMINIST COMMUNITY EVALUATION OF FRIDA'S PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING MODEL: FEEDBACK, LEARNINGS AND POSSIBILITIES

FRIDA is continuously exploring new ways to reflect on its model and improve its participatory grantmaking practices. In this section, we share the insights generated out of an external evaluation process to assess the impact of FRIDA's Participatory Grantmaking (PGM). As part of this external evaluation, we wanted to understand what participation means to the communities that we exist to support, where and how this grantmaking model brings joy and excitement, and what young feminist collectives found challenging in the process. Ultimately, we generated knowledge to transform and improve FRIDA's participatory grantmaking model.



ABOUT FEMINIST PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To carry out the study, we gathered a team of researchers to carry out a participatory evaluation that engaged young feminist community of applicants, grantee partners, and advisors. The development of the methodology was a process of reflection and collaboration where all participants were included as active members of the team. We wanted to create a space to learn, exchange and co-create knowledge with everyone involved. The process inquired into participatory decision-making practices in philanthropy but also provided insights into the nature of young feminist organising and provided an opportunity for FRIDA's community to see itself and learn together.

For this reason, we contracted external consultants with extensive experience in participatory research methodologies. In addition to the team of external research consultants, we contracted as co-researchers nine young feminist activists from the FRIDA grantee partner and advisory community. As part of their engagement, co-researchers contributed to the design of the data collection tools – including defining the objectives of each tool and framing the content of questionnaires. The consultants co-designed the methodology along with the FRIDA staff members who have been the most active in building, facilitating and managing FRIDA's PGM process.



THE 9 CO-RESEARCHERS¹⁸ WERE RECRUITED THROUGH AN OPEN CALL PROCESS AND SELECTED BASED ON:

- THEIR BACKGROUND IN FEMINIST ORGANISING AND PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGIES.
- REGIONAL DIVERSITY.
- AVAILABILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN ALL KEY STAGES OF THE RESEARCH.

After the selection, co-researchers were trained in conceptual frameworks around grantmaking, participatory grantmaking and data collection tools. We also led specific sessions to train them in informed consent, reducing bias and tackling the challenges they might experience when conducting interviews online.



**DATA COLLECTION
METHODS INCLUDED:**

**A DESK REVIEW OF FRIDA'S
DATA AND REPORTS:**

This entailed reviewing the feedback and voting comments from more than 900 groups collected during the calls for applications in 2016, 2018, and 2020.

34 INTERVIEWS WITH GRANTEE PARTNERS
7 INTERVIEWS WITH ADVISERS
5 INTERVIEWS WITH APPLICANT
158 SURVEY RESSPONSES

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS:

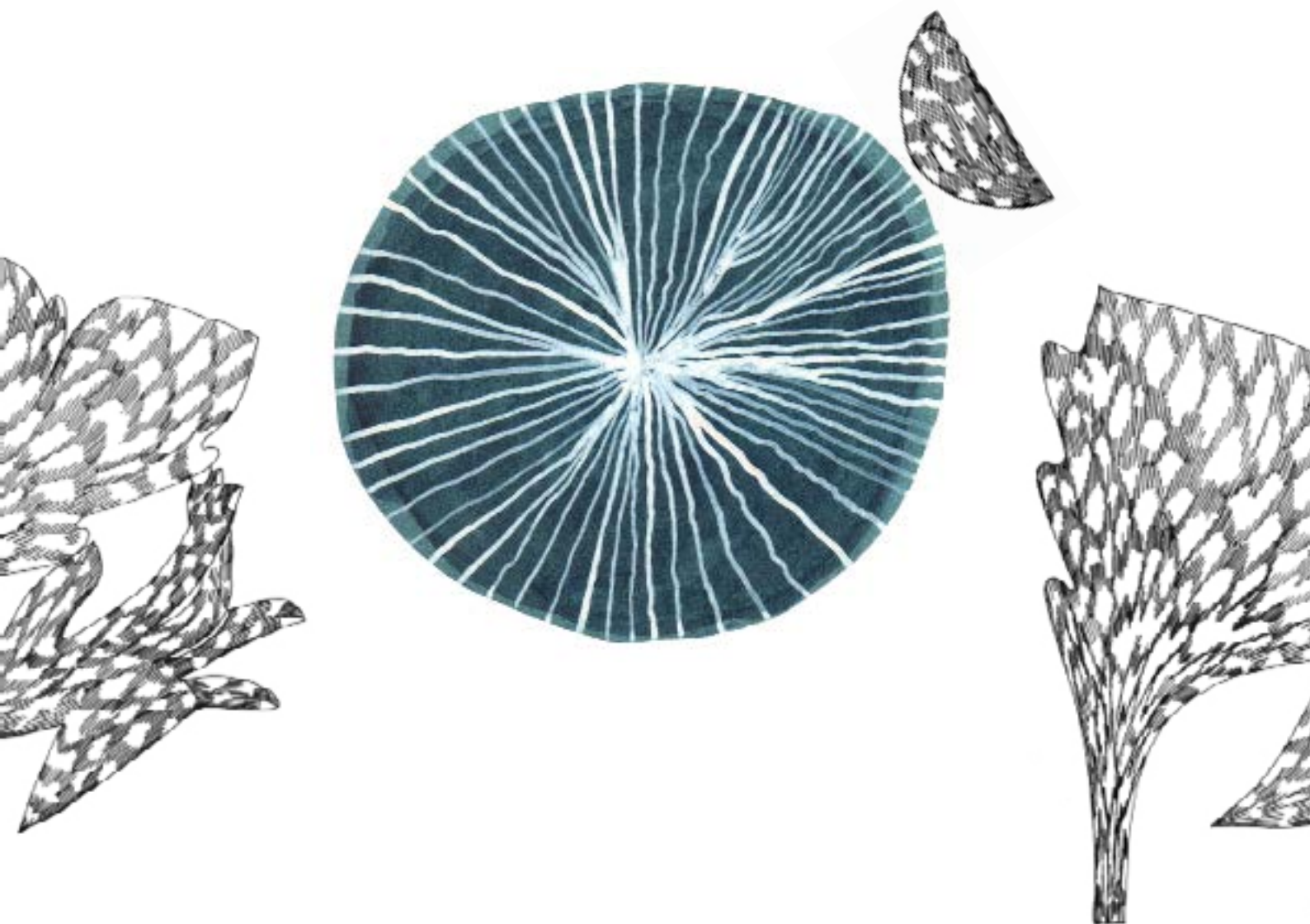
The youth co-researchers conducted semi-structured interviews via Skype or Zoom with both grantee partners and FRIDA staff/advisory group members. The interviews lasted 45 minutes to 1 hour and were carried out in 6 languages. In total, co-researchers carried out 34 interviews with grantee partners, 7 interviews with advisors and 5 interviews with applicants who did not receive funding.

¹⁸ FRIDA Grantee Partner Co-Researchers: Priyadharsini Palaniswamy (India), Jade P. Leung (Philippines), Tatjana Nikolic (Serbia), Deniz Nazaroza (Kyrgyzstan), Aline Izaias Lucio (Brazil), Dina Abdel-Nabi, Mona-Lisa Danieli Mungure (Botswana) FRIDA Advisory and Intern Co-Researchers: Twasiima Tricia (Uganda), Hazal Atay and Jessica Gonzalez Sampayo (Puerto Rico)

ONLINE SURVEYS:

Based on advice and feedback from the FRIDA team and co-researchers, consultants defined questions that sought to capture experiences and feedback on participatory grantmaking from a larger number of respondents through a survey. The survey was open for a period of 3 months, and it was available in 6 languages. It was sent to all collectives that participated in the FRIDA voting process from 2016-2020. We received 158 responses from young feminist collectives that participated in FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process. A separate survey was also created for FRIDA advisors who were part of the peer review process during these cycles. Note that since data was collected in different languages to ensure better reach and participation, some of it had to be translated for further analyses.

Data was analysed and triangulated to identify emerging themes, trends, and outliers which were then confirmed with the original data.



LIMITATIONS

When the research process was set up in November 2019, it included in-person gatherings for reflection and data interpretation between the co-researchers. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we had to modify the methodology, and the data collection process was conducted exclusively online.

FRIDA allowed this evaluation process to take as much **TIME** as needed. Our priority was to approach each aspect of it with care while providing continuous support for the FRIDA community involved. FRIDA is aware that communities might need time, resources and capacity-strengthening opportunities to be able to participate in an evaluation process. In some cases, groups were not able to find time to participate in the interview, even though they had voiced their interest. In those cases, we needed to extend the timelines to ensure their participation.

We also need to acknowledge the **POWER DYNAMICS** that exist between FRIDA and the participants (i.e. grantee partners) who were interviewed. If they hope to be funded by donors, participants may be reluctant to share their challenging experiences. The evaluation tried to account for power dynamics by making the process participatory and confidential. FRIDA staff members took part in the co-design of the participatory methodology and supported cross-communication; however, they did not carry out interviews or engage in any data collection activities.

NOTE ON RESEARCH ETHICS AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Before starting the research, the methodology development team reflected on and spelled out the potential risks for both co-researchers and other research participants. This included the possibility of feeling uncomfortable answering certain questions and of social risks if any of the sensitive information they revealed were to be disclosed outside of the research.

Co-researchers signed a consent statement that clarified the objectives of the process, a timeline highlighting key deadlines and the key responsibilities of all parties involved. Co-researchers took on the role of reminding other research participants that they were under no obligation to participate. They told interviewees they could choose not to answer any question or terminate the interview if they felt uncomfortable for any reason.

All data collected was securely stored, and the methodology development team protected the confidentiality of all information gathered. Identifying information from participants, including first names and contact details, was gathered only after they consented to participate in this process. Such information has not and will not be disclosed publicly unless otherwise approved by them.

Raw data was fully anonymized for protection. Co-researchers had access to participants' interviews and transcriptions only. Once the data was processed, care was taken to anonymize any identifying markers to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Identifiable data (e.g. voice records) was deleted within three months following the completion of the study. Each stage of the process was in line with FRIDA's Safeguarding Policy.¹⁹

For the reasons above, the quotes shared in the evaluation are all anonymous.



¹⁹ <https://youngfeministfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/FRIDAs-Safeguarding-Policy.pdf>

1.

YOUNG FEMINIST COLLECTIVES' ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING PROCESS



FRIDA | The Young Feminist Fund's participatory grantmaking model was *co-created by feminist organisers to serve those same movements in ways that best allow groups to access funding, learn from each other, and build connections across the regions they work in.* Young feminists are present at all levels of FRIDA's work and organization, and participate in strategic, resource mobilization, and funding decisions. Young feminists are staff members, advisors, and board members who steer the strategic direction of the fund.

FRIDA engages young feminist collectives, grantee partners, and those applying for funding, as well as young feminist activist members of the **FRIDA Global Advisory Committee**, in decision-making about its grantmaking process and participatory decision-making about where funding goes.



FRIDA's grantmaking model is in **an ongoing conversation and reflection with young feminist movements** on what a feminist funder should look like. This model goes through an evaluation and adaptation process after each grantmaking cycle to continue to respond to its purpose.

Almost all young feminist collectives regardless of whether they received a grant when interviewed and surveyed as part of this evaluation, felt very positive about FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process. Groups very much appreciated the opportunity to participate, and they expressed that the process itself had been empowering and rewarding for them. Being able to participate in deciding who should receive funding in their context was overall described as a valuable learning opportunity that made them feel included, recognized, and accountable to other groups and to the movement as a whole.

The majority of the groups shared that it is important to include the young feminist collectives who apply the decision-making process. They believed that the people who come from these communities should have a say in how funding is distributed and

contribute to the transparency of these processes. It made groups feel that they were part of something collective and not just participating in an impersonal application process done behind closed doors where they don't have clarity about the selection process.

”

THE FEMINIST ORGANIZERS KNOW MOST OF THE PROBLEMS FACING OUR COMMUNITIES, SO THEY CAN PROPERLY SET THE AGENDA THAT CAN INFLUENCE THE DONORS.

”

WE UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT, WE VALUE AND SUPPORT OTHER PEOPLE WORKING ON GRASSROOTS AND FEMINIST-ROOTED WORK, AND WE LIFT EACH OTHER UP.

”

MAKING SURE THE APPROACHES/STRATEGIES ARE SET IN FEMINIST PRINCIPLES AND VALUES, THOSE WHO KNOW THE ISSUES ON LOCAL GROUNDS ARE INVOLVED IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.

”

THE STRONG SIDE WAS TO FEEL THAT WE ARE THE ONES WHO DECIDE AND NOT THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE FAR FROM OUR REALITY AND SIT IN THEIR OFFICE SPACES

”

THE FACT THAT ALL THE PARTICIPATING GROUPS WERE ASKED TO VOTE MEANS A LOT TO US AND SHOWS US THE INTENTION FOR COMMUNITY-BASED DECISION-MAKING.

In this report, we have also interviewed and surveyed the Global Advisory Community, who participate in the Peer Review Panels that are integral to the participatory grantmaking process, to share their feedback and experience. This feedback exchange with the Advisory Community, who also participate in FRIDA's overall governance model, happens more organically and is part of FRIDA's internal reflection process. Most FRIDA advisors who were engaged as part of this evaluation were excited by the opportunity to participate in FRIDA's processes and to guide them in better reaching young feminist organisations.

The overall opinion of FRIDA advisors was that a participatory model was the best way for a feminist fund like FRIDA to decide which groups receive resources. Regarding the process in which applicants themselves decide who receives funding, the majority of advisors agreed with the model and felt FRIDA was doing a good job implementing it. However, some did believe that the groups should be engaged further to ensure they understand which proposals are the best fit for FRIDA and which most need the resources.

xxxxxxxxxxxx



Groups also shared that they experienced a great sense of responsibility when engaging in the voting process.

For most applicants, FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process was the first (and for many the only) opportunity to participate in a voting selection process and be part of deciding how funds should be allocated to young feminist movements. For many groups, this experience was both **rewarding and challenging**.

It was exciting and novel for the groups to be recognized as experts in their work and context. All participants expressed that after their involvement in FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process, they would be willing and eager to participate in other similar processes, thus further demonstrating that the experience was positive and valuable for them. In fact, several groups also participated in other participatory processes with FRIDA, which they also described as valuable and inspiring. This strengthened their belief in FRIDA's work and its participatory approach.



"ACTUALLY, AS FEMINISTS, WE FELT EMPOWERED TO BE PART OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS ON ISSUES RELEVANT TO US AS FEMINISTS. IT IS A GOOD PRACTICE WE HAVE ALWAYS ADVOCATED FOR, AND WE PLEAD ONE DAY OUR LOCAL/NATIONAL DECISION-MAKERS WILL APPRECIATE AND ADOPT IT.



"AS YOUNG FEMINISTS, WE KNOW BETTER OUR NEEDS AND STRUGGLES SO MAYBE WE CAN APPRECIATE BETTER THAN THE DONORS WHICH GROUPS SHOULD BE SUPPORTED. IT BRINGS OWNERSHIP OF THE PROCESS AND RESULTS ARE DEFINITELY AROUND FEMINISTS."



"MAKING SURE THE APPROACHES/STRATEGIES ARE SET IN FEMINIST PRINCIPLES AND VALUES. THOSE WHO KNOW THE ISSUES ON LOCAL GROUNDS ARE INVOLVED IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS."

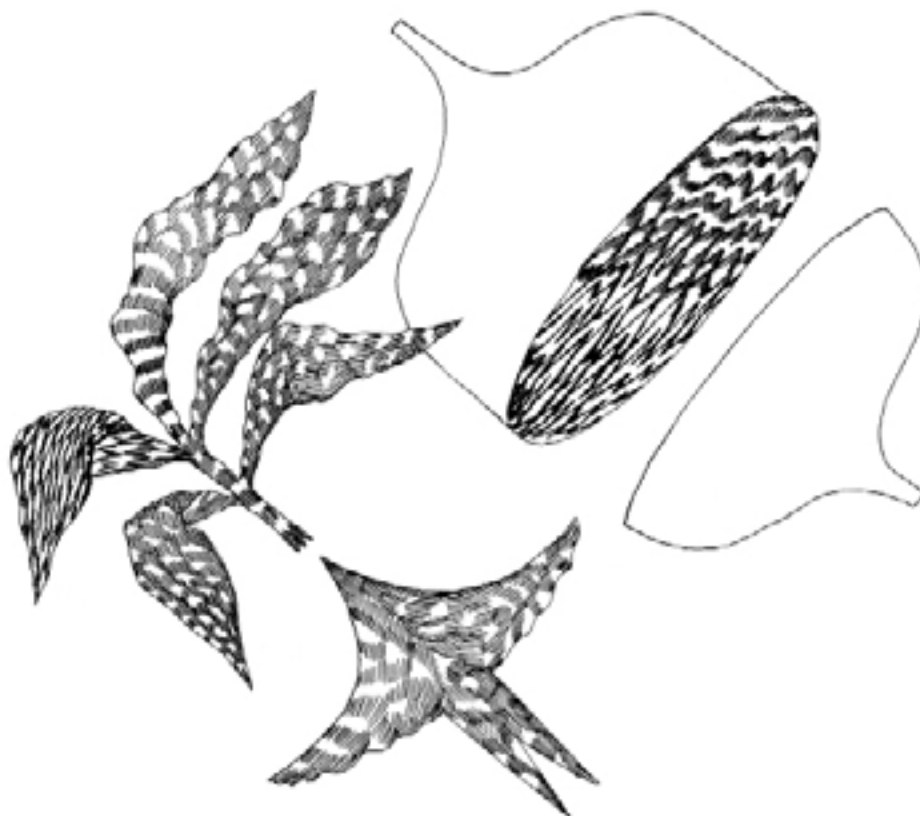


"IT WAS VERY INSPIRING AND WE WERE VERY CURIOUS TO SEE WHAT OTHER FEMINIST GROUPS IN THE REGION WERE DOING. APART FROM THAT, WE HONESTLY FELT LIKE WE WERE IMPORTANT AND CONTRIBUTING TO SOMETHING THAT WE WERE NOT GIVEN THE CHANCE TO CONTRIBUTE TO BEFORE. WE TOOK A LOT OF TIME TO REALLY REVIEW THE GROUPS AS WE DEEMED IT A TASK THAT TOOK GREAT RESPONSIBILITY."





Most of the groups shared that **it was very difficult to pick just five proposals**. They felt that most of the groups were deserving and in need of funding.



”

“THE GREATEST CHALLENGE WAS CHOOSING JUST 5 PROJECTS BECAUSE ALL OF THEM WERE INSPIRING IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER AND HAD AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE/ACTIVITY PLANNED.”

”

“THE VOTING PROCESS WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT AND RESPONSIBILITY DEMANDING – WE FELT THAT A LOT DEPENDS ON US AND WE HAD TO FACE AN ETHICAL CHOICE – WE WANTED TO SUPPORT THE GROUPS WHOSE WORK WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT ACCORDING TO OUR OPINION, THOUGH WE DID NOT WANT TO DISAPPOINT OTHER GROUPS WHO WERE NOT ABLE TO RECEIVE FUNDING.”

”

“THE GREATEST CHALLENGE WAS CHOOSING WHO TO VOTE BECAUSE DEEP DOWN WE WANTED ALL FEMINISTS TO HAVE ACCESS TO THE SOURCES THEY NEED. IT WAS HARD TO DECIDE.”



”

“OUR GREATEST CHALLENGE WAS HAVING TO PICK FROM A NUMBER OF VERY GOOD APPLICANTS AND SUMMARIES. THE DECISION WAS TOUGH BECAUSE OF COURSE EVERY PROCESS HAS A LIMITED REQUIREMENT AND IN AN IDEAL WORLD, EVERY SUMMARY WOULD BE PICKED. HOWEVER, WE HAD TO PICK 5 AND HOPE WE MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE AND THAT THE GRANT **WAS USED EFFECTIVELY. THE MOST REWARDING PROCESS WAS FEELING THE SENSE OF PARTICIPATING AND CONTRIBUTING TO A GLOBALLY IMPACTFUL OUTCOME.**”

”

“WE WERE INTERESTED AND SCARED THAT WE WERE TAKING PART IN THE VOTING, THIS IS A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY, AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS TRUST AND HONOUR FOR US. IT WAS NOT EASY, BECAUSE 5 ORGANISATIONS OUT OF 11 OR 12 WERE NEEDED, AND THE ORGANIZATIONS OF THE PARTICIPANT IN THE SELECTION WERE ALL WORTHY AND IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT TO CHOOSE SOMEONE FROM THEM.”



The process generated in young feminist collectives a sense of **confidence**, sparking **reflection and inspiration.**

Most were impressed by the work other young feminists in the region were doing and many reported that **participating in the process invited internal reflections on their own work.** In some ways, being exposed to other proposals improved their work. For example, several groups mentioned that reviewing the proposals of others encouraged them to discuss within their groups how to move forward with their work and explore different ways of organising.

”

“IT WAS VERY HELPFUL AND INSPIRING TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE WORKS AND FUTURE PLANS OF OTHER FEMINIST GROUPS. THERE WERE SOME PROPOSALS AFTER READING WHICH **WE KNEW SO MANY NEW THINGS ABOUT DIFFERENT ISSUES IN SOME REGIONS THAT WE HAVE NOT EVEN HEARD BEFORE.**”





Groups felt that **their participation was meaningful** and that their votes and feedback have been taken into the consideration.

Most of the groups expressed that this process allowed them to see the impact of their participation. Being able to witness the results of their engagement grew their trust in this grantmaking model and they felt that the time and the expertise that they have offered to this process were valued.

”

“WHEN WE WERE VOTING, WE DID NOT REALLY FEEL THE SIGNIFICANCE OF OUR VOTES AS WE HAVE NEVER FACED SUCH A SYSTEM BEFORE AND WE DID NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND HOW THIS PROCESS WORKS. AT THE END OF THE VOTING, WE **UNDERSTOOD** HOW THE VOTING SYSTEM WORKS AND **FULLY REALISED THAT OUR VOTES WERE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. WE SAW THAT THE TWO GROUPS WE VOTED FOR HAVE RECEIVED THE GRANT.**”

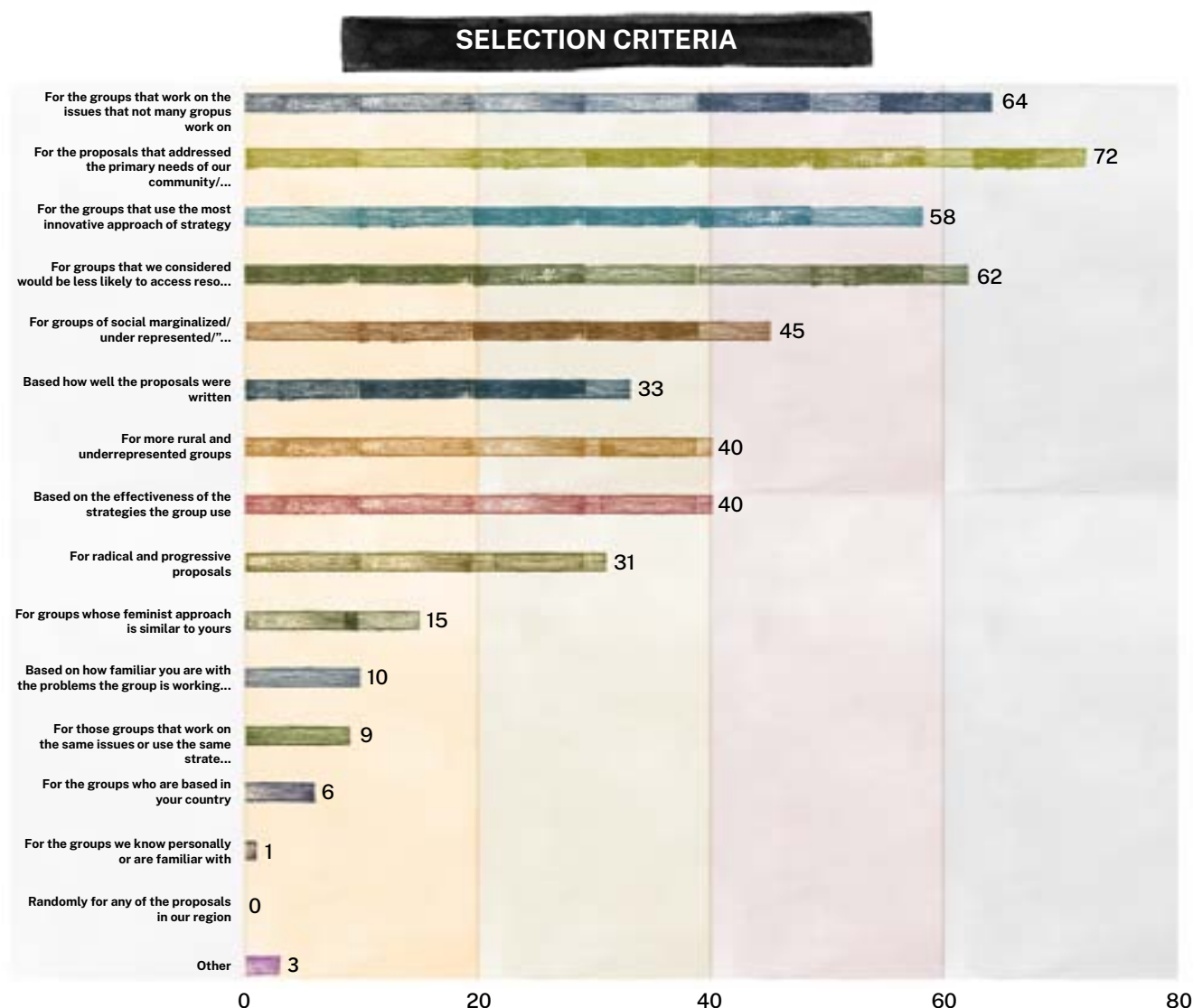


1.2.

WHAT CRITERIA AND CONSIDERATIONS MOTIVATED YOUNG FEMINIST GROUPS TO SUPPORT THEIR PEERS IN THE SELECTION PROCESS?



When groups were asked which criteria they applied for the selection process, several of them said that they were guided by the connection they felt with the projects presented and decided based on what they considered to be the most critical needs in their context. The majority of groups expressed that they voted for underrepresented issues, for groups using innovative approaches, as well for those that they considered being less likely to be funded. A few groups also shared that they selected some proposals based in their own country because they felt they could more accurately understand and assess their relevance.



As part of the voting process, groups explain their selections. In the voting section, they can address any concerns or questions they have about the groups. In their comments, groups justify their vote by providing contextual analyses and deep reflections on the way they understood the value of – or resonated with – the vision of the proposals they voted for.

Below are some examples of comments explaining why groups voted for their peers and endorsed them to receive funding:



“THE FIRST THING IN THE PROPOSAL THAT STUCK IN OUR MINDS IS THIS SENTENCE: ‘AFTER BEING INVOLVED IN ACTIVISM AND AFTER HAVING SUFFERED FROM **ANXIETY, DEPRESSION** AND **BURN OUT**, EXPERIENCED ON OUR SKINS HOW DETRIMENTAL BEING IN A CONSTANT FIGHTING MODE CAN BE. **WE WANT TO HELP OTHER YOUNGER ACTIVISTS TO AVOID** THE SAME PATH. WE SHARE THE SAME FEELINGS. FORMULATION OF THIS KIND OF ALTERNATIVE AND ENABLING SPACE IS VERY NEEDED IN A CONTEXT LIKE OURS (REGIONAL). AND WE SEE THIS GROUP AS OUR PEER IN **THE NEIGHBOURING COUNTRY**, THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO COOPERATE, SHARE EXPERIENCES ETC.”

— Caucasus

“FOCUSING ON MUSLIM WOMEN'S **PERSONAL STORIES** WOULD BRING OUT THE **REAL PICTURE** AND CONTEXT FROM THE TARGETED REGIONS /PLACES. AND THESE STORIES COULD BE A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE INTERVENTIONS ON THE ISSUE. ALSO, IT IS GOOD THAT THEY ARE PLANNING TO **BUILD THE CAPACITY** TO ENABLE THEM TO CHANNEL THEIR LEARNINGS WITH OTHERS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES. SOME OF THE APPROACHES ALSO SEEM INNOVATIVE I.E. BREAKING FAST EVENTS.”

— South Asia

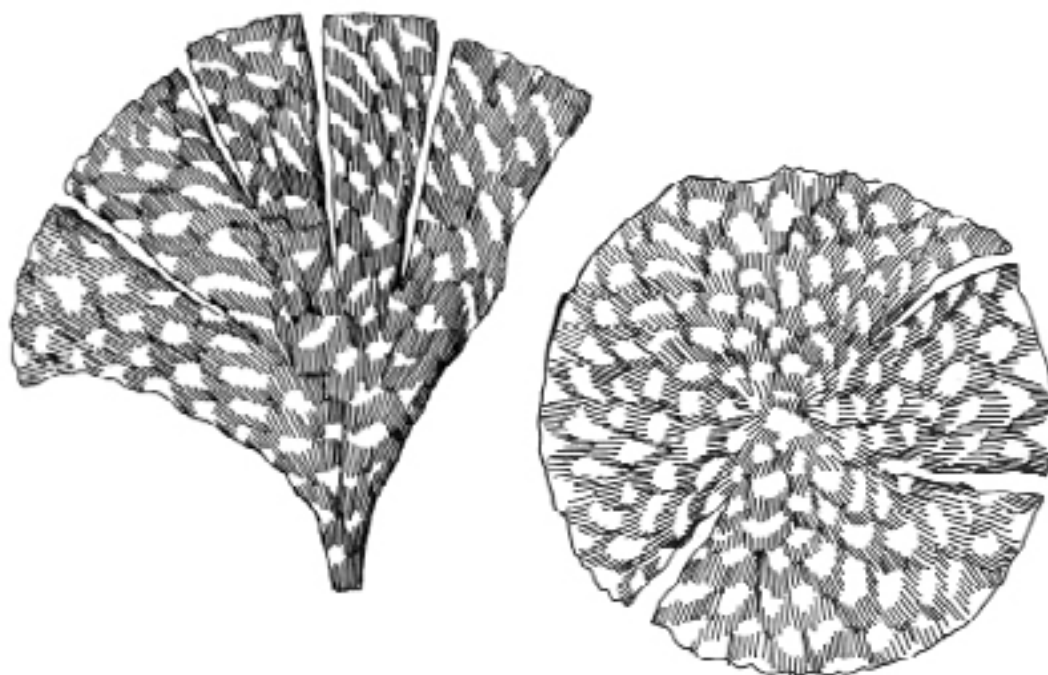
"AS A GROUP HONESTLY AT FIRST WE WERE SKEPTICAL BECAUSE IT WAS HARD FOR US TO WRAP OUR HEADS AROUND FOOD BEING USED AS A TEACHING TOOL TO SHIFT ATTITUDES BECAUSE IT IS UNPRECEDENTED. LIKE NEVER! EVER! NOWHERE ON PLANET EARTH IN THE HISTORY OF INTERSECTIONAL FEMINISM HAS THIS EVER BEEN DONE. HALFWAY THROUGH THEIR PROPOSAL WE WERE SOLD AND CONVINCED BEYOND ANY REASONABLE DOUBTS. **I PERSONALLY READ THEIR PROPOSAL 7 TIMES** AND THE MORE I READ IT, THE MORE IT REEKED OF SO MUCH POTENTIAL."

— Southern Africa



"**THEY ARE THE NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK** AND WE THINK THEY SHOULD BE GIVEN A CHANCE TO EFFECT CHANGE IN THEIR LIVES AS WELL AS THE COMMUNITIES THEY REPRESENT PARTICULARLY LOOKING AT THE FACT THAT IT IS ONE OF THE COUNTRIES THAT STILL UPHOLD COLONIAL PATRIARCHY DRIVEN **ANTI-LGBT LAWS** AND THEY WILL NEED ALL THE HELP THEY CAN GET BECAUSE **THEY WILL OPERATE FOR A WHILE BEING UNREGISTERED** AND THAT ON ITS OWN IS HARD FUND. READING THROUGH THEIR PROPOSAL SUMMARY REMINDED US OF WHEN OUR GROUP WAS JUST A FEW MONTHS OLD; WE WERE SICK AND TIRED OF SYSTEMATIC-IDENTITY-DRIVEN OPPRESSIONS THAT WE DECIDED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, TO THE POINT WHERE WE HAD SO MANY PROJECTS WE WANTED TO LAUNCH ALL AT ONCE! WE WERE THAT DETERMINED. THE TRUTH IS, **WE ALL HAVE A STARTING POINT AND WE HOPE THAT THEIRS IS THROUGH THIS GRANT.** IF THEY ARE SUCCESSFUL (FINGERS CROSSED) AS FRIDA YOU CAN MAYBE ADVISE THEM ON ONE SPECIFIC PROJECT THEY WOULD START UP WITH IN ORDER TO GAIN MOMENTUM AND COLLABORATE WITH OTHER GROUPS BECAUSE **MOVEMENT BUILDING AS A NEW GROUP IS SO CRUCIAL** TO THE GROUP'S SURVIVAL BOTH FINANCIALLY AND SOCIAL SUPPORT WISE."

— West Africa



“WE SENSE **GREAT CARE** EVEN FROM THEIR PROPOSAL WRITING, BETWEEN THE GROUP'S VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBERS, AND THAT IS THE FUNDAMENTAL BASIS FOR THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT WE BELIEVE. THE GROUP'S TARGET AUDIENCE AND THE PARTICIPATORY JOURNEY ARE STATED VERY CLEARLY. AND A **STRONG FOCUS ON CAPACITY BUILDING**, SIDELONG OTHER WORKS, MAKES A GOOD CONVINCER THAT THE GROUP WILL GIVE SOLID **SUPPORT TO THEIR QUEER MUSLIM-RAISED PEERS**. SUGGESTIONS: BY WAY OF DESCRIPTION, IT SEEMS THAT THE PROJECT WILL SUFFER A LOT OF RESISTANCE FROM THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMUNITY AND THAT MORE MEASURES MAY BE NEEDED TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THE PARTICIPANTS AS WELL AS THE ABSOLUTE SAFETY OF THE SPACE.”

— East Asia

“WE BELIEVE THAT THIS PROJECT SUPPORTS THE VISIBILITY OF RURAL LGBTIQ ORGANIZATION, HISTORICALLY FORGOTTEN EVEN WITHIN THE GENDER RIGHTS MOVEMENTS, THESE MOVEMENTS ARE USUALLY IN URBAN ENVIRONMENTS, LEAVING ASIDE AN IMPORTANT SEGMENT. IT IS NECESSARY TO SUPPORT THE EMPOWERMENT OF THE RURAL LGBTIQ GROUPS AS WELL. IT IS A NEW PROJECT WITH IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES PLANNED. IT COULD BE AN EXAMPLE FOR OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGIONS WITH BIG INDIGENOUS AND RURAL COMMUNITIES. BEING A RURAL ORGANIZATION IT MIGHT ALSO IMPLY THAT THEY HAVE LESS ACCESS TO FUNDS. THE PROJECT HAS VERY CONCRETE ACTIONS THAT COULD CREATE A GREAT IMPACT ON THE LOCAL LEVEL.

— Andina Region Latin America

"...GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IS A SORE ISSUE ACROSS THE CONTINENT AND WHENEVER THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY OR SPACE TO ADDRESS ITS EFFECTS, IT MUST DEFINITELY BE ATTENDED TO IN ORDER TO LESSEN THE OCCURRENCE OF INCIDENTS. MORE SO, THERE IS VERY LITTLE THAT HAS BEEN DONE TO DEAL WITH LBQT EXPERIENCES SPECIFICALLY TAILOR-MADE TO GIVE THEM THE SAFETY AND COMFORT THEY MAY NEED. THIS GROUP COULD, FROM ITS SUCCESS BE A LEARNING OPPORTUNITY FOR THE REST OF US. IT'S GOOD THAT THEY WANT TO INSTIL FEMINISM VALUES AND PRINCIPLES IN THEIR WORK. THEIR *USE OF ARTS AND SPORTS FOR ADVOCACY* IS A CREATIVE APPROACH AND PROVIDES A RECREATIONAL AND THERAPEUTIC SPACE FOR THOSE IN THE COMMUNITY THAT DOESN'T NECESSARILY LIKE FORMAL WORKSHOP TRAINING SPACES TO LEARN THROUGH SOMETHING THEY ENJOY AT THEIR LEISURE. *THE INCLUSION OF INTERSEX PEOPLE* IN THIS PROJECT IS APPRECIATED AS IT HAS BEEN AN ISSUE THAT THEY FEEL *EXCLUDED EVEN WITHIN THE LGBTI MOVEMENT*, SO THIS IS A GOOD STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION..."

— Horn of Africa

"...SELF-CARE IS A POLITICAL ACT, BUT IN MAINSTREAM MEDIA, IT IS OFTEN PACKAGED AS SKIN-CARE AND BINGE-WATCHING NETFLIX. AS THIS GROUP HAS *MEMBERS IDENTIFYING AT THE INTERSECTION OF DALIT, MUSLIM, QUEER*, AND OTHER HISTORICALLY OPPRESSED IDENTITIES, WE BELIEVE THEY HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO IDENTIFY AND AMPLIFY WAYS OF SELF-CARE THAT ARE NOT JUST FOCUSED ON SELF-PRESERVATION BUT ALSO *PROMOTE COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND PUBLIC HEALTH* (THEY HAVE ALSO MENTIONED SRHR AS PART OF THEIR APPROACH) AT LARGE. THERE HAVE BEEN MANY ACTS OF MARGINALIZATION, ESPECIALLY IN THE RECENT PAST, COMMITTED AGAINST PEOPLE HAILING FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY LIVING IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION. THEY HAVE *BEEN TARGETED BY RACISM, ISLAMOPHOBIA, AND HOMOPHOBIA* AS WELL - AN *INTERSECTIONAL MOVEMENT LED BY YOUNG FOLX* WOULD CERTAINLY HELP BUILD A SAFE SPACE..."

— South Asia

"...WE WANT TO SUPPORT POLAND WITH ITS FIGHT FOR *LGBT+ RIGHTS* IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE. IT SEEMS LIKE THIS GROUP IS EXTREMELY MOTIVATED, VERY ACTIVE, AND VERY DETERMINED TO REACH ALL THE NOOKS AND CRANNIES IN POLAND. AS THERE IS A HUGE LEAP BACKWARD IN POLAND IN TERMS OF "LGBT FREE ZONES", IT IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT THAT SUCH GROUPS ARE *WILLING TO TRAVEL AND NOT TO FOCUS THEIR WORK ONLY IN THE CAPITAL...*"

— East Europe

"...WE THINK THIS PROJECT SHOULD BE SELECTED BECAUSE TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE **CHALLENGES OF COMMUNITIES IN SOMALIA** ESPECIALLY **YOUNGER FEMINIST ACTIVISTS** WITHIN A VERY CONSERVATIVE AND PATRIARCHAL STRUCTURE-DRIVEN COMMUNITY AND RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM, THIS PROJECT IS A **SPARKLING HOPE FOR YOUNGER ACTIVISTS** AND THE COMMUNITIES IN DARING TO BREAK THE STATUS QUO AROUND RIGHTS, DIGNITY, SAFETY, PARTICIPATION AND FULL REALIZATION OF HUMANITY. THE PROJECT ALSO IS BUILDING ITS **CORE VALUES AND ACTIONS WITHIN SOMALIAN POSITIVE ROOTED PRACTICES** THAT ENHANCE YOUNGER FEMINISTS' GENERATION GROWTH IN ACTIVISM JOURNEY OWNED IN THEIR CULTURE AND IDENTITY..."

— the Horn of Africa

"...AS AN LGBTQ+ GROUP OURSELVES, WE WOULD LIKE TO **SHOW SOLIDARITY WITH OTHER QUEER GROUPS IN OUR REGION**. WE UNDERSTAND HOW **DIFFICULT IT IS TO NOT REGISTER YOUR ORGANIZATION AS LGBTQ+ GROUP** BUT ALSO DIFFICULT OTHERWISE - IN THE END, YOU HAVE **TO FIND A GRAY AREA WHERE YOU ACTUALLY DON'T BREAK ANY LAW BUT KEEP DOING IT INSTEAD**. **THIS GROUP REALLY NEEDS HELP SETTING UP OR ELSE THEY WILL BE BURNOUT ...**"

— Southeast Asia

Across all regions, the majority of the collectives have provided a strong contextual analysis in support of their voting choices. They have been able to envision how the work of their peers is contributing to the broader feminist movements and also to their own organizing. The majority of young feminist collectives have made decisions in the voting process guided by their understanding of the needs in their context and have prioritized the issues that are underrepresented, underfunded, or that are offering new approaches and strategies. Even though the majority of the groups have expressed the importance of young feminists deciding about the distribution of funding and consider themselves knowledgeable about their contexts, many felt discomfort making the right choice when voting for their peers. The majority felt that all groups are worthy of funding and felt uneasy that some might not receive the resources they need. In the analyses of votes and voting comments, it is evident that the majority of groups approach the voting process with responsibility, empathy, and compassion. This has been very much visible in the way how they show excitement about the work and potential of their peers as well as the understanding of the challenges they might be facing in their context and how the funds could also contribute to their growth, safety, and wellbeing.

1.3.

WHAT ARE THE STRONGEST POINTS OF FEEDBACK AROUND FRIDA'S PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING MODEL? HOW DOES FRIDA RESPOND TO THESE POINTS?



In addition to the model's strengths, we wanted to share aspects of FRIDA's participatory grantmaking model that surveyed groups found were either challenging or could be improved. We discussed each aspect as it emerged in the evaluation process. We then shared the recommendations made by external consultants for FRIDA staff to clarify or strategize about how to move forward.



Should more information about each group be available? What about safety concerns?

In FRIDA's current participatory grantmaking process, votes are anonymous. Many groups felt that having summary descriptions of the work is not enough to fully understand what the group and/or initiative is all about. This is especially true for groups who were applying for funding for the first time – as they might struggle to present their work clearly and convincingly. Many groups felt that knowing more about the organisations they were assessing, even their identity could benefit and simplify decision-making processes. There were even some suggestions that groups could have calls and closer interactions during the voting process to be able to clarify any doubts and learn more about the work of other groups. In the absence of calls, they suggested that applicants could share photos, videos, and audio of their work.



"MAYBE INSTEAD OF READING THE PROJECTS, IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO SEE VIDEOS OR MAKE VIRTUAL PRESENTATIONS TO GET TO KNOW BETTER THOSE WHO ARE APPLYING FOR FUNDS FROM FRIDA."

Amongst FRIDA's advisors in the Peer Review Panel, there was some degree of consensus that more background information should be provided to those groups participating in the voting process. Some advisors felt that the decisions were being made based on which groups had the best skills in presenting their work and that this could affect the voting process.

“I LOVE THIS DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, BUT I ALSO FEEL THAT **GROUPS WITH FEWER LANGUAGE CAPACITIES ARE MORE VULNERABLE** IN THE PROCESS SINCE THEY CANNOT CONVINCE OTHERS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR WORK.”

— FRIDA ADVISOR

“MY RECOMMENDATION THOUGH WOULD BE TO **SHARE MORE INFORMATION WITH APPLICANTS TO SUPPORT THEIR VOTING PROCESS**. AS I SHARED IN THE PREVIOUS QUESTIONS, DETAILS ABOUT HOW MANY GRANTEE PARTNERS ARE CURRENTLY SUPPORTED IN THE REGION, WHAT THEMATIC AND APPROACHES HAVE THE MOST/LEAST REPRESENTATION IN TERMS OF GRANTEE PARTNERS WORKING ON THEM AND MAYBE EVEN DETAILS ABOUT THE REPRESENTATION OF DIVERSE IDENTITIES IN THE GRANTEE PARTNERS THAT CURRENTLY ARE SUPPORTED BY FRIDA (HOW MANY GROUPS ARE GIRL-LED, HOW MANY ARE INTERSEX-CENTERED, TRANS-YOUTH/PEOPLE - CENTRED, HOW MANY ARE DISABILITY RIGHTS-FOCUSED). I BELIEVE A FACT SHEET LIKE THAT WOULD HELP APPLICANTS BEST UNDERSTAND WHERE FUNDS ARE MOST NEEDED AND INFORM THEIR DECISION BASED ON THE ACCURATE KNOWLEDGE OF FRIDA'S RESOURCES ALLOCATION.”

— FRIDA ADVISOR

Yet, other groups expressed safety concerns in sharing non-anonymized application material. They felt that receiving detailed information about groups and their work via email could pose a risk to groups operating in restrictive contexts. This may discourage some groups from applying for funding and be a reason why groups might decide to share little information about their work.

“**SOMETIMES WE CANNOT APPLY FOR A GRANT FOR FEAR OF PROSECUTION** AND IF WE DO WE TRY TO BE VERY ANONYMOUS FOR SAFETY AND WE END UP NOT RECEIVING THE GRANT... WE FELT THAT DURING THAT PROCESS THAT WE HAD NOT FILLED OUT SOME OF THE THINGS FOR SAFETY AND THAT'S IS WHY WE DIDN'T GET THE GRANT.”

”

“WE PUT LESS INFORMATION IN THE APPLICATION BECAUSE OF SAFETY ISSUES AND WE WROTE TO FRIDA BUT THEY DIDN'T RESPOND TO US.”

”

“THE APPLICATION PROCESS WAS PUBLIC WHICH MAKES YOU FEEL UNSAFE AND END UP NOT PROVIDING ALL THE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR WORK WHICH IS A DISADVANTAGE BECAUSE THEY ARE SCARED OF SHARING MUCH ABOUT THEIR WORK DUE TO SECURITY ISSUES”.



How can FRIDA ensure the objectivity of the voting process?

Some groups recognized that groups may be partial toward those working in their countries, regions, or with similar thematic areas. They questioned how to ensure impartiality in the participatory grantmaking process. In addition, some groups feared that it would be difficult to maintain anonymity: groups who know each other may coordinate to vote for one another, further harming emerging groups with less connection within the movement. Others were concerned about ‘stealing’ project summaries or ideas from other organisations. They requested clarification from FRIDA on how it addresses these risks and biases to ensure consistency in the voting process and that groups with less access can have equal opportunity to receive a grant.

Many groups also expressed concerns that **feminist spaces are not always intersectional and feared that groups may not understand the importance of intersectionality** when voting. For example, some groups working with trans and intersex collectives expressed concerns that they may be discriminated against, especially given the resurgence of anti-trans feelings within the mainstream feminist movement in certain regions.

“**CERTAIN ISSUES ARE PRIORITIZED OVER OTHERS**, FOR EXAMPLE, THOSE WHO ARE DOING SUBTLE AND JOYFUL WORK MAY NOT BE VIEWED AS NEEDING FUNDS MORE URGENTLY.”

“THE BAD THING IN THIS PROCESS IS THAT IT CAN LEAD TO **IDEAS BEING STOLEN BY FELLOWS/ PEERS** BECAUSE IN OUR REGION THERE IS A HABIT OF STEALING IDEAS AND PROPOSALS.”

“LACK OF EXPOSURE TO INCLUSIVE DIVERSITY WITHIN THE REGIONAL FEMINIST SPACES - SOME FEMINISTS STILL HAVE NO **KNOWLEDGE AND ACCEPTANCE OF TRANSGENDER DIVERSITY** WITHIN THE FEMINIST SPACES.”

“THERE IS A RISK OF **BIASES**, ESPECIALLY IF THE ORGANIZATION SEEMS FAMILIAR OR IS WITHIN YOUR REGION. THIS POSES A RISK FOR FAIR VOTING PROCESSES.”

“IN ANY SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT, **THE VOICES OF THOSE WITH PRIVILEGE ARE HEARD MORE**. IT'S NOT A PROBLEM UNTIL THESE VOICES BECOME THE ONLY VOICES. THEREFORE THERE NEEDS TO BE A POLICY OF TRANSPARENCY IN THESE PROCESSES AND REPRESENTATION OF INTERSECTIONAL COMMUNITIES.”

“**FEMINIST ACTIVISTS AREN'T ALWAYS AND DON'T ALWAYS HAVE TO AGREE ON EVERYTHING**. ESPECIALLY WHEN AN INTERSECTION IS CONSIDERED, MORE BIAS CAN BE SEEN THROUGH FEMINIST ACTIVISTS VOTING.”

“IT IS SCARY TO BE A PART OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS BECAUSE THEN THERE IS ALWAYS A LOOMING POSSIBILITY WHETHER THE GROUPS ARE GOING TO VOTE FAIRLY...**WE FEEL WE MIGHT NOT BE UNDERSTOOD** THAT WELL BY OTHER GROUPS IF ENVISION A CONFERENCE WITH OTHER GROUPS, FOR EXAMPLE. **AT THE SAME TIME-HEY, WE RECEIVED THE GRANT, SO PROBABLY WE ARE OFF SOMEWHERE IN OUR MINDSET :)**”

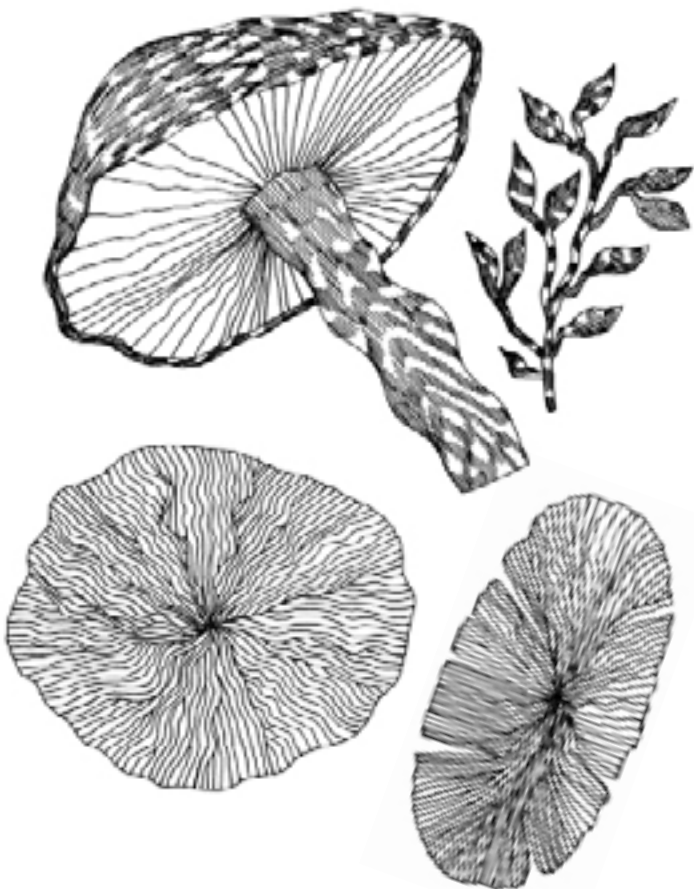
Interestingly, in the analyses of vote allocations across contexts many collectives indeed applied an intersectional lens when voting. This is most likely because of their understanding of the dynamics that exist across feminist movements that should be taken into consideration when voting for funding priorities. The majority of young feminists in the voting process recognize these complexities and approach the voting process with intersectional analyses at the center. The majority of surveyed and interviewed collectives have found this to be a potential challenge in the applicant decision-making process and many have expressed a concern if FRIDA as a funder would be able to identify how bias, increased access, and privilege facilitate the outcome of the voting process.



Should participatory voting be the only selection mechanism?

Despite positive feedback on the voting process, some groups felt uneasy about the responsibility of excluding some groups from gaining access to funding. Although certainly a minority, some groups expressed discomfort with voting, questioning whether they would make the "right" decision. The majority felt that all groups are worthy of funding and felt uneasy that some might not receive the resources they need. This shows that groups really show up to this process centering care and feminist solidarity.

When asked how they would envision this process differently, many suggested the need for another layer of review by FRIDA staff and advisors. Not all believed that the decision should be left entirely to the young feminist groups applying for funding. Many of them believed that FRIDA, with their experience and expertise, should also participate in the process and perhaps make the final decisions based on the recommendations made through voting. Some also felt that FRIDA should be more transparent about what happens after the participatory voting process and how it approaches these concerns and deals with bias.



"VOTING SHOULD NOT BE THE ONLY WAY A GROUP RECEIVES RESOURCES. IT COULD BE ONE OF THE REASONS, AND ORGANISATIONS VOTING SHOULD BE ABLE TO POINT OUT WHY THEY VOTED. AN ALTERNATIVE WAY WOULD BE A COMMITTEE TRAINED TO AVOID BIASES AND SOME BACKGROUND IN AREAS BEING APPLIED UNDER."

"WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE A COLLECTIVE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN FRIDA. IN OUR OPINION, IT COULD BE SUPPORTED WITH THE VOTES OF EXPERTS AND ADVISERS OF FRIDA."

"A PARTICIPATORY PROCESS IS THE BEST WAY. HOWEVER, FRIDA COULD AMPLIFY KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ITSELF AS A FUND IN THE REGIONS, TO THE VERY GRASSROOTS LEVEL, THROUGH ITS CURRENT AND PREVIOUS GRANTEES. IN THIS WAY, MORE INFORMAL AND LESS-FUNDED GROUPS COULD APPLY."



”

“THIS COULD POSSIBLY BE THE BEST WAY AND **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT THE APPLICATIONS ARE SPLIT INTO THE REGIONS** BECAUSE THEN THE GROUPS CAN EMPHATICALLY AND REALISTICALLY RECOGNIZE AND CONSIDER THE STRUGGLES OF EVERY GROUP.”

”

“WE FEEL THAT MORE THAN PARTICIPATION, IT'S THE REPRESENTATION WITHIN THE PARTICIPANTS THAT MATTERS. **IS EVERY SECTION OF FEMINISTS BEING REPRESENTED AS VOTERS?** DO THEY REPRESENT EVERY SECTION OF SOCIETY IN A PARTICULAR REGION? ARE ONLY ENGLISH-SPEAKING/KNOWING FEMINISTS REPRESENTED IN THIS PROCESS?”

FRIDA in fact does have another layer within the peer review process: following the voting, the young feminists who are a part of the FRIDA Advisory Community and grantee community participate in a Peer Review Panel to review the final voting results and support the final decision process.

The evaluation also engaged the Advisory Community to get a sense of how they understood their role in the participatory grantmaking process. Regarding the participatory process in which applicants themselves decide who receives funding, most advisers agreed with the model and felt FRIDA was doing a good job implementing it. Almost all advisers felt that the grantmaking process was clear and that they had received the necessary and appropriate support from the FRIDA team. However, some did believe that the groups should be engaged further to ensure they understand which proposals are the best fit for FRIDA and which most need the resources. The overall opinion of advisers was that a participatory model was the best way for a feminist fund like FRIDA to decide which groups receive resources; advisers also felt they could support it with regional expertise and inform final decisions when needed.



”

“I ABSOLUTELY LOVE THIS PROCESS AND BELIEVE IT'S ONE OF THE WAYS FRIDA TRULY LIVES UP TO ITS VALUES AND CORE BELIEFS. **APPLICANTS' VOTES SHOULD HAVE PRIORITY OVER ADVISORS' RECOMMENDATIONS** GIVEN THAT AS ACTIVISTS THEY ARE BEST POSITIONED TO IDENTIFY WHICH PROPOSALS ARE MOST NEEDED IN THE REGION AND WHICH APPROACHES ARE MORE LIKELY TO SUCCEED AND YIELD POSITIVE RESULTS.”

”

“I FELT LIKE PART OF **ONE OF THE FILTERS TO MAKE DECISIONS**, WHICH I CONSIDER TO BE POSITIVE CONSIDERING THAT WE ARE NOT THE ONLY ONES MAKING DECISIONS BUT THERE ARE SEVERAL ACTORS INVOLVED”

”

“IN ADDITION, I REALLY **LIKED TO READ AND EXCHANGE COMMENTS/** EXPERIENCE WITH OTHER ADVISORS, I FELT IT WAS VERY ENRICHING AND HELPED ME TO MAKE CONSCIOUS DECISIONS.”

”

“**FRIDA'S PARTICIPATORY PROCESS SHOULD REMAIN SO AS TO MOVE AWAY FROM THE TRADITIONAL GRANT-MAKING PROCESS WHICH USUALLY DOESN'T FAVOUR YOUNG FEMINISTS.**”

— FRIDA ADVISOR



Is the process too time-consuming?

Even though the majority of groups shared that the timeframe they had to read and vote for applications was enough, groups felt it must be acknowledged that it does require a significant time dedication for them to actively take part in such a participatory process.

As mentioned above, groups performed the task of reviewing applications and voting on them with responsibility and care – as such, many organised participatory processes where they worked together to review, discuss and assess the applications.

Though most were happy to dedicate time for this and described the process as worthwhile, for some this was a burden adding to the many responsibilities they already have. Some reflected that having to dedicate so much time to reading summaries might stand in the way of participating fully in the process – especially for smaller groups in which all members are volunteers.

”

“BEING A LOW-RESOURCE GROUP, IN EVERY SENSE, **SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION WAS NOT AN EASY PROCESS FOR US**, WE MADE OUR WAY THROUGH THE DEVALUATION OF OUR POSITION AND SOCIAL CAPITAL. IT WAS FRUITFUL FOR US TO WRITE AN APPLICATION AND RECEIVE SUPPORT.”

”

“**THE GREATEST CHALLENGE WAS OF COURSE OUR TIME**. WE ALSO COULD NOT SIT TOGETHER AS A TEAM TO DECIDE THIS SINCE MANY OF US WORKED FROM THE FIELD. SO WE JUST ASSIGNED A SMALL GROUP FROM OUR TEAM TO DO IT.”

”

“THE CHALLENGE IS THE TIME BECAUSE **WE HAVE LIMITED STAFF**.”

”

“MAYBE SOME ACTIVISTS CANNOT DEDICATE THE TIME TO CAREFULLY READ **EVERY PROPOSAL**”



2.

HOW DO YOUNG FEMINISTS IMPLEMENT PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES WITHIN THEIR ORGANISATIONS?



During the evaluation, we had the opportunity to learn about how young feminist groups engage their communities and which organisational systems they implement. We wanted to learn how they make decisions within their collectives and ensure **that FRIDA's decision-making processes are familiar and resonant to young feminist organising.**



The data informed us that **many of the groups don't apply a fixed concept of leadership and participation.** When asked how they practice participation, most groups explained that they strive for consensus within small teams of co-leaders who share the responsibility for their organising.

With small teams leading the organisation and participating in its work, these groups often make decisions together, instead of having a single person in charge. They regularly meet to discuss and debate all major decisions within the organisation. Most of the groups that participated in this evaluation said that when participating in the voting process, they met to review the summaries and came to a joint decision on who to vote for. Many also got together to participate in the interview as a group, or, if that was not possible, had meetings prior to the interview to discuss the topic and agree upon an organisational position.

In other words, for feminist groups who participated in the evaluation, consensus building is achieved through dialogue and enabled by affective bonds, rather than through specific tools and processes. Interviewees showed great interest in participatory practices and expressed curiosity towards discovering new models. Groups are actively asking themselves: "How do we make our decisions?"

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“SO THIS IS WHAT I MEAN WHEN I SAY THE PARTICIPATORY DECISION MAKING (...) WAS SORT OF BAKED IN AND WE DIDN'T RECOGNISE IT BECAUSE, YOU KNOW, **THREE OF US CO-FOUNDERS WOULD JUST TALK ABOUT THIS OVER BREAKFAST. IT WAS WHAT WAS ON OUR MIND. IT WAS PART OF OUR EVERYDAY LIFE.**”

”

“WE MAKE DECISIONS COLLECTIVELY, INVOLVING ALL MEMBERS OF THE ORGANISATION. MOREOVER, IF THE DECISION IS IMPORTANT AND HAS AN IMPACT ON DIFFERENT MINORITY GROUPS, WE CONSULT PROFESSIONALS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY.”

”

“WE HAVE A NUCLEAR TEAM RESPONSIBLE FOR DECISION-MAKING OF THE OVERALL ORGANISATION. HOWEVER THOROUGH CONSULTATION IS MADE WITH THE REST OF THE TEAM AND OUR PARTNERS I.E. COMMUNITY-BASED LEADERS, LOCAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES.”

”

“WE MAKE SURE THAT EVERYONE IN THE COLLECTIVE IS INVOLVED IN ANY DECISION-MAKING BEFORE WE START ON ANY PROJECT. THIS WAY WE ARE MORE COMMITTED TO DOING IT BECAUSE WE OURSELVES ARE THOSE WHO PLANNED IT.”

”

“WE ARE TRYING TO AVOID ANY KIND OF DOMINANT OR HIERARCHICAL BEHAVIOUR, WE'RE TRYING TO BE SENSITIVE ABOUT IT. WE DON'T HAVE THE FORMULA TO SUSTAIN OUR PARTICIPATORY DECISION YET.”

”

“PARTICIPATORY DECISION MAKING IS A VERY BROAD THING. WE'RE A SMALL ORGANISATION WITH A FLAT-ISH STRUCTURE, AND EVEN IF THERE IS A STRUCTURE, WE ALL ARE MORE LIKE PEERS AND NOT HIERARCHICAL. IRRESPECTIVE OF AGE, PEOPLE WITH VARIED EXPERIENCE COME WITH DIFFERENT IDEAS; THEY DISCUSS; AND THEN DECIDE WHETHER TO VETO, ETC. SO I THINK **PDM IS NOT A FORMAL PROCESS IN OUR ORGANISATION**, BUT WE FOLLOW IT. I ALSO FEEL LIKE WHEN IT COMES TO FUNDING, PDM IS A VERY DIFFERENT PROCESS. IN OUR ORGANISATION, I FEEL WHAT WORKS IS, WE ARE ON THE SAME PAGE; WE'RE WORKING TOWARDS THE SAME MISSION; WE'RE COMMITTED AND TIED IN A CERTAIN WAY; WE HAVE THE BEST INTEREST OF THE ORGANISATION (...)”





From the data, we learned that groups don't have a technical understanding of participation – it is not operationalised through formalities but rather through ongoing dialogue between the people involved. Yet, **participatory grantmaking provides a system, a mechanism, to engage with more complex decision-making processes. This is particularly important as groups grow.**

Participatory grantmaking poses the question: 'who makes decisions and what platforms and processes can we use to make them?' When FRIDA poses this question, it spills over to the grantee partners. It sparks internal reflection, questioning and experimenting, especially because interviewees pointed out that participation within a group becomes harder as the organisation grows. For example, only one group was explicit in saying that their model is hierarchical. They shared that from a team of 3, they grew to a team of 8, thanks to FRIDA's support. As the team grew, it was too hard to manage horizontal participation. They then realised it did not work for them if all people participated in all decisions and instead, they decided to organise by assigning roles. Many groups considered participatory grantmaking to be inspiring precisely because it invited them to think more critically about their understanding of decision-making.



"IN THE IMPLEMENTATION, IT'S VERY PARTICIPATORY. ALL THE TEAM HAS A SAY IN WHAT TO DO, WHAT NOT TO DO AND THE SUITABILITY OF THE CHOICES WE HAVE. I'M THE FOUNDER AND THE CEO BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT MY OPINION IS OBLIGATORY. AT THE END OF THE DAY, *I DON'T RECALL THAT ANY DECISION WAS MADE BY ONE PERSON SPECIFICALLY AT THE BEGINNING PERIOD.* ANOTHER OBSERVATION IS THAT WHEN WE WERE AN INITIATIVE, MEANING LIMITED RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES, PARTICIPATORY DECISION MAKING WAS EASIER. THE MORE YOU GROW THE HARDER IT BECOMES."

Groups tend to involve their communities in decision-making processes.



Most of the groups surveyed also involve their communities in decision-making about their programmatic work, and about how they offer community support and services. They are conscious that if they are creating programs for a certain community, such a community needs to be consulted and involved in decision-making.

”

“AMONG OUR TEAM, WE TAKE DECISIONS IN A PARTICIPATORY METHOD, WE DISCUSS THE NEEDS AND REQUESTS OF THE COMMUNITY IN ONE PLATFORM, WE LISTEN TO ALL THE TEAM MEMBERS AND MAKE DECISIONS BASED ON THAT. LIKEWISE, WHEN WE ARE DOING BENEFICIARY SELECTIONS FOR MEETINGS WE CONSULT THE COMMUNITY” (EX WE DISPLAY THE NAME LISTS IN THE VILLAGES FOR FINAL ENDORSEMENT)

”

“YES, EVERY 3-5 MONTHS WE ORGANIZE A COMMUNAL DECISION-MAKING EVENT WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS ABOUT OUR FINANCES, HOW WE SHOULD USE THE RESOURCES WHAT AND WHEN. EVERYONE IS INVOLVED IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND CAN COME UP WITH THEIR SUGGESTIONS FOR POSSIBLE CHANGES AND IMPROVEMENTS.”

”

“WE MAKE DECISIONS BY A DISCUSSION PROCESS WITHIN OUR COLLECTIVE AND ONCE A YEAR WE CONDUCT A COMMON MEETING WITH OUR AUDIENCE. WE INVITE EVERYBODY WHO IS WILLING TO PARTICIPATE, WE ASK ABOUT THEIR REQUESTS AND THEN WE MAKE A DECISION. WE CANNOT BE COMPLETELY TRANSPARENT ABOUT OUR ACTIVITIES AS ACCORDING TO OUR COUNTRY’S LAW, NAMELY, OUR COLLECTIVE IS NOT REGISTERED AND WE ARE DOING ADVOCACY WORK WHICH CAN BE DANGEROUS IN OUR COUNTRY.”

”

“WE ALWAYS CONSULT THE COMMUNITY BEFORE MAKING DECISIONS. WE MAKE DECISIONS BASED ON THEIR NEEDS, OUR EXPERIENCES, AND POSSIBILITIES.”



A few groups are also experimenting with participatory grantmaking internally.

Two groups shared concrete examples of how they tried to implement participatory decision-making practices internally. One group made available small funding and let community members vote and decide which project should get the funding. After ideas were proposed, the group facilitated a discussion so that every community member involved participated in deciding what kind of project to select. The group focused on facilitating the participatory process, while the community members decided everything else. They communicated with their community by saying:

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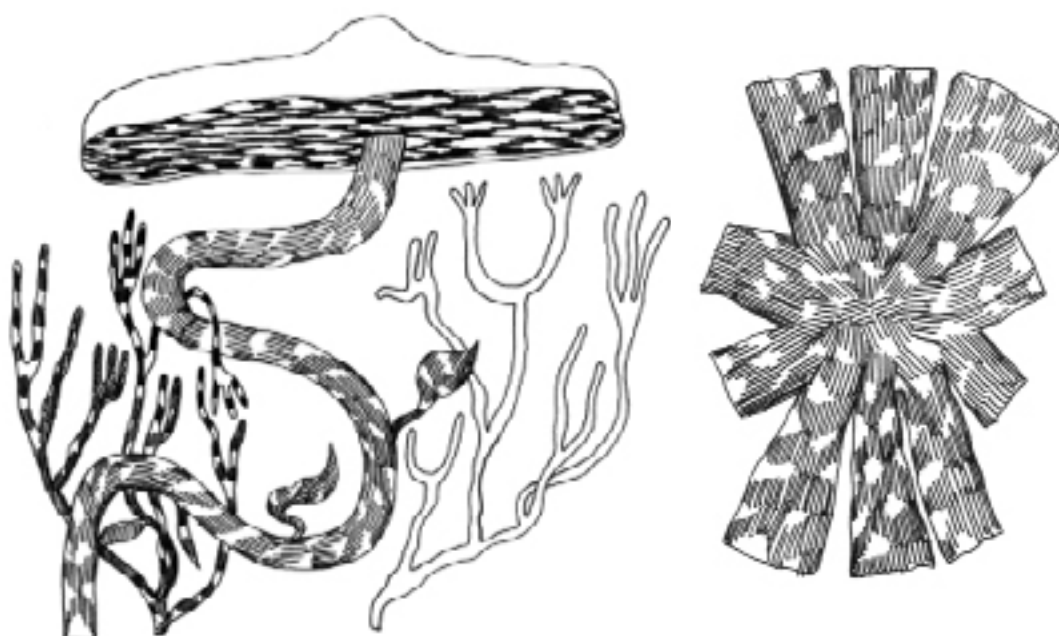
“WELL, HERE'S THE POT OF MONEY ON THE TABLE, AND YOU'RE GOING TO DECIDE HOW TO SPLIT IT AMONGST YOURSELVES. AND *YOU'RE GONNA DECIDE HOW MUCH IS GOING TO GO TO EACH GROUP AND WHETHER ONE GROUP IS GOING TO GET LESS DEPENDING ON THE KIND OF WORK THEY DO* AND ONE OTHER GROUP IS GOING TO GET MORE. SO IT'S ENTIRELY YOU GUYS WHO ARE GOING TO DECIDE WHAT HAPPENS TO THE MONEY.”

”

“WE HAVE SOME SORT OF *PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING PROCESS INTERNALLY TOO*”

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“WE HAVE LEARNED A LOT AND ARE NOW IMPLEMENTING FRIDA'S PARTICIPATORY MODEL”



Another group shared that they tried to mirror FRIDA's participatory grantmaking. The group had come together to vote on FRIDA's grantmaking cycle and realised the power of participatory decision-making. So, when they received funding, they encouraged the young girls they worked with to make decisions together about how to spend it. They were curious about the quality of the conversations and noticed that girls made collective decisions with respect.

It appears that many groups are discovering what internal organising practices work for them without following a fixed model, but with an orientation towards challenging hierarchical practices. One of the lessons learned is that *“Participatory decision-making could mean different things to different people.”*

Broadly, interviewees saw FRIDA as an example to look up to in terms of internal organising and participatory decision-making. Several interviewees stated that the relationship with FRIDA generated interest and learning around participatory practices. One interviewee, when asked if they were familiar with participatory decision-making practices, responded: ***“I am, and I was introduced by FRIDA. So that's where I learned.”***

Young feminist groups took FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process very seriously and many made significant efforts to ensure that, when participating in the voting process, they included all members of the group (even if that meant incurring costs). Many also expressed that this level of participation continued during the implementation of the work they received funding for, including for financial decisions.

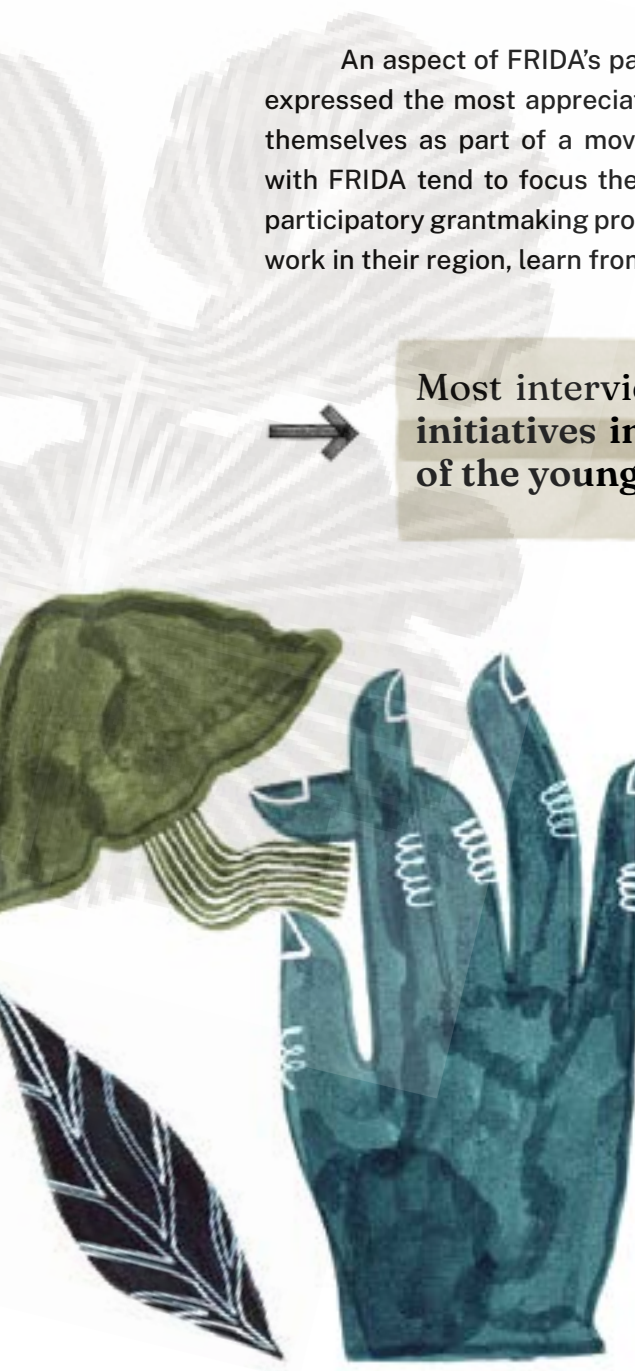


3.

HOW DOES FRIDA'S PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING IMPACT YOUNG FEMINIST MOVEMENTS?

unwinnable

An aspect of FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process that participants have expressed the most appreciation about is the possibility for young feminists to see themselves as part of a movement. The types of feminist groups that collaborate with FRIDA tend to focus their resources and energies at the grassroots level. The participatory grantmaking process is built to invite groups to become aware of feminist work in their region, learn from other groups and establish new partnerships.




Most interviewees stated that reading about other initiatives in the region widened their perception of the young feminist movement.

Interviewees explained how reading other groups' project summaries awakened in them new ideas and the desire to tell stories about the movement. In their interviews, grantee partners resoundingly shared that the FRIDA grant application process helped them value and adopt a wider regional perspective. Some interviewees reflected that since problems are structural and deep-rooted, most groups in their region were grappling with similar issues, but which manifest differently based on specific groups' contexts. In one of the voting comments, an applicant described reading proposal summaries as an opportunity to 'see and think with the eyes of other gazes' (translated from Spanish). By witnessing the panorama of different thematics and approaches proposed, another applicant suggested that they acquired a more comprehensive outlook on the many forms of feminist struggle.




“TELLING *DIFFERENT REALITIES OF FEMINISMS* IS ESSENTIAL TO DISCOURAGE HOMOGENEOUS AND UNIVOCAL VIEWS ON WOMEN AND TRANS IDENTITIES.”

“THE APPROACHES WERE *UNIQUE* ACCORDING TO WHAT WOULD WORK IN THEIR SOCIETIES AND WHAT WOULD WORK IN THEIR COMMUNITIES. THAT WAS VERY INTERESTING TO SEE.”



→ **Learning more about the work of other groups in the region supported a sense of solidarity.**

A widened awareness of their regional contexts made young feminists feel like they are not alone and that their work speaks to the work of other young feminist collectives. This sense of solidarity was enhanced even without knowing each other. Reading about the work of other groups made young feminists aware of the diversity of feminist movements, with some expressing that it reaffirmed their belief that we should speak of feminisms in plural. The realisation that many factors that affect young women in their contexts also affect others throughout the world promoted in many of them the need for an intersectional perspective in their work. They also had the opportunity to learn more about the challenges other young feminists face in their countries and regions and the strategies and approaches they apply in their organising.




“WE GOT VERY *INSPIRED*, MANY FANTASTIC WORKS BEING DEVELOPED ON THE REGION THAT WE DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT.”

“THE PROCESS WAS AFFIRMING DESPITE HOW TIME-CONSUMING IT WAS. IT WAS A VERY NECESSARY PROCESS IN REFLECTING ON OUR OWN WAYS OF ORGANISING AND *PRESENTED US WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO THINK ABOUT WAYS TO IMPROVE OUR PROGRAMS*. THIS PROCESS ALSO ALLOWED FOR A DEEP APPRECIATION AND SOLIDARITY BUILDING OF ALL THE OTHER FEMINIST GROUPS.”

“IT WAS GREAT TO FIND OUT WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING IN OUR REGION BECAUSE IT IS DIFFICULT TO FIND OTHERWISE. IT WAS HEARTENING TO HEAR ABOUT OTHER GROUPS WORKING ON LGBT ISSUES IN OUR REGION. IT WAS INSPIRING AND TOTALLY WORTH IT.”

“THE PARTICIPATION PROCESS ALLOWED US TO READ THE THOUGHTS, INITIATIVES AND PLANS IN THE REGION. *IT IS INSPIRING TO READ THE "AUTHENTIC WORD" OF OTHER YOUNG GROUPS*, AND TRULY WE LEARN A LOT IN TERMS OF STRATEGY AND MOVEMENT BUILDING FROM JUST UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER'S WORK MORE.”





For most, seeing so much powerful young feminist organising allowed groups to manage their expectations with regards to securing FRIDA funding.

Although they were all excited and hopeful that they would be selected, many expressed that if they weren't, they would still feel reassured knowing that the funding would be going to such amazing groups and supporting other young feminists in realizing their dreams. A group interviewed expressed that after reading the summaries from other groups, they were so impressed by their work and the difficult conditions they were working under that they thought about withdrawing their own application because they felt that others needed the funds more than they did. The process itself made the result not less important, but less determinant of how they viewed their participation in the process and the experience itself.

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“IT'S BEEN INSPIRING, IT ENCOURAGES US TO SEE OTHER WORK BUT ALSO *WE FEEL LESS DISHEARTENED IF WE DO NOT RECEIVE THE GRANT, WE KNOW IT'S GONE SOMEWHERE CRITICAL AS WELL.*”

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“IT INSPIRED US VERY MUCH, *IT MADE US FEEL SUPPORTED BY A NETWORK.* IT ALSO MADE US FEEL LIKE IF WE DIDN'T GET THE GRANT, STILL THE FUNDS WOULD REACH WONDERFUL PROJECTS, AND THAT IN ITSELF GAVE US A LOT OF STRENGTH”

(translated from Spanish by author)



The awareness and realisation that other young feminists are doing both similar and different work provides inspiration and a sense of recognition.

For example, one interviewee shared the experience of having established a research team but not knowing how to go about activating it. By reading others' applications, they learned about an organisation in a neighbouring country's research model. Reading about the other group's work motivated them – they were able to discover their own model. Receiving the support and votes of other young feminists also made participants feel that there was a collective value to their work. They expressed feeling recognized in ways they would not have if those who had acknowledged their work had been people in far-off offices, disconnected from their realities. Knowing that other

young feminists believed in them and valued their work was an important validation and reassurance of the need for their work. By 'seeing each other' through the voting process, groups shifted their perception of isolation and understood differently their social transformation power.

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“THIS HAS INTRODUCED ME TO NEW NETWORKS ACROSS THE REGION AND ALSO MADE ME FEEL SOLIDARITY WITHIN DIFFERENT MOVEMENTS AND INSPIRED BY THEIR WORK.”

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“HONESTLY, WE HAD NO IDEA THAT THERE ARE SUCH TEAMS EXISTING IN OUR REGION AND SUCH AMAZING EVENTS THAT ARE TAKING PLACE... WE ARE HAPPY TO BE AWARE THAT SOME OF THEM HAVE STEPPED FORWARD DESPITE THE EXISTING RISKS.”

”

“DURING THE WHOLE ELECTIONS PROCESS, WE WERE HAVING A STRONG FEELING OF SOLIDARITY, INSPIRATION, AND THE STRENGTH OF FEMINIST COMMUNITIES. WE STARTED TO THINK ABOUT A NETWORK OF FUTURE COLLABORATION WITH OTHER GROUPS IN THE REGION BUT IT IS STILL AN IDEA.”

“WE ARE NOT JUST FIGHTING AGAINST THE SYSTEM - WE ARE PART OF SOMETHING.”

“WHEN I SAT DOWN AND WENT THROUGH ALL THESE PROJECT IDEAS, I REALIZED THAT THERE ARE SO MANY AMAZING, AMAZING YOUNG FEMINISTS WHO CAME UP WITH A LOT OF INCREDIBLE IDEAS THAT I COULD NEVER EVEN HAVE THOUGHT OF, YOU KNOW?”

“OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS DEFINITELY INSPIRED US TO COLLABORATE WITH SOME OF THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT WERE PART OF THE VOTING PROCESS. WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO CONTACTING SOME OF THE ORGANIZATIONS AND GETTING TO KNOW THEM EVEN MORE FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE COLLABORATION.”

“WE FELT RESPONSIBLE AND ACCORDINGLY THAT STRENGTHENED OUR SENSE OF SOLIDARITY. (PGM) WAS A DOSE OF HOPE REMINDING US THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE STILL OUT THERE WORKING AND EXPLORING.”



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Participatory grantmaking also creates a culture of horizontal accountability as opposed to top-down accountability.

Those who received grants associated felt that being selected by the movement with a greater sense of responsibility for their work. One interviewee conveyed the importance of it by saying that, by voting for them, their peers acknowledged and recognised their work as something valuable. The appreciation for their work encouraged them to continue.

Although project summaries are anonymised, FRIDA's voting system includes a mechanism to establish new partnerships. In the voting comments, groups respond to a question expressing whether they want to connect with other groups. Most groups respond yes to this question. Groups can also specify the application code and country of the group they'd like to get to know. Applicants often express interest in following other groups' work and seeing their projects come to life.



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“WE FELT RESPONSIBLE FOR THOSE WHO VOTED FOR US, NOT ONLY TOWARDS THE FOUNDER.”

“

“IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE SUPPORT FROM PEERS, GROUPS THAT ARE SIMILAR TO YOURS, FELLOW ACTIVISTS, PEOPLE WHO ARE CONSTITUENTS, THERE IS NO LOGIC TO CONTINUE TO DO WHAT YOU DO.”

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“SUCH A PARTICIPATORY PROCESS HELPS THE GROUPS TO DECENTRALIZE, BUILD ALLIANCES, AND STRATEGIZE WITH OTHER MOVEMENTS. LEARNING TO COLLABORATE AND ALSO LEARNING OTHER METHODOLOGIES WITH OTHER GROUPS.”

Allowing for an expanded perspective thus invites different ways of organising and invites grantee partners to be creative. This is especially important given that traditional funding systems perpetuate a culture of competition amongst groups, which often hinders the creation of partnerships. In traditional grantmaking, the donor establishes a more restricted dialogue between their own values, agendas, and priorities and the approaches and reach of the grantee partner. Instead, participatory grantmaking opens multiple channels of communication simultaneously. Donors exercise great power when they decide how and what to fund. Yet, donors also use financial resources to amplify their power by establishing networks over which they maintain control and manage direct communication. Participatory grantmaking has the potential to share the power of networks with grantee partners and, at the same time, creates more *power with* grantee partners by fostering movement connections among grantees.



4.

HOW DOES FRIDA'S PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING MODEL CONTRIBUTE TO FEMINIST PHILANTHROPY?



FRIDA enters into dialogue with current and prospective grantee partner groups from a place of trust and allyship

This approach is not always common in the philanthropic sector, but it resonates with the organisational cultures of young feminist groups. Young feminists value the quality of their connections and personal relationships. FRIDA's grantee partners describe how friendship acts as a glue: it is an important dimension of their work because it binds the group together.

In the evaluation, grantee partners stressed that their interactions with FRIDA staff are profoundly human – they recognise FRIDA is guided by principles of self and collective care. Sadly, young feminists around the world are used to being mistrusted because of their age and other intersecting factors such as gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, race or class. Having an international fund engage with them respectfully reinforces that they do in fact deserve trust and recognition. For example, in contrast with traditional vertical relationships they experienced with other donors, grantee partners valued that FRIDA is open to recommendations and incorporates them in subsequent processes. This made them feel heard and like equal partners in the process.



"FRIDA IS ONE OF THE FEW FUNDS THAT TRULY *USE* ALL THE FEEDBACK RECEIVED AND IN THE NEXT YEAR IT IS ALREADY CONSIDERED."

"FRIDA IS ALSO QUITE RESPONSIVE; THEY ARE ALWAYS AVAILABLE TO ANSWER OUR QUERIES."

"WE ALSO FELT THAT THE COMMUNICATION IS VERY PERSONAL AND CARED FOR, WHICH WE APPRECIATE A LOT."



FRIDA places more attention on the well-being of the group itself than on what they deliver.

During the interviews, grantee partners felt that donors are usually more interested in funding 'projects,' rather than 'groups.' Because of this, donors are less willing to fund operational costs, and this negatively affects groups' capacity to sustain themselves. An interviewee puts it this way:

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“OUR PROBLEM WAS MAINLY THE OPERATIONAL COST(S) AND HOW TO SUSTAIN OURSELVES. IN THE BEGINNING, *FRIDA'S SUPPORT WAS NOT DIRECTED TO THE PROJECT. THAT HAPPENED AFTER WE GREW, AND WE GREW BECAUSE OF FRIDA'S SUPPORT.*”

The same interviewee explained that FRIDA's interest in their group, rather than in their projects, created a sense of group cohesion. They explained that using the language of 'the group' instead of 'the project' created more shared responsibility that shaped how they function as an organisation. Through this dialogue with grantee partners, FRIDA uses its position as a donor to invite groups to reflect on how they want to grow, while remaining flexible – the group retains the freedom to steer its path. For example, two interviewees stated:

“WE WANT TO GROW TO CREATE A SOLID GROUND FOR OUR ORGANISATION. (...) THIS IS TO ENSURE THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE WE'RE WORKING WITH AND TO MAKE SURE THAT THE VALUES THAT WE'RE TRYING TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE WORLD ARE DEMONSTRATED WITHIN OUR ORGANISATION. SO (*FRIDA'S CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT*) IS ALSO *HELPING US EXPAND.*”

“THROUGHOUT THE YEARS WE SORT OF BECAME STRONGER AS AN ORGANISATION, AND *FRIDA REALLY HELPED US TO STRENGTHEN OUR CAPACITIES.* WE USED THE GRANT WE RECEIVED IN THE LAST 5 YEARS TO HAVE BETTER PROCEDURES IN THE ORGANISATION, TO CONSIDER HAVING HELP FROM CONSULTANTS, IN STRENGTHENING ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE.”



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FRIDA effectively accompanies grantee partners in their organisational development journey. In doing so, it becomes an important dance partner as groups discover their internal culture, self-visioning, and direction.

Receiving a grant from FRIDA provides experience and credibility to groups. Traditionally, grantmakers expect organisations to demonstrate their capacity to implement funding. For example, most donors demand that organisations have a certain level of administrative infrastructure before they can receive funds. The participatory grantmaking model proposed by FRIDA supports groups in becoming more comfortable with managing resources. This is powerful, especially in regions of the world, such as in the SWANA²⁰ region, where young women are often kept from controlling their own financial resources.

Practice managing small funds and understanding the grant cycle makes it more possible for grantee partners to apply for bigger funding. To be eligible to apply for funding, most donors require prior experience. One group shared that when they apply for a grant, they are asked questions such as: how has the association utilised funding before? Who benefited from that funding? How do you organise financial resources? As a FRIDA grantee, they grew their portfolio, gained a better understanding of philanthropic cycles and practiced allocating and managing funds. Many shared that they felt more confident applying for other grants since they could now demonstrate previous experience with managing grants.

“SO, I THINK FRIDA IS ACTUALLY GIVING US A GOOD EXERCISE BY OWNING OUR RESOURCES. ESPECIALLY IN FEMINIST ECONOMIES, WOMEN ARE NOT (PAUSE) I MEAN, ONE OF THE CHALLENGES IS THAT WOMEN DON'T HAVE, IN MANY SOCIETIES, THEY DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO ACTUALLY DECIDE HOW THEY WANT TO MOBILIZE WHATEVER RESOURCES THEY HAVE - LET ALONE YOUNG WOMEN (...). WHEN YOU HAVE RESOURCES IN YOUR HAND TO DECIDE WHAT'S IMPORTANT AT THIS MOMENT AND AT THIS LEVEL FOR YOU (...) IT'S ALSO BECAUSE OF THAT SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS WHAT'S IMPORTANT FOR US AS YOUNG FEMINISTS.”

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²⁰ Southwest Asia and North Africa region



FRIDA supports unregistered groups.

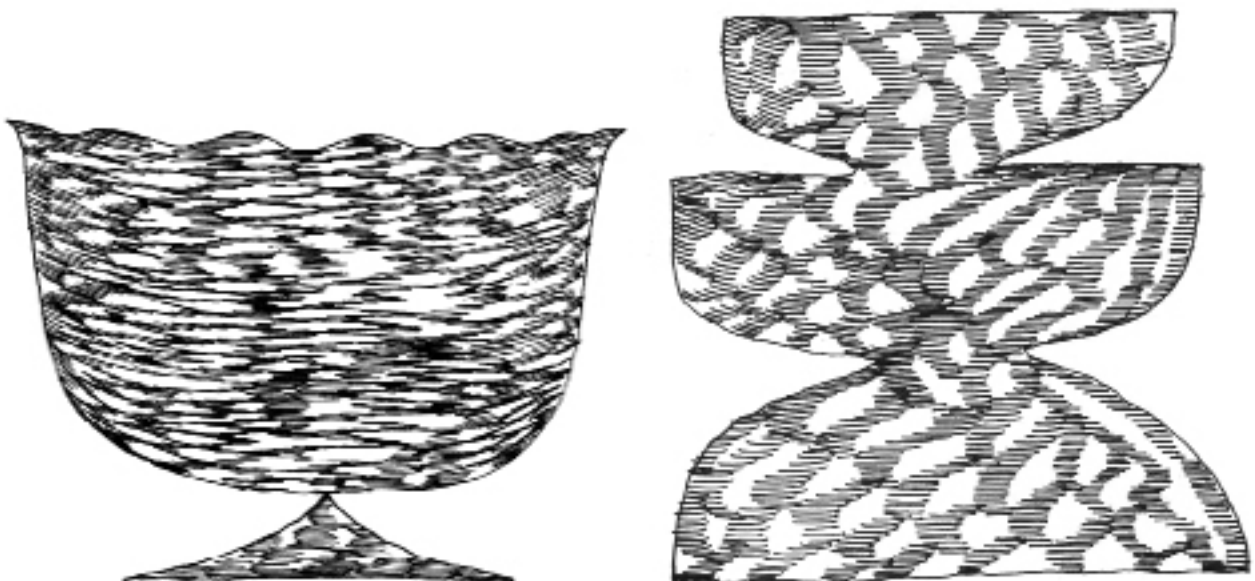
Most of the groups that receive FRIDA's funds are 'too small to be funded' by traditional donors. For example, out of the respondents to the PGM survey, 47% were unregistered collectives. Grantee partners have expressed that traditional philanthropic culture makes them feel stressed, uncomfortable and inadequate.

For many emerging young feminist groups, registrations can be inaccessible – this harms their ability to secure funding for their work. Others prefer to remain unregistered as they do not wish to be part of the system, but also recognize that this is a barrier in accessing other resources. Interviewees expressed that FRIDA not requiring registration is positive and crucial in being able to reach more groups doing powerful work in their communities.



FRIDA provides greater flexibility – as a principle, flexibility contributes to improving philanthropic culture overall.

Grantee partners stressed that they feel discomfort about the volatile nature of trends in development: several interviewees pointed out that they have seen donors get fixated on one region/issue/cause/approach, missing the creativity and possibility of what does not fit into their agendas. What we see in the data is a search for coherence within the grantee partners. They reject trying to speak the donors' language and crave frank dialogue with funding partners who could be potential allies. This explains why FRIDA was valued for being so approachable.



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“I THINK THAT MANY DONORS, THEY END UP ASKING FOR VERY CLOSE (PRE-ESTABLISHED AND INFLEXIBLE) PROJECTS, AND STUFF THAT THEY BELIEVE ARE THE STUFF THAT YOUNG FEMINISTS SHOULD DO. AND I THINK THAT **HAVING THE FREEDOM TO CHOOSE YOUR OWN PRIORITIES** AND TO CHOOSE WHAT YOU WILL WORK WITH AND IN WHICH WAY YOU WILL WORK, HOW YOU WILL MAKE YOUR STUFF, **IS VERY IMPORTANT TO KEEP OUR MOVEMENTS INDEPENDENT.**”

”

“DO YOU KNOW THAT ANXIETY THAT YOU GET WHEN YOU GET FUNDING? AND THEN YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT HOW YOU'RE GOING TO UTILISE IT, ARE YOU GOING TO DO THE RIGHT THING? ARE YOU GETTING IN TROUBLE? **I DIDN'T FEEL THAT WITH FRIDA, HONESTLY.** ESPECIALLY BECAUSE OF THE VOTING PROCESS.”

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“I DON'T EVER RECALL A COMPLICATED THING AS PART OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FRIDA. TO BE HONEST, I DON'T KNOW IF THAT IS BECAUSE IT'S A SMALL GRANT. IN GENERAL, REGARDLESS OF THE AMOUNT OF THE FUND, **THE RELATIONSHIP WITH FRIDA WAS SO HORIZONTAL. IT WAS NEVER A VERTICAL DONOR-PARTNER OR DONOR-GRANTEE TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP.** RATHER THAN THAT, IT'S A GOOD AND HORIZONTAL RELATIONSHIP WITH A PARTNER. THE PROCESS IS USUALLY EASY.”

One interviewee shared that the international development community only funds what is trending and mainstream—foreign policies and agendas influence funding availability, they explained. In their opinion, the problem is not having an agenda, but instead the lack of flexibility needed to recognize that there are multiple paths towards realising the world we want.

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“FRIDA ALSO HAS AN AGENDA, ADVOCATING FOR THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT AND BUILDING A REAL FEMINIST WORLD, SOMEHOW THAT'S AN AGENDA. AGENDAS ARE NOT A BAD THING. THE **FLEXIBILITY IN WHAT YOU ACTUALLY WANT AND HOW YOU WANT TO BUILD THIS WORLD AND THE INVITATION TO 'LET'S DO THIS TOGETHER IS WHAT I THINK IS DIFFERENT.'**”



Young feminist groups felt flexibility within the philanthropic community allows for movements to remain independent, acting on their own interests and working as they see fit, instead of forcing themselves to implement agendas established by agents disconnected from their realities. It allows grantee partners to focus on long-term change and not exclusively on quantitative short-term outcomes. It grants the space for young feminists to define their priorities and organising strategies:

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“FOR ORGANISATIONS LIKE OURS THAT ARE STILL FIGURING OUT THE BEST APPROACH AND IMPROVING EVERY YEAR, **FLEXIBLE FUNDING IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO CREATE THE BEST VERSION OF OUR PROGRAM.**”

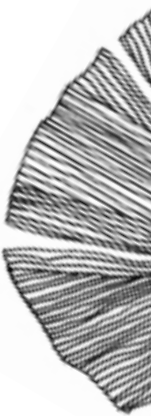
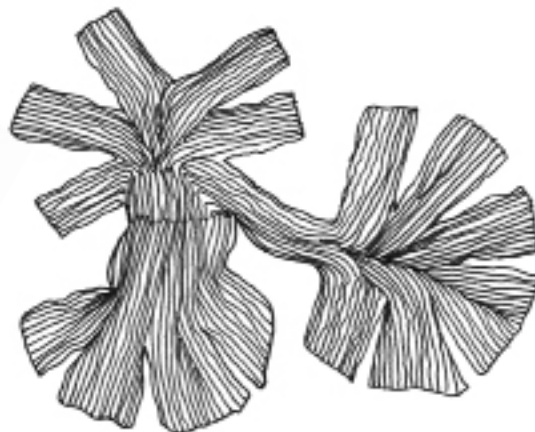
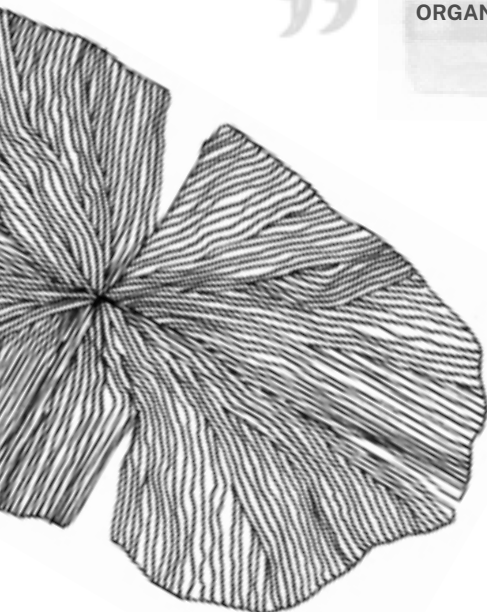


Grantee partners feel trusted in their interactions with FRIDA.

The data conveys grantees' overall excitement toward participatory grantmaking. By including groups in the decision-making process around who should receive funding, participatory grantmaking invites a more horizontal and accessible partnership between grantee partners and FRIDA. Trust is a novelty in philanthropy where, as a norm, control over results and compliance with technical requirements prevails over empathy for diverse experiences and cultural contexts. For example, an interviewee recounts how, for safety reasons, their group decided to suspend activities for a few weeks after a terrorist attack in their city. A donor threatened to pull their funding because they had suspended activities. The interviewee expressed frustration and disbelief sharing this story. They remarked:

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“I THINK THAT **COMPLETE DISTRUST OF ANYONE THAT THEY'RE GIVING MONEY TO IS THE BIGGEST FACTOR**, KEEPING (EDITED TO ENSURE ANONYMITY) ORGANISATIONS FROM HAVING ANY SORT OF PARTICIPATORY DECISION MAKING.”



Several interviewees shared their amazement over how much freedom FRIDA gave them to implement their work. Trust is a value that FRIDA cultivates throughout the grantee journey, and that encourages grantee groups to grow their capacity and leadership. One interviewee shared examples of how FRIDA's communication encouraged freedom and autonomy:

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“YOU CAN MAKE ALL THE CHANGES YOU NEED TO DO WITHOUT FEELING ANY OBLIGATION TO KIND OF ASK PERMISSION FROM US. YOU DON'T NEED PERMISSION FROM US TO CHANGE THINGS IN THE ORGANISATION. **WE KNOW THAT YOU KNOW YOUR ORGANISATION AND YOUR COUNTRY'S SITUATION THE BEST.** AND YOU HAVE ALL THE POWER TO ADJUST ALL THE CHANGES THAT ARE NECESSARY FOR YOUR ORGANISATION. THE MOST IMPORTANT PART IS TO -- FOR YOU TO FEEL SAFE ENOUGH TO DO IT.”



Trust sparks grantee partners' excitement and sense of responsibility. This grantee partner shared excitement over an email they received from FRIDA:

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“WE RECEIVED AN EMAIL MENTIONING LITERALLY THAT **FRIDA CONSIDERS US THE EXPERTS IN OUR REGION** AND THAT NO ONE WOULD EVALUATE THE PROJECTS BETTER THAN US! **WE FELT RESPONSIBLE AND EXCITED.**”

One group also expressed that they felt FRIDA's decision-making process to be horizontal, mirroring how most of them make decisions within their groups. They expressed that this was not the case of other donors they had worked with.

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“**MOST FUNDS ARE NOT ALLOCATED TO SMALL ORGANISATIONS** BUT WE ARE GRATEFUL TO FRIDA BECAUSE THEY GAVE US HOPE.”

This type of communication recognizes grantee partners as knowledge holders and as equals – it cultivates ownership, accountability and motivation.

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“BECAUSE OF ORGANIZATION LIKE FRIDA, DREAMS LIKE OUR OR YOUNG FEMINIST DREAMS ARE GOING FORWARD.”



The relationship groups establish with FRIDA – in many cases their first donor relationship – has the capacity to create a template for a new generation of donor-grantee culture. In fact, when a group experiences a more horizontal relationship with a donor in which their opinion and feedback is valued, they might be more likely to give feedback and avoid approaching other donors from the position of having less power. Young feminist groups are more likely to raise their voices to make it known when the system is failing them. These abstracts from interviews illustrate this point:

“INTERVIEWER: WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE PART IN OTHER PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING PROCESSES BY OTHER DONORS?

GRANTEE: YES. I THINK IT'S A MODEL THAT I'D ADVOCATE FOR. I'M ONE OF THE PEOPLE WHO BELIEVES IN CHANGING THE NARRATIVE ABOUT DEVELOPMENT WORK IN OUR WORLD TODAY. FOR ME, THIS IS ANOTHER WAY TO ACTUALLY LOOK AT THINGS. I MEAN, **I REALLY HATE THE REGULAR FUNDING PROCESS AND HOW WE HAVE PEOPLE DETERMINING WHAT IS IMPORTANT FOR US BASED ON WHAT SERVES THEIR AGENDA.** (...) WE WISH MORE ORGANISATIONS ARE USING THIS B APPROACH IN THE FUNDING CAUSE IT'S ACTUALLY **CHANGING THE DEVELOPMENT NARRATIVE. IT GIVES PEOPLE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DECIDE WHAT'S IMPORTANT FOR THEM.**”

Another group shared their experience with a funder, stating: *“Our needs were neglected. We did not have decision-making power.”* After their experience with FRIDA, they now want to manage their funds directly. They conclude: *“It was necessary to experience FRIDA first, learn, and later experience another organisation managing resources.”* The group shared how they fought for the last year to convince the donor to allow them to manage funds. This shows how groups can grow confidence and feel more emboldened to speak up to donors instead of falling silent for fear of losing funding.

A participatory grantmaking system that doesn't focus on building trust-based relationships where funders offer holistic support and resource the well-being of the grantee partners can still enforce transactional connections. Organising communities should not only take part in deciding where funding is going but in how funders set overall funding priorities and offer funding in a way that sees and resources collectives' individual needs.





OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION AND GROWTH



ENSURE ACCESSIBILITY

Groups recognize that FRIDA puts a lot of effort into making the grantmaking process available in several languages and that they have worked hard to incorporate advisors who can communicate with groups in their local languages. At the moment, FRIDA offers the opportunity to submit applications in seven languages. Applicants who do not speak one of those languages as their mother tongue, however, may be at a disadvantage when describing their work.

Interviewees recommended that FRIDA explore whether groups can share their applications in other formats while taking into consideration their security and safety. If this is not possible, FRIDA should be transparent with the collectives about this challenge and why a certain format is required.

MAKE FEEDBACK AVAILABLE

For many of the groups, FRIDA's participatory grantmaking was the first time they had any form of relationship with donors and their first time applying for funding. Many had never written a funding proposal before.

Whether they received the funds or not, most groups valued taking part in the participatory decision-making process. However, many would have liked to access the feedback they received from other groups. They expressed that it would be very valuable for them to know what their peers thought of their proposal, as it would help them reflect on their work and potentially improve their applications for future grantmaking rounds. This transparency would help to address the concern that there may be a lack of impartiality when groups know those they are voting for, or vote for applications exclusively because of the region or thematic area in which they work.

ADDRESS FAIRNESS OF THE VOTING PROCESS

Groups recommended that FRIDA might want to observe and consider how applicants compare with one another in the voting process. New or smaller groups might have a harder time articulating what they do and what they hope to accomplish with the funds. FRIDA needs to ensure that these groups receive support when applying. FRIDA should also pay attention to how the voting process is organised to allow these groups to be voted on to receive funding. Both emerging groups and those that are more established have a lot to contribute to their communities and to the feminist movement as a whole; it is important to ensure they are both getting fair chances to receive support.



PROVIDE SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE ON THE VOTING PROCESS

Some groups also expressed that they would appreciate more support and guidance from FRIDA on the selection and voting process itself, beyond the voting guidelines that they received from FRIDA. For new applicants, the review and voting process is exciting, but many expressed also feeling nervous because they wanted to make sure they did their best and were fair with those groups whose proposals they were reviewing. Most took this responsibility very seriously and felt accountable to those groups, to FRIDA, and to the movement. Thus, providing extra support to those pre-selected groups participating in the voting process, especially those participating for the first time, would be very valuable. Videos, webinars, guides, test voting processes, examples, etc. would all help groups understand the process better and feel more empowered to participate.

BE MORE TRANSPARENT AND CLEAR ABOUT ROLES IN DECISION-MAKING

Most of the groups that participated in the evaluation agreed that FRIDA's PGM process sought to be truly participatory and aimed to meaningfully engage them. Groups enjoyed being able to review the applications of other groups and valued being evaluated and selected by other activists in their region. Even though many felt that they were informed in a timely manner about procedures, timelines, and any changes in the process, some groups wished for more clarity **on the Peer Review Panel's role in decision-making.**

FRIDA shared with applicants a description of the participatory decision-making stages of their model, yet many groups needed more information about the involvement and role of advisors and FRIDA staff. They wanted to understand how FRIDA manages gaps and supports groups with less access. They recognized that some information might be omitted for security and safety issues – in such cases, FRIDA could develop a clear communication mechanism to ensure transparency.

BE MINDFUL OF TIME, INTERNET ACCESS, AND TRANSPORTATION COSTS

Young people, and especially those engaged in activism or other social impact work, are often stretched thin with numerous responsibilities and activities and have very limited free time to dedicate to processes like FRIDA's PGM. Yet, a participatory decision-making process in which young feminists have the opportunity to reclaim their power inevitably requires time, effort and resources. Recognizing this at all levels is crucial. Even though the majority of groups shared that time allocated for the voting process was enough, it might still be a challenge for some. The meaningful engagement of young feminists in the grantmaking process should ensure that no extra burden is put on them, as this may significantly restrict the ability of some groups to participate. FRIDA incorporates into their regular practices monetary recognitions for the time and effort of young feminists that participate in their processes (i.e., the Peer Review Panel members receive compensation for their time). However, engaging in the participatory grantmaking process and in the review of other proposals, for example, represented for some groups an expense both in time and money.

Taking part in the review process requires internet costs. For some groups, having access to a laptop and to internet access requires significant effort and financial

investment. While many groups already have reliable internet connections in their offices or homes, others don't – accessing the internet can be a significant burden for some. FRIDA advisors also highlighted the limited internet access that some groups have as a potential challenge.

Many groups also found their transportation costs to be a burden. Groups with only one laptop available, for example, opted to meet face-to-face to conduct the process together – this involved travel costs. Although several groups expressed that they tried to take advantage of regular and/or scheduled activities for which they already had allocated a budget, for some this was not an option.

Thus, FRIDA might consider providing financial support for data packages and transportation costs to ensure that groups in hard-to-reach areas are able to fully and meaningfully participate in the process.



Participating groups expressed that one of the aspects that they most valued about FRIDA's PGM was the possibility to learn more about and engage with other groups. They found reviewing applications inspiring, and felt reassured knowing that other groups recognized their work. Young feminists very much valued the opportunity to connect and engage with other organisations beyond the PGM. As part of the voting process, groups can share if they would like to be connected with any of the other groups. Most of the groups request the opportunity to engage with other feminist groups. It might be interesting to create an online community to facilitate collaboration, exchange, and movement building. This could include not only FRIDA grantee partners but also, with their consent, those applicants that are not selected.

It is often the case that groups may be working on similar issues. Some advisors and applicants alike also proposed the idea that groups working on similar or complementary issues could collaborate on grant applications or initiatives. Finally, interviewees expressed that it was also important for groups that FRIDA supports them in connecting with other donors who may be interested in funding their work.

OPPORTUNITY FOR JOINT ADVOCACY AND KNOWLEDGE-EXCHANGE

FRIDA's grantmaking model in many ways responds to the participatory values that young feminists collectives express in their work and organizing. Many groups have shared that they have learned from FRIDA's participatory decision-making model and created similar practices when they were in a position to distribute resources through sub-granting or other processes. One of the advisors interviewed shared that based on FRIDA's model, they found their way to their own participatory grantmaking model in co-creation of another feminist fund in their region. Many advisors and grantee partners have also participated in participatory grantmaking processes of other funders where they also shared their knowledge acquired through FRIDA's grantmaking model and they got an opportunity to influence other donor-driven processes. There is an opportunity for FRIDA to reflect on these practices together with those who have been part of its participatory grantmaking process and track the the impact of the model beyond the context of philanthropy. For many this model has inspires more paarticipatroy thinking and collaborative approaches to organzing and working together and this is something FRIDA can continue to be connected to and learn from.

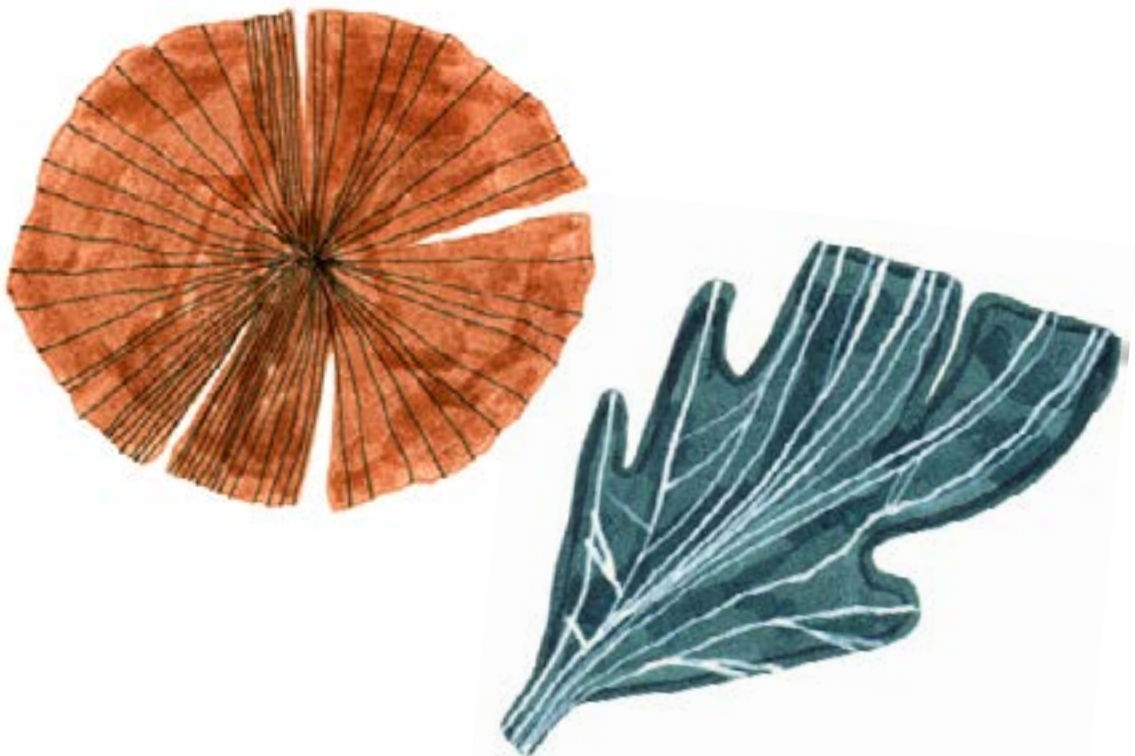
BUILD CAPACITY AND SYSTEMS THAT ALLOW DIVERSE PARTICIPATION

In the evaluation survey, we asked grantee partners whether they were interested in getting involved in shaping donors' agendas. The answer was a resounding 'Yes!' Yet, many grantee partners expressed that they feel too overwhelmed to take part in donors' conversations and participatory grantmaking practices. Because of limited resources and capacities, they miss opportunities to engage with donors' processes and are often excluded from participation. Donors interested in meaningfully engaging grassroots groups should invest in building the structures, timelines, and capacity-strengthening opportunities that are needed for communities to take part in these processes.

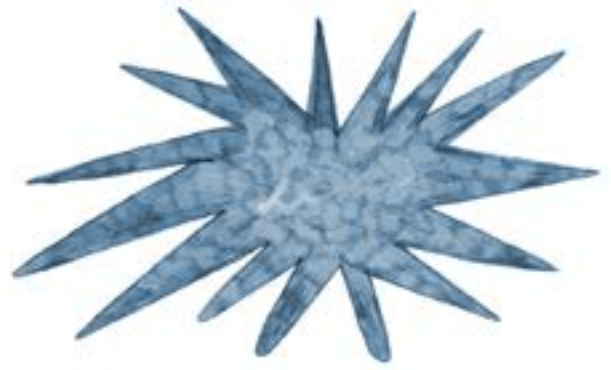


SUSTAINABILITY OF THE MODEL

The feedback about FRIDA's grantmaking model and grantee support during collective journeys with FRIDA has been overwhelmingly positive. Young feminist collectives, grantee partners, and applicants valued the care and intention that FRIDA dedicates to building relationships with young feminist organizieres and prioritizing the well-being of collectives over outcomes and results. FRIDA's participatory grantmaking model has been facilitated and a part of the role of one staff member. Since the moment we've started this evaluation process, FRIDA has grown in staff, advisory, and grantee partner community and has a stronger structure to commit the time needed to implement this complex funding process. However, with a lack of capacity, the grantmaking staff might not be able to hold all the important pieces of the participatory process and can face burnout and overwhelm. FRIDA needs to think strategically about the capacities needed for the sustainability of their models of support, and evaluate what systems and practices need to be in place to support the staff members in their work and the sustainable transition of knowledge.



FRIDA REFLECTIONS
ON YOUNG FEMINIST
COMMUNITY FEEDBACK
& WAYS FORWARD





FRIDA Reflections on Young Feminist Community Feedback & Ways Forward

The findings from the external evaluation have sparked many new ideas, thoughts and doubts, and have also confirmed many concepts that we have already been questioning. In this section, we are weaving together our responses to the findings from the external evaluation as well as the internal reflection. Many of the feedback, stories and experiences that we have received illuminated the impact of resources that inspire connection between and within movements. They have activated our imagination and helped us to envision all the possibilities that could emerge from a participatory grantmaking practice.

FRIDA stays devoted to resourcing the participatory feminist futures that we want to see unfold. Although it will take time for those futures to manifest, we can already feel their impact on the resilience of movements' connections.

Addressing the structure behind the process

MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION NEEDS INTENTIONAL FACILITATION

FRIDA funds young feminist organizing that is multilingual, cross-thematic, interconnected within different movements and abundant in strategies and approaches. Although young feminist organizers globally might be facing similar realities and challenges in their organizing, young feminist movements are not homogenous.²¹ Creating a participatory grantmaking process that can respond to the many dimensions of feminist organizing globally has been much more challenging for us than focusing on a specific thematic or geographic context. FRIDA's model is exploring different approaches to participation across socio-political contexts, focus

²¹ Brave, Creative, Resilient - The Global State of Young Feminist Organizing: FRIDA The Young Feminist Fund/AWID

areas and language barriers for the more than 500 applicant proposals that end up in the voting process during each cycle. In every grant cycle, we adapt and change the model in each of FRIDA's focus regions to address their specific challenges. **We must explicitly map out the internal infrastructure that holds this participatory process in order to facilitate young feminist movement connection and exchange and address complexities with transparency and care.** It is also important that the knowledge that is shared in the participatory grantmaking model never just stays within the realm of grantmaking, but is in dialogue with all other pieces of FRIDA's work.



THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATORY FUNDING STRATEGIES

Young feminist leadership has been key in creating strategies that are aligned with the needs of global young feminist movements and their shifting realities.²² The majority of FRIDA's processes — especially our programmatic work and funding decisions, strategy and criteria — are open to guidance, feedback and input from the young feminist community. However, we are aware that when funders request community participation in their decision-making processes, it can add extra labour on organizers who are often already overburdened with work. To offset this, we create our funding strategies with movements, so that even when participation in funder processes is too overwhelming, their needs are still embedded into our process and the final decision-making. **Funding strategies that are generated through community participation might take time to develop, but they allow us to save time in the implementation stage.**

A strategy created through a participatory approach also seeds and cultivates trust in FRIDA's decision-making process, especially when no direct participation in the final decisions is possible. All decisions require a different pace, so that trust and pre-discussion about strategy helps us to save time and make decisions more quickly. For instance, because we've created regional and grantmaking strategies in advance with young feminist organizers, when it comes time for our annual grant renewal process, grantee partner participation in decision-making is optional. In this case, the decisions are made by FRIDA program staff with interested Advisory Committee members from each region, and are guided by strategies and funding frameworks that have already received community input.²³

²² They have been integrated across FRIDA's governance, communications, strategic and MEL framework, resource mobilization and general funding strategies.

²³ Also, some institutional processes require confidentiality on a level that doesn't allow open participation for safety reason, but that still need to be led by feminist values.

FRIDA's strategy to holistically support young feminist movements should always be created with:

- 1 FRIDA Global Advisory Committee input and recommendations
- 2 FRIDA staff cross-team input and recommendations
- 3 Data gathered from every call for applications: voting process and overall feedback
- 4 Data gathered from grantee partner feedback: surveys and reports
- 5 Inputs from the thematic and regional funding strategies

For FRIDA grant opportunities that have limited funding, we need to ensure that there is a participatory decision-making process in place, in addition to participatory development of our funding strategy. We follow this process for FRIDA's Special Grants, for instance, which are dedicated to supporting capacity strengthening, collaboration and movement connection among grantee partners and advisors, and for which we have only a limited number of grants available. In this case, we create a Special Grants peer review committee that consists of programs staff, grantee partners and advisors from each region who have not applied for a special grant. Everyone from the Special Grants peer review committee provides inputs into decision-making, and the staff bring additional knowledge about each of the groups and the capacity strengthening needs they shared. This peer review committee makes final decisions based on criteria that are established with movements prior to the selection process. This increases transparency around our internal grantmaking processes.

On the other hand, the participatory decision-making process in our open call for applications welcomes learnings from many young feminists across geographies, identities and strategies of organizing. **FRIDA ensures that every new critical reflection, impact and need finds its way into our funding policy, regional strategy and funding criteria, as well as our plans for further outreach. This way, FRIDA staff together with the Global Advisory Committee have an opportunity to learn with young feminist movements, and ensure that knowledge flows across different organizational processes.** This is just one of the reasons we stay committed to a participatory grantmaking model, where key decisions are made by the young feminist community that applies for FRIDA funding.



✱ FRIDA NEEDS TO DEVELOP A TOOL TO EXAMINE WHEN OPEN COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING IS NEEDED, AND WHEN ADVANCE CONSULTATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS ARE ENOUGH TO AVOID OVERBURDENING THE YOUNG FEMINIST COMMUNITY WITH A DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. FRIDA MUST ALSO BE CLEAR WHEN DECISIONS ARE MADE SPECIFICALLY BY FRIDA BOARD, STAFF AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

✱ DIFFERENT OPTIONS FOR YOUNG FEMINIST COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE. DATA SHOWS THAT YOUNG FEMINISTS DO CARE ABOUT THE FINAL DECISIONS, EVEN IF THEY DO NOT ALWAYS HAVE THE CAPACITY TO PARTICIPATE, SO WE COULD ENCOURAGE MORE ENGAGEMENT BY OPENING UP MORE POSSIBILITIES FOR HOW TO PARTICIPATE.

✱ NOT EVERYTHING NEEDS TO BE SURVEYED — FRIDA BUILDS A LIBRARY OF YOUNG FEMINIST KNOWLEDGE ANNUALLY THAT ALLOWS FOR DEEPER THEMATIC AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT ANALYSES. THEREFORE, FRIDA IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DATA IT RECEIVES FROM YOUNG FEMINIST COMMUNITIES, AND SHOULD CONTINUOUSLY EMBED THIS IN ITS DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES.

✱ FURTHER, FRIDA MUST DEVELOP A TOOL TO HELP GUIDE PARTICIPATORY FUNDING STRATEGY CREATION AND SUPPORT OTHER PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES.

THE ROLE OF GLOBAL YOUNG FEMINIST ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The very first Global Advisory Committee²⁴ was created by the feminist activists who helped create FRIDA and operationalize its initial stages of work. This first Global Advisory Committee held many internal structure and governance responsibilities at a time when FRIDA had few staff members and no Board structure. The advisors have been a powerhouse for FRIDA and have decentralized FRIDA's decision-making processes and the Fund's infrastructure since its incubation stages.

As the initial advisory members have transitioned out of FRIDA, the next young feminist Global Advisory Committee²⁵ members have been selected through an open call process for each region. A similar recruitment process is still in practice today. The transitioning advisors, in addition to staff members, make recruitment decisions about new advisors based on FRIDA's advisory and grantmaking needs. This process is not open for community participation, unlike the selection of FRIDA Board members, which is open for nominations and a community voting process. It is important to recognize that throughout the history of FRIDA's young feminist Advisory Committee, new advisory members have not always been able to immediately adopt ownership and shared power over FRIDA's processes. **When a funder is part of decisions who**

²⁴ The Global Advisory Committee today consists of regional advisory committees that have 10-20 advisors in each region.

²⁵ All FRIDA Advisory Members are paid an annual stipend to participate in FRIDA's processes, which was not the case with initial advisory committee members, who were volunteers. Advisors can also apply for specific grants for their capacity strengthening, including travel, holistic well-being, etc.

joins their Advisory Committee it creates a power dynamic that could limit the feeling of ownership that new advisors experience. They can experience this limitation in FRIDA's Advisory Committee, especially while they are still in the orientation process around the interconnectedness of their role with other aspects of FRIDA's work. Onboarding advisors in each of the regions often grow their collective agency over time in relationship with FRIDA staff and Board. FRIDA's new administrative structure, which now includes a Board, has also changed the role of the Advisory Committee, yet they still play a critical role in FRIDA's governance structure.

Now, there is a team of staff at FRIDA that facilitates advisors' integration, representation, and participation across FRIDA's processes. Young feminist governance through the Global Advisory Committee decentralizes the power and knowledge exchange within FRIDA and builds a cross-accountability mechanism between young feminist movements and FRIDA as a funder. Young feminist activists in the Global Advisory Committee bring expertise about the needs and priorities of young feminist organizing in their regional socio-political context. This guides FRIDA's regional funding strategies, helps determine funding criteria and outreach planning, and increases the accessibility of FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process. Unlike the FRIDA Board, the Global Advisory Committee is part of peer review grantmaking processes across FRIDA's programmatic work. In the open call for applications process, they participate in regional Peer Review Panels, which review applicant eligibility, join the community voting process and support consistency and equity in FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process.

✱ FRIDA NEEDS TO ADDRESS THE POWER DYNAMICS IN THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, WHICH EMERGE WHEN NEW ADVISORS ARE SELECTED THROUGH AN OPEN CALL WHERE DECISIONS ARE MADE BY OTHER ADVISORS AND STAFF. WE SHOULD CONSIDER OTHER SELECTION MECHANISMS THAT ALLOW COMMUNITY INPUT INTO THE ADVISOR SELECTION PROCESS.

✱ FRIDA NEEDS TO INVEST MORE TIME AND RESOURCES INTO SUPPORTING THE ADVISORY COMMUNITY TO BUILD OWNERSHIP OVER FRIDA'S INSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES. THIS WILL DECENTRALIZE POWER AND BETTER DISTRIBUTE ACCOUNTABILITY ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION.



GRANTEE PARTNERS AS PART OF THE PEER REVIEW PANEL IN GRANTMAKING PROCESSES

Before the 2020 grant cycle, only Global Advisory Committee members were part of the Peer Review Panel in FRIDA's open call for proposals. In the last two grantmaking cycles, however, we have piloted a panel where Global Advisory Committee members come together with activists from FRIDA grantee partner organizations to review proposals and the applicant voting results. After receiving a grant through FRIDA's young feminist voting process, many grantee partners have expressed interest in continuing to take part in the process of selecting new grantee partners. For many grantee partners, the opportunity to join a participatory grantmaking process for a new cohort of grantees allows them to further connect and learn from young feminist organizers in their region. Many grantee partners have shared that when they participate in funding processes, they experience a greater feeling of power and importance.

Grantee partners' participation in the Peer Review Panel also contributes to decentralization of knowledge and expertise, and helps build the collective power of young feminists in FRIDA's grantmaking. It also strengthens mutual accountability between the Advisory Committee, grantee community and staff, and grows young feminist representation in FRIDA's governance, which further enhances the transparency and fairness of the process. This has brought more richness, nuance and new perspectives to the Peer Review Panel space. However, it is important to note that grantee partner participation alongside Global Advisory Committee members in the Peer Review Panel has been piloted only in the last two cycles. We wanted to experience this model and the possibilities and challenges that it could bring before we made it a structural part of our processes. We have found, however, that this shared space for decision-making has added new layers of facilitation for FRIDA, as well as an opportunity for FRIDA to build trust and power with young feminist movements.



✱ FRIDA CAN EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES FOR EXPANDING THE PEER REVIEW PANEL AND CAN REDESIGN THE MODEL TO ADJUST TO ALL CHANGES THE COMMUNITY HAS EXPRESSED A NEED FOR, INCLUDING MORE MULTILAYERED PARTICIPATION.

✱ FRIDA CAN MAKE SPACE FOR MORE GRANTEE PARTNER ENGAGEMENT IN THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS, AS WELL AS THE OUTREACH PROCESS, AND ENSURE THAT GRANTEE PARTNERS ARE COMPENSATED FOR THEIR INVOLVEMENT.

WHY THE OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS INCLUDES MORE DECISION-MAKERS THAN JUST THE PEER REVIEW PANEL

The Peer Review Panel has long played a central role in supporting FRIDA to navigate the socio-political contexts of its focus regions and address gaps and access issues in our funding systems and strategies. They review over 1,000 proposals in each cycle to determine if groups fit FRIDA's funding criteria, and also review the voting results to ensure there is consistency throughout the process. However, when it comes to final decision-making, the voices of young feminists that have applied for grants are prioritized.²⁷ The majority of philanthropic participatory grantmaking processes involve a peer review committee from the community they support, which generally makes final decisions about the pool of applications. There are a variety of ways to design this process with only a peer review panel, and FRIDA does apply this model in some of its special grantmaking. **Considering how broad and diverse FRIDA's funding focus is, however, having a peer review panel make all final grantmaking decisions wouldn't necessarily empower an intersectional participatory grantmaking process.** We can't represent all voices, backgrounds, identities and organizing focuses in all the contexts where FRIDA funds, therefore FRIDA include grant applicants in its final decision-making.

Even when funders' grantmaking processes are participatory, they can still replicate the same systemic inequalities and power dynamics of any other grantmaking process. For instance, we pay close attention to how we recruit Peer Review Panel members. For many funders' peer review panels, staff are involved in the recruitment process, which can limit the power of the panelists to advocate for different radical funding practices. FRIDA has created mechanisms to limit this power dynamic in its own Peer Review Panel and to align with its participatory values. This helps create FRIDA's current multilayered participatory grantmaking model, which allows FRIDA spaciousness to share power across multiple decision-making actors and to establish accountability as a framework for growing connections. For instance, each person in the Peer Review Panel, when reviewing applications, might apply different

²⁷ The process is explained further in the chapter How does it work

criteria that are based on their knowledge, access and lived experience. FRIDA has also created a guiding tool²⁸ that supports us to align the review process with our principles and values. This sometimes asks us to spend more time unlearning patterns and transforming them into new generative systems to evaluate and set our funding criteria and priorities. The guiding tool also helps to identify any organizations with little or no access to funding in their contexts, groups that likely might not be voted for based on language or other dynamics, etc. The Peer Review Panel also reviews the final votes to identify any movement dynamics, biases or inconsistencies that might have occurred in the process, and can support the final decision-making process, which is based on a applicants vote.

✱ FRIDA NEEDS TO INCREASE TRANSPARENCY ABOUT THE PEER REVIEW PANEL AND INTRODUCE THE PEER REVIEW PANEL BEFORE THE PANEL REVIEWS SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS, SO THAT APPLICANTS KNOW WHO IS REVIEWING WHETHER THEY FIT FRIDA CRITERIA.²⁹

✱ FRIDA NEEDS TO MORE TRANSPARENT ABOUT WHAT ROLES THE PEER REVIEW PANEL HOLDS AND HOW THE COLLECTIVE VOTING PROCESS FACTORS INTO FINAL DECISIONS.



²⁸ FRIDA doesn't use a scoring table for decision-making because from our experience, numbers do not capture the intersections and more nuanced analyses that are necessary, and because those with power normally decide what qualities are being scored.

²⁹ The Advisory Community is public on the website, but information about them and encouragement about interaction with them should be clearly communicated with those applying.

THE PROCESS IS NOT DONE BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Having both a Peer Review Panel and an applicant voting process makes FRIDA's participatory decision-making more diverse as well as more complex. However, creating space for continuous feedback, input and recommendations supports FRIDA in making the system more accessible, intersectional and truly participatory. All groups get to see proposal summaries that are being reviewed next to theirs in their voting group. There are many emotions, intimate realities and vulnerabilities written into the grant applications that groups submit to funders, and sometimes funders meet them with nothing but an automatic email or a impersonal response. Often application processes are not clear, and applicants don't know who reviews their application, if all criteria are applied and how funders score their importance and need for funding. As one of the key transparency tools of its participatory grantmaking model, FRIDA has designed a system where groups can track their proposal, the stage they are at in the process, and what is coming next. We want groups to be able to witness key parts of the process and see that the time and resources they put into submitting their application are valued as much as their work, regardless of whether they receive funding or not. **As funders, we should engage in building trust with the movements that we exist to support, regardless of whether they are part of our grantee cohorts. Relationship and trust building opportunities are important to our initial grant applications stage and an impersonal grantmaking process could take away that potential.**

✿ THE PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING MODEL INCREASES TRANSPARENCY, BUT FRIDA ALSO NEEDS TO CONTINUE TO BALANCE THAT TRANSPARENCY WITH SAFETY AND CONFIDENTIALITY IN ITS UPCOMING GRANT CYCLES.



HOW WE FACILITATE PEER REVIEW PANEL ACCESS AND 'CONFLICT OF INTEREST'



FRIDA strives to make participation of our Board, Advisory Committee and any participants that hold power within FRIDA throughout its grantmaking process clear and transparent. We have learned, however, that 'conflict of interest'³⁰ guidelines for our participatory grantmaking process are important for creating transparency and accountability toward young feminist movements. FRIDA's 'conflict of interest' policy guides us through potential dynamics of power and access and how they might play out in FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process. For example, it is critical that activists and organizers are part of boards, advisory committees or peer review panels where they can influence and transform grantmaking processes to ensure movement needs are truly represented. **However, we must be mindful that this puts some organizers in privileged positions over others, and that this can create further challenges when the same movement and funder representatives hold multiple positions and hats across peer review panels, boards and advisory committees. This not only limits the diversity of perspectives, experiences and backgrounds that influence these spaces, but could emphasize individual visibility over movement needs and representation.**

Since FRIDA's advisors are also recruited through an open call selection process, we have learned that the dynamics between Peer Review Panel members can also be affected by individual access, identity, language barriers and lived experience. Even when there is community participation in Advisory, Board and Peer Review panels, there are often conditions and power dynamics that influence how members see their voice having power or not. For this reason, the purpose of the structure behind FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process is to hold clarity about the roles, values and principles we want to reflect in our decision-making process and how increased access might impact power-sharing. Still, we also need to ensure that there is mindful facilitation that ensures equitable participation within the Peer Review Panel. We use varied tools to facilitate conversations and understand what dynamics might affect

³⁰ FRIDA is not aligned with the terminology of 'conflict of interest'. We plan to rename these practices to reflect what they mean for FRIDA, which has more to do with creating a structure that facilitates increased access to decisions and power, as well as equity and fairness, in our participatory process.

equitable participation, as well as to offer different formats for expressing thoughts and sharing input and recommendations.³¹ **We acknowledge that experiences with young feminist organizing make the participants in FRIDA's grantmaking process peers, and that there can be many connection points and similarities in our experiences, especially related to identity or geopolitical context. However, peer does not mean sameness, since our lives are shaped by the socio-political conditions, identities and bodies we inhabit, as well as how interlocking systems of oppression relate to them.**

We hold these complexities collectively within both the Peer Review Panel and staff, who supports cross-communication and alignment of values throughout FRIDA's grantmaking process. Thus, FRIDA's 'conflict of interest' policy exists to help young feminists across FRIDA's governance structure to participate in its processes with greater awareness of boundaries and the power that we hold. For instance, the Advisory Committee has more direct access to FRIDA and is able to share support about a group or influence a group's application process if there is a personal conflict or misalignment. The young feminist collectives that apply, on the other hand, don't have the same access to FRIDA. This is not something specific to participatory grantmaking, but is a concern that has grown from experiences with traditional philanthropy. It has proven to be an even greater concern when grantmaking decisions depend on relationships with a single Program Officer or are made behind closed doors. For many organizations, this experience is common when they apply for a grant from local offices of international funds or for government funding that might be biased, or decided based on relationship dynamics or even corrupted systems.

This hasn't been often the case among FRIDA's Peer Review Panel. However, because we know that this might be a possibility we created a process where multiple Peer Review Panel members review the same applications, and where staff members review each Panel's decisions for consistency and ask any clarifying questions. This ensures that no single advisor or staff member can necessarily sway the final decision. **Advisors also declare 'conflict of interest' in some scenarios. For example:** FRIDA advisory members can apply for a grant with their collective in the open call for proposals. When they do, they cannot participate in the review process with the Peer Review Panel, but can participate in community voting with other applicants, and with the same access to information as other collectives. To receive a grant, the entire community needs to vote for them, so there is a clear process where the Peer Review Panel can't decide alone to award a grant to an advisor's group. If that group is selected to receive a grant, they also go through the same due diligence process as other groups, although this part of the process may be more straightforward for them because FRIDA is already familiar with the advisor and their work.

Activists from grantee partners collectives can become part of FRIDA's Advisory Committee, so if an advisor's collective receives a grant, that advisor can remain on the Advisory Committee. However, there are agreements about the processes grantees

³¹ FRIDA grantmaking and Community and Culture staff build relationships of trust with advisors so that they can address any power dynamics, conflict or unsafe feelings within the Peer Review Panel, or if they need specific conditions to participate equally.



can participate in — for instance, they can't join a grant renewal process since under current agreements, that process involves just staff and non-grantee Advisory Committee members.

Board members, however, **cannot apply or receive a grant** from FRIDA. If an activist from a grantee partner collective is nominated and joins the FRIDA Board, they need to step down from the grantee collective, or else the collective must transition out of FRIDA's current grantee community. We made this agreement because the Board member is joining as an individual activist and not as a grantee collective nominated by the grantee community to represent them. This means their collective is no longer a peer to other grantee partners in terms of power, visibility and access within FRIDA. Especially in the FRIDA renewal grant process, this would make it hard for that group to receive radical trust and to remain as a peer partner of the grantee community. This agreement is about recognizing power in all its forms and how it can direct our hearts and minds. This is why addressing access and intersectionality across lines of power and privilege is important.

We also apply this to FRIDA staff. Many staff members have been part of applicant groups or grantee partner groups in the past. Even though our lived experiences as young feminist organizers have been essential in shaping FRIDA's work to better support young feminist movements staff members have needed to transition from their collectives and step back from participating in FRIDA's process when collectives they used to work with are involved.

✿ FRIDA SHOULD MAKE THE 'CONFLICT OF INTEREST' POLICY MORE TRANSPARENT TO YOUNG FEMINIST COMMUNITY MEMBERS. FRIDA NEEDS TO ENSURE THAT THIS POLICY IS ALWAYS CLEAR FOR THE GROUPS APPLYING, ADVISORY MEMBERS AND BOARD MEMBERS, AS WELL AS HOW WE NAVIGATE IMPORTANT VALUES WITHIN THE GRANTMAKING PROCESS AND HOW APPLICANTS CAN SHARE ANY INCONSISTENCIES THEY NOTICE.





Addressing the Accessibility of the Model

ANONYMITY IN THE VOTING PROCESS

In the Voting Stage, applicants get to read anonymized summaries from other applications in their geographic and thematic context. Applicants have sometimes requested the opportunity to learn more about the peer feminist collectives in their voting groups, connect with them and visit their social media pages before voting. However, we intentionally anonymize the summaries to minimize any non-alignment, bias or safety concerns that collectives might have. It also provides an additional safety layer for groups whose organizing might put them at risk, without leaving them out of opportunities to connect and learn from other feminist collectives. We also encourage groups to reach out to FRIDA in case they have any security concerns, and we ensure that there are conditions in place for them to participate. Also, many of the groups who apply are newly established and might not have materials to present yet, while others might have a strong online presence that represents their work well. Access to information can influence the voting and decision-making process, and put some groups, such as those with less published materials, at disadvantage, which is another reason we anonymize application summaries. However, FRIDA will explore mechanisms to add more information to guide groups in their voting process without putting applicants at risk or disadvantage.

✖ FRIDA SHOULD DESIGN WAYS TO SHARE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT GROUPS AND THE CONTEXTS THEY OPERATE IN WITHOUT PUTTING THEM AT RISK. THIS COULD SUPPORT APPLICANTS' DECISION-MAKING DURING THE VOTING PROCESS.

✖ FRIDA CAN EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF PROVIDING MORE TRAINING FOR THOSE WHO TAKE PART IN OUR PARTICIPATORY PROCESS AND SHARE MORE COMPREHENSIVE VOTING GUIDELINES FOR THOSE WHO ARE INTERESTED OR NEED MORE INFORMATION.

✖ FRIDA SHOULD SHARE SUMMARIES FROM THE REGIONAL STRATEGIES, CLARITY ON WHO WE HAVE BEEN SUPPORTING SO FAR, AND WHERE WE'VE IDENTIFIED GAPS WITH VOTING GROUPS. EVEN THOUGH THIS IS AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE, IT MAY NEED TO BE MORE ACCESSIBLE TO SUPPORT VOTING DECISIONS IF APPLICANTS FIND ONLY VOTING FOR 5 GROUPS CHALLENGING.

WHY ONLY WRITTEN APPLICATIONS?

To support the anonymity of our grantmaking, FRIDA only accepts proposals in written format. Groups can only apply through an online platform in 1 of 7 languages or submit a Word document. We agree that other formats might open space for more creative connection among those participating, however, we have also witnessed that consistency in the formatting of applications neutralizes the voting process and decreases bias. Furthermore, not all groups feel comfortable with video formats or could be exposed to risks if videos or photos are shared. Also, video formats, although more engaging, could affect the voting process for those who have more access to technology, or who have strong video presentation and language skills, over those who don't have the same access. Not only could it impact those who choose writing as their tool of expression, but it could also lead to voting decisions based on presentation preference, rather than on the organizing work itself. Bias is already present in written format, since applicants may vote based on how eloquently groups present their ideas in writing, so we are reluctant to add more opportunities for bias to affect the process. Most importantly, when the applications are in written format, the identity of people behind the work is confidential, minimizing their exposure to risk. There are many accessibility challenges that groups can experience in funders' grantmaking processes in general, no matter the format — accessibility of the application, language requirements, non-profit lingo culture, etc. **We are addressing these challenges in FRIDA's process and we recognize that many collectives might experience these barriers. However, so far the written format has offered the most equity for our global, cross-thematic, multilingual participatory process.**

✿ THE WRITTEN APPLICATION FORMAT ALLOWS US TO PRACTICE CONSISTENCY AND FAIRNESS IN A PARTICIPATORY PROCESS THAT ENGAGES MORE THAN 500 YOUNG FEMINIST COLLECTIVES IN EVERY CYCLE. HOWEVER, FRIDA CAN EXPLORE MORE CREATIVE WAYS OF SUPPORTING THE PRESENTATION OF WRITTEN PROPOSALS AND PROPOSE MORE DETAILED GUIDELINES.



LANGUAGE ACCESS

We acknowledge that an application process in only seven languages still creates quite a disadvantage for many young feminist collectives. For example, in many regions we translate proposals so that other groups reviewing them can read them, which means groups are not always getting a totally accurate view of each other. FRIDA has been exploring ways to expand application form language access and provide additional support to the groups that have challenges applying due to language. For instance, FRIDA has provided application information in additional languages spoken by advisors and staff members. However, another possible challenge that hasn't come up in the findings yet is that language might be a barrier for groups to read each other's proposals, or might make it an easy task for some and overburdening for others, depending on the languages in applicants' regional contexts. Some young feminist collectives need to ask their community for support with writing and translating their application in order for them to apply and be part of FRIDA's participatory process. Language access is a challenge in peer review committees as well, and it can enhance power dynamics among those making decisions.

FRIDA does address language access when creating voting groups. For instance, we will sort groups who have similar writing skills or approaches into the same voting group to ensure there is more language equity. Many have shared that the FRIDA voting process has been an important opportunity for them to learn how to present their work, so it is on us as a funder to improve our language diversity in order to support their participation.

✿ FRIDA IS ALREADY ASKING GROUPS IN THE APPLICATION FORM WHETHER THEY RECEIVED TRANSLATION SUPPORT TO APPLY, AND TAKES THAT INTO CONSIDERATION FURTHER ALONG IN THE PROCESS. FRIDA SHOULD EXPAND POSSIBILITIES FOR SUPPORTING GROUPS TO SUBMIT THEIR APPLICATION WHEN THEY DO NOT SPEAK ONE OF FRIDA'S CURRENT APPLICATION LANGUAGES.

✿ VOTING GUIDELINES THAT WE SHARE WITH ALL APPLICANTS IN THE VOTING PROCESS CAN REMIND THEM THAT SOME GROUPS MIGHT FIND EXPRESSING THEIR WORK IN ONE OF THE APPLICATION LANGUAGES CHALLENGING. THESE GUIDELINES SHOULD REMIND GROUPS NOT TO VOTE BASED ON ELOQUENCE OF LANGUAGE, BUT BASED ON IDEAS AND THE WORK THAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT.

OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF ONLINE PARTICIPATION

Both the Peer Review Panel and the applicant voting portions of FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process happen in an online space. We have learned that technology can assist and facilitate connections that still feel close and tangible. There are emotional aspects of connection and participation that those involved exchange, and groups feel part of a broader feminist movement. The advantage of hosting this process online is the diversity of perspectives, identities and backgrounds that can connect with each other, which wouldn't be possible for FRIDA to manifest in a physical realm. We still need to ensure, however, that our online participatory process applies the same feminist principles, values and agreements as we would practice in shared physical space, especially around holistic care and well-being. We use an online platform³² that allows the Peer Review Panel to access training on the participatory grantmaking model, exchange comments and learnings with each other and document their work. Applicant voting also happens on the same online platform, through which they can create their profile, save and submit their application and track their application's journey. We know that some level of in-person decision-making does happen because many groups come together with their team members during the voting process to read and make decisions together about their votes. We also recognize that in-person participation and decision-making processes can enrich the experience of participation and movement connection. At the moment, this is not feasible for FRIDA, so we are committed to using the many possibilities that online spaces can offer us while ensuring we also address this format's disadvantages.³³

When we reflect on our first grantmaking cycle in 2012 and many of the following cycles, lack of internet access and disproportionate access across regions created major challenges and disadvantages for young feminist collectives. Even though this gap might be smaller today, many groups still depend on accessible internet connection to participate in this process. Collectives in countries where internet access is controlled by oppressive regimes or sanctioned, for example, are not able to safely access and apply through our online system even though it is built with safety protocols. This means that these collectives need to invest additional personal resources and funds to pay for internet access or even for travel costs to internet spaces, even when they apply using a Word document, etc. FRIDA itself is a fund where all operations happen in an online space, so we have learned over the years how to best use the internet's opportunities while also addressing its disadvantages and safety concerns. As we reimagine what is possible beyond the current conditions, we are developing tools to navigate these challenges and facilitate meaningful participatory decision-making processes in an online space.

³² The participatory grantmaking and management platform is hosted at Smart Simple

³³ This has been an amazing experience for Peer Review Panels in many participatory funds - being able to be in the same room together and make decisions.

✿ EVEN THOUGH PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING PROCESSES IN AN ONLINE SPACE HAVE LIMITATIONS, THEY DO HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO DIVERSIFY PARTICIPATION AND OUTREACH, AND TO SUPPORT GROUPS WHO ARE WILLING TO CONNECT THAT OTHERWISE WOULDN'T HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY. FRIDA SHOULD EXPLORE AND UTILIZE ALL THE ONLINE TOOLS IT CAN OFFER, WHILE UNDERSTANDING HOW TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGE OF INEQUITABLE INTERNET ACCESS.

✿ FRIDA WILL ASK GROUPS IF THEY HAVE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET TO UNDERSTAND WHAT KIND OF CHALLENGES THEY MIGHT FACE DURING THIS ONLINE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS, AS WELL AS HOW TO ADDRESS THOSE CHALLENGES. GROUPS CAN ALSO REACH OUT TO FRIDA IF THEY HAVE ANY SAFETY CONCERNS AND FRIDA WILL SUPPORT THEM.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A HOLISTIC OUTREACH PLAN

FRIDA leans on the broadness of its networks, community, friendships and social media to share information about each call for proposals. On some occasions, we have been able to organize events with the leadership of Advisory Committee members to share more about FRIDA and our funding opportunities with young feminist in their contexts. For instance, one of FRIDA advisors organized a community event in the Pacific region, sharing information with young women and trans youth on how to apply to FRIDA's call for applications. This had a great impact in that grantmaking cycle on the number of groups applying from that region. Similar events have been organized by advisors, staff and grantee partners across regions and also international activist spaces. These events have helped to create connections with communities that haven't had access to FRIDA's funding before and to learn what support they would need to apply. In-person and online events and dedicated outreach processes have also helped us clarify our funding criteria and make our processes more accessible.

Because the scope of FRIDA's funding is so broad, many potential applicants have felt unsure whether FRIDA would be open to funding their organizing. For instance, FRIDA was not visible as an organization that is committed to supporting trans organizing, so we needed to do intentional outreach and strategy work in order for those feminist organizaers to feel invited to apply. Regional funding strategies that feed into FRIDA's overall grantmaking also allow us to understand who is missing from our processes, the challenges groups face in different regions when it comes to accessing funding and how to address those challenges.³⁴ They inform the outreach plan in each context and it supports our participatory processes to embrace intersectionality, both in the call for applications and in our direct communications and outreach plan. **Participatory mechanisms are helpful to diversify our grantmaking**

³⁴ FRIDA has recently published their strategy for how it will show up and support trans organizing, and there is an intention to create focused thematic funding strategies to support other underfunded communities to access FRIDA funding.

process and outcomes, but they can't work in isolation from other tools that make our processes more accessible for a wide range of communities. Regional strategies that inform our outreach plans are key to guide us in creating conditions for meaningful and diverse participation. They also help us to understand where we need to adapt our model, systems and funding criteria.

✿ TO DIVERSIFY ITS GRANTMAKING PROCESS, FRIDA NEEDS TO MAP OUT THE CAPACITY NEEDS AND BUDGET FOR OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES GUIDED BY REGIONAL FUNDING STRATEGIES AND CREATE A PROCESS THAT COULD INVOLVE FRIDA COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT FRIDA FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES.

SUPPORT CAPACITY STRENGTHENING FOR PARTICIPATION

Our responses to community questions and concerns about our processes are a space to practice trust building. Building that trust lies in how we protect the safety of those involved and how we navigate through conflict of interest and power dynamics. Timely communication, responding to queries and clarifying the process, allowing the space for greater flexibility and adjusting the timelines are also important in cultivating relationships with the young feminist collectives that are part of the application process. All groups need to be informed about the status of their application or if there will be delays in the process, so that they can plan their budgets and activities accordingly. Applying for funding is an emotional and exhausting process for many organizations, especially when they are operating without enough staff capacity. Meaningful participation requires time, capacity and often resources. It is important to be flexible and allow for more time or changes in the application conditions and practices to match groups' realities so that they can actively engage in the process. Many groups who haven't had a chance to join a participatory grantmaking process before might need support through things like video trainings and Q&A sessions to clarify purpose and criteria. Young feminist collectives care about how funding is distributed in their contexts and feel that their participation in funding decisions is important, but their participation might not always be possible within the limitations of our model, which often doesn't respond to their realities. A meaningful participatory process that addresses all the conditions that need to be created for groups to participate takes time, but that time also leads to more substantial long-term change.

WHAT ABOUT THE YOUNG FEMINIST ACTIVIST TIME COMMITMENT?

In order for the applicant voting process to drive FRIDA's final decision-making, all groups involved need to vote within their voting group. Even though this process has been rewarding for the majority of groups, some don't have time to dedicate to this process. Young feminist movements are vastly underfunded and under capacity, and their members take on multiple roles within their collectives while they also work, study and support their families. FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process can be burdensome, especially when collectives are often joining the process from a place of burnout.

We are reflecting on this question continuously and we have improved our systems over the years to make them more accessible and less demanding, however, FRIDA still doesn't have systems in place to financially compensate the over 500 groups who participate each year in the voting process. We do offer support for those who experience challenges in applying or participating, including support with internet connection. The majority of groups shared that the voting process was worth their time, and that they gained a lot from it, however they also expressed that it was overwhelming and consuming of their time and resources. Even though many groups have shared that they could not imagine another grantmaking model for a feminist funder, we still want this process to be generative and not overwhelming. This has been a major motivator for change in FRIDA's grantmaking system.

✿ FRIDA SHOULD EXPERIMENT WITH OTHER PARTICIPATORY MODELS THAT STILL HOLD FEMINIST VALUES AND SUPPORT MOVEMENT CONNECTION, WITHOUT CREATING AN OBLIGATION TO PARTICIPATE. INSTEAD, IT COULD BE A PROCESS WHERE INFORMATION IS SHARED AND GROUPS CAN CHOOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE BASED ON INTEREST.






Addressing the Complexity of Movement Connection

BUILDING COLLECTIVE POWER: WHAT IF WE DON'T KNOW ENOUGH TO MAKE A DECISION?

Even though groups have expressed that they feel young feminists should decide where FRIDA funding is going and consider themselves knowledgeable about their contexts, they have felt unease about their vote being the only decision-making factor. The majority have expressed that although all groups are worthy of funding, they worried they might not make the right choice when voting. This contradiction has taught us that we haven't been fully transparent about how votes come together and build with others into a *collective decision*. For a decision to be made, the majority of the collectives need to vote similarly, which also confirms some shared values, needs, knowledge and priorities in their context. Part of working through this contradiction is also reprogramming cultural input about power and agency that young people, especially women and trans and gender non-conforming people, have received saying that they are not taken as seriously. Groups are not questioning if they know enough about feminist organizing, but if they know enough about *philanthropy and funding processes* to make these decisions.

Many groups have shared that they would like to influence donors' funding strategies, but that they are not sure where their entry point is or what skills this requires. There has been a disconnection between the knowledge of their lived reality and organizing experience, and the knowledge that funders have sought for to make strategic decisions within a philanthropic context. These days, philanthropy often sees young people as *experts of their own reality*. However, this perspective hasn't expanded to other areas of expertise that young people could hold in designing, building and developing grantmaking systems, governance and leadership processes that concern their context, community and overall cross-generational feminist movement exchange. Taking part in philanthropic decision making processes at early stages of organizing can change young feminists' sense of agency and the power of their voice in funding decisions. We have witnessed this shift in young feminist collectives FRIDA has supported. Over time, they are more willing and interested in joining FRIDA's participatory processes because they can see the impact of their direct participation.



The purpose of participation in funders' processes needs to be clear in order to grow agency and understanding among young feminists about the importance of their voice in influencing and collectively bringing forward solutions in the philanthropic space. The existing power dynamic between funders and grantee partners and funders' top down approaches have created a sense that movement voices do not belong in philanthropic decision-making processes. Therefore, shifting not only who holds the power and the knowledge to decide, but mindsets and cultural understandings about who funding decisions belong to is critical.

✱ FRIDA SHOULD SUPPORT COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE CREATION WITH YOUNG FEMINISTS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATING AND OCCUPYING DECISION-MAKING SPACES.

✱ FRIDA MUST MAKE MORE INFORMATION AVAILABLE ABOUT THE COLLECTIVES, FRIDA'S GRANTMAKING PROCESS, WHO HAS BEEN FUNDED, GAPS, ETC., SO THAT GROUPS FEEL MORE EMPOWERED BY THE INFORMATION THEY HOLD TO MAKE DECISIONS.



HOLDING COMPLEXITIES WHILE FACILITATING CONNECTIONS IN THE VOTING PROCESS

In FRIDA's participatory grantmaking open call for proposals, we have learned that applicants truly believe that a participatory decision-making process aligns with their vision for a feminist funding mechanism. However, this doesn't mean that they show up with wholehearted trust and without doubt about the fairness of this model or that all young feminist collectives will apply the same values and principles. It is evident that young feminist organizers recognize the complexity of feminist movements. Young feminist collectives have expressed concern about whether FRIDA will be able to recognize how privilege and access can direct outcomes in participatory processes across different contexts. Many believe that, like any other grantmaking process they've experienced, certain groups might be excluded or there will be more competition than solidarity. When the lived experiences of organizers are not present in resourcing related decisions, it is impossible for those decisions to be made from an intersectional perspective. This perspective is key however in building, practising and expanding a relationship of trust, cooperation and interconnectedness within the participatory grantmaking process and then in relationship with the funder.

However, the final outcomes of the voting process often indicate that groups apply an intersectional lens when voting for their peers. They ensure that underrepresented groups and those with less access to funding in their context are supported. Still, even though the groups recognize the value of their peers reading and voting for their work, they feel the need for another layer of review by FRIDA staff and advisors that mostly focuses on ensuring that concerns around issues such as representation are taken into consideration. They believe that FRIDA also needs to build understanding about each context its funding reaches in order to organize this voting process and make sure that those without much access are fairly considered. Collectives have requested that FRIDA create a system that can recognize when groups experience disadvantages in its participatory grantmaking process and when FRIDA's engagement is needed. For this reason, we believe that a participation alone is not enough and that this process requires an informed and caring structure to facilitate meaningful connections.

✱ FRIDA NEEDS TO MAKE THE STRUCTURE BEHIND THIS PARTICIPATORY PROCESS IS MORE TRANSPARENT, AS WELL AS THE MECHANISMS IN PLACE TO MINIMIZE BIAS IN THE VOTING PROCESS. THERE ALSO MUST BE AWARENESS AMONG THE GRANTMAKING STAFF AND THE PEER REVIEW PANEL ABOUT POTENTIAL INEQUITY AND HOW IT IS ADDRESSED IN FINAL DECISIONS.

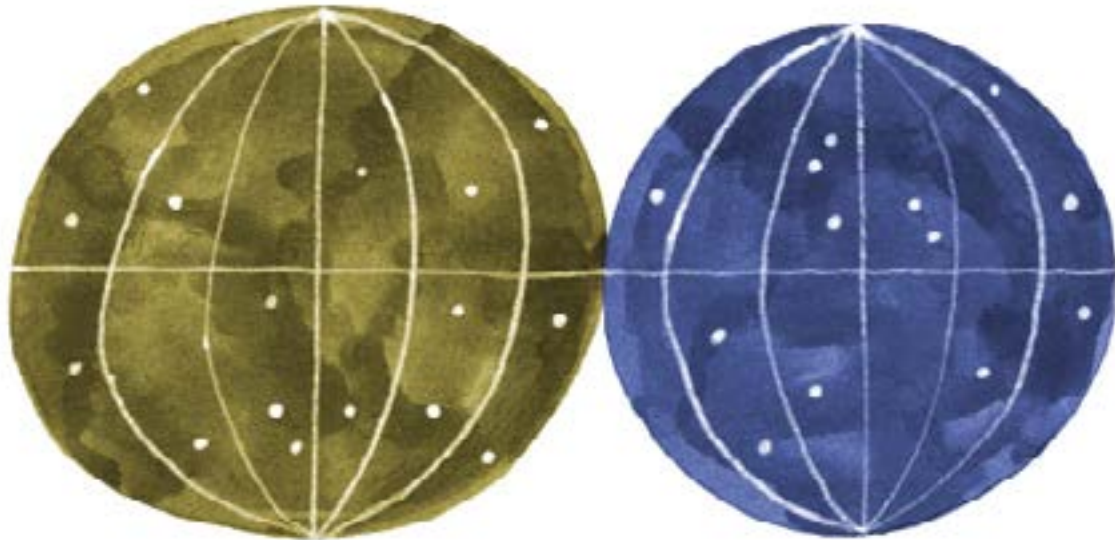
HOW DOES FRIDA ADDRESS BIAS AND FAIRNESS IN THE VOTING PROCESS?

The majority of FRIDA staff, board and advisors are young feminist activists and organizers themselves. Since we come from movements, we bring knowledge about the many complexities that movement-driven decision-making can entail. Yet each grantmaking cycle asks us to grow our understanding of power structures and dynamics that could emerge in each socio-political context. It often unveils the conditions that need to be in place for communities with less access to fully represent their realities, visions and strategies in the process and be equally recognized and resourced.

Over time, we have learned to identify in the voting process when certain communities, issues and strategies are not receiving votes. The young feminist collectives in each sub-region approach the voting process differently, and different thematics for different subregions have been underfunded or prioritized over the years. We know that there are as many synergies across young feminist movement as there are differences. In the earlier years of this voting process, for example, we noticed some voting patterns across regions where some collectives wouldn't prioritize LBTQI+ organizing, for instance. For this reason, FRIDA has re-designed the applicant voting process to capture the intersections in each context and introduced an extra stage into the review process, where the Peer Review Panel reviews voting results. The Panel identifies complex dynamics, as well as gaps, in each context, and can award additional grants. Based on contextual analysis for each sub-region, voting feedback and review of the final voting results power regional funding strategies. This is also connected to overall analyses about which regions are continuously being underfunded. FRIDA's grantmaking budgeting works to bridge these funding gaps.



**ACROSS GEOGRAPHIES THIS CAN LOOK
DIFFERENTLY, FOR INSTANCE:**



In West, East, Central and Southern Africa, the voting process is organized in English and French sub-regionally and thematically. For instance, there are separate voting groups for LBTQ+ organizing, FGM/child-marriage-focused collectives, climate and environmental justice, art, etc. Given how many proposals we receive, this has allowed for more diverse strategies and approaches to be voted on and supported.

In Latin America, the voting is sub-regional, country-based and also addresses the access of large cities and more remote contexts. We have also established priorities around supporting Indigenous and Afro-descendant organizing. The process is also organized in Spanish and Portuguese.

In the Caribbean, the voting process is in three languages, which means that everyone's proposal most likely needs to be translated into all three, which may require more thought.

Southwest Asia and North Africa have the voting organized according to sub-region, country, language access, and large cities vs more remote contexts.

In other regions, voting groups are sub-regional, language- and country-based, and facilitated with mindfulness of feminist movement and social justice organizing history, socio-political and cultural dynamics, and how interlocking systems of oppression work within them.

In respect to this, young feminist collectives who apply from the countries that are perceived as part of different regions get to choose the region that they feel most connected to, instead of being placed into regions based only on geography. There are shared histories that connect different contexts, communities and cultures that aren't just about geographic proximity. This disrupts dominant narratives about regions, borders and connection, and decolonizes the idea of distribution of wealth and resources. In many reports on social justice funding, the data is divided per region, which doesn't take into consideration which countries, contexts or thematics within those regions are continually underfunded. There are many realities that exist simultaneously, and we can learn and address different experiences in community with each other during the participatory grantmaking process.

✿ FRIDA NEEDS TO CONTINUE TO EXPAND ITS KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SOCIO-POLITICAL CONDITIONS THAT AFFECT YOUNG FEMINIST ORGANIZING IN EACH FOCUS REGION IN ORDER TO CREATE CONDITIONS FOR MEANINGFUL AND ACCESSIBLE PARTICIPATION FROM AN INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVE.

✿ FRIDA NEEDS TO SHARE WITH APPLICANTS WHAT CRITERIA ARE CONSIDERED WHEN VOTING GROUPS ARE MADE, AND THAT THERE IS ANOTHER LAYER OF REVIEW AFTER THE VOTES HAVE BEEN TALLIED.

✿ FRIDA SHOULD CONTINUE TO SHARE HOW MANY VOTING GROUPS THERE ARE AND HOW MANY GRANTS WILL BE AVAILABLE IN EACH REGION.



WHAT IF SOMEONE COPIES OUR IDEA?

The majority of groups shared in the feedback process that the most valuable aspect of FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process is that they got to learn about and witness the abundance of organizing strategies and the resilience of young feminist movements in their context. However, some groups expressed a concern that others would take their ideas and request funding for them elsewhere. This was an especially present concern in contexts that have seen irresponsible traditional and charity funding that has increased silos, creation of 'NGO businesses' and competition for resources. These concerns exist in both traditional and in peer review participatory grantmaking processes.

However, intersectional, decolonizing and movement-informed funding strategies are important lenses for resource distribution. Otherwise, many emerging organizations or those operating in challenging contexts may stay largely underfunded and movement frictions may become even more profound. Many collectives have shared that funders often find groups with more visibility and access in their contexts to be more trustworthy to manage funds and therefore prioritize them in calls for applications. In this dynamic, those groups who might have more visibility may adopt another collective's idea or a strategy without working in collaboration with them. We recognize this challenge, so we ask groups to share in their proposal summary only the information they want other groups to read. We remind groups of confidentiality and ensure there is a due diligence process before groups are moved into the voting process.

At the same time, all groups have been willing to connect with others after the voting process to share their knowledge, ask questions and sometimes apply similar strategies in their own contexts. They let FRIDA know which groups they'd like to connect with and why. For example, one group shared that learning about how another group set up their research process inspired them to approach their own research in a similar way. All groups have shared that if any group is interested in learning about their work, that group can reach out to them. The movement exchange component of FRIDA's participatory process has been the most rewarding experience for the majority of applicants. One of the main findings is that all groups felt inspired by each other, and inspiration is an important driver of organizing in movements for justice. Thus, this is more about creating mechanisms that make this knowledge exchange transparent, reciprocal and mutually accountable. The peer exchange in this process needs to be facilitated so that groups can track how they contribute to each other's work, and share back about how they have adapted new learnings.

For the sustainability of feminist movements, it is critical to have an abundance of successful strategies shared and replicated across the movements' intersections.



This can multiply the impact and alignment of our work. For this reason, we want to strengthen FRIDA's facilitation process so when groups are looking for inspiration and want to learn more about each other's strategies they can directly reach out and connect with one another.

✱ FRIDA SHOULD BUILD A MECHANISM FOR CONNECTING GROUPS AFTER THE VOTING PROCESS TO EXCHANGE KNOWLEDGE AND BUILD CONNECTIONS.

✱ WHILE FRIDA NEEDS TO MAINTAIN ITS PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING PROCESS'S TRANSPARENCY, WE MUST ALSO CONSIDER HOW TO PROTECT WITH CONFIDENTIALITY ANY INFORMATION THAT GROUPS WOULD LIKE TO SHARE ONLY WITH FRIDA.

WHAT IF THE GROUPS KNOW EACH OTHER IN THE VOTING PROCESS, EVEN WHEN ANONYMOUS?

Even though some groups might indeed recognize each other despite the anonymity of the voting process, and even if they do vote for each other, it doesn't sway the voting much because each group needs to vote for **5 different groups**. The main reason for the anonymity is not just to protect groups who are familiar with each other from voting for one another. It is to ensure that there is a layer of safety and confidentiality in the process. If a group knows another group, and they believe they are doing great work and want to give them a solidarity vote, this is still part of the movement connection our participatory process seeks to nourish. It also doesn't guarantee any group will receive funding, since 15 other collectives in that voting group also need to vote for a group in order for them to get the highest vote. Groups need to vote in alignment with each other in order for a group to receive a grant, and they also must share why they believe the groups they vote for should receive funding. It is a collective decision-making process, so no group receives funding just because one or two groups know them and vote for them.



IS THERE ANOTHER LAYER OF REVIEW FOR THE VOTING RESULTS?

We recognize that for many young feminist collectives who participate in our grantmaking process, this is their first time engaging with a grantmaking model of this kind. Also, not all groups are familiar with non-profit language, which as much as we are trying to move away from it, still dominates how we speak about funding. To add an extra layer of support, FRIDA's Peer Review Panel reviews the voting results after the voting process is done, and identifies gaps, underrepresented issues and communities, or if any groups haven't received votes due to potential bias and impartiality. Once the Peer Review Panel reviews the groups who received the most votes, they get to add additional information about each proposal, including if they feel a proposal fits an underfunded issue, thematic or community that has not been funded before. They can also add notes in proposals addressing bias, access and any other challenges that groups may have faced in the voting process.

This layer of review helps us understand more deeply how systems of oppression inhabit movement spaces and sometimes direct the outcome of participatory decision-making processes. For example, if two groups have the same number of votes and FRIDA can fund only one, the Peer Review Panel members will make the final decision with an intersectional lens and consideration about access to funding. In the same way, the Panel can award additional grants to underresourced communities and provide overall feedback on the voting process to ensure it aligns with the values and principles of FRIDA's model. This also responds to the request from young feminist collectives for FRIDA to conduct a final review of the voting process to address bias and access that might not have been fully transparent earlier.

✿ FRIDA NEEDS TO SHARE THE DETAILS OF ITS PEER REVIEW PANEL PROCESS WITH THE COMMUNITY AND ALSO ENSURE THE TOOLS AND GUIDELINES PROVIDED TO PEER REVIEW PANELS ARE UPDATED WITH FEEDBACK BEFORE EACH CYCLE.

✿ FRIDA MUST ENSURE THAT GROUPS ARE INFORMED WHEN ADVISORS AWARD ADDITIONAL GRANTS, AND MUST SHARE ANY IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE PEER REVIEW PANEL'S REVIEW OF FINAL VOTES.



Movement Knowledge Exchange, Connection and Alignment

MOVEMENT CONNECTIONS THROUGHOUT THE PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING PROCESS

The majority of young feminist groups have shared that FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process allowed them to learn about the diversity of organizing in their region and envision possibilities to connect across geographies. They get to experience their organizing as part of a larger movement vision where everyone's work is valuable and important for the larger movement's resilience, sustainability and growth. Different perspectives speak to each other and build on each other's visions, bringing more movement cohesion across a diversity of organizing. This is a potent space that can catalyse young feminist movement connection that goes beyond FRIDA's grantmaking process. Participatory grantmaking processes with this connective component indeed can expand empathy, compassion and understanding for the many varied social issues impacting the lives of people who share the same movement space. Young feminist collectives can build new currents of solidarity through this kind of knowledge sharing and can uplift each other's activism through this process. Almost all groups have expressed the desire to connect with others in the voting process, and have shared a rationale for why that connection was important for them. Many groups have shared that their vision for feminist futures expanded when connecting with others, as did their understanding that this struggle requires generative connections and collaborative practices to guide the way.

During the voting process, groups get to support each other's proposals and advocate for work different from their own to receive funding. They also get to express any questions, doubts and concerns about any of the proposals. The questions have usually been less technical and more about care for groups' well-being, safety and capacity needs during the implementation of their projects. Also, many have expressed a deep sense of compassion and unease about how many collectives might not receive funding in the current grantmaking cycle. Many groups have shared that even if their collective doesn't receive the funding, the news is less challenging because they know that other important young feminist strategies and ideas are receiving the funding instead. As one participating collective put it, they were not disappointed "because

we are part of those movements, the work of others benefits us too, our communities and speaks to our work.' An example of the deep solidarity that can be inspired in this grantmaking process is that after receiving a grant from FRIDA through a participatory process, a couple of groups returned their grant. They witnessed other amazing organizing work that needed resourcing, and because another funding opportunity came through for them, they decided that their FRIDA grant should go to other groups. **The participatory grantmaking process invites us to learn about new strategies and struggles and engage from a place of compassion, as well as to practice reimagining and co-creating justice spaces between us.**

✱ FRIDA SHOULD EXPLORE WHAT CAPACITIES ARE NEEDED TO CREATE A SAFE SYSTEM THAT COULD FACILITATE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN COLLECTIVES AFTER THE VOTING PROCESS.

✱ FRIDA COULD EXPAND THE CURRENT PLATFORM THEY USE TO SUPPORT GROUPS TO CONNECT IN THIS PROCESS, AS WELL AS USE THE PLATFORM TO SHARE RESOURCES WITH A BROADER YOUNG FEMINIST COMMUNITY, ALLOW CURRENT GRANTEE PARTNERS TO CONNECT WITH OTHERS APPLYING IN THEIR REGION, AND COLLABORATE.

HOWEVER, IT IS NOT NECESSARILY A NON-COMPETITIVE PROCESS

Participatory grantmaking can help us practice more collaboration and solidarity when making decisions about resources, but won't feel non-competitive for everyone. Participatory decision-making is not necessarily the opposite of competition, and participation alone without a caring infrastructure won't inspire solidarity. If we don't recognize that participation and competition can co-exist in our process simultaneously, we fail to acknowledge the dynamics imposed by oppression and inequality that don't just disappear even in a system that at its core intends to challenge those dynamics. The current configuration of structural privilege and oppression across the world's contexts is always present in funders' processes. Even when we are establishing alternative practices, they will not necessarily be free of competition, impartiality, disagreement or mistrust. Organizers show up to our process from very different conditions and levels of access. We need to acknowledge the complexities that exist and recognize that participatory processes are not always simple. Many collectives mobilize a lot of their internal resources to apply for funding, especially to international funders and private philanthropy. That application carries their power, their struggle and solutions that would bring them closer to the futures they are dreaming of. Not receiving much needed resources can be equally disappointing in any grantmaking

process, even when it's participatory, because of the often precarious positions of organizations. One group has shared with us that it was hard for them to show up and support other groups' proposals even though they were aligned with their values, because at that moment they were organizing from a place of exhaustion and limited capacity and resources. Some groups have shared that it was simultaneously rewarding and challenging to know that their application was reviewed next to others and that so much important organizing work requires resources. This might not be reality for everyone, but we can't overlook the fact that in each cycle, more than 400 groups don't receive a grant from FRIDA. For this reason, we don't expect that participation alone in our grantmaking practices will make them non-competitive, but it does cultivate space for our compassion, empathy and trust to grow in spite of it.

✿ MANY GROUPS THAT RECEIVE GRANTS HAVE BEEN INTERESTED IN COLLABORATING WITH THOSE THAT DID NOT RECEIVE A GRANT. FRIDA CAN SUPPORT THIS CONNECTION.

✿ FRIDA IS COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING GROUPS WHO GO THROUGH OUR VOTING PROCESS TO CONNECT WITH OTHER DONORS AND SISTER FUNDS WHO COULD POTENTIALLY SUPPORT THE GROUPS THAT WE COULDN'T DURING EACH CYCLE. WE ASK GROUPS FOR THEIR CONSENT TO SHARE THEIR PROPOSAL AND CONTACT INFORMATION WITH OTHER FUNDERS.



REBUILDING TRUST IN OUR CONNECTIONS

The competitive mindset over resources in social justice organizing is rooted in many years of funding practices that have not prioritized catalysing connections across movements. In many cases, non-transparent funding strategies have driven movement frictions, encouraged work in silos and put underfunded and marginalized communities in precarious positions. These philanthropic landscape patterns have created the conditions for competition. Funders who wish to truly support movements hold a large responsibility to break cycles of competition and encourage connection instead. Movements for justice need funding and support mechanisms that centre movement needs and interests and that inspire collaboration, solidarity and mutual accountability. Participatory grantmaking is one way to challenge these dynamics and form new kinds of relationships between funders and movements. Competitive systems inhibit our capacity to build connections across movements, but the participatory grantmaking process in itself focuses on relationship-building prior to final decision-making outcomes.

Participatory grantmaking practices have the potential to challenge the competitive and neoliberal capitalist way of working in isolation from community and other organizing. They remind us of solidarity economies and principles of collaboration that sustain our work and allow us to practice at a small scale what we hope to grow into wider movement practices. FRIDA's process is about learning to make funding decisions collectively, knowing that all organizing is interconnected and equally important. Funders need systems that facilitate learning, exchange and active solidarity and inspiration, while recognizing that all collectives that apply for funding might equally be needing the grants. Understanding this can help funders grasp the full potential of participatory grantmaking, while acknowledging and addressing its limitations.



VOTING FEEDBACK: WHEN RESULT MATCHES CONTRIBUTION

When communities connect with the impact of their engagement in the grantmaking process, it can fundamentally change how they relate to their power and their participation in collective action and transformation within their communities. Young feminist collectives get to witness and be in relationship with the impact of their participation, and also that there is some level of movement alignment in the results that emerge. The voting process is very diverse and involves many radical and underfunded organizing strategies, innovative approaches, or solutions that might seem risky or may commonly not receive support through traditional funding. A transparent, movement-driven participatory process intervenes in organizing dynamics that are affected by interlocking systems of oppression and funding that reinforces competition. We interrupt these patterns and expectations by creating space to witness interconnectedness and practice compassion, accountability and active solidarity.

Even though among applicants there are many differences in approaches, priorities and alignments, some shared framework around values and principles emerges in the final voting decisions. The opportunities and challenges that groups have shared with us have been consistent based on values of safety, mutual respect, connection and liberation strategies. Supporting young feminist collectives to experience this synergy and values alignment is just as important as the decision-making outcomes.

This model allows collectives to uplift and affirm each other and build supportive relationships that contribute to community accountability politics based on values of safety, respect, mutual responsibility, connection and collective liberation. Young feminist collectives care how funding is distributed in their context and feel that their participation in those decisions is impactful. Many groups shared that they felt even larger commitment to their work and share their progress with their peers who voted for them. They felt a deeper sense of responsibility, especially because they know how many great proposals were in the process. Groups who receive grants share solidarity notes to those who voted for them, and many have expressed a desire for FRIDA to connect them after the voting, so they can work collaboratively beyond FRIDA.

Even when there is a feeling of competitiveness, we witness the compassion and empathy that guide groups' approaches to this decision-making process. This shows up in the voting rationale that they share for each group they gift their vote to. In their rationale, groups always apply context analyses and intersectional lenses about work that is under-resourced in their region and which collectives' funders may

be less likely to prioritize. This voting feedback not only influences the final results, but also some of FRIDA's overall funding criteria. For instance, income generating activities have existed separately from FRIDA's funding criteria for a long time. However, we saw in one voting process that a group who wanted to open an income generating queer space to support their LGBTQI+ work received a vote from everyone in their voting group. All collectives who voted for them emphasized how important autonomous financing is in their context and that more projects like that should be supported. Now, FRIDA does fund income generating activities that are resourcing groups' activism. This is just one of many examples of how this voting process changes our strategy and criteria and allows us to apply more context-specific approaches based on this applicant feedback.

✿ FRIDA SHOULD EXPAND THE CURRENT PLATFORM SO THAT THERE IS MORE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE VOTING RATIONALES THAT GROUPS LEAVE FOR EACH OTHER. THIS MAY HELP GROUPS SEE HOW MUCH TIME AND EFFORT OTHER APPLICANTS HAVE COMMITTED TO READING THEIR APPLICATION, AND UNDERSTAND HOW OTHER GROUPS FELT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR THEIR WORK TO BE FUNDED.








Internal Reflections and Challenges

ON WELL-BEING AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSITIONS

From its inception, FRIDA's grantmaking process was led and facilitated by one staff member and an advisory committee of young feminist activists. Over the years, FRIDA's participatory grantmaking model has been modified to match the needs of young feminist movements. First-hand experiences of young feminist organizing and needs is built into the grantmaking process that exists today, and it has strengthened trust between FRIDA grantmaking staff and young feminist applicants. However, during the moments of limited capacity, it has been key for FRIDA's participatory model to be facilitated by staff that come from young feminist organizing.

Even though FRIDA's staff capacities have grown over time, we need to acknowledge that as we celebrate our work, we also need to reflect on the resources that facilitating a meaningful participatory decision-making process requires—resources as in staff, time, knowledge, patience, deep care and attention to the applicants and guidance every step of the way. FRIDA is committed to providing these resources because we know it takes a feminist village to facilitate a participatory process, improve systems and allow for sustainable flow of knowledge across the FRIDA young feminist community. Intersectional approaches and knowledge about every region and context, and the dynamics within them, are necessary to continue to create space and access for a meaningful participatory processes. With limited capacity, it has been overwhelming for grantmaking staff to facilitate the grantmaking process, build, adapt and evaluate the system, and also document all the learnings to support sustainable transitions. We have witnessed what happens when one person is holding all this knowledge and how long the orientation process can take, which makes this kind of approach unsustainable. In the 2022 cycle, transitions and lack of internal capacity have affected the length of the process. Moving forward, we plan to reflect on the capacity systems needed for this model to be sustainable during staff transitions when new staff members join the grantmaking team.





✿ FRIDA NEEDS TO IDENTIFY WHAT IS NECESSARY FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THEIR GRANTMAKING PROCESS AND WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE IN THE MODEL TO MAKE KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER MORE STRAIGHTFORWARD.

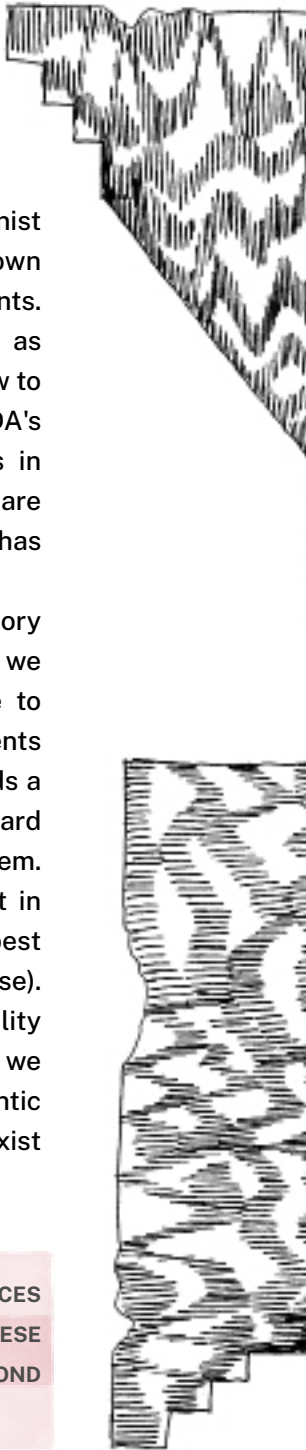
✿ FRIDA NEEDS TO DECENTRALIZE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ITS GRANTMAKING PROCESS SO THAT IT IS HELD BY MULTIPLE STAFF MEMBERS.

BUILDING PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES WITH YOUNG FEMINIST MOVEMENTS

This research process has shown us that the majority of young feminist collectives apply participatory approaches to decision-making within their own organizations, as well as with their communities and others in feminist movements. Young feminist organizers have expressed that they envision feminist funders as participatory grantmakers, and have offered us great ideas and alternatives on how to improve our model. Many groups have also shared that after participating in FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process, they used similar decision-making models in their organizations. There is an opportunity to build knowledge and solutions that are movement-led and practices that better match organizers' needs. Participation has helped feminist organizers build networks of support and expend collective vision.

Over the years, FRIDA has mostly built its knowledge about participatory grantmaking practice with the philanthropic community and peer funders. As we continue to be part of a philanthropic community of practice, we would love to reimagine this knowledge co-creation space together with young feminist movements and consider further how this exchange could look in practice. Philanthropy needs a narrative shift toward making knowledge production more participatory, and toward engaging movements in creating solutions for the processes that concern them. Also, there are strong young feminist participatory practices that already exist in movements, which many funders can learn from to create funding approaches that best respond to each movement context (and compensate movements for their expertise). There are also many different ways to build relationships of solidarity, accountability and support in our respective contexts. Through participatory knowledge creation, we want to practice young feminist movement resourcing solutions, cultivate authentic movement connection and embody feminist solidarity practices that continue to exist even when philanthropy doesn't.

✿ FRIDA SHOULD SUPPORT KNOWLEDGE CO-CREATION ABOUT PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES TOGETHER WITH YOUNG FEMINIST MOVEMENTS IN A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE WHERE THESE LEARNINGS, RESOURCES, AND SOLUTIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY BEYOND GRANTMAKING PROCESS





PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES HAVE THEIR OWN PACE

There have been many discussions about how participatory grantmaking processes take more time than a more transitional grantmaking process, but we believe this is not necessarily accurate, especially when a participatory process is set up well. Meaningful participation might require extra time and attention if we don't have a structure that holds all important pieces and complexities of the process together. Setting up these systems might also take some time, and we believe that investing this time is essential in all funding processes, regardless of whether they are participatory or not. We are resourcing organizing that is complex, and we need to fund responsibly. FRIDA's participatory processes require not only time, resources and capacity, but also experience. We have learned that over time some stages of our process become more straightforward because everyone participating has more experience. We have learned which systems we need to have in place to accelerate stages that could take time otherwise. We moved from Excel sheets to comprehensive grantmaking systems that we also designed, and this transition has taken time. We need to recognize that even though participation might take time, our readiness and systems for support need to be in place to minimize how much time everything takes. For us, the systems that facilitate this participatory process need to be part of the main principle and values of our model.

Participatory grantmaking processes have a great impact beyond funding, and we are continuously learning about this potential. Learnings from participatory processes have been an important tool for creating collaborative funding strategies within FRIDA that today allow for many other programmatic and grantmaking decisions to move more quickly.



THE POSSIBLE FUTURES WE ENVISION FOR THIS MODEL

PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING IS HOW WE MOVE FORWARD

Young feminists movement envision FRIDA using a feminist participatory grantmaking process where they have a say in the final decision making so FRIDA will stay committed to its current model. This commitment also means continually improving the model, as we have been doing since even before this evaluation, so that we can adapt it and discover all the possibilities it holds beyond decisions about distribution of resources. Participatory processes can strengthen movement exchange, connections and alignment, all of which add important quality and value to the resources we share. Now we have more clarity about how we can centre our model around aspects that feel rewarding to and resonate with young feminist community, without adding an extra layer of labour or difficulty for them. We will adapt our system and process to ensure young feminists feel invited to participate in decisions that concern them, and in ways that recognize their agency and impact, rather than making them feel like they are participation out of obligation to a funder.

EXPLORING AN INTEGRATED MODEL

An integrated model would mean keeping the voting process optional so that those who have the time can participate, while those who don't can opt out without impacting the voting results. Groups would still get to read about each other's work, vote and leave feedback that supports the groups they want to see receive funding. All the information would then still go to a Peer Review Panel consisting of a diverse group of activists from the Advisory and grantee partner communities. The Peer Review Panel would then make final decisions based on the information from the voting process, regional and thematic funding strategies and their internal voting. To adapt this process to a new integrated model, FRIDA would need to:

EXPAND PEER REVIEW PANEL

One key reflection for us is that we must consider organizers' time, as well as compensation for their contribution to this process. For this reason, we have explored the possibility of expanding Peer Review Panels to include current and transitioned grantee partner communities. This pilot model, which we tried out over the last two years, helped us see how much including grantee partners in this phase of the process improved participation in decision-making overall. This new model is possible today because FRIDA is supporting more than 250 partners at the moment across regions that are diverse in backgrounds, organizing strategies, languages and access, which adds necessary nuance and intersections to the Peer Review Panel. There is great interest among grantee partners to participate in this process, and FRIDA can now compensate them more easily for their contributions. Adopting it into our open call for proposals would also allow for movement connection, shared accountability and establishment of trust between Advisory, staff, and grantee communities. This way the final decisions would be made by the Peer Review Panel and not relaying only on the voting process from the applicants. This model entails increasing our budget for grantee partner participation, implementing new approaches to facilitating the process and increasing staff capacity. Overall, however, this would make the application review and decision-making process faster with clearer timelines and clarity of roles. The process would also have increased transparency, while final decisions would still be made by the larger young feminist community forming the Peer Review Panel.

KEEP THE VOTING PROCESS OPTIONAL

The majority of young feminist collective applicants found their experience participating in the process to be unique and rewarding. Therefore, their participation should remain part of FRIDA's grantmaking process, but with more focus placed on movement-informed decision-making, transparency, trust-building, connection and learning. Young feminist collectives should get to read about each other's work, collectively decide about the priorities and share feedback within the boundaries of their capacities, interest and what feels generative. Since FRIDA doesn't have the structure to compensate the 500 collectives who participate in each voting cycle, the voting should be optional and groups should receive clear communication about the benefits of taking part. The feedback and data show that the majority of groups would still take part in this process, however, we want to enable optional participation for groups who for any reason don't feel they can contribute, but want to observe, learn and maybe connect later on. FRIDA would still receive information from the voting process that informs our regional and thematic funding strategies and criteria, as well as our

knowledge about the needs of young feminist organizers, and the voting feedback can still guide final decisions made by the Peer Review Panel. This process would allow applicants to participate in different ways, while still keeping the process transparent and sensitive to their time and capacities. This would also further help Peer Review Panels and staff to facilitate complexities around bias, access and misalignment, while still supporting meaningful connections, movement building and resourcing.

COMMIT TO CONTINUOUSLY EXPANDING ACCESS

Participatory processes require continuous commitment to reflection on inequitable power dynamics, accessibility and different complexities that could emerge. FRIDA will explore ways to expand its call for applications to include more languages, consider internet access and create any conditions that need to be in place for certain communities to apply. This also includes creating communications that clarify our processes, make information available in different formats and increase transparency in ways that do not compromise the safety and well-being of those involved. We hope that this report is a start to that communication about our work and the purpose behind this process. We also hope that it will guide clear strategies and outreach plans that continue to expand accessibility and diversity within our processes.

CONNECT GROUPS AFTER THE VOTING PROCESS

FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process creates momentum to challenge, unlearn and heal from unaccountable funder practices that have affected feminist movement infrastructure, and to build more sustainable approaches to resource sharing and distribution. Our approach creates space for mutual accountability, where young feminist collectives get to learn about organizing in their context and how it contributes to their work and our collective liberation. They can build collaborations, learn from each other and build greater movement vision and strategy alignment. Activist movement building in online spaces is possible, and FRIDA has a great opportunity and responsibility to use its funding to expand movement connections, even beyond our grantmaking. FRIDA will explore ways to create an online space where groups who wish to connect after the voting process and collaborate can do so safely. This would require budget and capacity increases in FRIDA and collaborations with other funds and organizations to make this happen.

CO-CREATE WITH YOUNG FEMINIST MOVEMENTS

The conversations with young feminist organizers about participatory approaches to organizing, funding and organizational structures have also been a source of inspiration, both for us and for young feminist organizers. Participatory learning allows different knowledge and experiences to come together and create joint solutions and approaches that centre feminist futures. FRIDA will explore how we can exchange our knowledge about participatory practices with young feminist movements, share solutions and bring those solutions forward into philanthropic contexts. The knowledge that we create together about meaningful participation and connection should also live beyond FRIDA's grantmaking process and outlive philanthropy as an embodied practice.

SUSTAINABLE GRANTMAKING PRACTICE

FRIDA will spend time before its next grantmaking cycle envisioning the needs, dreams and future of our participatory grantmaking team. To make this model more sustainable, there needs to be decentralization of work, as well as of knowledge creation, memory and documentation of FRIDA's participatory grantmaking process. This would make it possible for staff transitions to take place with more ease, and would help make the grantmaking model more sustainable in the long-term and more open to new changes and growth. Also, FRIDA will reflect on how the funding plus model can look and evolve in ways that are sustainable and responsive to urgent needs, yet still centred on dreaming, practising and strategizing feminist futures.

THIS PUBLICATION IS IN CONVERSATION WITH

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[Conflict of Interest Policy](#), FRIDA
[Code Of Conduct](#), FRIDA



FRIDA | The Young Feminist Fund

Flexibility Resources Inclusivity Diversity Action

Published by:
FRIDA The Young Feminist Fund
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Design: Marina Milanovic / IG@milanovicmarina

Data Analyses Report: Recrear International