

# LESSONS ON RISKS AND RESILIENCE

What we learnt as a rapid response grantmaker  
and feminist regional fund

2019



FOR WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS  
ASIA & PACIFIC





In this annual report, we have included observations and comments shared by activists from the region – we respect confidentiality and their choice to keep their identities undisclosed.

As part of our efforts to be an environmentally-conscious fund, we encourage you to read this report online.

## ANNUAL REPORT CREDITS

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Women's resilience in the face of adversity, is more than often not talked about. It doesn't make the news. It is rarely talked about in depth during post-recovery cluster meetings. It is almost certainly never talked about in terms of women being our true superheroes in dealing with crises head on and ensuring that families get back to normal as soon as possible. Instead, children are socialised into thinking 'that is the role of a mother', and so it becomes an expectation rather than an example of resilience and strength.

We need to change this narrative, and acknowledge and recognise the critical role of our women during crises.



**OFAKILEVUKA ('OFA) GUTTENBEIL - LIKILIKI  
UAF A&P BOARD MEMBER**

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# SOWING SEEDS OF COURAGE AND CARE

Letter from the Chair - Kamala Chandrakirana



Writing at a time of an escalating global pandemic makes one critically aware of the fragility of our lives and the world we have built. This unprecedented crisis has revealed the good and the ugly around the world, including on our own home ground in Asia and the Pacific. There are countries that have learned the lessons of past epidemics and become global reference points in preventing the deadly spread of COVID-19. Others have remained complacent for too long – unwilling to set aside grand economic ambitions, penalising the poor and marginalised – and as a result, failed to contain the outbreak.

**But we also witness small acts of compassion and solidarity daily, where individuals and solidarity groups reach out to one another despite distances and distancing.**

No doubt, this pandemic will have far-reaching impacts, for better and for worse. As defenders of human rights, we will most likely heighten rather than lower our risk-taking in the post-pandemic world. The stakes have become much bigger. Authoritarian rulers and chauvinist agendas may well flourish, benefiting from new powers obtained during states of emergency.

New imaginings of a different world could also embolden more people to challenge injustices. As demands increase for us to step up and we are called take more risks, we must also make good progress in building our webs of safety and care, within and across our movements. This is where UAF A&P, with its sister funds and partners around the world, comes in.

From the outset four years ago, we envisioned UAF A&P playing its role in a changing world. Our preparedness for this comes from a standing commitment to sharpen the lens to observe and understand our surroundings.

We opened our minds, ready to explore and encourage new ways of working.

We heard loud and clear the call to make bold initiatives, aware of the equal chance for failure or success. We took steps to carry out the slow process of building bridges across long-standing disconnects. Today, navigating the contours of this pandemic, we are even more convinced in our decision to adopt a holistic approach in the work of building resilience, going beyond the urgent moment of threat and bringing focus on the need for community-based systems of safety and care as an integral part of our activism.

**Then and now, our confidence comes from our shared feminist visions and the energy we create together from and for our movements.**

In the meantime, the UAF A&P Team has made sure our organisation is built on a solid foundation for managing risks while staying innovative. All our internal systems are secure and support defenders on the ground. We have increased accessibility of our rapid response grants and continue to reach out to defenders in marginalised and hostile contexts. We have initiated the opening of new spaces and new collaborations to broaden

our constituency of support from within Asia and the Pacific, including for more sustainable resourcing. Last November, members of UAF A&P's governance bodies – the regional board and the national boards in the Philippines and Australia – came together for the first time and adopted a charter to guide us all under a common framework ensuring that we walk in sync towards our shared goals.

**I am proud to say UAF A&P continues to set the necessary building blocks for a professional and accountable organisation that is also a mindful and caring one. This is what we will stand on as we face the new (and familiar) challenges of today and the post-COVID-19 world.**

Jakarta, 1 April 2020





# REFLECTING ON RISK IN ACTIVISM

Notes from our Co-Leads – Mary Jane N Real and Virisila Buadromo



In 2019, we focused on grounding our programmes in what we were learning from our constituents. Human rights violations against activists in Asia and the Pacific are continuously intensifying. As a feminist rapid response grantmaker in Asia and the Pacific, risk has become an inescapable feature of activism. Therefore, understanding how we address risk, and how we do not add to the danger activists face, becomes imperative for us.

**How we respond to risk is a careful balance between recognising and addressing it, without valorising it.**

Defenders themselves say risk trivialises the other visible and invisible threats, such as defamation, slander, and other forms of psychological threats. These are also human rights violations. Equating the definition of a defender to the exposure to risk also delegitimises activists who have been at the forefront of defending human rights, whether they are exposed to bodily harm or threats to their life, or not. As a feminist fund, we are cognizant of how many of our grantees and advisors have normalised risk to cope with the state of danger they live in. One high-risk defender, who continually faces baseless lawsuits and arrests, told us how normal it had become to change her daily routines, secure personal communications even with friends and family, and continually relocate to new places to stay. Her survival depends on an

extensive support network of family and friends, colleagues, allies, and organisations in the social movements she belongs to.

We feel it is important not to glamourise risk, which heralds the individual hero, and diminishes the strategic support of social movements that sustain activists. As applications from activists increased, and underlined the urgent need for protection, we raised our budget for rapid response grantmaking.





In 2019, a bulk of our grants went to support security and well-being needs, such as strengthening physical security and psychological support. We also supported well-being needs expressed by women and non-binary activists in these regions, such as emergency medical assistance and healthcare for those without health insurance. Our portfolio of grants expanded beyond Rapid Response to help defenders build their own systems of protection and care through our Resourcing Resilience Grants and Webs of Safety and Care Grants. These grants are intended to support them build a systemic response to the unabated risk they face, and not simply depend on adhoc emergency assistance.

**As a feminist fund, we see risk as an intentional interaction with uncertainty.**

We fundraise responsibly to secure our annual budget within our three-year strategic plan. Our choice to remain small in terms of our budget and operations to stay agile and flexible in the face of financial risks, and political risks in the countries we work in, is deliberate. Rather than expand our own organisation's operations, we funded a scoping study in the Pacific that helped us understand how we can support a feminist resource mobilisation architecture promoting the resilience of feminist movements in the region by connecting them to national, sub-regional and regional funds. We are also revising our notions of accountability and risk exposure of our donors. In our financial audit, we redact identifiable data on our grantees, reducing risk of exposure for them. For those donors who require us to identify risk, and specify steps for mitigation, we engage with them and share how risk is central to our mandate. This is also why we have adopted an Emergent Learning Framework for our monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEAL) system instead of traditional log-frames. It allows us the flexibility to implement our programmes, while adjusting our strategies periodically.

Regular data collection and timely analysis help make probable consequences visible and support our decisions to mitigate risk. It guides us along a path that diverges from the numbers and key performance indicators-driven monitoring and evaluation methods. Grounded in learning questions and hypotheses, the framework encourages us to think outside the box when responding to the constant yet varying nature of risks. We realise that managing risks requires building resilience – not only externally, but also within our

organisation. Our programmes are innovative and our operations nimble, and we are learning to manage risks present in the hostile political contexts we work in.

**We realise that supporting women and non-binary activists to become resilient will require multi-pronged, multi-year strategies that are collective and sustainable for communities.**

Our pilot testing of the Webs of Safety and Care initiative is already showing us that social relationships of trust and empathy underpin resilience. We hope that experimenting with emergent practices, particularly **in our current responses to the COVID-19 pandemic**, will help us inform and contribute towards building resiliency of activists worldwide.







The past decade has shown severe reverses to democratic processes in Asia and the Pacific, particularly with the resurgence in authoritarian powers. In countries like China, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam, as authoritarian regimes continued to be the political reality, women and non-binary activists reported no cessation in the multiple forms of discrimination they face. In 2019, as Hong Kong symbolised civilian protests against authoritarianism, women on the frontlines **reported being targeted with sexual violence and other forms of harassment.**

In several countries, such as India, Myanmar, Philippines, and Sri Lanka, majoritarian political parties with hardline agendas have supported the resurgence of far-right populism; nativist/nationalist politics; and new religious right alliances.

In India, women from minority communities led the **Shaheen Bagh resistance** against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) that was passed and was widely criticised for being discriminatory against women, transgender persons, social groups that are considered 'lower caste', and persons with disabilities, apart from minority communities. The sit-in was primarily led and sustained by Muslim women, including senior women, who

largely came from no prior direct activism backgrounds, heralding a major shift in the activism demographic in India. It was also a coming together of several women's and trans-rights movements to make themselves heard nationally and internationally.

Last year also saw various trends in online news dissemination and muzzling of media, such as surge in fake news, manipulation of media narratives, and coercion of media houses into accepting populist notions and government actions, across several countries of South Asia and Southeast Asia. **Attacks and threats against Philippine media** were reported since the Duterte administration gained power in 2016.

**Several journalists and social media users were also red-tagged or red-baited by police, military officers, or their intelligence assets and allies.**

Draconian anti-terrorism security laws, and regulations that restrict freedom of expression, association, and assembly, are being used to arrest, detain or kill defenders in countries, such as India and the Philippines.

The imposition of a host of obligations that regulate financial transactions as part of anti-terrorism measures, have also drastically affected the ability of activists under attack to access funds. In many countries including Bangladesh, Malaysia, Nepal and Vietnam, contentious cyber security laws and legislations, have been used to control the public, threaten journalists, and curtail freedom of the press.

A United Nations Human Rights Office's **50-country study** identified the misuse of the online space through hate speech, cyberbullying and smear campaigns as "a trend on the rise, with women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons particularly targeted, including by their own communities".

The report also said cases of intimidation and retaliation against victims, civil society and activists who cooperate with the UN are also rising. The Women Deliver conference reported **a major setback for gender equality without a counterbalance**, due to declining spaces for women's groups, and silencing of outspoken women's voices through trolling or even murder. Human rights defenders are more vulnerable than ever, as state and non-state actors blatantly violate their individual or community's human rights.



## Other trends we are tracking:

- Southeast Asian countries prominently figure among the most dangerous places to be an environmental defender.
- Targeting family members to muzzle or intimidate activists have been documented across several countries.
- Suspending telecommunication connections to stop information spread, and rallying of support for the disaffected has been reported from Kashmir (India), Jakarta, Papua and West Papua (Indonesia), and Rakhine state (Myanmar), among others.
- Defenders continue to go missing or in exile to escape having to face state or quasi-state action.
- Sorcery-related violence continued to endanger the lives of women and girls in several island nations of the Pacific.
- Curbing free media reportage continues to be rampant across Pacific nations, such as Fiji, Tonga and Papua New Guinea (PNG).
- In PNG, research shows domestic violence affects more than two-thirds of women.

An AWID 2019 report on *Toward a Feminist Funding Ecosystem*, describes how 99 percent of gender-related international aid fails to reach women's rights and feminist organisations directly. There is a need to shift power to ensure feminist movements receive money to sustain them and niche feminist funds to work with other funders in the women's funds ecosystem to empower feminist grassroots activism.

# OUR 2019 MILESTONES AND THE LESSONS WE LEARNT





## How do we map the path of our journey year on year?

This question has come up during discussions with the Board, Co-leads, and the team. We chose to be guided by emergent learning – perhaps the first attempt by an organisation to use this practice to create a flexible and adaptable MEAL framework to suit the needs of a rapid response grantmaker.

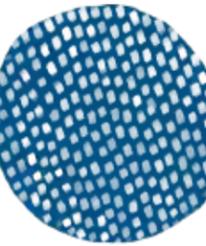
**We are on a journey to find new learnings with relevance for our community of funds, and the larger ecosystem of social movements.**

This report details the progress we made, and presents selected vignettes from our learnings, which were tracked using learning questions we collectively framed in January. Our organisational learnings are structured to answer two key questions, which help us work towards our theory of change.

## What will it take to strengthen the resilience of women and non-binary human rights defenders?

We are also reflecting on our internal processes and practices by asking: what would it take for our organisation to practise a feminist culture of sharing and caring? This annual report presents the progress we have made and the learnings from our various programmes.

All the learnings documented from our programmes respond to learning questions co-created by the teams to help them track progress and challenges over the first three years. The premise in bold across various programme updates is the learning question each team identified as their guiding questions.





## RAPID RESPONSE GRANTMAKING



Over the last two years, UAF A&P gave 87 grants to activists and networks across 18 countries of Asia and the Pacific for their protection and support in adverse or hostile environments, and to boost resilience. We gave 53 grants in 2019, totalling more than US\$219,000, of which 45 grants were for security and the well-being of defenders and their organisations.

Our efforts to expand equitable access for women and non-binary defenders to our rapid response grants was met with some steady progress. In 2019, we added grantees to our roster from seven new countries, including Afghanistan, East Timor, Fiji, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, and Thailand. In total, 27 grants were given to women or non-binary activists from marginalised groups.

**Our advisor network expanded to more than 100 across Asia and the Pacific to support our grantmaking efforts.**

Some practices which helped were directly contacting potential grantees on recommendations from advisors and peer donors; and building outreach to peer donors, advisors, and potential grantees targeting specific marginalised groups.

To better understand regional contexts and realities, and to hear first-hand from defenders and organisations on the crisis support they

most need, we conducted three consultations – in Fiji, Taiwan and among Vietnamese activists. Although there was no direct increase in applications seen from among marginalised groups immediately after consultations, 48 applications emerged from countries where we had conducted consultations in the last two years. We also facilitated an advisors' consultation in Phnom Penh, Cambodia during October, bringing together 13 advisors from different countries of Asia and the Pacific to discuss how to increase access to rapid response grants in their regions.



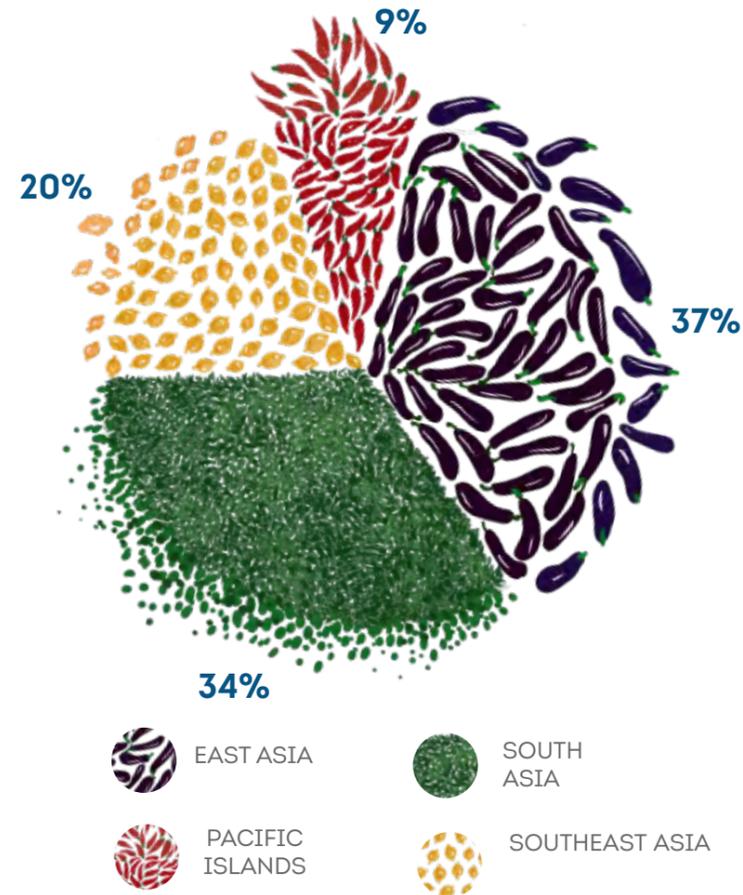


**US\$ 219 473**  
2019 Total  
Grants



**US\$137 620**  
2018 Total  
Grants

## 2019 GRANTS SUMMARY



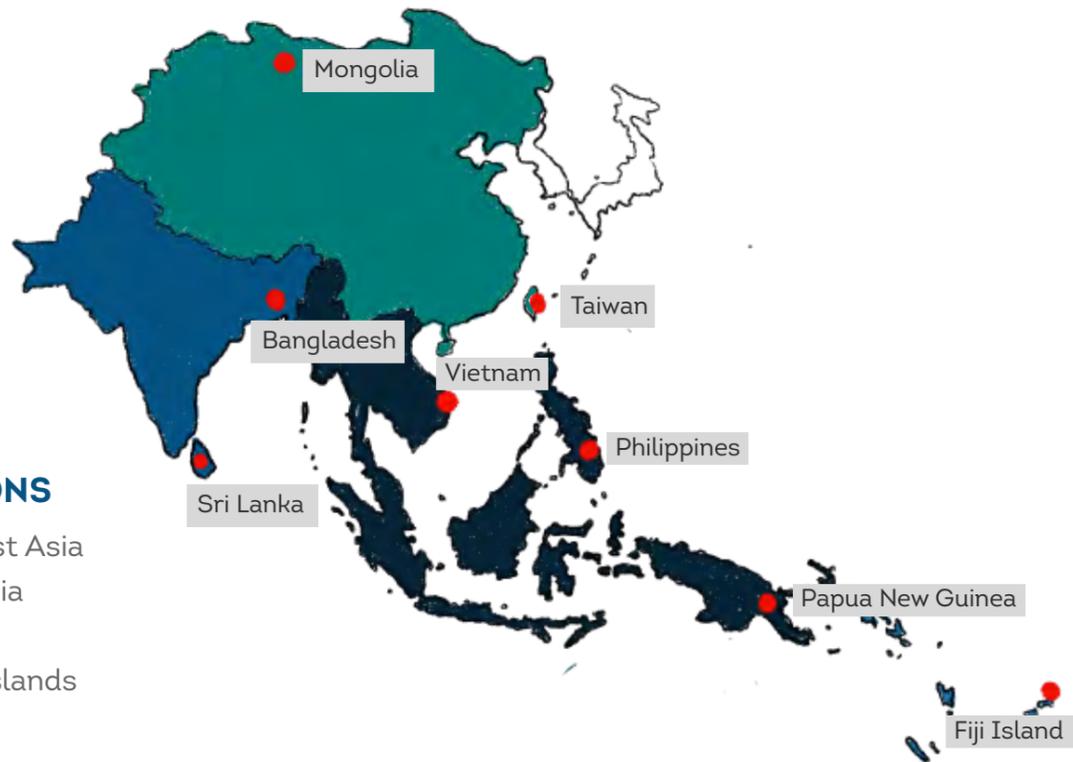
EAST ASIA

SOUTH ASIA

PACIFIC ISLANDS

SOUTHEAST ASIA

## 2018-19 RRG CONSULTATIONS

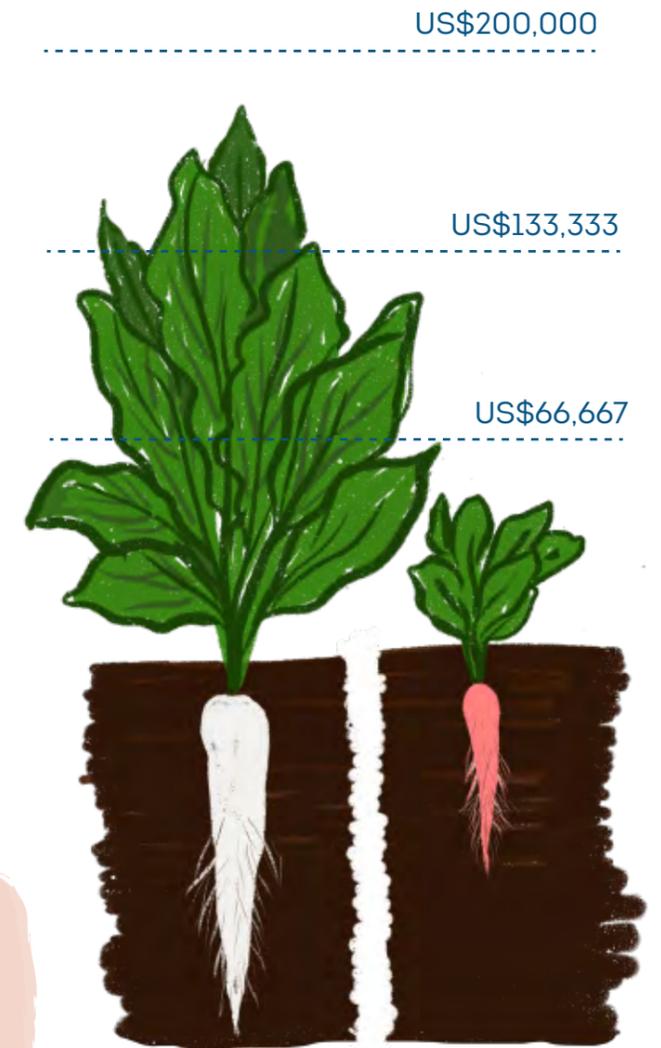


### SUB REGIONS

- Southeast Asia
- South Asia
- East Asia
- Pacific Islands

In 2019, we moved our application processes to a secure database launched on International Women Human Rights Defenders' Day (29 November). This was our effort to better secure data and information provided by our grantees and advisors. The database reinforces our commitment to secure grantmaking and communication processes, keeping grantee security and confidentiality at the centre of all our activities. We strive to be a regional feminist fund that considers ourselves simply as custodians, not owners of the information we collect from our constituents. We place grantee security and confidentiality at the forefront of all our activities.

## 2019 REGIONAL GRANTS



SECURITY AND  
WELL BEING  
GRANT

RESOURCING  
RESILIENCE  
GRANT



## WHAT ARE WE LEARNING FROM OUR RESOURCING RESILIENCE GRANTS?



Our resourcing resilience grants are intended to fund communities of activists poised to build their own support systems such as setting up a health fund or opening salons for income generation of trans activists to pre-empt their own well-being and other needs prior to a crisis.

In 2019, we offered eight Resourcing Resilience Grants.

There were fewer applications than for Safety and Well-being Grants, and we realised securing grants depended on the ability of activists or networks to assess and identify needs beyond their immediate crisis.

Since defenders across most countries we work in are often in a crisis mode, they are focused on addressing their immediate threats, rather than focusing on developing a systems approach to building resilience.

We needed to closely follow through with grantees and potential applicants to shift mindsets and strengthen capacities beyond meeting their urgent needs.

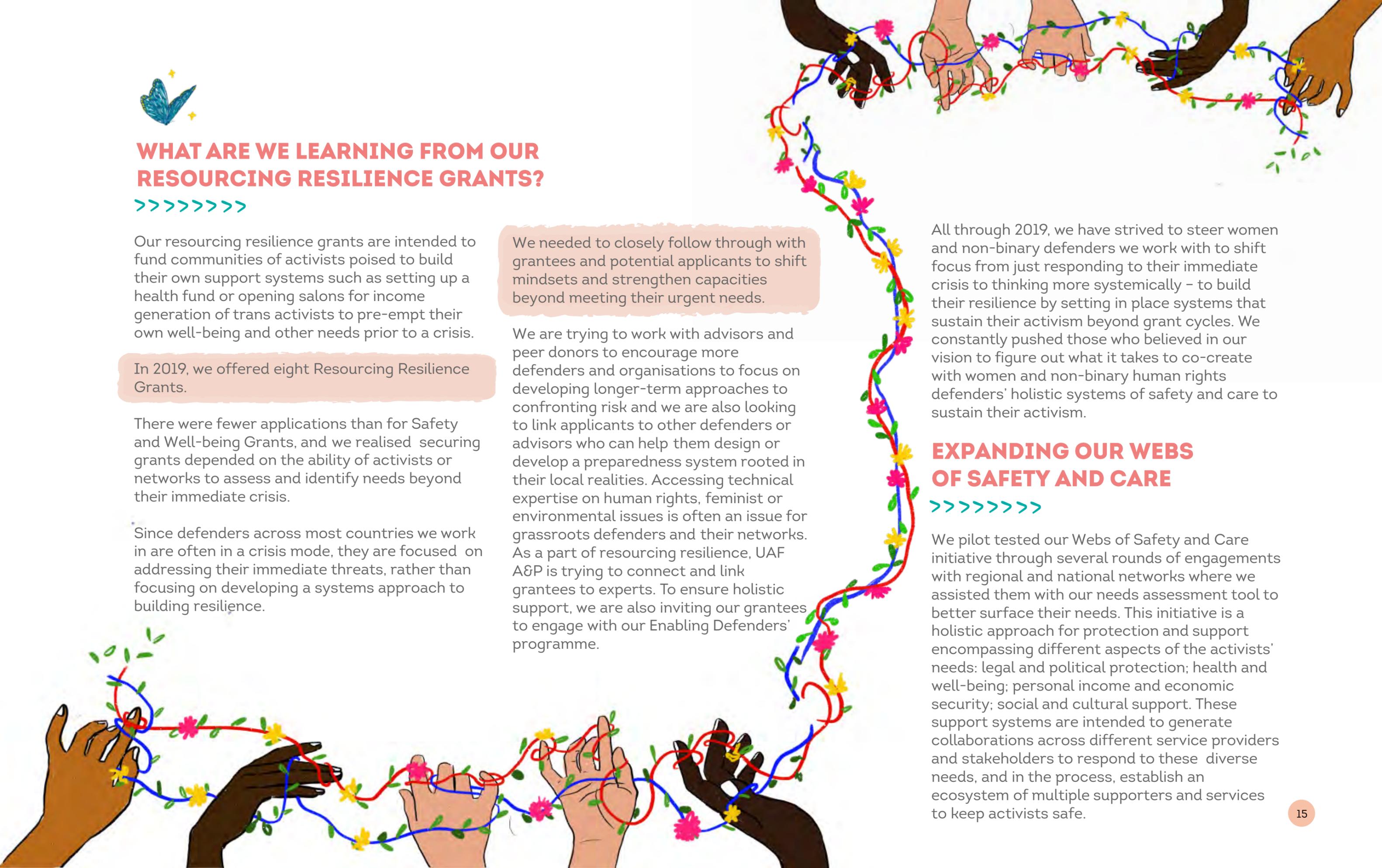
We are trying to work with advisors and peer donors to encourage more defenders and organisations to focus on developing longer-term approaches to confronting risk and we are also looking to link applicants to other defenders or advisors who can help them design or develop a preparedness system rooted in their local realities. Accessing technical expertise on human rights, feminist or environmental issues is often an issue for grassroots defenders and their networks. As a part of resourcing resilience, UAF A&P is trying to connect and link grantees to experts. To ensure holistic support, we are also inviting our grantees to engage with our Enabling Defenders' programme.

All through 2019, we have strived to steer women and non-binary defenders we work with to shift focus from just responding to their immediate crisis to thinking more systemically – to build their resilience by setting in place systems that sustain their activism beyond grant cycles. We constantly pushed those who believed in our vision to figure out what it takes to co-create with women and non-binary human rights defenders' holistic systems of safety and care to sustain their activism.

## EXPANDING OUR WEBS OF SAFETY AND CARE



We pilot tested our Webs of Safety and Care initiative through several rounds of engagements with regional and national networks where we assisted them with our needs assessment tool to better surface their needs. This initiative is a holistic approach for protection and support encompassing different aspects of the activists' needs: legal and political protection; health and well-being; personal income and economic security; social and cultural support. These support systems are intended to generate collaborations across different service providers and stakeholders to respond to these diverse needs, and in the process, establish an ecosystem of multiple supporters and services to keep activists safe.

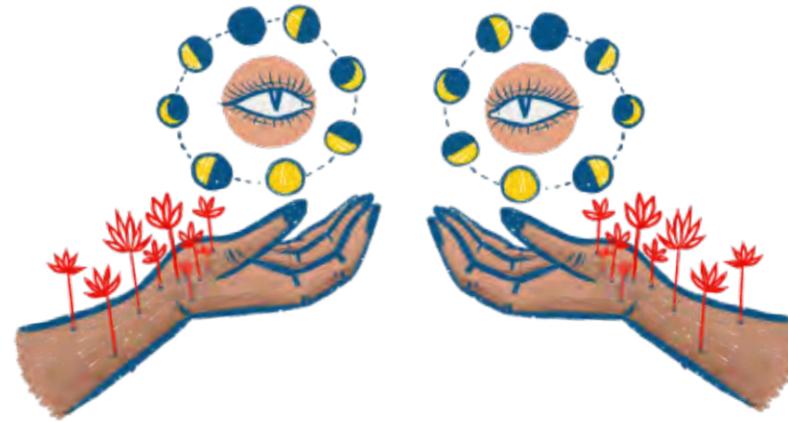


Anchored in communities rather than only in individual or organisational efforts, these webs are intended to be more sustainable. As a participant at a workshop in Nepal told us, “Risks are not just the direct threat, they come from various angles. Safety means to feel supported by family, [to] be able to build on the skills and build our financial capacity”.

Interestingly, activists of a regional network we piloted the needs assessment tool with realised their inability to apply for a webs of safety and care grant at that point of time. The network members were intent on growing their social movement by organising and investing in local mobilisation rather than engaging at a regional level. There was a positive outcome of the engagement, however. The group found value in the tool for their organisational assessment and planning, independent of their engagement with UAF A&P.

### What are we seeing while seeking holistic thinking?

Two rounds of engagement we conducted with defenders reinforced our understanding when the needs assessment framework is internalised and the groups feel a sense of ownership, it paves the way for developing a safety and care system which works for them. On two separate instances, we observed developing a sense of ownership through the process resulted in activists’ groups identifying challenges of capacities and resources, and addressing the immediate barriers towards imagining a sustainable protection system for themselves. We also realised handholding them through this process and working with them closely were also essential to build webs of safety and care rooted in their communities.



### INNOVATIVELY MOBILISING RESOURCES



In our attempt to leverage new or more resources to strengthen the resiliency of women and non-binary defenders, we focused on ensuring we raise at least 40 percent of our resources independent of the UAF sister funds consortium (see the Financial Report section) to ensure our autonomy and ability to provide grants rooted in the realities of Asia and Pacific.

We also began the process of conceptualising and implementing programmes to help us tap into local giving and resources. Sustainable and adaptable resourcing to build and strengthen resilience requires more than occasional or one-off funder contributions. It involves long-term commitment to create a system of solidarity that functions not only socially and through women-led networks of sharing and caring, but also economically, through investments and collaborative ventures.

### Co-creating communities of courage and care, and solidarity economies

In 2018, we set out to create a network of influential women entrepreneurs from Asia and the Pacific who could help defender communities in their respective regions by mobilising resources and mentoring them. However, while reviewing our programme in 2019, it seemed breaking this big experiment into smaller experiments was the way forward. We have been working with our Boards and activists in the regions to co-create and establish five sharing communities across Asia, Australia and the Pacific to mobilise US\$50,000 each. These funds would support six urgent grants to courageous women, girls and non-binary individuals during



moments of crisis; two grants valued at US\$10,000 would also be mobilised to host two safe spaces in Asia and the Pacific. The organisation has also been working with women and non-binary defenders to facilitate livelihoods that strengthens their economic security and social protection. We attempted a pilot project with an activist community in Thailand in 2019, but barriers such as language, remote location, lack of local knowledge among UAF A&P team members and difficulty in connecting networks proved challenging. A review of the resource mobilisation strategy in October 2019, as part of our reflection and sense-making process, helped us arrive at

workable alternatives. We acknowledged any new programme requires trust from all parties engaged in the experiment. Fiji was then identified as an ideal location for the experiment because it is accessible, has a small population size, and language was not a barrier. We have team members of Fijian origin who have strong social capital within business and activist communities in the country, which we harnessed for this experiment. New concept notes were drawn up and groundwork for the experiment commenced in early 2020 with two activists' communities in Fiji.

In 2019, we also focused on better understanding the needs of Pacific countries and building awareness among donors as most have limited understanding of the needs and gaps in funding women rights activism across this diverse and scattered region. We commissioned a report to bridge this gap where we put forward recommendations to strengthen feminist activism in the region.

### What commissioning a scoping study highlighted

The study we commissioned, *Where is the money for women and girls in the Pacific? Mapping funding gaps, opportunities and trends*, highlighted the main challenges in mobilising resources for feminist activism in the Pacific. Many Pacific women's organisations are small and thousands of small

grants are needed across hundreds of islands. Therefore, one of the key recommendations from the report is to set up a Pacific Feminist Fund to be the nodal agency to raise various kinds of resources for grassroots groups and build alliances across the Pacific. A regional Pacific Feminist Fund would act as an intermediary to de-risk grants made by a range of funders, and be responsible for distribution to women's and gender non-conforming organisations and groups. By facilitating this process with the Fiji Women's Fund, UAF A&P is attempting to grow and diversify resources for women and trans communities working on human rights in the Pacific.

## LEVERAGING PLATFORMS FOR SHARING STORIES



We invited our grantees, activists and organisations to share their stories, needs and aspirations before an audience comprised of donors, women's funds and other activists and networks from across Asia and the Pacific at the first Prospera Asia Pacific convergence, *Revolutionising Philanthropy* in September 2019. Together with other regional and national women's funds from two regions, we conceptualised and organised a meeting that was truly a shared space for reimagining philanthropy and resources needed to sustain feminist activism. Results from three-days of brainstorming and collaborations were documented in a **feminist manifesto**, further leveraging learnings to support our grantee activists and networks from Asia and the Pacific.



# HOW IS UAF A&P STRENGTHENING THE RESILIENCE OF ACTIVISTS AS A RAPID RESPONSE GRANTMAKER?

What our grantees and advisors said...



# HOW ARE UAF A&P'S RAPID RESPONSE GRANTS HELPING DEFENDERS?

## TO PREPARE FOR FUTURE RISKS AND THREATS...

"We also hope to continue self-care activities both collectively and individually by seeking additional funding for these items, including institutionalising mental health leaves and similar support. We will advocate with funding partners to value labour by ensuring all staff are supported within projects, so as not to stretch management staff to work on holidays and weekends to be able to pay unfunded staff, especially finance and administrative officers."  
**(GRANTEE FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA)**

## TO FIND NEW WAYS TO SUSTAIN ACTIVISM...

"We could not reopen yet [sic] our organisation...but I am able to continue my writing...it's a documentary about hate crime."  
**(GRANTEE FROM SOUTH ASIA)**

## TO HELP RELOCATE TO SAFER DESTINATIONS...

"The grant was also very timely as a political crackdown on activists was being carried out by state agents in major urban centres in the country."  
**(GRANTEE FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA)**

## TO REVISE SAFETY STRATEGIES...

"I already have some methods to protect myself such as using security phone and computer. But we think most importantly it [is] how we inner power be sustainable (sic) and how we keep our mind and courage to deal with the situation and the pressure come from the police."  
**(GRANTEE FROM EAST ASIA)**

## TO FIGHT LEGAL CASES....

"...this case has [had] a positive impact on a large number of HRDs as it boosted confidence that legal protection can be rendered in case there is any prosecution in course of their legitimate activism..."  
**(GRANTEE FROM SOUTH ASIA)**



### How are we resourcing resilience beyond being rapid responders to crisis?

"Human rights defenders made an assessment with analysis to identify differences between what they have been doing so far and what could be the ideal actions by human rights defenders. As a result of this assessment, surprisingly, we understood that we put ourselves in a risk and a danger. For example, we had been threatened while working in places and field visiting where affected by mining activities. During that time, we were not aware of potential threats, risks and dangers that could have happened to us. Now, we all understand and can assess situations that might be the dangerous and risky to human rights defenders, and we know whom to reach and where to go for our safety and protection."

**(Group from Southeast Asia)**

"It has been realised that change cannot be brought in isolation. Therefore, the need to stay intact with each other and support each other in need has been felt which ensures the sustainability of this network. This has helped in creating the safety net for the participants."

**(Organisation from South Asia)**

### Why do we need solidarity and sharing of resources and knowledge?

"Some of you are up there, some of the others are left behind - women who are up there, should be able to see those of us at the roots... We have been working in isolation - we need to form this women's coalition... We need to voice the voiceless - we do not have resources, but we can do with what we have, if we come together."

**(UAF A&P Advisor and a Human Rights Defender from the Pacific)**

### When the grantee-advisor and community ecosystem are in sync...

"The UAF (sic) [grant] has helped [gain legal access to secure] the arrest of the perpetrator and this has opened the eyes of many people that there are laws to protect the citizens. The UAF grant showed us that we need to support each other. The importance of a WHRD and her role is very important. Community learned the importance of supporting each other."

**(Grantee from the Pacific)**

"We are happy we were able to facilitate this support. The court case is still pending trial. But [name of WHRD - redacted for confidentiality] is seen as a leader, her confidence has boosted, other young women are looking up to her. She is gaining a lot of experience of the whole process."

**(UAF A&P Advisor from the Pacific on supporting a WHRD through the grant process, including helping her fill the final reports)**



## WHAT WERE THE KEY FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS OF 2019?

The focus of 2019 was increasing rapid response grantmaking for women and non-binary human rights defenders in our regions and grounding our operations in our virtual and physical workspaces.

**Our total income received was \$1,307,246. We secured direct funding from the following organisations:**

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION   | \$150,000 |
| FOUNDATION FOR A JUST SOCIETY   | \$300,000 |
| SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (THROUGH THEIR REGIONAL OFFICE IN BANGKOK, THAILAND) | \$165,425 |
| CHANNEL FOUNDATION  | \$25,000  |
| AMERICAN JEWISH WORLD SERVICE   | \$40,000  |
| INDIVIDUAL DONORS   | \$4,571   |

**We were also supported by donations we received via the Urgent Action Sister Funds consortium.**

|                               |           |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| COUNT ME IN CONSORTIUM        | \$200,000 |
| NOVO FOUNDATION               | \$250,000 |
| FORD FOUNDATION BUILD GRANT   | \$116,000 |
| WELLSPRING PHILANTHROPIC FUND | \$56,250  |

## OUR EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

Our organisation partnered with women and non-binary human rights defenders in Asia and the Pacific, making 53 grants. We supported our Rapid Response Grantmaking efforts by organising consultations in Fiji, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Cambodia while we also worked on fine-tuning our secure Rapid Response Grants database. We continued to develop our Enabling Defenders Programme and our Webs of Safety and Care Framework with



consultations and research across Southeast and South Asia. In all, our grantmaking and resilience programmes cost US\$682,431 which contributed to 51 percent of our total budget.

We also began primary work towards establishing our Activating Philanthropy programme with a scoping study, experiments and pilot project in the Pacific. We developed a MEAL system based on the innovative Emergent Learning Framework, and expanded its use with regular adjustments to our working strategies and processes via learning questions and hypotheses. These are reflected in the costs under Other Programmes, which amounted to US\$375,615 – nearly 29 percent of our total budget.

Our administration costs included overheads, such as insurance, rent, board coherence costs, as well as accounting and legal fees associated with governance. The total spend was US\$268,366 which was 20 percent of our overall budget.

# UAF A&P BOARD AND TEAM



## REGIONAL BOARD

Board Chair: Kamala Chandrakirana  
Ambika Satkunanathan  
Devi Leiper O'malley  
Roshmi Goswami  
Xiaopei He  
Ofa Guttenbeil

## AUSTRALIAN BOARD

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Emily Dwyer  
Kamala Chandrakirana

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Board Chair: Ma. Angela Villalba  
Judith Pamela A. Pasimio  
Marla Alcazar Barcenilla  
Andy Yentriyani  
Kamala Chandrakirana

## UAF A&P TEAM

Co-Lead, Programmes and Innovations: Mary Jane N Real  
Co-Lead, Partnerships and Resource Mobilisation: Virisila Buadromo

Grants Facilitator: Joana Palomar  
Enabling Defenders Facilitator: Jebli Shrestha

Finance Facilitator: Elvira Colobong  
Strategic Finance Facilitator: Fareen Jalal

Communications & Learning Facilitator: Deepthy Menon  
IT Support Facilitator: Esther  
Resource Mobilisation Facilitator: Noelene Powell

Urgent Action Funds Coordinator: Ava Danlog





## POSTSCRIPT

# DEFINING HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN THE TIMES OF A PANDEMIC



As we were signing off on this Annual Report for printing, we felt the urgency to voice our sense of devastation at the depth and breadth of this ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Responses to COVID-19 over the couple of months since this report's first drafting have shocked us to the core – mass evictions of migrant workers, criminalisation of human rights defenders, militarisation in the enforcement of lockdowns, to name some of the distressing developments.

As our spectrum of threat and risk broadens and those who fight to defend their rights and that of others expands, we must review the modalities of our support and revisit even how we define who is the human rights defender.

From our community of women and non-binary defenders, we are seeing not only the familiar vulnerabilities in political, legal and digital security, but also a new sense of emergency due to rising economic insecurity under COVID-19. Earlier conversations about building a solidarity economy has gained more urgency today and is surely integral to our future resilience as human rights defenders. No longer a long-term ideal, food sovereignty is now an immediate need for defenders even in individual home gardens for those lucky enough to have one. Our organisation has opened a COVID-19 Crisis Fund to support our community of defenders in navigating the impacts of this pandemic with tried and tested initiatives as well as new imaginings of what is possible.

As human rights defenders and their communities come together to support one another in this time of crisis, we continue to be hopeful. We are encouraged by the wave of people across our wide regions expressing their humanity and sharing resources with those in need. Now more than ever, generosity must transform into justice – that we

give not just to ensure relief today, but to guarantee safety and dignity for all tomorrow. We look forward to activating a philanthropy that creates transformative energy. We hope to inspire such mindful giving and sharing through the stories of courage, resilience, and solidarity we bear witness to every day at UAF A&P.

This year, UAF A&P is due to carry out an organisation-wide reflection and review, which will lead to a new strategic plan. That our process of collective rethink coincides with this historic moment of crisis and change provides us with a unique opportunity to revisit our assumptions, and adapt our model, so we can rise up to the challenge of these unprecedented times.

From the UAF A&P Board  
27 May 2020





**UAF A&P WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR SUPPORTERS FOR BEING PART OF OUR JOURNEY**

- Ambika Satkunanathan
- Andy Yentriyani
- American Jewish World Service
- Charmaine Rodrigues
- Count Me In Consortium
- Channel Foundation
- Devi Leiper O'Malley
- Elizabeth Cox
- Emily Dwyer
- Ford Foundation
- Foundation for a Just Society
- Judith Pasimio
- Kamala Chandrikarana
- MA Angela Villalba
- Marla Barcenilla
- Merrill Black
- NoVo Foundation
- OAK Foundation
- Open Society Foundations
- Ofa Guttenbeil
- Prospera International Network of Women's Funds
- Roshmi Goswami
- Swedish International Development Agency
- Suzy Hutomo
- Wellspring Philanthropic Fund



**URGENT ACTION FUND** FOR WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS ASIA & PACIFIC

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