

DIALOGUE SUMMARY AND KEY TAKEAWAYS



Women's Economic Justice Grantee Learning Convening

May 27, 2021



On May 27, 2021, the SAGE Fund convened representatives from 14 organizations working on seven projects related to advancing women's economic justice (WEJ) as part of a pilot grantmaking program. This exploratory grant program centers WEJ at the intersections of women's rights, human rights, and global economy issues. The purpose of the convening was to create a platform for the grantee partners to begin to get to know each other and their work, strategies, and goals; hold an initial exchange of ideas about their vision for the work on women's economic justice; and identify areas of potential further learning and exchange.

During the convening, the participants were asked to share one hope, one challenge, and one big idea related to their project and the topic of women's economic justice. Summarized in this report are some key insights and highlights from the conversation, organized by theme.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Impacts on Women

The pandemic has caused a greater impoverishment of women since they've had to quit their jobs. There's also been a spike in instances of domestic violence. Additionally, the overburden of women has been exacerbated during the pandemic as care needs have increased and men have done little to support with household chores, childcare, and education. Feminism in Chile is becoming more popular as the pandemic has made more visible that women's unpaid work is sustaining the economic system. The topic of care work is top of mind for both women and government authorities.

Teresa Valdés, Observatorio de Género y Equidad (OGE), Chile

The pandemic has increased attention to the role of care - paid and unpaid - which means we don't have to work as hard to make the case. But it is unclear whether this attention will result in concrete and transformative fiscal and economic policy changes.

Neelanjana Mukhia, ActionAid, India

The pandemic has made women workers more vulnerable both in the production and reproduction. Garment workers lost income, some lost their jobs. Garment workers are among the ones who keep working amidst the risk of getting the virus while others can work from home.

Dina Septi, Lembaga Informasi Perburuhan Sedane (LIPS), Indonesia

The pandemic has meant that workers are laid off without benefits or are not getting their required bonus for religious holidays. Women must share income with children who are studying from home, who need cell phone credits. Yet, companies are cutting salaries. Women's wages are being cut more so than men. There are some companies who are actually being flooded with work throughout the pandemic, yet they say because of COVID-19 they must reduce the wages of women workers.

Sumiyati, National Industrial Workers Union Federation (SPN), Indonesia

Government Responses to the Pandemic

Countries are relying a lot on austerity measures and COVID-19 responses are based on austerity measures.

Lays Ushirobira, Global Alliance for Tax Justice (GATJ), Brazil

Feminist Just Green Future Framing: Key objectives will be around how we increase policy and fiscal space in the Global South, push back on privatization, and push forward greater financing of public services and social protections, so that women's paid and unpaid care work are revalued and are at the center of economies?

Neelanjana Mukhia, ActionAid, India

Covid has laid bare the need to accommodate the way that women experience work and the way that women's unpaid care is not acknowledged. By working cross-thematically with labor unions and women's rights organizations, we've developed an effective platform to drive the urgency of these issues... but it isn't clear going forward what the actual shifts in fiscal space or in broader macroeconomic policy will be to enable real investment in public services, and therefore real investment in the public services that are most impactful for women.

Arianna Kandell, ActionAid, United States

Practical Challenges for Projects

A big challenge has been accessibility, access to the internet. A lot of the small projects have not, at times, been able to access emails due to challenges in their local contexts, or have had poor connectivity. There is difficulty - particularly with COVID meaning everything has been remote - with trying to be as inclusive as possible of people who don't have the same access to systems that we do.

Alex Webber, Womankind Worldwide, UK

We are experiencing barriers of using new technologies to reach all women in such a large country, especially in rural and isolated areas.

Teresa Valdés, Observatorio de Género y Equidad (OGE), Chile

Before the pandemic, union density was already low, but the problem has been exacerbated since then. Sumiyati's union has lost a large number of members. This limits what our project can do, and we might not be able to achieve some of the things we planned to do with the current union density.

Dina Septi, Lembaga Informasi Perburuhan Sedane (LIPS), Indonesia

OTHER EMERGING CHALLENGES ACROSS CONTEXTS

Patriarchy and Gender Discrimination

Women's work is not paid and is not even recognized as work. Women don't see themselves as contributing to the family economy. Everything that is seen as belonging to a family is under the name of a man, and a woman doesn't have ownership of property so that she can feel ownership over the work she is doing.

Lily Mejía, FIAN Honduras, Honduras

Patriarchy makes it difficult to reform inheritance law, as many think that equality would be against religion.

There is also a link to Covid as there is unequal access to healthcare in Maghreb countries.

Khitem Bargaoui, Fédération Internationale Pour Les Droits Humains (FIDH), Tunisia

ATFD began working on equal inheritance law in 1999. Then, there were maybe 100 people who supported this cause. It was taboo. Today, there are several thousands of people who believe in this idea. Public opinion is changing. We will continue to struggle, and maybe in a few years we will have more equality.

Ramy Khouili, Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates (ATFD), Tunisia

Authoritarianism and Shrinking Civic Space

One of the big challenges is the shrinking space for civil society, including at the international level but also at the national level, the rise of authoritarian governments, the increase in anti-human rights policies... I think the context in Honduras also is extremely worrisome at that level, and I think that is one of the challenges we see, I would say, internationally.

Daniel Fyfe, FIAN International, Switzerland

This may not be Maghreb-specific, but we are seeing conservative and opportunistic movements growing in the region. These are sexist groups who are against women's rights. This will be our main challenge in the coming years.

Ramy Khouili, Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates (ATFD), Tunisia

In Maghreb, we keep fighting to establish democratic regions. Within our organizations, we are convinced that a democratic system is pivotal to establish a fair economic system. A democratic system means we can support fair legislation and have fair development based on the real needs of each citizen.

Khitem Bargaoui, Fédération Internationale Pour Les Droits Humains (FIDH), Tunisia



BUILDING POWER OF WOMEN WORKERS AND WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS FROM THE SOUTH

Womankind Worldwide would like to create an intervention model to build the collective capacity of grassroots women's rights organizations. An opportunity came from a Needs Assessment conducted with Latin American and African organizations, to test and validate an approach for South-South communications that brings together these sets of grassroots women's rights organizations around the demands that women have on taxation (because of the unequal share of the burden they hold), and the need for states and state funds to respond to these demands.

Jorge Sanchez Chiara, Womankind Worldwide, UK

Bringing workers at the bottom of supply chains directly into bargaining with brands, retailers, etc. How are people being impacted actually getting to speak with, negotiate with, bargain with the institutions that actually hold the power?

Jessica Champagne, Workers Rights Consortium, United States

There is an opportunity for us to think of these changes together: changes in economic systems, changes in the way unpaid care work is structured. Our big idea is to mobilize collectively people from the Global South and strengthen South-South cooperation in order to push for these changes.

Lays Ushirobira, Global Alliance for Tax Justice (GATJ), Brazil

Through this project I can see that there is an opportunity to strengthen the women's movement and I hope this can create greater changes within the structure and activities in the SPN union to strengthen the capacity of women.


Sumiyati, National Industrial Workers Union Federation (SPN), Indonesia

The implementation of the feminist agenda methodology ("Cooking Up Political Agendas") will strengthen the participation of women in communities. We see an increased interest of women in communities to get involved in these processes and to take part in the work being developed in the field. This guide will help women locally to build a political agenda that can promote and contribute to structural changes.

Lily Mejía, FIAN Honduras, Honduras, and Andrea Nuila, FIAN International, Germany



OBSERVATIONS AND INSIGHTS OF TRENDS ACROSS PROJECTS

1. *Creating alternative economies that work for women.* We are in an important moment of bringing attention to a new economy, new ideas, new realities that are possible for women and others marginalized from the current economic model.
 2. *Strengthening links between the local and global.* How can the local realities of women and workers better inform global norms, frameworks, and decision-making? These projects are bridging the micro to the macro, ensuring that local context informs broader trends and changes macroeconomic policies and interventions.
 3. *Reckoning with the persistence of patriarchy and gender discrimination.* Rising authoritarianism is reducing mobilization and space for civil society. Patriarchy is linked to rising authoritarianism around the world. The pandemic has exacerbated existing gender inequalities and increased gender-based violence as well as women's unpaid care work.
 4. *Emerging new alliances and collaborations.* There is hope in stronger South-South collaborations, as well as emerging alliances between women's rights movements, labor unions, and rural, indigenous, and peasant movements that are building collective power and collective capacity.
- 

Participants

Piloting a Tool for Rural Women's Economic Justice	Karen Lily Mejía , FIAN Honduras, Honduras Claudia Suyapa Pineda Medina, FIAN Honduras, Honduras Andrea Nuila, FIAN International, Germany Daniel Fyfe , FIAN International, Switzerland
Promoting Inheritance Equality to Ensure Economic Justice for Women in the Maghreb Region	Khitem Bargaoui , International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), Tunisia Ramy Khouili, Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates (ATFD), Tunisia
Building Cross-Movement Capacity to Advocate for Tax and Gender Justice	Lays Ushirobira, Global Alliance for Tax Justice (GATJ), Brazil Jorge Sanchez Chiara, Womankind Worldwide (Womankind), UK Alexandra Webber, Womankind Worldwide (Womankind), UK
Generating New Models for Combating GBVH in Indonesian Garment Factories	Jessica Champagne, Workers' Rights Consortium (WRC), USA Dina Septi, Lembaga Informasi Perburuhan Sedane (LIPS), Indonesia Sumiyati, National Industrial Workers Union Federation (SPN), Indonesia
Leveraging Constitutional Reform to Enshrine Women's Economic Justice	Lorena Fries, Corporación Humanas, Chile Teresa Valdés, Observatorio de Género y Equidad, Chile
Building a Cross-Movement Alliance for Women's Labor Rights and Unpaid/Paid Work	Shameem Sheik Dastagir, ActionAid, Kenya Neelanjana Mukhia, ActionAid, India Arianna Kandell, ActionAid, USA
Cross-Movement Building to Eliminate GBVH at Work	Robin Runge, Solidarity Center, USA Gaby Oré Aguilar, Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, Perú

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC JUSTICE PROJECTS

In 2020, the SAGE Fund piloted a new thematic line of grantmaking to support organisations implementing innovative efforts to strengthen women's economic justice and secure women's livelihoods. SAGE sought to support women-led and designed strategies to prevent or remedy the disproportionate negative impacts of economic globalization on women, creating field infrastructure to advance this work and expand the engagement of the women's rights field in economic justice issues. Each project centers around power-building with a strong focus on cross-movement building; strengthening women's leadership and capacity to address systemic causes; and creating platforms for strategizing economic alternatives and agenda-setting.

BUILDING A CROSS-MOVEMENT ALLIANCE FOR WOMEN'S LABOR RIGHTS AND UNPAID/PAID WORK

The project aims to reverse the exploitation of women's paid work and unpaid care work by promoting investments in public services and social protection, strengthening a cross-movement global campaign alliance for women's labor rights, and promoting national-level policy changes in Ghana, Kenya, Liberia and Zimbabwe.

ORGANIZATIONS

- ActionAid International, actionaid.org, Global and Africa
- ActionAid Ghana, ghana.actionaid.org, Ghana
- ActionAid Kenya, kenya.actionaid.org, Kenya
- ActionAid Liberia, liberia.actionaid.org, Liberia
- ActionAid Zimbabwe, zimbabwe.actionaid.org, Zimbabwe

LEVERAGING CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM TO ENSHRINE WOMEN'S ECONOMIC JUSTICE

The project will mobilize, coordinate and build the capacity of Chilean feminist and other social movements to participate in and shape the constitutional process, seizing a historical opportunity to address structural inequality and secure strong protections for women's social and economic rights.

ORGANIZATIONS

- Corporación Humanas, humanas.cl, Chile
- Observatorio de Género y Equidad, oge.cl, Chile
- Centro de Estudios de la Mujer, cem.cl, Chile

PILOTING A TOOL FOR RURAL WOMEN'S ECONOMIC JUSTICE

The project will pilot the implementation of new guide developed to help rural women in Honduras translate recent international human rights standards on rural women's rights and sustainable livelihoods into local transformative agendas and policies around the right to food and climate change.

ORGANIZATIONS

- FIAN Honduras, facebook.com/fianhonduras, Honduras
- FIAN International, fian.org, Germany

BUILDING CROSS-MOVEMENT CAPACITY TO ADVOCATE FOR TAX AND GENDER JUSTICE

The project will strengthen cross-movement capacity and collaboration among Global South women's rights activists working at the intersection of tax and gender justice to advocate for fair and transparent tax policies towards a universal feminist tax system.

ORGANIZATIONS

- Global Alliance for Tax Justice, globaltaxjustice.org, Belgium
- Womankind Worldwide, womankind.org.uk, UK

GENERATING NEW MODELS FOR COMBATING GBVH IN INDONESIAN GARMENT FACTORIES

The project aims to combat gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) in the Indonesian garment industry, through documentation, capacity-building, and brand engagement in order to lay the groundwork for an enforceable brand agreement modeled after the groundbreaking Lesotho agreement on GBVH.

ORGANIZATIONS

- Lembaga Informasi Perburuhan Sedane, lips.or.id, Indonesia
- Worker Rights Consortium, workersrights.org, USA
- National Industrial Workers Union Federation, spn.or.id, Indonesia

PROMOTING INHERITANCE EQUALITY TO ENSURE ECONOMIC JUSTICE FOR WOMEN IN THE MAGHREB REGION

The project will lay the groundwork for a long-term regional strategy to obtain inheritance equality in the Maghreb and advance women's economic justice by ensuring access to and control over financial and natural resources.

ORGANIZATIONS

- Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates, facebook.com/femmesdemocrates, Tunisia
- International Federation of Human Rights, fidh.org/en, France and Tunisia

CROSS-MOVEMENT BUILDING TO ELIMINATE GBVH AT WORK

The project seeks to build cross-movement and women-led organizing to support national campaigns for the ratification of ILO Convention 190 and to challenge social and economic inequality as one of the root causes of gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work.

ORGANIZATION

- Solidarity Center, solidaritycenter.org, Global



The SAGE Fund is a collaborative fund that cultivates breakthroughs in human rights accountability for economic actors – spurring innovation in approaches and building greater field capacity in the human rights movement. The Fund works interactively with groups to pilot new tools and strategies that require more upfront design to increase their likelihood of success. We support multi-tiered partnerships between civil society organizations and affected communities to bring an array of skills, knowledge and leverage points.

Learn more at www.sagefundrights.org