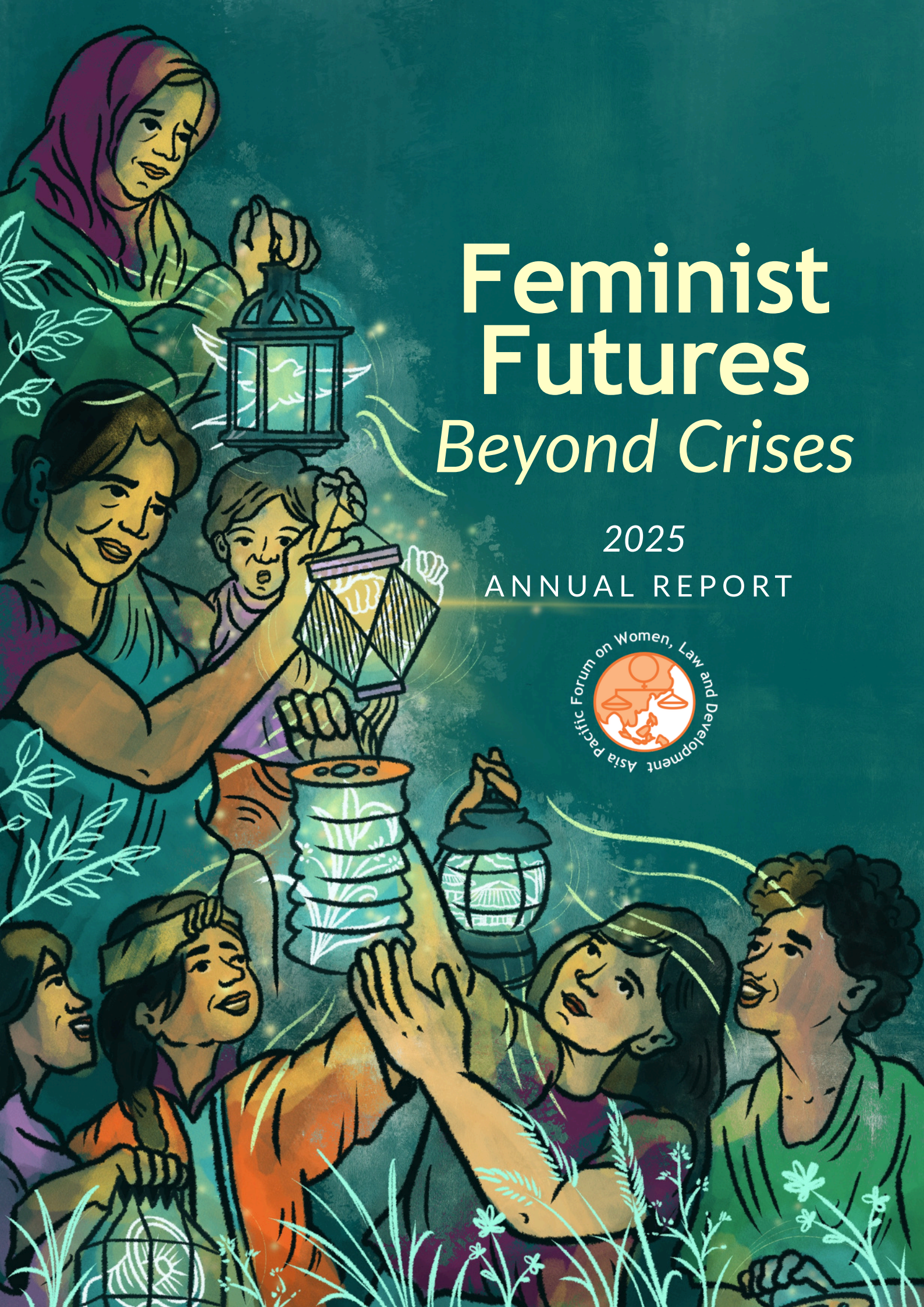


An illustration of a group of women of various ethnicities and ages, some wearing headscarves, holding up different types of lanterns (one with a face, one with a house, one with a flower) against a dark teal background with glowing particles and stylized plants. The title text is overlaid on the right side of the illustration.

Feminist Futures *Beyond Crises*

2025
ANNUAL REPORT



Feminist Futures *Beyond Crises*

2025
ANNUAL REPORT



Table of Contents

1	Who We Are
3	A Message from APWLD's Regional Coordinator
5	Accountability in Action: Our Impacts and Wins
6	Foreword
7	Women Building Feminist Food Sovereignty and Real Climate Solutions
27	Women Workers Reclaim Power in the Digital Economy
33	Global South Feminists Shift the Financing for Development Agenda
45	Building a World Without Imperialism
57	Access to Justice for Women Human Rights Defenders
66	Shifting Narratives
77	Strengthening Member-led Feminist Leadership, Solidarity and Accountability
87	Financial Narrative & Accounts
90	Acronyms

Who We Are

Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) is an independent, non-governmental, non-profit organisation and a leading network of feminist organisations and individual activists in Asia and the Pacific. With over 310 members from 31 countries and territories in the region, APWLD actively works towards advancing women's human rights and Development Justice since 1986.

Read about our HerStory [here](#).

We use feminist analysis to dissect, engage with and transform laws, legal practices and the systems that shape and inform them. At the heart of our work is the belief that the nexus of patriarchy with militarism, fundamentalisms and neo-liberal economic globalisation is responsible for gross violations of women's human rights and fundamental freedoms. Equality, Development Justice and the realisation of human rights can only happen when women, particularly marginalised women, have the agency to lead policy and legal debates and determine solutions.

We believe that advances in women's human rights are achieved when strong, autonomous, sustained and diverse feminist movements exist and thrive, free from any form of harassment and constraint. Our work is designed to support and foster movements and amplify their impact through four key elements:

- Building strong capacities to analyse, organise, advocate and drive social, economic and political change;
- Co-creating knowledge, evidence, tools and resources to advocate for change;
- Extending/Facilitating advocacy space and opportunities to engage with and influence policy makers at local, national, regional and international levels; and
- Enabling institutional structures and space to build alliances, coalitions and networks that amplify common demands and collectively drive change.

We believe that sustained movement-building occurs when interventions are accompanied by a culture of solidarity with other networks and movements, as well as a culture of accountability of state and non-state actors in the pursuit of women's human rights and Development Justice.



APWLD is connected to **328 members** across **32 countries and territories** in Asia and the Pacific. Of these 234 are organisational members while 94 are individual members.



A Message from Regional Coordinator

Dear members, fellow resisters and persisters,

In a year marked by deepening crises and shifting global dynamics, 2025 has reaffirmed both the urgency and the power of our collective struggle. Across Asia and the Pacific, intensifying inequalities, entrenched maldevelopment and escalating militarism and wars have continued to erode hard-won human rights gains and attacked the very core of our peoples' rights to dignity, self-determination and justice. These conditions have further deepened the oppression of women, particularly those at the frontlines of economic injustice, climate crisis, displacement and conflict.

And yet, it is also from these frontlines that our strength continues to grow. Resistance is planted in the everyday—in how communities organise, how women hold the line and how we continue to fight for alternatives even in the most difficult conditions.

As someone who comes from this membership, shaped by grassroots organising and collective struggle, I carry with me the same political grounding that defines our work. I have seen, and been part of how our collective power is built over time, often slowly and against great odds. APWLD's four decades of work reminds us that lasting advances in women's human rights are made possible only by strong, autonomous feminist movements that move in solidarity with other social movements, in deep recognition that our struggles are deeply interconnected. In 2025, APWLD lived this in practice by strengthening capacities of grassroots women to analyse, organise and lead actions; by producing knowledge that challenges dominant narratives and expose systems of exploitation; by expanding advocacy spaces where women's voices do not just participate but challenge and reshape policy, and by building alliances that amplify our shared demands across movements and borders.

This year also marked a moment of transition. Allow me this moment to recognise that our work in 2025 stands as testament to the many years of leadership of our dear sister-in-struggle, Misun Woo, whose vision and dedication have been instrumental in shaping APWLD into what it is today. Stepping into this role is both a responsibility and a continuation of the work we have all built together as the leading women's network in Asia and the Pacific, and of the movement that has shaped many of us, myself included.

As we approach the final year of our current strategic plan in 2026, we enter a critical period of reflection and renewal. This is a time to assess our progress, confront our challenges and address the gaps in our work with honesty, humility and rigour. Guided by our collective commitment to transformative change, we will examine how effectively we have strengthened movements and advanced accountability, not only in demanding it from powerholders, but in how we practise it within the living contours of our own spaces, relationships and structures.

Our experiences this past year remind us that accountability is not a fixed outcome, but a continuous, collective process built through shared analysis, trust, principled solidarity and the courage to transform both systems and ourselves.

In the face of uncertainty and intensifying attacks and repression, we remain grounded in what has always sustained us: our collective power. Across Asia and the Pacific, we continue to resist, reimagine and rebuild. We assert that alternatives are not only possible, but are already being lived by our communities in our breathing, living collective resistance.

This annual report reflects not only what we have achieved, but how we have moved together—with purpose, with accountability and with an unwavering commitment to Development Justice. As we step into the year ahead, we do so with determination and shared responsibility to strengthen our movements and the just feminist future we are all building together.

In solidarity,

JOMS SALVADOR

Regional Coordinator

Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)





Accountability in Action: Our Key Impacts and Wins

Capacity-Building

In 2025, we **strengthened the capacity of 4,496 grassroots women** and others in their communities. These efforts strengthened critical analysis, practical experience and advocacy skills on issues ranging from digitalisation and decent work to migrant rights, feminist peace, feminist communications, food sovereignty, blue economy, climate justice and economic justice.

Knowledge, Tools & Resources

In 2025, APWLD and its partners produced and shared **over 155 feminist knowledge tools and resources**, both digital and print. Of this, APWLD produced 12 publications, complemented by 348 multimedia content and collaborative campaigns. Collectively, these outputs provided the knowledge, evidence and analysis to strengthen advocacy by grassroots women and allies to challenge dominant neoliberal narratives and policies, resist false solutions and advance rights-based alternatives across the region.

Advocacy Opportunities

APWLD supported more than **70 grassroots women** and over 24 members/partners to participate in **22 advocacy spaces at regional and global levels**. Over 100 speaking opportunities were secured for members and partners to amplify feminist demands on women migrants' human rights, food sovereignty, climate justice and financing for Development Justice. These efforts led to feminist policy language reflected in at least six United Nations (UN) outcome documents, 11 published media stories and strengthened the visibility of grassroots and global south feminist perspectives in key advocacy spaces.

Movement Architecture

APWLD and its partners led and participated in 35 initiatives, networks and collaborations across national and regional levels. These efforts resulted in the **formation of 11 new groups and networks** while strengthening more than 10 existing alliances. Strategic partnerships with media and creative collectives expanded feminist communications, while grassroots organising mobilised communities in the region. Globally, **over 240 members were engaged** in reinforcing feminist leadership, collective advocacy and advancing feminist demands in key UN processes.

Foreword

In a world of rapidly shifting geopolitics, imperialist rivalries, militarised governance across the world and the unravelling of multilateral systems and long-fought for human rights, it is more critical than ever to hold powerholders accountable.

In 2025, we grounded regional and global decision-making spaces with the voices, demands and political analysis of grassroots women; we built alliances and pushed for the adoption of rights-based language and policies so that women's experiences and those of the most marginalised were centred and not erased. Despite shrinking civic space and growing backlash, the creation and reclaiming of spaces for women's narratives were critical in building the culture of accountability that we want to see. We also supported the taking back of power by grassroots communities who prove that we can thrive in alternatives to neoliberal economic models and ways of living.

APWLD reaches the end of its five-year strategic plan in 2026 and will begin shaping a new phase of work that is rooted in the lived realities of women from Asia and the Pacific as they grapple with an ever-changing world. As we embark on this process, the past year was also a moment to reflect on the ways we have strengthened our accountability to each other in our movements and collective struggles: by strategising together, by strengthening feminist analyses in our interventions, by creating spaces for cross-movement solidarity, by being intentional and meaningful in the ways we take and give up space, by amplifying the voices and experiences of grassroots women and by standing in solidarity and support. Together with our members and allies, we strengthened our collective political clarity on emerging challenges as well as the intersections of injustice—for instance, how militarism is so deeply connected to the struggles for climate justice, food sovereignty and financing for Development Justice. And together we reflected on and discussed the ways through which our resistance can shift and move quickly and boldly in response to crises and how we can continue to sustain our movements.

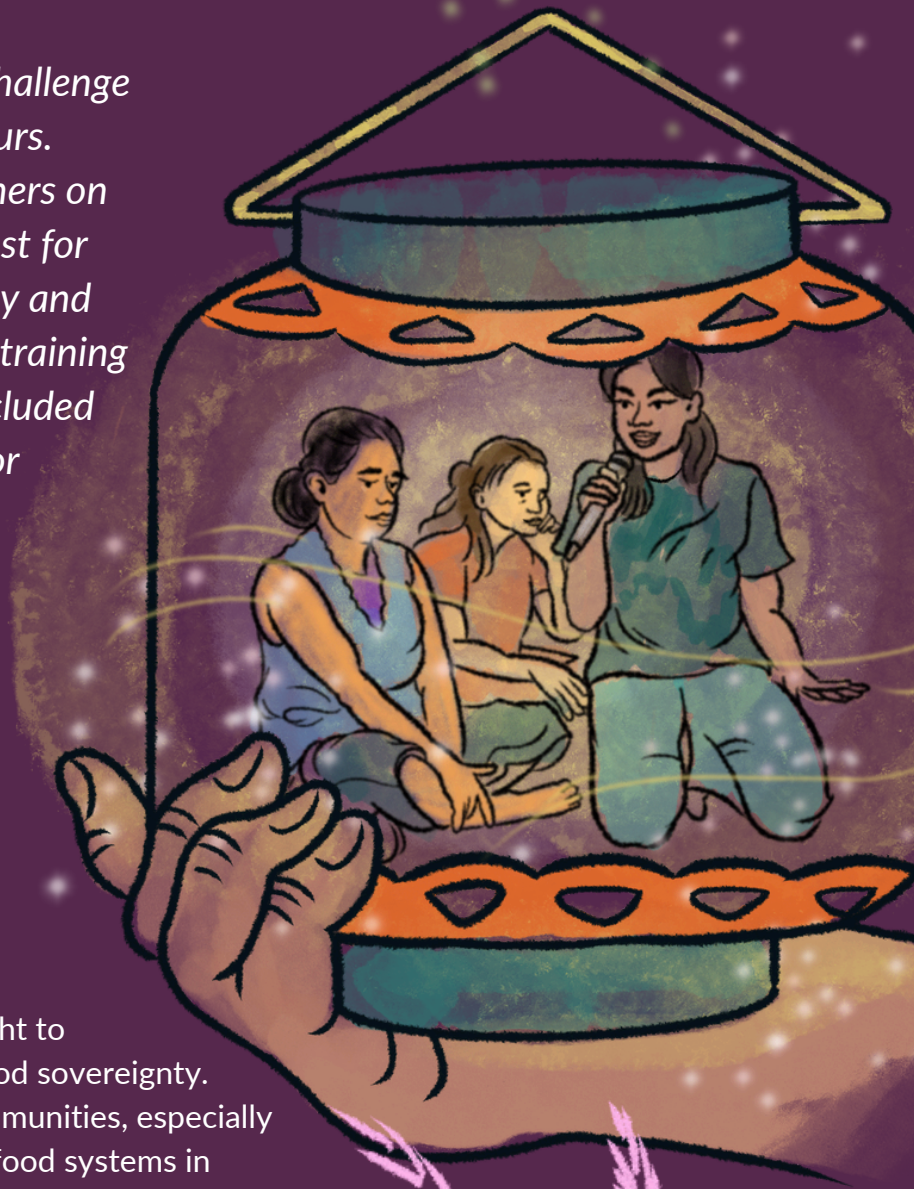
The report highlights key impact stories from APWLD's cross-cutting thematic priorities from our 5-year strategic plan 2023-2027, namely: 1) Food Sovereignty, 2) Digitalisation, Digital Rights and Justice, 3) Financing for Development, 4) Militarism, and 5) Access to Justice - as well as cross-cutting works of our Information and Communication and Feminist Knowledge, Learning and Publication (FKLP) programme in shifting narratives for women's human rights. This report brings together our learning, our impacts and milestones from a year of demanding for accountability from powerholders. It also reflects our commitment to deepening our accountability to members, partners and allies in the region as we build a shared future together.

Reclaiming Power, Demanding Accountability: Women Build Food Sovereignty and Real Climate Solutions

'Land rights have always been a challenge for Indigenous communities like ours. After attending a Training of Trainers on land rights, I realised land is not just for farming, it's tied to dignity, identity and power, especially for women. The training showed how women are often excluded from ownership despite their major role in agriculture. It inspired me to speak out for land justice and food sovereignty. Land isn't just a resource, it's a right and women must claim it.'

KALPANA PRAJA
Young woman researcher
Tukee Foundation, Nepal

At APWLD, we understand women's right to food through the feminist analysis of food sovereignty. This means focusing on the right of communities, especially grassroots women, to define their own food systems in ways that are local, culturally appropriate, sustainable and equitable. By extension, the fight for food sovereignty is the fight for community control over land, seeds, oceans and for recognition of women's labour in food production, which is often unrecognised and undervalued.





In 2025, APWLD and its partners achieved some far-reaching impacts. Through Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR), women's leadership was strengthened to challenge false solutions with evidence-based advocacy and advance community-led alternatives. Capacity-building and political education efforts have borne fruit. Women and young researchers developed feminist food sovereignty campaign materials, farmers applied newly learned agroecological and seed-preservation practices and large public-facing activities reached thousands through radio broadcasting, cultural events, festivals and community mobilisation. Together, these efforts expanded women's leadership, increased public visibility of food sovereignty issues and strengthened organisational growth and alliances with communities, media and decision-makers. Across Nepal, the Philippines and India, rural and Indigenous women moved from being seen as beneficiaries of development programmes to becoming actors who actively demanded accountability over food, land and livelihoods. Through FPAR, women first rebuilt confidence in their own knowledge systems—recognising Indigenous seeds, traditional foods and agro-ecological practices as expertise rather than outdated practices. This transformational shift in self-perception became the foundation for collective action.

For us, feminist food sovereignty requires demanding resource rights from powerholders while holding them accountable for false solutions and neoliberal-led extraction. These destructive development models strip Indigenous communities, farmers, fisherfolk and others of their rights and dignity. Resistance also lies in reclaiming agroecological alternatives and fostering cross-regional solidarity around food sovereignty with grassroots movements.

Women fisherfolk in Bangladesh successfully fight a harmful sand-embankment project and gain social security benefits

In Bangladesh, fisherwomen from Mongla, located along the coastal belt of the Pasur River that flows through the Sundarbans mangrove forest, have been fighting on two fronts: Firstly, to shut down a sand dredging and embankment project by the Mongla Port Authority to expand port capacity, make the river more navigable and to supposedly protect local communities from climate change impacts. But instead, it was worsening salinity, damaging farmland and causing food insecurity and health risks. And secondly, the women were demanding official recognition as fishers that would allow them to access social security benefits.

Women fisherfolk have struggled for recognition, with local media reports showing that just 40 of around 380 fishing cards in some villages in the area were given to women, despite the fact that many families rely on women for fishing and collecting crabs. The lack of official recognition has also meant that they are excluded from government training programmes and any financial assistance.

In 2025, they were successful on both counts. The sand embankment project was temporarily halted by sustained advocacy against the project in 2025, coinciding also with local political instability in the area. Grassroots organisation and APWLD FPAR partner, Badabon Sangho, helped organise the fisherwomen, collect evidence through FPAR and strengthened the capacity of the women to challenge the project with local authorities. Their public dialogues and negotiations with ministry officials, shifted the framing of their situation from a technical challenge to one of maladaptation as a false climate solution and state responsibility. Through their organising, 1,000 campaign posters were distributed by Badabon Sangho together with media briefs and videos, that raised awareness and built support among the local community.



'This dialogue gave us the chance to speak directly with decision makers. We urged them to stop false solutions like land grabbing for so-called green projects.'

Woman from the Khulna community

'I feel more confident raising our concerns to policy makers after this training. This is the first time, we have been sharing our situation in front of the senior officials.'

Woman from the Mongla community

Through organising with Badabon Sangho, the women not only gained the confidence to confront local authorities but succeeded in securing recognition as fisherfolk, which enabled them to access state social security and other benefits and has made them eligible for any compensation. The organisation submitted applications for 34 women to receive official recognition as fishers with Identification cards and access to training on sustainable fishing.



Watch this [video](#) by Badabon Sangho on false climate solutions.

Reclaiming community management of critical ecosystems in Thailand

One of the most significant changes this year emerged from years of organising and advocacy of the Ban Pred Nai community in Thailand, supported by the Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF). The community successfully resisted the imposition of carbon market mechanisms on their mangrove forests and formally registered community-led management instead. This was much more than an administrative achievement. It marked a turning point in how communities in the province understood their own power, how they interpreted climate solutions and how they positioned themselves in negotiations with both government agencies and private actors.

Through sustained organising and advocacy, they challenged state and corporate attempts to monetise ecosystems without consent. For several years, different groups had attempted to introduce carbon credit programmes to coastal communities in the area, presenting these as technical opportunities for income generation or as a modern pathway for conservation. Women in Ban Pred Nai repeatedly raised concerns about how these programmes could restrict their access to forests, redefine community responsibilities and shift control away from local people toward external actors. Their arguments connected questions of conservation with questions of food sovereignty, human rights and justice. Their reflections were grounded in long-standing relationships with the mangroves, which they rely on for food, income and cultural practices. When the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources officially approved the registration of the mangrove forest under community management, it validated years of local organising.

The process leading to the registration was not straightforward. Women had to repeatedly explain to different authorities why the carbon credit model did not align with their needs or the ecological realities of their forests. They also created collective spaces to understand what 'carbon markets' meant in practice and why the framing of these schemes often overlooked local knowledge. These discussions strengthened the community's political awareness and helped build a shared analysis of what real climate solutions look like. They went on to build alliances forming a network with 41 coastal groups in Thailand.

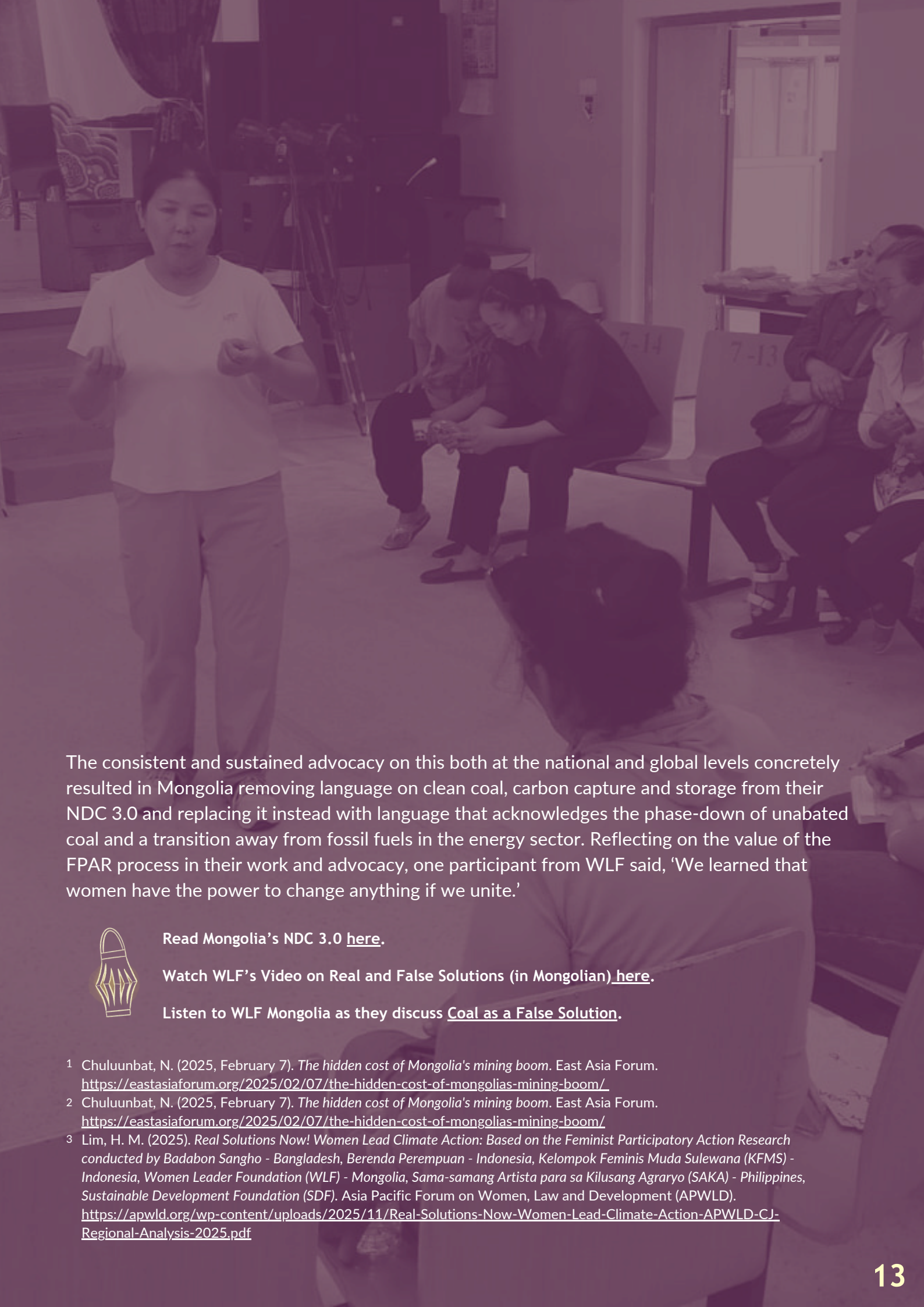
The impact of this moment quickly extended beyond Ban Pred Nai. Word spread across the province, and many other coastal groups began reconsidering offers that had been presented to them by banks, investors and project developers. Some communities postponed existing agreements, while others initiated internal discussions about whether carbon market participation aligned with their needs or undermined their sovereignty. The deeper shift was in how communities interpreted the meaning of 'climate action'. Instead of viewing external schemes as inevitable or unquestionable, they felt more confident treating their local knowledge as legitimate and politically relevant. They also saw that resistance could lead to structural outcomes, not just symbolic ones.

Mongolian women successfully lobby against the ‘clean coal’ myth

Mongolia’s mining sector contributes almost 30 per cent to its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and over 90 per cent to its exports¹. Communities and civil society organisations have been fighting against the country’s mining boom that led to roughly 72 per cent land degradation² and a law that requires households to shift from raw coal to ‘clean coal’, a false climate solution.³ ‘Clean coal’ refers to attempts to make the burning of coal supposedly cleaner through a process of carbon capture and storage of the emissions produced when burned.

Through an FPAR supported by APWLD, grassroots partner Women Leader Foundation (WLF) Mongolia was able to advocate, with evidence, for the removal of the language of ‘clean coal’ and carbon capture and storage from the country’s Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) 3.0. At the 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), WLF Mongolia led the drafting of a shadow report with other Mongolian partners, that reflected feminist language and demands on ‘clean coal’ as a false solution. Further, they used their findings to intervene in national consultations regarding NDCs and pushed forward the demands on false solutions associated with coal such as clean coal, carbon capture and storage and so on to be removed from their NDC.





The consistent and sustained advocacy on this both at the national and global levels concretely resulted in Mongolia removing language on clean coal, carbon capture and storage from their NDC 3.0 and replacing it instead with language that acknowledges the phase-down of unabated coal and a transition away from fossil fuels in the energy sector. Reflecting on the value of the FPAR process in their work and advocacy, one participant from WLF said, 'We learned that women have the power to change anything if we unite.'



Read Mongolia's NDC 3.0 [here](#).

Watch WLF's Video on Real and False Solutions (in Mongolian) [here](#).

Listen to WLF Mongolia as they discuss [Coal as a False Solution](#).

- 1 Chuluunbat, N. (2025, February 7). *The hidden cost of Mongolia's mining boom*. East Asia Forum. <https://eastasiaforum.org/2025/02/07/the-hidden-cost-of-mongolias-mining-boom/>
- 2 Chuluunbat, N. (2025, February 7). *The hidden cost of Mongolia's mining boom*. East Asia Forum. <https://eastasiaforum.org/2025/02/07/the-hidden-cost-of-mongolias-mining-boom/>
- 3 Lim, H. M. (2025). *Real Solutions Now! Women Lead Climate Action: Based on the Feminist Participatory Action Research conducted by Badabon Sangho - Bangladesh, Berenda Perempuan - Indonesia, Kelompok Feminis Muda Sulewana (KFMS) - Indonesia, Women Leader Foundation (WLF) - Mongolia, Sama-samang Artista para sa Kilusang Agraryo (SAKA) - Philippines, Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF). Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD).* <https://apwld.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Real-Solutions-Now-Women-Lead-Climate-Action-APWLD-CJ-Regional-Analysis-2025.pdf>

Chepong women revive community food traditions and seed preservation

In Nepal, the Chepong Indigenous community in Raksirang District was made to believe that processed and commercial food signify progress. Through FPAR, women re-valued the knowledge, labour and care embedded in their own traditional food. In the first phase, community women returned to the forest to observe the diversity of their agroforestry systems and to recall cultural practices that are inseparable from those landscapes. This collective reflection rekindled pride in traditional techniques of gathering, cultivating and preparing local foods and clarified how these practices sustain both households and community identity.

The Chepong women strengthened their own capacity by establishing a revolving fund managed by and for the women who would bring traditional products to market. The fund is intended to cover upfront costs, reduce cash flow pressures and encourage more producers to participate.

'We did not know our food had so much demand in the market, but when the gitta (yam) sold instantly, I felt like we had something powerful to offer.'

SUN MAYA PRAJA
Chepong leader

No longer timid and unsure, the Chepong women are now actively holding the local government accountable and engaging them to present policy gaps and concrete recommendations that support food sovereignty initiatives. Tapping into their own wisdom and experience, they proposed solutions that are beneficial to the women food producers, such as inclusion in agricultural training and budget allocations for the preservation of Indigenous food and seeds. This engagement led to significant verbal commitments that ensured women's inclusion and participation and local government support to scale up the women's efforts in promoting local and traditional food.

This change signals a deeper shift in power and perception. Where processed foods had been framed as modern and superior, women are now asserting the value of Indigenous ingredients, methods and flavours. The combination of field-based learning, local government engagement and women-led finance is helping the community regain control over what they grow, how it is valued and who benefits. The process is rebuilding confidence and opening a pathway for dignified livelihoods that are grounded in ecological knowledge and cultural continuity.

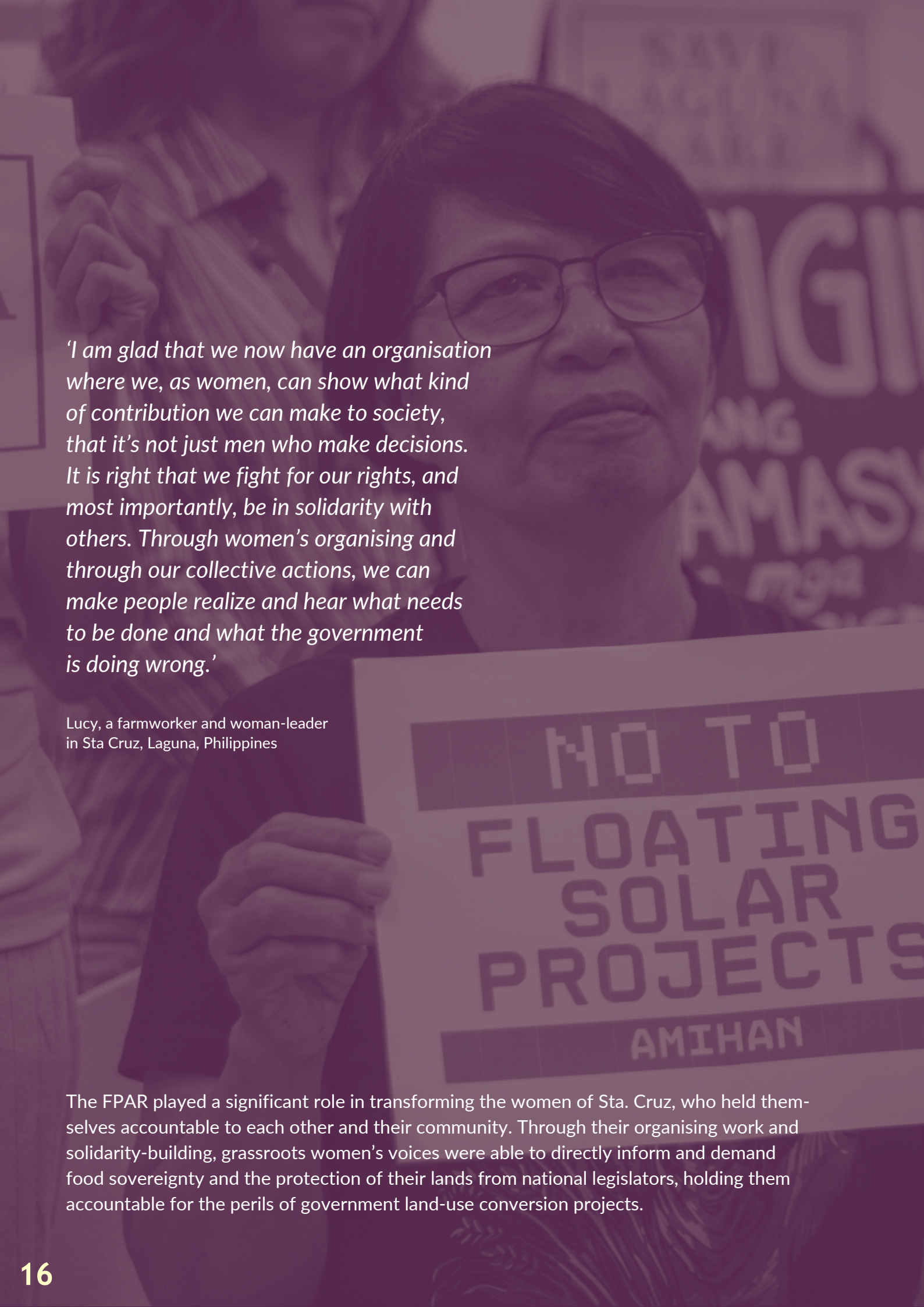




Fighting land-use conversion projects in the Philippines

Farmers, farmworkers and fisherfolk from communities surrounding Laguna Lake in the municipality of Santa Cruz, Laguna in the Philippines have been affected by intensifying land use conversion in the area. This is where agricultural lands and fishing spaces are increasingly being replaced by infrastructure projects, residential developments and commercial ventures. Among these projects are the Laguna Lakeshore Road Network and a large floating solar farm, both of which could significantly reduce agricultural and fishing spaces and displace communities that rely on the lake for food and income. The 2,000-hectare floating solar panel project, funded by the state and private energy companies, is being peddled as a renewable energy solution generating approximately 2,500 megawatts of renewable energy. However, around 8,000 fishers and related workers could be affected by the reduction of fishing areas, while there are also concerns about possible ecological damage and risks during extreme weather events if the solar structures are damaged.

Working together with Amihan National Federation of Peasant Women through an APWLD supported FPAR in previous years, women farmers documented how these changes threaten their livelihoods, food production and local ecosystems. The research conducted with women farmers formed the evidence base that informed the advocacy campaign against land use conversion and the floating solar panel project. Through this process, women farmers gained skills in research, public speaking and legislative advocacy, enabling them to participate directly in lobbying efforts and public campaigns. On 24 April 2025, House Resolution No. 2272 was filed in the Philippine House of Representatives using the findings generated from the FPAR, by representatives from farming and fishing communities in Laguna, together with Amihan and members of the Save Laguna Lake Movement, coordinated with Gabriela Women's Party representative, Arlene Brosas. The resolution calls on relevant congressional committees to conduct an investigation into the socio-economic impact of the floating solar farm project on farmers, farmworkers, fisherfolk and other residents living around Laguna Lake. The filing of the resolution was accompanied by testimonies from affected community members, including women farmers who explained that their agricultural lands and sources of livelihood are at risk due to the planned projects.

A woman with short dark hair and glasses is looking upwards and to the right. She is holding a large white protest sign with bold black text. The sign reads "NO TO FLOATING SOLAR PROJECTS" and "AMIHAN" at the bottom. In the background, other people and signs are visible, including one that says "SAVE" and another with "AMASY".

'I am glad that we now have an organisation where we, as women, can show what kind of contribution we can make to society, that it's not just men who make decisions. It is right that we fight for our rights, and most importantly, be in solidarity with others. Through women's organising and through our collective actions, we can make people realize and hear what needs to be done and what the government is doing wrong.'

Lucy, a farmworker and woman-leader in Sta Cruz, Laguna, Philippines

The FPAR played a significant role in transforming the women of Sta. Cruz, who held themselves accountable to each other and their community. Through their organising work and solidarity-building, grassroots women's voices were able to directly inform and demand food sovereignty and the protection of their lands from national legislators, holding them accountable for the perils of government land-use conversion projects.

Women farmers push for food sovereignty in Bougainville's independence policies

Women from the communities of Busbin, Wonn and Nouru in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, have been advocating for greater control over land and food systems through a process supported by the Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency (LNWDA). The Nexus Group, composed of community women and organised by LNWDA during the FPAR, has grown into a cross-community network advocating for food sovereignty and land rights. The women farmers engaged with the local government, putting forward their political demands to strengthen local food systems and for recognition of women's role in land stewardship and agriculture.

This political engagement by the women farmers is significant given that women are starkly underrepresented in Papua New Guinea's parliament and systems of governance. While considered a matrilineal society, much of the decision-making is still men-dominated, as evidenced in the token women's representation in the national parliament. Their engagement is also timely because it comes at a moment when Bougainville is seeking independence from Papua New Guinea and in the process of setting up an autonomous government. LNWDA thus is maximising this opportunity to ensure that women's voices in the new autonomous government will be heard and recognised. The Bougainville women's demands for food sovereignty, backed up with the evidence and stories from women and communities are being actively considered by their local governance structures with policy proposals being reviewed by the local constituency office.

The women's key demands, developed through FPAR feminist research and organising, include securing women's access to customary land for farming, protecting communal land from encroachment or loss, improving infrastructure and government support for local agriculture, and providing practical assistance such as farming subsidies, tools and better road access to support small-scale farmers. The women have also called for greater recognition of traditional ecological knowledge and the inclusion of women in decision-making processes related to land, climate adaptation and agricultural development. These demands were consolidated into position papers and a unified policy proposal prepared collectively by women leaders involved in the advocacy initiative. The women-led group was also successful in gaining land access to a five-hectare land that will serve as their communal farm. Securing their production was likewise a result of the women's solidarity work with the Catholic Mission of Bougainville.

While the independence transition is still ongoing, the women's participation in these spaces underscore the importance of women's inclusion in these processes. Their FPAR journey has not only built their capacity and confidence, their stories have become effective tools for pushing women's human rights and fighting for food and political sovereignty.





Community gardens strengthen women's resolve for food justice in Jharkhand, India

Women from Indigenous and forest dwelling communities in areas of Jharkhand, India are reclaiming greater control over their food production and nutrition. Through FPAR, Swadhina and the women from the villages in the Mosaboni and Patamda regions of Jharkhand examined the challenges they face in relation to land rights, agriculture and food security, particularly within customary systems where men traditionally control decisions regarding farming and land use.

Women started reclaiming unused or fallow land within their villages to cultivate vegetables and other food crops, establishing community gardens. These gardens were maintained using traditional and organic farming practices, including the use of locally prepared organic manure and natural pest control, reflecting women's existing agricultural knowledge and reducing dependence on commercial agricultural inputs. The gardens soon became important collective spaces where women could exchange seeds, share agricultural knowledge and make joint decisions about what to grow and how the produce should be used. The produce from the garden fed their families, allowing them greater control over theirs and their families nutrition, while some sold a portion of the produce to meet small household expenses.

Working together also gave women greater confidence to assert their rights more broadly. For example, when a woman in Dhoboni village faced eviction from her home and loss of access to agricultural land, members of the local women's committee intervened collectively and approached local authorities, resulting in her reinstatement and restoration of her rights. Such actions reinforced the role of the women's collective in protecting livelihoods and strengthening women's autonomy in managing food production, reducing their dependence on external food systems and strengthening their ability to decide what they grow and eat.



The Seeds We Sow: Growing Feminist Futures from the Ground Up

'The rights of rural women are structural, ideological and global issues, closely intertwined with global politics, economic and trade rules, gender culture, climate change and other factors.'

LIN LIXIA
China
Programme Organising Committee Member
Breaking Out Of Marginalisation Programme
APWLD

Our accountability to movements on food sovereignty has been through strengthening feminist political education, analysis and exchange of knowledge across movements. Through our engagement with grassroots women and partners across countries and contexts, it was evident how **political education is a key factor for resistance**. Local struggles, often framed around immediate concerns such as food, water and land, were increasingly understood and articulated as part of broader political and economic systems. Women who joined programmes with concerns rooted in daily survival ended the year as political actors, building evidence, collectively organising and influencing decision-makers.

These shifts were further deepened in APWLD's Regional Convening on Feminist Food Sovereignty, where participants reflected on how their local struggles—whether around migration, water scarcity or land access—are deeply interconnected with wider geopolitical and economic forces. They shaped what they meant by Feminist Food Sovereignty and how it offers a pathway for collective resistance and building community-led alternatives. They emphasised the leadership of rural and grassroots women, the power of collective action and the urgency of embedding feminist perspectives in addressing food, climate and resource crises. The convening became a vital space to build solidarity and exchange strategies to confront and expose systemic exploitation by corporations, states and elites.

It is from this strengthened political clarity that regional and global advocacy becomes possible and necessary.

Together with our members and partners, we translated grassroots analysis and realities into formal written submissions that can engage and challenge global policy spaces. APWLD's submission to the Working Group on Peasants on Global Trends and the Right to Equal Participation, analysed how neoliberal globalisation, enforced by militarism, perpetuates land and resource grabbing, corporate monopolies and climate-driven displacement. The [submission](#) underscored the gendered impacts on peasant and rural women's food sovereignty and political participation, offering policy recommendations to uphold women's human rights.

A woman with curly hair and glasses is speaking into a microphone. She is wearing a lanyard with a badge. In the background, another person is partially visible. A laptop is in the foreground.

'The GAP thus represents both a tool and a test: a tool for advocacy and accountability, and a test of whether governments will act with courage to make gender justice an operational reality rather than a diplomatic formality. For the Asia-Pacific, advancing gender justice in climate action also means confronting militarised economies, extractive industries, and ecological destruction — the invisible engines of both inequality and climate breakdown.'

WANUN PERMPIBUL
Climate Watch Thailand



'Just Transition Work Programme outcome weakly mentions the critical minerals for renewable energy but it lacks the strong language and specific regulations regarding the women's human rights and environmental impacts of the critical minerals extraction, despite mounting evidence that the rush for minerals is driving land grabs, displacement, militarisation and gender-based violence in mining-affected communities.'

ANA CELESTIAL
Kalikasan Peoples Environment Network
Philippines

The year 2025 is an important year for feminist climate change advocates as it marks the development of a new Gender Action Plan (GAP) during the 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30). APWLD was selected as one of the civil society representatives in the first technical workshop to design gender action plan activities organised at the 62nd session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Subsidiary Bodies (SB62) meeting in 2025.

To ensure grassroots women voices are included in the subsequent meetings, as part of Women and Gender Constituency's process, APWLD ensured that regional consultations took place and that these spaces centred grassroots experiences. In Asia and the Pacific, more than 75 partners from 13 countries contributed to a collective analysis of the challenges their communities face in accessing climate finance, participating in national processes and sustaining community-led solutions. All of their perspectives influenced the technical discussions during subsequent follow-up workshops and at COP30. This provided a more accurate reflection of regional realities in global climate negotiations.

All of this work from women in the region led to several wins, such as the recognition of women environmental human rights defenders, care work, informal labour and indigenous leadership in the newly adopted Gender Action Plan (GAP) at the COP30. However, it remains silent on protection mechanisms, finance commitments, accountability measures and the actual defense of environment and human rights defenders facing repression all over the world.



‘COP30 only focused on promoting and expanding blue carbon deals, conservation offsets, and ocean-based carbon markets without proper and strong safeguards, transparency, gender justice frameworks and community consent. These mechanisms are only a “blue washing” tool coming from the private sectors and global government to commodify coastal and ocean resources. One thing that should be noted is that our coastal and ocean ecosystems are not commodities. The government should be more concerned about people over profit. It should be climate justice, not climate business.’

NIBRAS
KIARA

Indonesia, taken from the ‘Outcomes of COP30
Negotiations: A Collective Reflection Piece’

The adoption of the Belém Action Mechanism (BAM) also marks an important outcome of COP30, reflecting sustained and persistent advocacy by APWLD members, allies, civil societies and trade union and workers organisations. It recognises that organising workers participation, protecting labour rights, ensuring social protection and decent work are essential for ambitious and fair climate action.

Yet, despite these wins, grassroots women remain critical and vigilant. BAM remains weak in addressing the impact of critical minerals extraction and unfair trade measures done in the name of energy transition.

Across COP30, our members and partners continued to advance community-led, gender just and people-powered real solutions such as agroecological practices, while rejecting false solutions including climate smart agriculture, artificial intelligence and techno-centric climate solutions for food and agriculture.



'It was scorching hot that day, but the solidarity—and the people's clamour for climate justice and for Global North nations to act—was even warmer.'

ANNE MARXZE 'ZENG' D. UMIL
APWLD Alumni Media Fellow
taken from '[Field Notes: Covering COP30 and the Global Fight for Climate Justice](#)'

While climate colonialism still shapes decision-making, with 1,600 fossil fuel lobbyists, agribusiness corporations and intermediary multi-development banks dominating negotiations, we witnessed how movements were not confined to these spaces. APWLD members, partners and media fellows, alongside broader people's movements, took to the streets during the People's March for Climate in Belém, where over 75,000 people mobilised to demand accountability and real climate action.



Read the full 'Outcomes of COP30 Negotiations: A Collective Reflection Piece' [here](#).

Watch as APWLD member Wanun Permpibul of Climate Watch Thailand calls for climate financing for people, not for profit at COP30 [here](#).

Listen to what our members said about COP [here](#).

Cross-regional learning and knowledge exchanges

'Agroecology and sovereignty are about solidarity, not competition. Despite our geographic distances, women from different regions are united in constructing a just world from the grassroots. It is important to see how women resist the neoliberal food system through organising. We see in Gaza how food is used as a weapon, and we must draw these links between local and global struggles. The need for international food governance must be rooted in local sovereignty. We honour the collective strength of the women here today. We are not alone and we are united in our right to food and in transforming the world.'

RITA SAAVEDRA
Movimiento Agroecológico Boliviano

We also recognised the power and solidarity of cross-regional learning and knowledge exchanges on food sovereignty, which affirmed the shared struggles by women across the Global South and the need for a sustainable strategy on food sovereignty. In 2025, APWLD initiated online exchanges with Latin American and African movements, specifically Movimiento Agroecológico Boliviano (MAB) and Women's Network Against Rural Plantations Injustices (WONARPI), respectively. Women from feminist and peasant movements in Asia, the Pacific, Bolivia and Sierra Leone reflected on the state of rural women and their shared struggles for food sovereignty.

In November 2025, two women leaders from the Philippines and Thailand also joined a five-day Learning Exchange with agrarian reform settlements in Mosquero, Belem in Brazil, through an exchange with the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST or the Landless Workers Movement) in Brazil. In a time when multiple crises and injustices can divide the Global South, the Learning Exchange is a huge step for APWLD in strengthening solidarity and forging linkages with the peasant movement in Brazil where women and communities share similar contexts and the same vision for food and land justice. Together, voices of Global South women demanding change and accountability are made stronger by fostering international solidarity.



WATCH: This [video](#) captures powerful reflections from APWLD partners on what feminist food sovereignty means to them, their struggles and path to transformative alternatives.

The video was developed during the community learning exchange with the Southern Peasant Federation of Thailand (SPFT) in Surat Thani.

'Despite the violence and control of capitalism among women and workers, in Asia and in Brazil, our organisations continue to struggle for land. Even without the titles, we continue to fight collectively. This collective struggle, as we also see in our experience with agroecology, is the way to transform our life in the countryside. This sharing of experiences of struggles and resistance against capitalism is important, and we call on workers, peasants and women of the world to build solidarity and cooperation.'

DONA TEO

Woman-leader from MST and a settler
in Martires de Abril, an MST land reform project
in Mosquero, Belem, Para in Brazil





Women Workers Reclaim Power in the Digital Economy

Women's struggles are not only for access to and control over resources, but also for recognition of their labour. Women's work is undervalued, made precarious and stripped of dignity. The same development model that grabs land for corporate farming and false climate solutions also pushes workers into exploitative labour markets, from factories to the platform economy.

The quick rise of digitalisation has reorganised the world of work, pushing workers into new forms of exploitative labour in the market economy, from factories to gig work on tech platforms. This has further concentrated power in corporations while shifting risks onto workers, especially women. Platformisation and automation intensify employer control, further cementing a system that keeps wages low, erodes employee protections and makes organising harder.

In 2025, APWLD advanced accountability in the digital rights and justice space by strengthening the ability of members, partners, media fellows and the Secretariat to participate safely and meaningfully in digital spaces, while challenging digitalisation agendas that deepen inequality and exclusion. It also sharpened its feminist analysis on women's labour rights in an era of digitalisation and related surveillance and control by 'Big Tech'. Rather than treating digitalisation as a purely technical concern, APWLD approached digital rights and justice as a feminist accountability issue shaped by rights of women workers in these spaces.

Women platform workers in Thailand lead advocacy and action

'We deliver meals every day, but we can't afford our own. That's not just a personal struggle — it's a failure of a system that exploits women's labour and gives nothing back.'

Punnapat woman rider, Krabi

In Thailand, our FPAR partner, Just Economy and Labor Institute (JELI), together with two women food delivery riders, Tannaree Jaruprasit and Chaninart, played a central role in leading research that documented the ways that the platform economy impacts their rights—highlighting long working hours, accidents without compensation and sexual harassment without safe reporting channels. Their organising included riders who identify as part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual + (LGBTQIA+) to ensure the space was inclusive. The Thai women riders declared: *'Inclusion isn't a bonus, it's the bare minimum. We need labour rights that respect who we really are'*.

At the 113th International Labour Conference (ILC) in Geneva in 2025, with APWLD's support, Tannaree Jaruprasit made a powerful intervention focused on the situation of women delivery workers in Thailand as well as the urgent need to recognise women delivery workers as workers in the currently drafted International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention on Decent Work in the Platform Economy. Her intervention, alongside APWLD member Joanne Cesario of Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), pushed for a rights-based, gender-just approach to platform work, exposing how algorithmic surveillance, wage theft and Gender-based Violence (GBV) undermine women workers' rights. These interventions are breakthroughs in carving space for feminist demands in a system that has long remained indifferent to women's lived realities of work.

Meanwhile, Tannaree was also elected in 2025 as the Southern Riders Association (SRA) first female president, while Chaninart served as general secretary. Both SRA and JELI convened multiple meetings with trade unions and workers' movement allies and successfully built broad-based opposition to the Draft Platform Economy Act, which threatens to undermine the rights of platform workers. These efforts translated into concrete mobilisation and public protest across multiple spaces. These actions not only challenged regressive legislation but also strengthened the visibility and legitimacy of women platform workers as key political actors shaping the future of labour rights in the platform economy.

Throughout the year, women workers demonstrated strong strategic and tactical capacities in amplifying grassroots voices to influence policy and advance the struggle for decent work in the digital economy through collective action.

A just transition to automation in Bangladesh

'I have worked here for 25 years. My hands know the stitches, but now machines do it all. I don't know how to use the machines, and no one has time to teach me.'

Woman garment worker (aged 50), Bangladesh

'They think we are not capable of learning new machines, but they do not even give us a chance.'

Woman garment worker, Bangladesh

In Dhaka, Bangladesh, women workers successfully negotiated support for a just transition to automation in the garment industry.

Women workers are confronted with the reality that automation has negatively affected their fundamental rights, particularly regarding wages and job security, as well as their opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge. Their positions can be replaced at any time because they are perceived to never gain the ability to operate machines.

Women workers developed a critical awareness of the conditions they face through an FPAR process. It became a space for them to reflect deeply, strengthening their understanding of the systemic inequalities women experience and reinforcing their commitment to gender justice. Women workers formed groups that created safe spaces to discuss workplace issues, provide mutual support and develop strategies for engaging with management.





'We meet every week after work to talk about our problems and plan how to present them together. If we stand together, they can't ignore us.'

JOTSNA BEGUM
a group leader

'I used to be afraid to speak up, but now I know my voice matters.'

SHIMA
A young mother and worker

Building on this deepened understanding, the workers translated their critical awareness and individual vulnerability into concrete collective action. They convened a roundtable discussion with policymakers and labour rights advocates, bringing together more than 30 participants. This initiative ensured that the voices of women garment workers continued to shape the national policy discourse. The dialogue generated concrete and actionable recommendations:

1. Support for a just transition to automation through guaranteed retraining and upskilling for affected women workers;
2. The establishment of a jointly financed social protection and reskilling fund supported by employers and the government; and
3. The expansion of collective bargaining rights to address automation-related grievances while strengthening women's leadership within factory committees.

As one woman garment worker employed as a sewing operator shared, 'This was the first time I saw policymakers listening directly to women from the factory floor. It gave us courage.' Thailand and Bangladesh are not alone. Across our FPAR programme, a common thread emerges: agency. Women workers are organising, negotiating space and speaking back to power with dignity.

- **In Cambodia**, women delivery workers organised under the Cambodian Food and Service Federation and managed to build and expand their platform workers networks.

'We did not just organise in Phnom Penh; we connected workers across Cambodia online. This is a best practice because, without this network, they would remain isolated and vulnerable. Now they can share problems and learn how to advocate directly to their employers.'

VATANAK

Cambodian Food And Service Workers Federation (CSFWF)

- **In India**, Aajeevika Bureau worked through a construction workers' collective to put automation and gendered exclusion squarely on trade union's agenda. They initiated consultations, dialogues with builders' associations and the labour department, and piloted 'on-the-job' training that pushed them from 'helper' roles toward basic machine operation — claiming space in male-dominated sectors.
- **In the Philippines**, nurses organised against excessive digital surveillance—where electronic health records and biometric time-tracking blurred the boundaries of their shifts. Their organising focused on demanding digital tools for care and safety, not control and exploitation.

These organising efforts—rooted in women's lived realities across platforms, sectors, and borders, culminated in our Regional Convening on Digitalisation and Labour Rights. It became a powerful space to connect threads across countries and deepen our collective strategy. Grounded in the experiences of food delivery workers, factory workers, and nurses, the convening sharpened grassroots feminist analysis of digitalisation, helped participants understand the structural links between surveillance, debt, and labour precarity, and co-created advocacy pathways to influence the ILO Convention on Platform Economy towards ILC 2026.

'The Regional Convening significantly improved my skills and knowledge regarding women's work in the era of digitalisation, primarily by bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical organising strategy. I gained specific knowledge about the "double discussion" procedure at the International Labour Conference (ILC). I learned that advocating for a new ILO standard (like one for platform workers) requires a sustained, two-year strategic effort across two consecutive ILC sessions, which demands coordinated, well-timed input from national trade unions to ensure the final adopted text is strong and worker-centric.'

SELIRA DIAN PUTRI

SINDIKASI, Indonesia

To further strengthen our work on digitalisation and labour rights as well as digital rights and justice in general, in 2025, APWLD launched its Media Fellowship on Digital Rights and Justice with 17 media fellows from all subregions of Asia and the Pacific. As the fellowship is still ongoing, more assessment about this programme will be reported in 2026. However, the stories that the fellows are currently developing already reflect an intersectional scope, that range from the impact of digital surveillance on migrant women workers, to digital colonialism among Indigenous communities and e-commerce on rural communities. This work is strengthening feminist reporting on digital labour, surveillance and platform economies in the region.



Read more from APWLD's research on women's labour rights in an era of digitalisation [here](#).



Global South Feminists Shift the Financing for Development Agenda

Transformation of the international financial and trade architecture is a bold but critical demand for a more equal and just world. It calls for a radical reimagining and commitment by states and global systems of governance to divert from a neoliberal framework that promotes inequality and debt dependency; and to remove the reliance on private investments and corporations that prioritise profit over people.

Grassroots women disproportionately bear the brunt of the failures to realise these commitments. In 2025, APWLD and its members and partners strategically occupied, negotiated and claimed space in regional and global advocacy spaces to demand accountability for these failures. We put forward alternative visions and demands for feminist financing for Development Justice to counter a growing debt and economic crisis in Asia and the Pacific.

Demystifying debt for women across the region

'We learned how neoliberalism works — capitalists influence the government to pass laws they benefit from.'

Woman fisher, Philippines

Debt is first and foremost felt and experienced in households and communities. Exclusionary narratives portray debt as a topic that only a privileged few can understand, discuss and decide upon. Women are often excluded from these conversations though they are often the primary bearers of the burdens of debt in families and households.

In 2025, APWLD engaged 366 women across six countries in Asia and the Pacific—Sri Lanka, Philippines, Pakistan, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan and South Korea—in the second phase of the feminist Multi Country Rapid Research (MCRR-II) on the impacts of the debt crisis on women's human rights in the region. While findings from Phase I of this research served as core resource materials in developing educational tools, discussion modules, and advocacy content, Phase II created spaces for collective reflection, political education through peer learning, advocacy and movement-building, thereby transforming individual experiences of the debt crisis into shared experiences and feminist analyses of structural injustice.

As women's capacities were strengthened, they described a shift from internalising economic hardship as personal failure to recognising debt and austerity as political and structural issues requiring collective action. This process also enabled them to formulate and raise collective feminist demands directed towards powerholders, states and global institutions rather than bear the brunt and blame of debt individually.





APWLD Members and partners used feminist debt research to deepen national policy and advocacy discussions. **In Kyrgyzstan**, migrant women presented findings at the inter-sectoral national stakeholders' meeting to the Minister and the Advisor of the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Migration linking debt to migration, poverty and violence. They used budget analysis to embed feminist debt analysis into national policy discussions. **In the Philippines**, consultation forums with women workers, farmers and others advanced a legislative agenda drawn from APWLD member and MCRR-II partner, Center for Women's Resources' Ulat Lila public forum that tackled the worsening economic and debt crisis in the country. Their advocacy efforts called for the reallocation of funds from debt servicing, the halting of regressive tax measures, safeguarding labour rights and addressing rural displacement. **In Sri Lanka**, direct dialogue between grassroots women and policy actors on the micro-debt crisis resulted in commitments to use research outcomes for developing gender-responsive policy recommendations. **In Mongolia, Pakistan and South Korea**, findings were shared with media, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and movement groups working on debt justice to amplify the evidence collected and explore synergies for potential cross-movement organising and mobilising in the future.

Increased financial literacy among the women of Kolmo, Kyrgyzstan

At the community level and within families, increased financial literacy through the research process, helped reduce family tensions and strengthen solidarity. For instance, in Kolmo, Kyrgyzstan, traditional gender norms continue to shape women's experiences and limit their participation in both the private and public spheres, particularly when it comes to the issue of debt. Financial decisions are typically made by husbands or in-laws, while the role of women is mainly to handle household expenses without having control over income or a clear understanding of how debt accumulated.

'When I showed my husband the budget journal, he understood why we always lacked money. Now we plan together instead of arguing.'

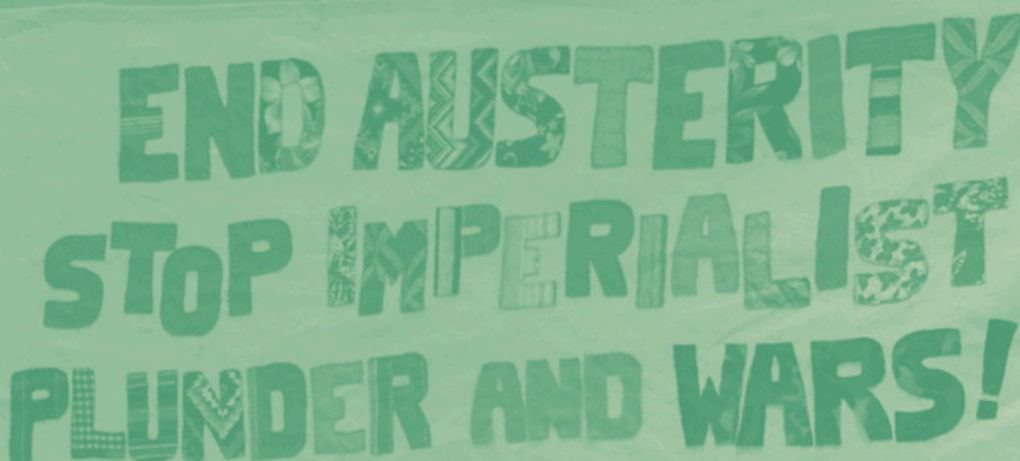
Woman in Kolmo, Kyrgyzstan

Women participants in the research shared that financial literacy helped reduce tensions within families, citing that communication has improved, making budgeting and decision-making more transparent. For them, financial literacy is not only an economic tool, but rather, a protection mechanism against emotional stress, domestic violence and the dependency reinforced by patriarchal norms. Understanding finances enabled women to have shared control over their family's finances, advocate for household needs, negotiate expenses and avoid predatory loans.

'I always felt ashamed to ask about our family's debts. Now I understand the numbers, and I can discuss them with confidence. I am not afraid to say what we actually need in the household. Before, I stayed silent.'

Woman in Kolmo, Kyrgyzstan

Around 30 women participants shared their knowledge and learnings with other community members. This initiative strengthened collective knowledge-building while building solidarity within the community towards debt justice.



END AUSTERITY
STOP IMPERIALIST
PLUNDER AND WARS!

Grassroots women against corporate-led financing for development

Table 1.

Timeline of APWLD's engagements in the lead up to FfD4:

	2022-2023 Virtual learning sessions and side-events in APFSD and HLPF
	November 2023 Regional Convening on FfD in Manila
	March 2024 Friends of Monterrey in Mexico
	July 2024 Global South Peoples' Strategy Meeting in New York
	December 2024 Asia Pacific Regional Strategy Meeting and Asia Pacific CSO Preparatory Meeting on FfD in Bangkok
	April 2025 Annual FfD Forum

As APWLD and its members and partners deepen our understanding of debt, we also confront the broader systems that produce it. This has led to growing resistance to corporate-led financing for development, which often reproduces the same cycles of indebtedness, dispossession and inequality.

Women from Asia and the Pacific along with the rest of the Global South have long demanded that the Financing for Development (FfD) agenda be grounded in grassroots and Global South realities to fulfil women's human rights and Development Justice.

Over the past three years, APWLD has engaged with regional and global mechanisms on FfD, in an effort to shift it away from corporate-led and profit-driven interests and hold powerholders accountable for the same. These include the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD). In particular, APWLD led and reactivated the Financing for Development Working Group of the Asia Pacific Regional Civil Society Organisation Engagement Mechanism (APRCSEM). This included coordinating regional civil society engagement towards the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) held in Seville, Spain, to advance feminist demands on financing for Development Justice in 2025.



'We call on FfD4 to recognise the crucial role of feminist organisations and civil society in shaping, implementing and monitoring financial and fiscal policies. Their effective inclusion is imperative to ensure greater accountability and transparency in all processes, and to ensure transformative solutions that effectively respond to the realities of those most affected.'

ZAINAB SHUMAIL

Coordinator, APWLD Crisis Initiative,
PrepCom III, New York, United States (U.S)



Read the Key Asks of the Feminist Workstream for FfD4 [here](#).

Through targeted virtual and in-person learning sessions, side events, convenings and engagement in regional and global spaces from 2022 to 2024 (see table 1), APWLD cultivated a core movement of strong Global South feminists, united in their commitment to integrating Development Justice principles into FfD4. This critical mass movement is determined to drive radical macroeconomic transformations globally, grounded on resistance, the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) monitoring work at the local and national levels, the MCRR on Debt Crises and the different FPARs led by grassroots women.

By early 2025, APWLD has initiated and now co-leads the Feminist Workstream within the Civil Society Financing for Development (CS FfD) Mechanism, together with the African Women's Development and Communications Network (FEMNET) and Red Latinoamericana por Justicia Económica y Social (LATINDADD). The Feminist Workstream collectively transformed a highly technical and exclusionary process into a feminist participatory space, strengthening cross-regional solidarity among Global South feminist organisations, and grounding the process by engaging migrant groups, labour movements and allied civil society actors to participate in, contribute to and lead meaningfully in the FfD process.

By January 2025, the Feminist Workstream had grown to over 240 members globally, transcending boundaries and solidifying the movement. APWLD supported collective agenda-setting, drafting feminist interventions, statements and political positions and coordination across regions. As a result of this coordinated effort and democratised space, 19 feminist interventions were delivered across the Third and Fourth Preparatory Committee Meetings (PrepCom) of FfD4 that influenced the FfD4 outcome document.

Notably, the Feminist Workstream produced the first global south feminist submission to the Zero Draft of the FfD4 outcome document.

Strengthening feminist political education, meaningful participation and Global South solidarities for FfD4

“As a migrants’ rights advocate, it gave me a lot of insight on how do we restrategise and adapt our organising. So, this meeting, despite its repressive-ness and overwhelming nature, really did give an insight into what to anticipate and the time to see how to respond. APWLD has helped open doors and visibility for us, had speaking engagements at the Feminist Forum, at the protest action, so this opportunity is valuable in terms of also getting more people on board. We need a mix of militant, non-militant approaches in our organisation to complement in order to engage in this space.”

ENI LESTARI

International Migrants Alliance, Indonesia
during FfD4 in Seville, Spain

Members and partners of APWLD have consistently shared with us how valuable they have found the space the Feminist Workstream has created and how the collective preparation made a difference in their engagement in the FfD process.

In the lead up to FfD4, the Feminist Workstream strengthened political education for nearly 500 members, partners and feminist allies, that broke down the FfD process, examined impacts and challenges and provided a space for feminist actors to collectively strategise and build coordinated interventions and solidarity actions.

The organisation of the Feminist Forum for and beyond FfD4 in conjunction with the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) held in Seville, Spain was a concrete example of cross-regional, intersectional and inter-generational movement-building. It was organised with feminist groups from the global south—APWLD in Asia Pacific, FEMNET in Africa, LATINDADD, Fundacion Para Estudio E Investigacion de la Mujer (FEIM), GESTOS and IPPF ACRO in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Federación Planificación Familiar (SEDRA) and the Andalucía NGO Network in Spain, as well as the Women Major Group (WMG) secretariat and was attended by more than 340 organisations. It broke traditions and transcended boundaries by democratising the space and ensuring the global south feminist perspective was embedded in the core, as reflected in the programme of the webinar series and the 2-day in-person Forum in Seville. It also led to the Red Flag Campaign, which signified the urgency of addressing systemic barriers to women’s human rights and gender equality and reparations to the global south.



'We stand with those struggling to defend dignity and home as part of a global feminist movement, we carry the responsibility to bring forward our collective demands.... The outcome document of FfD4 falls short, failing to usher in an economic system rooted in care, justice and equality, something the feminist and women's movements have long fought for. Now is the time to reclaim body autonomy and reimagine power.'

MISUN WOO

Former Regional Coordinator of APWLD

The Political Declaration of the Feminist Forum is now signed by over 300 organisations globally, and the Red Flag Campaign is moving to HLPF to further elevate the call for structural change.

For APWLD members, the Feminist Forum became a collective space to share grassroots experiences and analyses on FfD from local, national and regional levels. For example, Eni Lestari from the International Migrants Alliance (IMA), Indonesia, spoke about how FfD is a migrant issue and how colonial legacies pave the way for the diaspora of millions of Global South people to look for opportunities elsewhere. Azra Sayeed of Roots for Equity, Pakistan discussed the linkages between the climate crisis and militarism in the context of imperialism. Cham Perez from the Center for Women's Resources (CWR), Philippines, emphasised the role of regional-level initiatives such as the APRCEM in the FfD process, and Chathu Sewwandi of Law and Trust Society from Sri Lanka spoke in front of member states and the UN, sharing their experience in Sri Lanka, a country navigating a severe debt crisis since it defaulted on its debt repayments in 2022.

'At LST, we were looking for opportunities to get word about our campaigning and advocacy in Sri Lanka to the regional and global level, and this is a space which is not talked about at all back in Sri Lanka. They do not talk about debt justice, human rights, intersectional issues, therefore, it is very important for us to highlight and address these issues - we need to bring back this information and knowledge back to our countries and communities, that is one thing that I will be sharing with my team and trying to work on upon return.'

CHATHU SEWWANDI
Law and Trust Society, Sri Lanka

Our collective advocacy also won concrete gains from the FfD Outcome Document, including a call to establish a platform for borrower countries under the UN, and a stronger regional follow up process that open pathways for democratic accountability. This will create more space and proximity for grassroots organisations and peoples movements to engage with the process.

These wins demonstrate how coordinated feminist engagement can force accountability within global economic governance processes that are otherwise resistant to rights-holder influence.



Read the Adopted FFD4 Outcome Document: Sevilla Commitment (Compromiso de Sevilla) [here](#).

Additionally, in FfD4, APWLD co-led the Red Line/Red Flag Campaign, entitled 'Feminist Hold The Line, Raising the Red Alarm and Demanding Reparations Now!' with the Advocacy Working Group. The campaign served as a visible advocacy strategy to amplify urgent feminist demands on macroeconomic transformations. This was later brought to New York during the HLPF to raise the alarm of the non-achievement of the SDGs and the dangerous line we are about to cross.



Challenging accountability gaps in SDG implementation amidst shrinking civic spaces

'As a migrants' rights advocate we remind the member states that the UN Charter starts with "We, the People..." thus it is imperative for civil society and peoples' organisations to claim the space in decision-making. We urge the member states to respect, protect and fulfil our rights to be in multilateral spaces and meaningfully engage—free from any censorship, discrimination or violence.'

APRCM, at the 12th APFSD

In February 2025, together with its grassroots members and allies, APWLD transformed the 12th APFSD into a site where feminist movements collectively challenged the accountability gaps in SDG implementation, including reliance on private finance and public–private partnerships and shrinking democratic spaces. As a result of seven interventions by APWLD members and partners and through sustained coordination with APRCEM, feminist priorities—including universal health coverage, civic space, gender-responsive development, global tax justice and opposition to austerity—were reflected in the APFSD Chair's Summary. The overall messaging of the Chair's Summary also reflected on access to justice and the protection of civic spaces—as this has been the major call throughout the Forum in relation to the censorship that APWLD faced.

At the 12th APFSD, APWLD faced censorship from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) and the organisers—the APFSD Secretariat. A planned launch of the [Feminist Accountability Map](#) (FAM)—an interactive map that tracks progress of countries in Asia and the Pacific against its commitments to women's human rights—as well as a Regional Report on 10 years of the SDGs, was not allowed to proceed. These were to be launched at a side event entitled, 'Demanding Accountability in Pursuit of Women's Human Rights and Development Justice', organised by APWLD, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR), ILO and APRCEM. Further, there was also an order to remove the phrase 'women's human rights' from the title of the side event. Some member states even requested for the side event to be cancelled altogether.



Read the 12th APFSD's Chair Summary [here](#).

Read APWLD's '10 Years of SDGs in Asia and the Pacific: A Feminist Analysis' Regional Report [here](#).

Read APRCEM's [Press statement](#) on defending civic spaces and reclaiming the development agenda.

Read Bulatlat's Opinion piece on the issue of censorship at the 12th APFSD [here](#).

[Listen](#) to the demands of Global South feminists at HLPF and [Read](#) some of the powerful messages shared by APWLD members.

Read APWLD's Policy Brief on Macroeconomic Transformations, Women's Human Rights and Development Justice [here](#).

This was followed by a coordinated response with APRCEM and other allies rallying behind APWLD. A silent protest action was held inside the halls of the United Nations Conference Center (UNCC) with a call to defend civic space. A press statement and press release stating the protest and key messages were also shared widely. Bulatlat, a local alternative media outlet in the Philippines, picked up the story and posted an opinion piece. As a political response, APRCEM pulled out the side-event in protest and engaged in a dialogue with the UN ESCAP Executive Secretary.

Building on this momentum, APWLD mobilised members and grassroots women's organisations to influence the HLPF in July 2025. Two APWLD members, Joanne Cesario from KMU and Rochelle Porras from the Ecumenical Institute of Labor Education and Research (EILER), successfully delivered statements in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) session and the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC) General Debate respectively.

The side-events organised with other regional feminist organisations at HLPF became spaces for grassroots women from Asia and the Pacific, Africa, East-Central Europe (ECE) and LAC, among others, to share their demands and reflections on the non-achievement of the SDGs and their experiences in the past 10 years of SDG engagement.

Challenging gender gaps and CSO exclusion in trade negotiations

Amidst restricted civil space at the 16th session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD16) in October 2025, APWLD, Region Refocus and Gender and Trade Coalition (GTC) convened one of the only CSO side-events. This challenged gaps in UNCTAD's gender mandate and advanced grassroots women's demands on debt, trade, ocean extraction, militarism and climate accountability.

At the side event, the Government of Brazil delivered an intervention confronting the imperative need to address debt and understand the lived impacts on different communities. APWLD also met bilaterally with the Chief of UNCTAD's Programme on Trade, Gender and Development, Gul Unal, which provided an opportunity for both parties to collectively review the gaps in trade and its impact on women. APWLD expressed the need for UNCTAD to fulfil its mandate through a feminist perspective and recognise the critical role and impact of trade on ocean resources, militarisation, debt and the climate crisis.

The lead-up to UNCTAD however was fraught with pressures on civil society organising and participation. Chief among these was the exclusion of CSOs from providing critical inputs on both the zero drafts and final drafts of the UNCTAD16 documents, despite these having profound impacts on people's lives, especially those of women and marginalised communities.

Other pressures included last-minute logistical changes in the venue for the event from Vietnam to Switzerland that impacted global south participation; lack of transparency regarding CSO participation; and no opportunities for a CSO Forum and a Gender and Development Forum to be held, despite having these in previous years. The space has become dominated by global north and private sector interests, invisibilising gender and rights-based perspectives.

The increased repression of CSOs and feminist allies in negotiations on trade made APWLD's intervention critical by ensuring that grassroots voices and feminist analyses on debt, trade liberalisation, critical minerals, digital trade and conflict continued to inform UNCTAD's interventions.



Read the full Civil Society Statement to the UNCTAD16 Quadrennial Conference [here](#).
Read APWLD's Statement on UNCTAD16, 'Shaping Whose Future?', [here](#).





Building a World Without Militarism

Militarism has always been a feminist issue.

The primary drivers of wars and conflicts in our region and globally are imperialism and the unrelenting quest for global hegemony, rooted in economic dominance. Militaries have been used to great effect to exert control, to dominate peoples and extract resources. Nowhere is this more evident than Asia and the Pacific, that is home to over 100 military bases held by imperial powers, primarily the U.S., together with tens of thousands of military personnel, frequent military exercises, imperial control of maritime infrastructure that straddles crucial trade routes, high national defence budgets that exceed social spending and a complex web of actors including state, military, financial institutions and corporations that maintain the status quo. Militarism therefore, is not only about wars. It is a systemic issue embedded in our economic and political structures at all levels.

By reframing militarism as a feminist issue at APWLD, we centre a vision for peace and justice that recognises militarism as a systemic injustice and we ensure that our actions, resistance and advocacy is always grounded in women's demands for a just and peaceful world. This shifts the narrative from one of building peace through wars to one rooted in grassroots feminist visions of peace, solidarity and sovereignty and emphasises women's role in peacebuilding processes and putting forward feminist alternatives.

For APWLD, accountability to our members, partners and allies in the fight against imperialism and militarism includes building regional solidarity in demanding the dismantling the militarised structures by defunding of war and financing of peace, amplifying grassroots women's experiences when holding powerholders accountable, achieving meaningful change in laws and policies at all levels, and supporting the safety and security of Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) on the frontlines of the struggle.



Read APWLD's feminist analysis of militarism in Asia and the Pacific:
[Guns over people: Asia and the Pacific in the global militarised order.](#)

Read '[In the Line of Fire](#)', a story of a community in Eastern India confronting a powerful military-industrial complex.

For more [news and feature stories](#) on women in peace processes, follow the work of APWLD's media fellows.





Confronting militarism through regional power-building

'This state of the world right now often leaves us feeling really hopeless and isolated. This gathering, as many other APWLD's gatherings, has really inspired me, strengthened me. It's fortifying me and I'm excited to bring this back home. It's not going to be the end as we will remain in conversation. It's not performative solidarity. It's tangible solidarity. Really looking forward to continuing the conversation and working together and supporting each other's campaign and movement, to show up, to disrupt and demand change.'

MONAEKA FLORES
Prutehi Guåhan, Guam

Together with our members and partners, APWLD is strengthening regional solidarity to confront militarism in all its forms—linking struggles against war, occupation, debt and false climate solutions—while advancing feminist visions of peace, sovereignty and Development Justice. Over the past few years, APWLD has deepened its analysis of the many faces of militarism, how it operates across the region and its impacts on women's human rights, and built a shared feminist vision for peace and justice. These efforts have also created visibility for the anti-militarism movement in Asia and the Pacific.

Through regional study sessions as well as regional and national convenings in 2025 and in previous years, APWLD together with our members and partners has dissected the roots of militarism, connected the dots between militarism, imperialism, debt and climate justice and through its activism and campaigning, have demanded a redirection of military budgets towards peace and justice.

*'The world is not strong
by weapons, it is strong
by peoples' goodwill.'*

ASEL DUNGANAERA
JIPAR, Kyrgyzstan

In 2025, we held two regional convenings on 'Militarism and Women's Rights to Peace and Justice' in Chiang Mai, Thailand and Campaigning for Feminist Peace and Justice in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka. The first convening deepened under-standings of militarism and its entanglements with imperialism, capitalism and neoliberalism and also, crucially, linked these to grassroots women's struggles. The second followed this with collective demands that called for structural solutions to end militarism and imperialism in the region rather than piecemeal approaches.

The joint consultations and shared political agendas also resulted in participating women's human rights activists reporting increased confidence in engaging UN human rights mechanisms and a stronger understanding of 'financing peace' as a feminist framework.



'Yes, in terms of making me understand how geopolitics works or processes on a global level. And also made my understanding deep on women in militarism because I never learned this before. Thank you, APWLD, for taking me to this convening. Love it.'

AMANDINA DA SILVA
Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR)
Timor Leste

'It (regional campaign) is very much needed urgently. I am looking forward to a forceful and broad reaching campaign on Feminist Peace and Justice'

Women's rights activist, Beijing, China

Multiple deliberations with members, grassroots activists and organisations, regional and global allies during the year, resulted in a collective vision for Feminist Peace and Justice that calls for three main political demands:

1. Sustained and concrete efforts to dismantle militarism and the military-industrial complex, which includes removal of military bases from Asia and the Pacific, stopping of military exercises, weapons testing in the region and weapons production and trade, disarmament and defunding of military expenditure and redirecting expenditure to social causes;
2. Stopping extraction of resources for the war economy and upholding peoples' sovereignty over resources, labour and markets; and
3. Upholding accountability, meaningful reparations and justice for those who have suffered the worst from wars and conflicts.

Thirty women human rights defenders, organisers and activists from 13 countries came together in September 2025 to co-create this shared vision for Feminist Peace and Justice. It is a critical piece in strengthening cross-country solidarity and laying the foundation for regional and shared feminist campaigns against militarism in 2026 and onwards. This vision is informed by the impacts of militarisation on women's everyday lives and on their communities.

It is this shared vision, deepened analysis with regionally grounded evidence, common political agendas and shared campaign demands that shaped our engagement with UN Special Procedure Mandate Holders and the multilateral system more broadly on issues of militarism, peace and justice. Ensuring that our collective analysis and political demands are amplified in spaces that we have access to, has been a critical part of holding ourselves accountable to the movements we are a part of.

Recognition of feminist demands on financing for peace

‘Despite widespread evidence of harm, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) continues to resist calls for incorporating binding human rights impact assessments into its programmes.’

‘By funding repressive regimes and harmful initiatives, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) risk actively contributing to the erosion of democratic space and human rights...Infrastructure and land reforms backed by IFIs have sparked displacement and conflict, while the austerity policies promoted by the IMF have fuelled protests across the global South. These uprisings, often violently repressed, implicate IFIs in state violence.’

From thematic report on ‘Financing Peace’ by UN Independent Expert on Foreign Debt, Other International Financial Obligations and Human Rights, Attiya Waris

In October 2025, UN Independent Expert on Foreign Debt, Other International Financial Obligations and Human Rights, Attiya Waris, delivered a thematic report on ‘Financing Peace and Financing War’ to the Third Committee at the UN General Assembly (UNGA). This report carried forward grassroots women’s analysis from APWLD’s submissions on ‘Financing Peace’ and ‘How International Financial Institutions Fuel State-Sponsored Conflict in Developing Countries’, linking military spending, debt and public deprivation, and critiquing the dominant role of IFIs in the region and its contribution to the legitimisation of repressive regimes and erosion of democratic space and human rights.

Since 2023, APWLD’s sustained engagement with the UN Independent Expert on Foreign Debt, resulted in concrete feminist and grassroots influence in her work. This strong relationship contributed to strengthening reflections and demands on the intersecting impacts of debt on financing for development, the climate crises and most recently, on peace. This raised the voices of grassroots women from the Global South, while forcing states and institutions to confront the evidence on IFI-led injustices in Asia and the Pacific and more broadly in the Global South as well as feminist demands on financing for peace.

APWLD contributed to strengthening the informal network that works on the intersections of financing for development and militarism through the Regional Consultation and National Consultation on Financing Peace in Seoul, South Korea. The UN Independent Expert on Foreign Debt participated in this regional consultation with grassroots advocates including women activists from the region to discuss their lived experiences and analyses on the issue.

'I had the privilege of being part of a series of consultations with civil society in South Korea that came as a run up to my report on Financing Peace in October. It was an extremely valuable set of consultations as it is not often that I get the opportunity, while I'm preparing a report, to meet regional actors in a space, and then at the second level, be in a country consultation. It was an incredible group of people mixed from different parts of the region, and the diversity of stakeholders really resulted in robust and deep engagement. It is a privilege and an honour to be engaged with this wonderful organisation, APWLD.'

ATTIYA WARIS

UN Independent Expert on Foreign Debt,
Other International Financial Obligations,
and Human Rights

While the outcomes of the consultation is clearly visible in its reach as described by UN Independent Expert on Foreign Debt, what made this gathering distinct was not just the diversity of movements and expertise represented, but the rare convergence of worlds and shared clarity that militarism and its financing cuts across all our struggles and fights: from Pacific Islanders confronting toxic nuclear testing legacies, South Asian feminists challenging ever-expanding military budgets while their countries battle severe poverty, researchers analysing arms trade economics and the great disarmament, grassroots organisers confronting and resisting militarisation in their communities, Indigenous leaders defending their territories against extractive and militarised development and UN-level policy Independent Experts unpacking global financing architectures.



Read the UN Independent Expert on Foreign Debt's Thematic report on 'Financing Peace and Financing War' [here](#).



Amplifying regional demands to 'Finance Peace, Defund War!'

APWLD has used its varied platforms to amplify the experiences, collective political position and demands of its members and partners to end militarism and uphold justice in Asia and the Pacific. It also elevated an integrated regional analysis grounded in their lived experiences, that the root causes of conflict lies in systemic poverty, inequality and competition for resources. And that militarism in our region is a deliberate outcome of a global financial system designed to serve imperialist, patriarchal and corporate interests.

In 2025, APWLD led the co-development of a collective statement with the participants of a regional consultation on Financing Peace. This statement, Finance Peace, Defund War! A Feminist Call to End Militarism and Uphold Justice for All, reflected shared feminist analysis that peace and justice is not just the absence of war but also the presence of dignity, autonomy and the fulfilment of collective rights for all people in the region.

Further, APWLD engaged in collective advocacy at the Asia Pacific Conference on Climate Imperialism and Militarism and COP30, drawing clear linkages between militarism and climate imperialism, underscoring how militarised development and extractive climate false solutions deepen women's rights violations. Together with grassroots activists and organisations, APWLD co-developed a 'unity statement' together with Indigenous Peoples, farmers, fisherfolk, workers, scientists, faith-based groups, women, people with diverse genders, youth, climate activists and human rights advocates, united in defense of our land, water and natural resources. The unity statement imagined an Asia and Pacific 'free from neocolonial domination, militarism and ecological destruction; a region where lands and waters are guarded by the people, economies are centred on justice and sustainability, energy transitions are led by communities and peace is rooted in justice, sovereignty, self-determination and equity.'

The collective statement further outlined the united actions that would be taken by all 35 signatories.

Early in the year, APWLD made a submission to the thematic report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Context of Climate Change, Elisa Morgera. The submission carried the lived realities, real solutions from grassroots communities to the climate crisis and feminist calls for a just and equitable transition. Language from the submission on the linkage between military emissions and climate change was included in her report on 'The imperative of defossilizing our economies' for the 59th Session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) in June 2025. More specifically, she referenced militarisation's role in the fossil-fuel based economy and that militarism was responsible for 5.5 per cent of global emissions in 2022 with devastating impacts on biodiversity, life and local economies. She also called for an end to debt-related fossil fuel lock-in, in which indebted states are compelled to continue relying on fossil fuels rather than pursuing more sustainable alternatives and reparations. Below is APWLD's citation from the report:

'Finally, fossil fuels are a driver of armed conflict. Militarisation is part of the fossil fuel-based economy, being responsible for 5.5 per cent of global emissions, major loss of life and biodiversity, toxic pollution, increased dependence on imported food and strained local economies.'

ELISA MORGERA
UN Special Rapporteur on Climate Change's
Report on Fossil Fuel-based Economy
and Human Rights

Read the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Climate Change on 'The Imperative of Defossilizing Our Economies' [here](#).



Constructive engagement on militarism and financing peace

APWLD's engagement at the 80th Session of the UNGA is the culmination of our advocacy on Financing a Feminist Vision of Peace and Justice that was echoed in multiple multilateral spaces such as in FfD4, the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) and our various engagements with UN Mandate Holders—centering a feminist analysis of militarism and financing, challenging state focused military narratives.

APWLD delegates to the Forum on Financing Peace co-organised with the UN Independent Expert on Foreign Debt and Human Rights, Attiya Waris, included members from PEACEMOMO in South Korea and the Women's League of Burma (WLB). They brought rich perspectives and critique on conflict and the military-industrial complex as experienced in their contexts. These interventions underscored how militarisation diverts resources from essential services and asserted feminist demands in multilateral spaces typically dominated by governments, financial institutions and corporations.

Together with our members, PEACEMOMO and WLB, APWLD channelled community evidence into these formal accountability processes. The groundwork for this was laid through extensive movement-led consultations, research and analysis, as well as political education and advocacy. Through these efforts, APWLD contributed to strengthening the recognition of feminist analyses of militarism within discussions on financing peace and direct discussion with UN actors on accountability.





These engagements also created critical entry points to press duty-bearers on their institutional obligations, including greater transparency in military expenditures, stronger human rights safeguards in financing frameworks and policies and meaningful inclusion of grassroots women in peace and security decision-making processes.

APWLD also interacted with the President of the HRC during a civil society briefing on the UN80 Initiative, raising concerns regarding the rise of anti-gender and anti rights movements, as well as the implications of institutional restructuring and budget cuts on the fulfilment of mandates. This emphasised the need for the UN system to uphold its normative commitments and resist against the erosion of accountability under the guise of efficiency.

Centering a feminist analysis of peace and justice at all levels, through community evidence and narratives, requires listening and bearing witness to women and their stories of struggle and resistance in the face of militarism.

Readying for feminist action on militarism and extractive ocean industries

The 'blue economy' is an emerging frontier of feminist struggle for APWLD, its members and partners. In 2025, we engaged in an effort to build our collective understanding of extractive ocean economies and the ways it intersects with trade, militarism and climate false solutions.

Through study sessions and regional convenings with 44 members and partners, we explored the impacts of ocean extraction on coastal and fishing communities, especially women. Together we also questioned the terminology and framing of 'blue economy' itself—initially intended as a vision for economic growth that balanced economic protection and development, but has in practice been a continuation of imperial and extractive development. The oceans have increasingly become a space of government and military control, weaponised to justify extraction, securitisation and continued colonial military control over Indigenous territories across the region and especially in the Pacific.

These exchanges enriched the organisation's collective understanding and laid the groundwork for the next cycle of movement-building, FPAR and engagement in multilateral spaces on the issue of ocean resources. APWLD also increased its involvement in the UN-led Ocean Dialogue process, contributing to a collective statement that brought feminist analysis into discussions on deep-sea mining, marine geo-engineering and militarisation.





Access to Justice for Women Human Rights Defenders

The global rise of fascist, authoritarian, ultra-nationalist and right-wing regimes and conservative ideologies that are anti-gender equality have led to corresponding attacks on human rights, especially for women and girls. In Asia and the Pacific, we saw this in the formal non-recognition of and active hostility towards marginalised groups, in the weaponisation of 'anti-terror' and 'online safety' laws that served to censor, surveil and crackdown on people's resistance to oppression even as rampant disinformation spread, in the rollback of critical aid, in the denial of labour rights, in climate emergencies and the economic struggles of people, and in attacks on WHRDs, among others.

Access to justice therefore became an important rallying point for organising and mobilising communities, as women's human rights movements in the region came together to support WHRDs under attack. In 2025, APWLD increased its support to advance feminist legal activism and access to justice for WHRDs, consolidating evidence of harm so as to demand accountability for marginalised groups and mobilising direct resources to support WHRDs under attack or at risk.



Recognition of feminist demands on financing for peace

In Burma/Myanmar, WHRDs risk both arrest and erasure. Women activists in the country are systematically targeted, forced into hiding, displacement or exile. But they continue to lead, document violations, organise communities and defend the dream of a federal democratic future.

In 2025, a feminist fact-finding mission created a rare political space to document first-hand testimonies of repression, displacement and the gendered impacts of military violence in Burma/Myanmar. The fact finding mission, led by Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) from Burma/Myanmar with support from APWLD, gathered evidence of ongoing human rights violations, challenged the legitimacy of the junta's planned elections, exposing humanitarian crisis and how internally displaced women and children are denied aid through formal channels. Crucially, the mission also connected front-line women directly with a cross-party cohort of Members of Parliament (MPs) from New Zealand, Thailand and members of ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR). This direct engagement ensured that regional and international allies heard firsthand accounts of ongoing human rights violations.

This led to strengthened international solidarity and concrete political outcomes. Members of Parliament, particularly from New Zealand, raised these findings in their national parliament and global forums, rejected the junta's sham elections, and called for humanitarian assistance to be channelled through local and border-based networks rather than the military regime. The calls reinforced support for the ongoing struggle for federal democracy.



APWLD and its trade union and workers members in Burma/Myanmar have also long exposed the broader pattern of repression by the military regime against the labour movement in Burma/Myanmar, especially since the 2021 military coup. The military has systematically targeted trade unions and civil society organisations that advocate for social justice and workers' rights. In October 2022, military leaders enacted the Registration of Associations Law (SAC Law No. 46/2022), a measure widely used to restrict and criminalise the activities of civil society groups and trade unions.

In 2025, APWLD, together with Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC), Just Associates (JASS) and the Worker Rights Consortium, led regional solidarity efforts in response to the arrest of Myo Myo Aye and members of the Solidarity Trade Union of Myanmar (STUM), mobilising human rights organisations across the region. On 20 October 2025, Myo Myo Aye was conditionally released from Insein Prison after a bond was posted, while other STUM members remained detained. Following sustained advocacy, all detained STUM members were released on 19 February 2026 after seven months of detention, and the case was won. However, restrictions remain: three activists, including Myo Myo Aye, were released on bond with mandatory monthly reporting to police, while seven others are under a one-year restriction requiring them to report their travel to authorities.



Read the Call for the Release of Burmese Union Leader Myo Myo Aye & STUM Activists signed by 25 Asia and the Pacific human rights organisations [here](#).

Read APWLD's Statement, 'End the Crackdown on Workers' Rights - Release STUM Labour Activists Now', [here](#).

Read Clean Clothes Campaign's latest statement on Myo Myo Aye's release and 'Update on the Solidarity of Trade Unions Myanmar's current situation' [here](#).



Recognising and protecting journalists as women human rights defenders

Through a Feminist Media Fund—set up following feedback from media fellows—APWLD supports journalists working under pressure or facing risks. Through APWLD's support, alumni fellows like Nikita Jain were able to feel safe to reach out for assistance when facing legal challenges and repression that hinder their work and ability to travel as journalists.

Nikita Jain, who is a Senior Correspondent at Maktoob Media, highlighted her appreciation for the recognition of shared challenges faced by journalists, media organisations and grassroots women activists across Asia-Pacific. As she noted:

'The surveillance and crackdown by the governments on journalists and civil bodies was a common thing between people from all countries—especially towards the marginalised and Indigenous groups. Also, the misuse of laws like terror laws against journalists and activists in almost all countries was what really baffled me.'

These reflections reinforce the need to recognise journalists as part of a broader ecosystem of activists facing similar risks, and to create dedicated spaces of support for them. This culminated in their inclusion in rich discussions during our 2025 Convening on Freedom of Expression and Association. As Nikita shared: 'I liked how (APWLD) was radical in its approach towards feminist reporting. There was no 'if or but', just conversations purely from the lens of gender perspective. I also like how conversations steered towards the whole lot of other issues and the structural way through which conversation of feminism was done.'

Through our News Lab project, in collaboration with Earth Journalism Network (EJN), South Asian women journalists and APWLD partners were also able to better understand each other's struggles. As shared by Aisha Farrukh, News Lab media fellow and head of content at The Centrum Media, Pakistan: 'Meeting fellow journalists and activists from India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka was a refreshing experience. Despite being divided by borders and political differences, I realised that many of our challenges are strikingly similar.'

A step towards justice: marriage migrants gain regional recognition

*'As a spouse of a migrant,
I carry with me lived experiences...
Marriage migrants are integral to the
social and economic fabric of the
nation but face immense barriers to
basic services and protection...
Governments must ensure
immigration policies protect migrant
spouses and binational families,
prioritising their well-being, dignity
and right to family life. A gendered
approach is essential—policies must
address power imbalances and the
unique challenges faced by women
marriage migrants. With marriage
migration on the rise, Member States
must strengthen protections and
uphold gender equality.'*

PATRICIA LOW
Family Frontiers, Malaysia

During the year we saw critical gains in the push for formal recognition of marriage migrants within the framework of the Global Compact on Migration (GCM)—the first-ever UN global agreement on a common approach to international migration in all its dimensions.

This followed from sustained and grounded advocacy by APWLD and its members and partners to expand the issue of migration and recognise the specific concerns and experiences of women marriage migrants—which refers to the migration within countries or across borders due to marriage. Predominantly, marriage migrants are women and there are multiple and intersecting push and pull factors that give rise to marriage migration and have associated risks and inequalities.

In 2025, APWLD advanced feminist accountability within migration governance by grounding advocacy in a Multi-Country Research (MCR) on marriage migration and translating findings into coordinated regional interventions. The research was conducted in five countries: Malaysia, Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia and the Philippines. The findings were used as a consolidated evidence and an advocacy tool in at least five regional spaces from 2024 to 2025 (see Table 2).





**Table 2: Regional spaces in 2024 to 2025
where the MCR findings on Marriage Migration
were shared:**

	September 2024 Fourth Asia Pacific Feminist Forum (APFF4)
	September 2024 Regional Women Migrants Convening
	November 2024 Regional Workshop Developing Migrant and Refugee Indicators
	November 2024 GCM Stakeholder Consultation
	February 2025 2nd Asia Pacific GCM Regional Review
	June 2025 Regional Migrants' Summit
	October 2025 Regional Women Migrants Convening

It was in those spaces that APWLD members raised the issue of inclusion of marriage migrants into the GCM. At the 2nd Asia Pacific GCM Regional Review in February, APWLD, Family Frontiers, Korea Center for United Nations Human Rights Policy (KOCUN) and KABAR BUMI organised a side event, entitled 'Integrating Marriage Migrants into GCM Implementation: Ensuring Safe, Human Rights-Based and Gender-Responsive Pathways'. During this side event, the OHCHR and UN Women representatives voiced their support for integrating marriage migration into the GCM framework.

‘What needs to be done, and I think what would be my recommendation, for moving forward, is to fit this issue within the broader issue of migration governance which is ultimately what the GCM is about. So that we’re looking at it to ensure that where marriage migration is taking place, that it’s rights-based and human-centered, and that you’re looking at it from the perspective of the spouses, of the children, and of the various forms of family. And the governance should be predictable...So well done for putting this on the agenda, please count on the UN Human Rights Office to be your partner in this.’

PIA OBERO
OHCHR representative

Moreover, the issue of marriage migration and the side event were also acknowledged in the official document of the Asia Pacific GCM Regional Review as part of the Chairs’ summary.

‘Marriage migration was increasing in the region, but female spouses often had limited rights and faced barriers to integration in destination countries. Furthermore, migrant children had the right to legal identity and civil registration and their voices needed to be represented.’ - Taken from Agenda item 2 of the Chairs’ Summary

‘Marriage migration, especially when the marriages are organised through brokerage agencies, could put migrant women into highly vulnerable situations due to a lack of language skills, their young age and the unequal distribution of power in the relationship. The legal identity and citizenship of children of binational married couples were often unclear. More reliable data, comprehensive pre-departure and reintegration services, easy access to social services and better cooperation between the Governments of countries of origin and destination were needed.’ - Taken from Agenda item 3b of the Chairs’ Summary

The collective organising and mobilising of women migrants and migrants’ rights organisations strengthened the movement in the region. This was also an important win this year as APWLD and its members and partners gear up for the second International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) in May 2026, where the final global review of the GCM will take place.



Read the Second Asia Pacific GCM Regional Review Chair Summary [here](#).

Read APWLD’s Multicountry Research on Marriage Migration [here](#).

Amplifying the voices of returnee and indigenous women migrants regionally

APWLD and its members were also able to secure at least 10 speaking slots from the floor at the 2nd Asia Pacific GCM Regional Review, raising issues from trafficking, overcharging, socio-economic reintegration, Indigenous women's rights, internal and returnee migrants to marriage migration. Their interventions resulted in language inclusion for most of the issues they raised in the official Chair's Summary. Further, two APWLD members also managed to secure speaking slots as panellists at the roundtable of the High Level Panel Discussion.

'We call upon Indonesian and destined [sic] country governments to consistently adhere to the international human rights standard, particularly the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their families...To ensure that migrant workers hold their identity documents and legal documents and ensure the stop of illegal confiscation of documents of migrant workers.'

KARSIWEN
Chair of KABAR BUMI

'Migration is treated as a separate issue, detached from the systemic marginalisation Indigenous Peoples face, forcing many into unsafe labour conditions. Indigenous migrant workers—especially women and gender-diverse individuals—experience deep-rooted discrimination at every stage of migration. The Global Compact for Migration must bridge this gap by recognising Indigenous Peoples as rights-holders, ensuring inclusive migration policies that protect our dignity, identity and well-being.'

LADIPMA KIRATI
National Indigenous
Women Forum (NIWF)

'Achieving meaningful sustainable reintegration requires an intersectional approach that addresses caste, gender, class, denial of SRHR, indigeneity and ethnic-based discrimination (including the recognition of Indigenous identities) Moreover, migrant workers must be recognised as key stakeholders in platforms like the GCM reviews. Grassroots migrant women must have access to understandable information, resources, and decision-making spaces. Migration policies and dialogues must be inclusive, ensuring that migrant workers are at the center of discussions that impact their lives.'

SUNITA MAINALI
Women Rehabilitation Centre
(WOREC)

Further, in October 2025, APWLD organised a Regional Women Migrants Convening which gathered 39 women migrants from at least 16 countries in Asia and the Pacific. The convening created a space for women migrants and migrant rights organisations to consolidate their priorities, recommendations and further analysis of the GCM implementation and review mechanism. It helped foster solidarity among participants whose discussions informed a joint statement on 'Defending Women Migrants' Human Rights and Access to Justice', together with insights from six national consultations in 2025 in Nepal, Thailand, South Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Papua New Guinea and the United Arab Emirates. Released on International Migrants Day in December 2025, this statement is a 'womanifesto' of women migrants from the Asia and the Pacific region that maps out their concrete demands and recommendations in time for the implementation review of GCM at the 2nd IMRF in 2026.



Read Women Migrants' Joint Statement on 'Defending Women Migrants' Human Rights and Access to Justice' [here](#).

Advancing access to justice through feminist legal resistance

When the state weaponises the law to silence dissent, feminist movements respond by weaponising something stronger: solidarity, strategy and collective resistance.

In the Philippines, WHRDs and CSOs have increasingly been targeted under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) and the Terrorism Financing Prevention and Suppression Act (TFPSA). APWLD supported the National Union of People's Lawyers (NUPL), an APWLD member, in its initiative to provide sustained litigation and advocacy support to lawyers defending WHRDs and CSOs. Together, they consolidated and monitored at least 32 cases nationwide, facilitated regular case conferences and supported trial work in key prosecutions such as that of Community Empowerment Network (CERNET) and Paghida-et sa Kauswagan Development Group (PDG)—two development Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) facing false charges of 'terrorism financing' in the Philippines. The initiative strengthened coordination among legal teams, sharpened defense strategies and ensured that WHRDs and CSOs (clients) were informed and actively engaged throughout the process. This partnership between APWLD and NUPL contributed to case dismissals, ongoing constitutional challenges and collective legal actions against abusive prosecutions and designations.

Further, the evidence gathered from these cases, which details patterns of fabricated charges, asset freezes, red-tagging and the disproportionate targeting of WHRDs, was transformed into a policy brief and shared in various public fora marking five years of the ATA. Their collective work reached the Philippine Commission on Human Rights (CHR), Integrated Bar of the Philippines, selected members of the Philippine House of Representatives and relevant UN offices and international institutions on observations on the implementation of the terror laws.

At the same time, APWLD expanded feminist legal capacity across Asia and the Pacific through its Feminist Legal Theory and Practice (FLTP) trainings, equipping lawyers, activists and WHRDs with tools to critically analyse laws and advance rights-based advocacy. Participants applied feminist legal frameworks to issues ranging from gender-based violence to discriminatory laws and WHRD protection, resulting in stronger policy engagement, clearer advocacy strategies and deeper regional solidarity. Together, these efforts not only defended women against unjust legal attacks but also strengthened their ability to use the law as a tool for resistance and systemic change.

Notably, in the East Asia FLTP Training, Mikiko Otani, an international human rights lawyer and member and former Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and Heisoo Shin, Chair of KOCUN, former Vice-Chair of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee and longtime APWLD member, joined as resource persons. Both of them presented and assisted the participants in learning about practical examples of integrating feminist analysis into their work. At the regional FLTP, Radhika Coomaraswamy—a lawyer, former United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and a long standing APWLD member—shared her experiences and memories of the women's movement and its legacy in the region.



Shifting Narratives for Women's Human Rights

Feminist storytelling and narratives centre the lived experiences of women in all their diversities, especially those most marginalised by patriarchal power structures and systems. Amplifying women's voices and feminist perspectives on justice has the power to shape discourse, shift narratives and counter silencing and erasure.

At APWLD, we recognise that patriarchy intersects with systems of oppression like globalisation, fundamentalisms and militarism, impacting women's lives in very specific ways in Asia and the Pacific. These are the narratives we seek to tell, through communications advocacy, feminist storytelling, activist journalism and feminist research.

Grounding global spaces with inter-generational feminist voices

'Attending my first CSW, I felt the power of inclusion and growth because it is deeply challenging for local grassroots organisations to finance for such participation. Without APWLD, we will be left behind. A personal and empowering highlight was representing the Women's Rights Caucus... I felt the powerful shift of feminist leadership by giving me the opportunity to amplify my voice. What I saw from CSW is that there are rising challenges of multilateralism but I see the strength and resilience of our feminist solidarity taking real action.'

ARENZUNGLA
Feminist Activist, Nagaland, India

Arenzungla or 'Aren', a young Indigenous feminist from Nagaland, India, delivered a bold and grounded intervention co-drafted together with members of APWLD during the Interactive Dialogue session on Accelerating the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). While Aren has long been engaged in grassroots and national advocacy, this marked her first time speaking formally at the UN, representing APWLD, Women's Rights Caucus and Global South feminist movements. In a space where grassroots and Indigenous women are too often excluded or tokenised, her participation represented a powerful act of feminist solidarity and an important step toward making global decision-making processes more accessible and inclusive for voices that are underrepresented. In her intervention, Aren called on Member States and the UN system to bridge the gap between global declarations and local realities by institutionalising national and regional consultations, ensuring that they are transparent, participatory and meaningfully engaging feminist movements.

These are the voices that we amplified in different media and communication platforms.

In 2025, at least 49 news and feature stories were published featuring the work and analyses of APWLD and our members in key events and advocacy spaces. These stories increased the visibility of women's perspectives from the region on issue-based reporting and analysis.

These stories were written by 37 national, regional and global media outlets and organisations including The Diplomat, BFM Malaysia, The Fiji Times, Manila Today, Bulatlat, Tempo.co, News Ghana, Feminism in India, The News International, Good Morning Kashmir, Mizzima, Down to Earth, The Independent and Prachatai, while APWLD member Korea Women's Associations United (KWAU) was featured by International Policy Digest. Two featured interviews with APWLD on women's human rights and feminism in the Asia and the Pacific region ran in the Diplomat, while Bulatlat covered the APFSD in Bangkok, Thailand across three news articles and posts. In addition, at least 13 APWLD members and partners were supported to engage directly with journalists and media outlets in 2025 which resulted in 11 published media stories.



Meanwhile, APWLD's digital outputs across its platforms in 2025 reached over 120,000 people and generated more than 2.2 million impressions, expanding movement-led narratives across platforms.



Read The Diplomat's Feature on APWLD's work [here](#).

Further, nine media fellows were also supported to participate in APWLD's regional convenings and key global spaces including COP, FfD and UNGA, strengthening their knowledge and understanding of critical feminist issues such as food sovereignty, debt, climate justice, labour and digitalisation, financing for peace and freedoms of expression and association. Their participation enhanced their capacity to report on these issues from a feminist perspective.

For example, Lady Ann Salem, a media fellow from the Philippines, joined APWLD's Militarism Convening in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka in September 2025. At the convening, she contributed her expertise on media and digital advocacy, sharing suggestions and inputs on how to engage the media and campaign on militarism. Zeng Umil, a media fellow from the Philippines, joined the APWLD delegation at COP30 in Belém, Brazil in November 2025. She covered the first week of COP30 and produced three stories and one video reel. Another media fellow, Nicha Wachpanich, was also present at COP30 and produced a story on our partner, SDF Thailand. Two media fellows, Joanna Marie Robles from the Philippines and Yiyi Zhang (Anita Zhang) from China, joined APWLD's Regional Convening on Women's Labour Rights and Digitalisation, to better understand the impact of digitalisation from APWLD members and partners perspectives and experiences. The media fellows will be producing stories on digitalisation and digital rights and justice in 2026.

Reshaping media narratives through feminist journalism

Strategic collaboration among activists, movements, journalists and media organisations can be a powerful approach to shape and influence media narratives and spaces.

In 2025, APWLD launched two media fellowships: the Feminist Media Fund for Alumni and the Media Fellowship on Digitalisation and Feminist Digital Rights and Justice. Under these fellowships, seven alumni and 17 new media fellows strengthened their political analysis, reporting ethics as well as digital security when reporting in high-risk environments and situations.



The alumni fellows reported on issues of militarism, debt, feminist food sovereignty and climate injustice:

- Read their coverage of the [Filipino Masinloc fishing community that is grappling with Chinese intrusions into the West Philippine Sea](#);
- Watch this short documentary [Between The Quiet Waves](#) of two fisherfolk wives who look back on how their lives have shifted after their husbands and sons endured harassment from the Chinese Coast Guard, leaving their families with deep fears and lingering trauma;
- Listen to [podcasts](#) that dissect economic inequality and tax justice in India;
- In [Fight for hills](#), read coverage from Odisha in India, as a woman activist is jailed for fighting against bauxite mining in the Sijimali hills; and
- Read an analysis of how [‘Imperialism is the root cause of climate crisis’](#) published during COP30.





APWLD's collaboration with the Earth Journalism Network through the NewsLab initiative strengthened collaboration between media and grassroots movements, resulting in more effective feminist reporting on climate and environmental issues. It enhanced journalists' understanding of women's lived realities and improved activists' ability to engage the media and shape compelling narratives. The initiative also led to five story grants for APWLD members, increasing the visibility of feminist and community-led perspectives in South Asian media.

EJN's Gender Equality & Social Inclusion Advisor, Arianne Olegario, noted, '*NewsLab is an opportunity to negotiate concrete collaborative actions between what we once saw as opposing forces—objectivity and advocacy.*'



Read more feminist reporting by APWLD Media Fellows [here](#).

Being a credible source of feminist knowledge and feminist research in Asia

Over the past two decades, APWLD has engaged in feminist research—from FPAR to rapid research across multiple countries in the region—and we have witnessed the power of research to build and shift power in communities. Research can be an act of resistance when it is led by women, especially grassroots women, who do not simply collect data but collect information and evidence that name their oppression and build their own capacity and power to demand justice on their terms. APWLD's starting point for any research we do is challenging the idea that communities do not have enough understanding of their own issues, nor enough knowledge for critical analysis and action. They do.

In 2025, APWLD and partners produced research that explored strategic areas in our struggle for Development Justice and deepened our regional level political analysis to inform our advocacy at all levels.

- As we expand our work on women's labour rights, we explored the realities of [women's labour rights in the era of digitalisation](#). As a woman warehouse worker in the Philippines reflected in the research, 'I am just realising how digitalisation is in my life right now. It's true, the apps on my phone determine what I am going to do or not do for my whole day. I keep checking the GC (Group Chat) every hour if I am listed among the on-call workers who will report for duty the following day. If I'm on the list, I'm happy. If I'm not, I'm miserable.'
- We published research on the [invisible role of women in food production](#), based on groundwork in Riau province, Indonesia, Chui region in Kyrgyzstan, Sindh in Pakistan, Southern Mindanao in the Philippines and in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka.
- We did a [feminist analysis of ten years of the SDGs in Asia and the Pacific](#) based on monitoring data from across the region between 2016 and 2023. The report confirmed that Asia and the Pacific is not on track to achieve the goals and targets by 2030 and that women in Asia and the Pacific still bear the brunt of poverty and hunger that are created and worsened by neoliberal policies and the climate crisis.

- Implementation gaps in the 30th Anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing+30) Declaration across critical areas of concern were tracked through a [Qualitative Scorecard](#) produced by APWLD. A scorecard of aspirations vs realities informed by APWLD's members, it was a key advocacy tool for APWLD's engagement in CSW69, with 200 physical copies distributed to at least 35 government delegates, UN agencies and more than one hundred civil society members in New York. The online version was launched on the APWLD website and social media for a wider audience and reached over 370 individuals. It was a critical piece of work that held a mirror up to the accountability and lack thereof of powerholders.
- Based on research on militarisation in four countries with grassroots organisations in West Papua, Burma/Myanmar, South Korea, Kyrgyzstan, APWLD together with its partners and members developed [a framework and grassroots women's demands for feminist peace and justice](#) that will guide advocacy and campaigning in 2026 and onwards.
- And finally, APWLD published an analysis of [women leading climate action](#) and climate real solutions based on FPAR with six women's grassroots partner organisations in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mongolia, Philippines and Thailand.

Research, analysis and case story narratives from grassroots organisations that APWLD works together with are being consolidated and amplified through APWLD's [Feminist Accountability Map \(FAM\)](#), which expanded to include five countries of South Asia—Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India and two countries of Central Asia—Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan in 2025. The map tracks the progress of countries in Asia and the Pacific against its commitments to women's human rights and Development Justice. The map currently features 18 countries in the region and growing and recorded 1,911 users in 2025.

Conceptually, APWLD has been engaging with others in the region to better understand what research for movement-building looks like for activists and organisations in the region.



Listen to our two-part podcast (episodes [1](#) and [2](#)) on *Research as Resistance* released in 2025 based on conversations with 30 activists, researchers and academics from South East Asia, South Asia, East Asia, Central Asia and the Pacific.

Creative activism in the service of women's human rights

Eyeing the Debt (2024)

"Beyond Debt" was preceded by "Eyeing the Debt", which functioned as a graphic denunciation, exposing how debt — both public and private — together with the orthodox economic policies often implemented to ensure debt repayment, adversely affect a wide range of human rights and groups in situations of social vulnerability.



“On Debt Row” provided us a space to think deeply about the issues discussed at the FfD4. It gave us an alternative safe space when most of the spaces offered to us are restrictive and exclusive. It was such a joy to see art as a medium to express our resistance.’

EURODAD

Creative art activism, grounded in collaboration with feminist artists, artists from the Global South and global movements, has become a strategic and creative approach to advancing women's human rights. In collaboration with global organisations and artists from the Global South, APWLD hosted an exhibition 'On Debt Row' during the FfD4 Conference in Sevilla, Spain in 2025 that highlighted the political and human rights dimensions of debt. APWLD's collaboration with feminist artists from the Global South (O Home), Jairo Alvarez (Argentina), as well as academe and former UN Independent Expert on Debt and Human Rights, Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky—successfully brought the voices and stories of the grassroots communities, including grassroots women in Asia and the Pacific and Latin America through art. In doing so, it amplified the lived impacts of debt on women and marginalised communities by creating an alternative platform through art so civil society could continue to advocate in otherwise restrictive multilateral spaces. The exhibit also provided a unique opportunity to translate complex and abstract concepts of debt into accessible, women-centred narratives through visual and digital art.



*'The exhibit was an important space.
With so much oppression everywhere,
art can be our ultimate form of
resistance!'*

SCARLETT
Debt for Climate Europe

The exhibit hosted two events: 'On Debt Row: Artists speak on debt, channeling resistance through art' and 'Demilitarising Finance: Women's lived realities at the intersections of conflict, debt & related crises in the Global South.' The events and the exhibit gathered at least 180 registered visitors over a week across the spaces.



See here for [photos and highlights](#) of the two exhibits and events.

Meanwhile in India and Indonesia, grassroots women developed songs of resistance in their fight to reclaim land and traditional forms of forestry and cultivation.

In Dhobani and Uldahi in Jharkhand, India, community women composed a song about the value and significant role of forests to Adivasis. The song was collectively created during capacity-building exercises and was later performed at community events as a way to raise awareness about the situation of women and forests in Jharkhand and why it is important for women and communities to act together.

SWADHINA SONG

*We are adivasis, we live in villages
There we live together in joy and happiness.
We maintain our Jaherstan—the place
of traditional worship
We do farming
This brings us food and prosperity
Our forests are being cut down
Our land is shrinking
Let all sisters and brothers come together
We must save our forest
Let us protect our trees and forests
This will bring us rain and save our farming.*





Similarly, in Jeneponto, Indonesia, a collective song also became part of grassroots women's political expression and resistance. Air Mata Pesisir or 'Tears of the Coast' is a song about the resistance of women seaweed farmers in Jeneponto, South Sulawesi in Indonesia who are pushing back against the big shrimp farming industries. Sipitanggari Fisherwomen Community (KPNS) members sing the song on various occasions, such as the Coastal Peoples' Festival. KPNS also taught and shared the song to other participants and groups during the Festival, and together they sang the song to uplift and inspire one another in their fight against the shrimp farming companies.

TEARS OF THE COAST

*Prayers of tears fall
On every strand of seaweed
Where we entrust our lives to
On the back of the ocean*

*The waves nurture them with care,
Rousing them to grow,
Blessing the life of fisherfolks
Who depend on it for their livelihood*

*Yet from shadows unknown
Poisonous waste seeps in,
Threatening the peaceful coastline,
Tearing the conscience within*

*The lips of the sea turn murky,
Grimacing in pain and sorrow
The roar of the waves is hoarse,
Screams of suffering and despair*

*Whose greed is it?
Polluting my sea with waste
Kill the seaweed
The pillar of a fisher families livelihood*

*Who's the bastard's doing?
Against the law of sacred balance,
Chasing abundant profits
In a despicable and embarrassing way*

These creative expressions, along with other media such as films, podcasts, cartoons and visuals serve as effective political tools for raising consciousness, visibilising and amplifying women's roles and voices, strengthening solidarity and sustaining collective resistance against the corporatisation of land, forest and coastal resources.



Strengthening Member-led Feminist Leadership, Solidarity and Accountability

Membership and network engagement

In 2025, APWLD continued strengthening its role as a member-led feminist network across Asia and the Pacific. We welcomed four new organisational members from two countries, bringing APWLD's membership to 317 members comprising 223 organisations/networks and 94 individuals.

The Regional Council (ReC) continued to provide strategic guidance to the organisation while also serving as an important political space for solidarity, contextual analysis and collective reflection across the region. Members remained actively engaged in APWLD's governance and programme implementation through Programme Organising Committees (POCs) and regional activities.

Listening closely to members' priorities and regional realities, APWLD convened two sub-regional members' gatherings in South Asia and in the Pacific. These spaces enabled members to collectively analyse emerging political challenges, identify sub-regional priorities and discuss strategies to strengthen representation and leadership from historically underrepresented subregions within APWLD. APWLD also held a Regional Convening on Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Association, strengthening cross-movement solidarity and collective analysis in response to shrinking civic space across the region.

Strengthening feminist institutional capacity, care and security

In 2025, APWLD maintained a fully operational Secretariat comprising 35 colleagues, including full-time staff, interns and fellows. As the organisation's work and regional engagement continued to grow, APWLD remained committed to strengthening a feminist workplace culture grounded in accountability, wellbeing, collective care and political solidarity.

The Secretariat convened both its Annual Planning Meeting (APM) and Mid-Year Review (MYR) in Chiang Mai, Thailand, creating important spaces for collective reflection, strategic planning and organisational learning. These gatherings also strengthened relationships and solidarity among colleagues working across different programmes, countries and hybrid working arrangements.

Recognising the increasing importance of communications advocacy and movement visibility, APWLD strengthened institutional capacities in feminist storytelling, reporting and campaigning. Through workshops facilitated by the People's Archive of Rural India (PARI), Greenpeace and APWLD's Feminist Voices team, Secretariat staff, members and media fellows strengthened practical skills in feminist reporting, multimedia documentation, ethical storytelling and campaign strategy.



Conclusion and Reflective Questions for Our Movements

As we think about our work in 2025, we understand that the feminist organising we are engaged in is happening at a time of escalating global crises, shrinking democratic spaces and rapidly changing political realities. These experiences have not only deepened our resistances, but have also posed critical concerns for our movements around accountability, power, sustainability and the feminist futures we are aiming to build beyond crises.



1

How do we sustain feminist leadership, accountability and resistance in the face of compounding forces of imperialism, militarism, neoliberal capitalism, fundamentalisms and patriarchy?

Feminist movements globally and in Asia and the Pacific are organising under increasingly hostile conditions. Shrinking civic space, pervasive surveillance and the weaponisation of laws against Human Rights Defenders present severe, escalating risks to activists and grassroots communities, especially for feminist and women's human rights movements. These groups face a dual threat: they are targeted not only for resisting authoritarian state policies and corporate capture, but also for actively dismantling patriarchal power structures. For WHRDs, the closing of civic space is explicitly gendered, weaponising misogynistic attacks, digital violence and targeted defunding to push women out of public governance and decision-making.

Our members and secretariat staff report increased risks when engaging publicly with state actors and multilateral spaces, leading to both state-imposed restrictions and self-imposed censorship. At the same time, climate disasters, economic insecurity, political repression and armed conflict intensify the emotional, financial and political strain on movements. These realities raise urgent questions about how we sustain long-term organising while ensuring grassroots women retain political agency and leadership over their struggles.

Our experiences show that consistent political education and organising is key, as well as regional solidarity-building, strengthening urgent response mechanisms for WHRDs under attack, and fostering cross-movement solidarity to sustain pressure for accountability. These experiences ultimately remind us that feminist organising must simultaneously resist systemic repression while building robust infrastructures of safety, collective care and movement resilience.



2

What can feminist political education look like in an era of repression and disinformation?



3

As multilateral systems collapse how do we hold powerholders accountable in ways that are most effective to bring about structural change?

Our experience confirms that feminist political education is not simply about capacity-building. It is a radical tool for shifting consciousness, building and mobilising collective power and enabling women to identify and challenge structural injustice. Our interconnected ecosystems of feminist grassroots organising, participatory research, cross-border advocacy and campaign, and movement-building spaces have allowed grassroots women to sharpen their political analysis, reclaim leadership and build solidarity across movements. However, as authoritarianism, digital misinformation and anti-rights movements intensify, sustaining accessible, movement-led feminist political education is no longer just an internal capacity-building goal, but a critical frontline defense of democracy and an essential tool for strengthening resistance and building feminist futures beyond crisis.

Multilateral spaces and global governance platforms are becoming increasingly corporatised and exclusionary, thereby reducing meaningful civil society representation. Policy spaces such as UNCTAD16 and the FfD negotiations have had limited transparency and access for grassroots engagement. This institutionalised exclusion is inherently gendered, as it operates on highly technical, gatekept language specifically designed to keep grassroots women from scrutinising global financial systems and macroeconomic policies that exploit their labour.

APWLD has countered this structural exclusion by utilising a two-pronged strategy: maintaining a strategic, disruptive presence within formal spaces, while simultaneously building sovereign, alternative feminist spaces such as the Feminist Workstream. The Workstream transformed the highly technical and exclusionary process of FfD into a participatory, feminist-led process, strengthening cross-regional solidarity among Global South feminist movements.



4

How do we deepen solidarity while actively dismantling inequalities of power, resources and access within our own movements?

While cross-border and intersectional solidarity remains our strongest weapon against systems of inequality, it is neither automatic nor inherently equitable. Feminist movements do not exist in a vacuum, and we must constantly negotiate the same unequal distributions of resources, language dominance, mobility, visibility and political power that mirror broader geopolitical hierarchies. Such circumstances demand rigorous and continual reflection on power, responsibility and redistribution within our own movements, so that solidarity can evolve beyond rhetoric into transformational political activity that is recentred around the most marginalised communities.



5

How do we sustain feminist alternatives, imagination and hope?

Feminist movements need to do more than simply respond to crises. We also need to generate spaces for political imagination, collective dreaming and feminist alternatives grounded in care, justice, dignity and liberation. Yet, this visionary work is increasingly suffocated by a broader geopolitical strategy of economic strangulation, where philanthropic and state funding for civil society becomes heavily restricted, conditioned and competitive. Feminist movements are starved of the basic resources needed to survive, let alone mobilise. Reduced funding undermines movements' capacity to adapt to fast-changing political realities and interconnected crises caused by war, authoritarianism, climate catastrophe and economic injustice.

APWLD has supported members through sub-grants, establishing regional solidarity and supporting grassroots women's meaningful engagement in regional and global advocacy spaces. These experiences reaffirm that sustaining feminist futures cannot rely on short-term or project-based approaches to change. It demands deep, unrestricted, long-term investments in grassroots organising, movement infrastructure, collective care ecosystems and the radical feminist imagination.

APWLD's Governance Structure (2024-2027) and Secretariat

Programme and Management Committee

Organisation	Name	Country
Korea Center for United Nations Human Rights Policy (KOCUN)	Heisoo Shin	South Korea
Individual member	Madhu Mehra	India
Center for Women's Resources (CWR)	Cielito V. Perez (Cham)	Philippines
Public Foundation 'JIPAR'	Asel Dunganaeva	Kyrgyzstan
Representative of the Thailand National Board of Directors	Maliwan Senawong	Thailand
Representative of the Malaysian National Board of Directors	Daniella Zulkifili	Malaysia
Regional Coordinator, APWLD Secretariat	Joms Salvador (ex-officio)	Philippines



Regional Council

Organisation	Name	Country
Fiji Women's Crisis Center	Stephanie Chanelle Dunn	Fiji
Fiji Women's Rights Movement	Nalini Singh	Fiji
Brown Girl Woke	Doris Tulifau	Samoa
Center for Women's Resources	Cielito V. Perez (Cham)	Philippines
Women's League of Burma	Nang Moet Moet	Burma/Myanmar
Palangkaraya Ecological and Human Rights Studies (PROGRESS)	Kartika Sari	Indonesia
SILAKA	Reasey Seng	Cambodia
All Women's Action Society (AWAM)	Jayamalar Samuel	Malaysia
Sangsan Anakot Yawachon Foundation	Matcha Phornin	Thailand
Indonesian Migrant Workers Union	Sringatin	Hong Kong
Korea Center for United Nations Human Rights Policy (KOCUN)	Heisoo Shin	South Korea
Centre for Human Rights and Development (CHRD)	Mandkhaitsetsen Urantulkhuur	Mongolia
PA Feminist League	Yevgeniya Kozyreva	Kazakhstan
Public Foundation 'JIPAR'	Dunganaeva Asel	Kyrgyzstan
PO Otifa	Nurmatova Sanoat	Tajikistan
Zan va Zamin	Mamadaliyeva Mukhabbatkhon	Tajikistan
Roots for Equity	Azra Sayeed	Pakistan
HomeNet Pakistan	Ume Laila Azhar	Pakistan
Access Planet Organization	Laxmi Nepal	Nepal
Karmojibi Nari	Sunzida Sultana	Bangladesh
Stand Up Movement Lanka	Ashila Dandeniya	Sri Lanka
Individual member	Madhu Mehra	India
Representative of the Thailand National Board of Directors	Maliwan Senawong	Thailand
Regional Coordinator, APWLD Secretariat	Joms Salvador (ex-officio)	Philippines

APWLD Secretariat in 2025

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>
1	Aijamal Bakashova	Grants Manager
2	Aizhan Dzhanaeva	South to South Fellow
3	Aliza Yuliana	Programme Officer, Migrants United and Act for Human Rights
4	Alyssa Balite	Programme Associate, Feminist Knowledge, Learning & Publications
5	April Porteria	Programme Officer, Feminist Development Justice
6	Degina Adenesa	Programme Officer, Women Organising Workers
7	Edz Dela Cruz	Programme Officer, Feminist Voice
8	Eloisa Delos Reyes	Programme Officer, Breaking out of Marginalisation
9	Joms Salvador	Regional Coordinator
10	Ka Mei Lau	Executive Officer
11	Kalpana Rai	Programme Associate, Feminist Development Justice
12	Kamakshi Amar	Programme Officer, Women in Power
13	Kornvika Paupratum	Finance & Admin Manager
14	Liani MK	Programme Associate, Feminist Voice
15	Maham Tanveer	Human Resources Manager
16	Maitreyi Gupta	Programme Manager
17	Marie Ugoy	Intern, Migrants United and Act for Human Rights



	<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>
18	Munkhsaruul Mijiddorj	Programme Manager
19	Phantiwa da Cruz Fernandes	Liaison and Administrative Officer
20	Rachel Tan	Programme Officer, Grounding the Global
21	Raktai Damrongmanee	Finance Officer
22	Ranjana Giri	Programme Officer, Climate Justice
23	Rattikan Kuntapoung	Finance Associate
24	Sadia Afrin Khan	Programme Officer, Feminist Law and Practice
25	Sanila Gurung	Programme Officer, Women Interrogating Trade & Corporate Hegemony
26	Shardha Rajam	Programme Associate, Labour & Migration
27	Shikchhya Yonzon	South to South Fellow
28	Tasmiah Juthi	Programme Associate, Breaking out of Marginalisation
29	Thanyarat Khrueawongkaew	Administrative Associate
30	Theresa Mikhaela Moalong	Intern, Women Organising Workers
31	Wardarina	Deputy Regional Coordinator
32	Yamonh Pwint Thit	Subgrants Associate
33	Zainab Ibrahim	Feminist Knowledge, Learning & Publications Officer
34	Zainab Shumail	Coordinator, Crises & Women's Human Rights Initiative
35	Zar Zar Tun	Programme Associate, Women in Power & Feminist Law and Practice

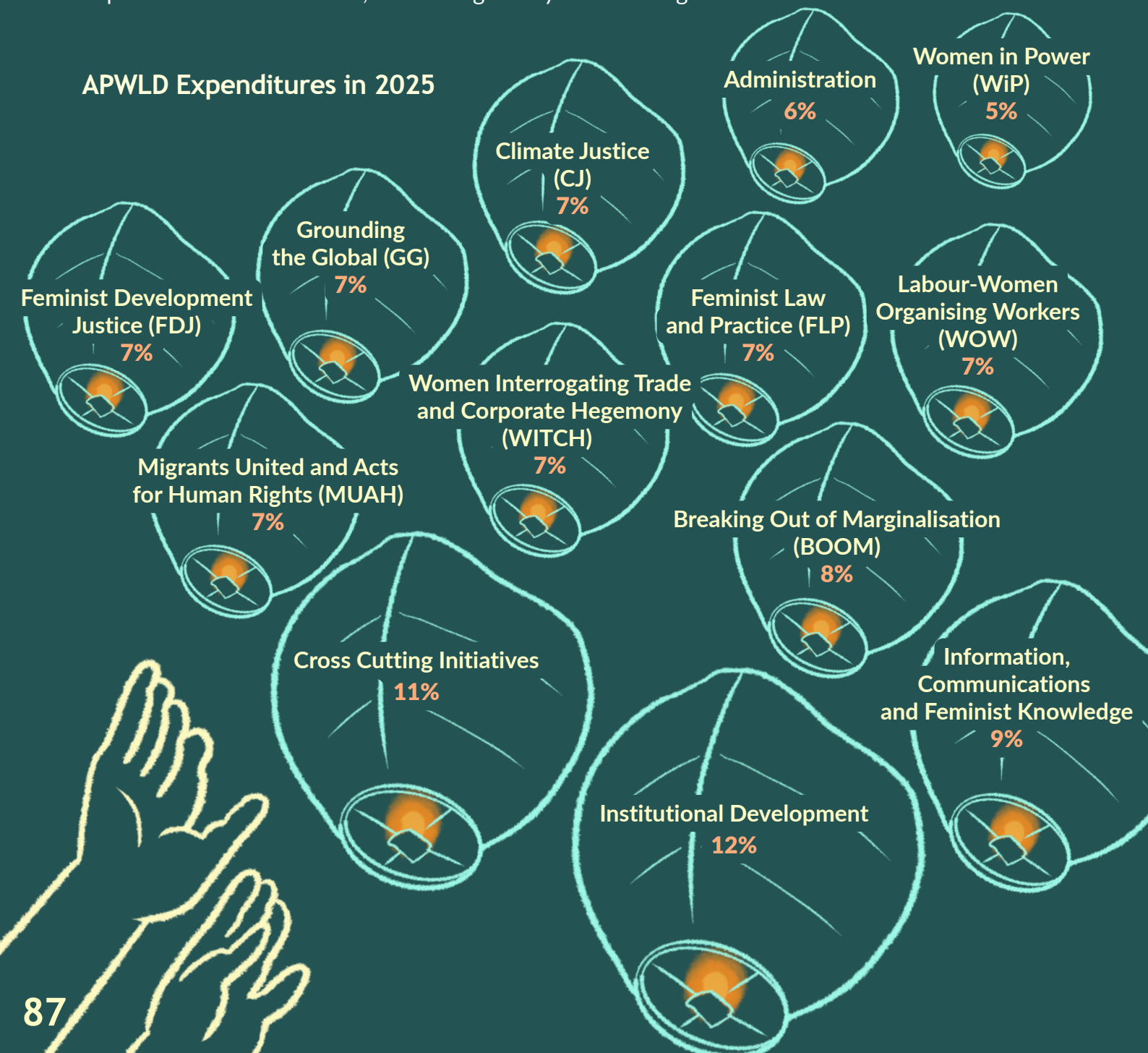
The following staff members transitioned out of APWLD in 2025. We are grateful for their contribution to our work.

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>
1	Lyn Angelica Pano	Programme Manager
2	Andi Cipta Asmawaty	Programme Officer, Women Organising Workers
3	Gerimara Manuel	Programme Associate, Feminist Voice
4	Sagarika Bhatta	Programme Associate, Climate Justice and Crises & Women's Human Rights
5	Misun Woo	Regional Coordinator

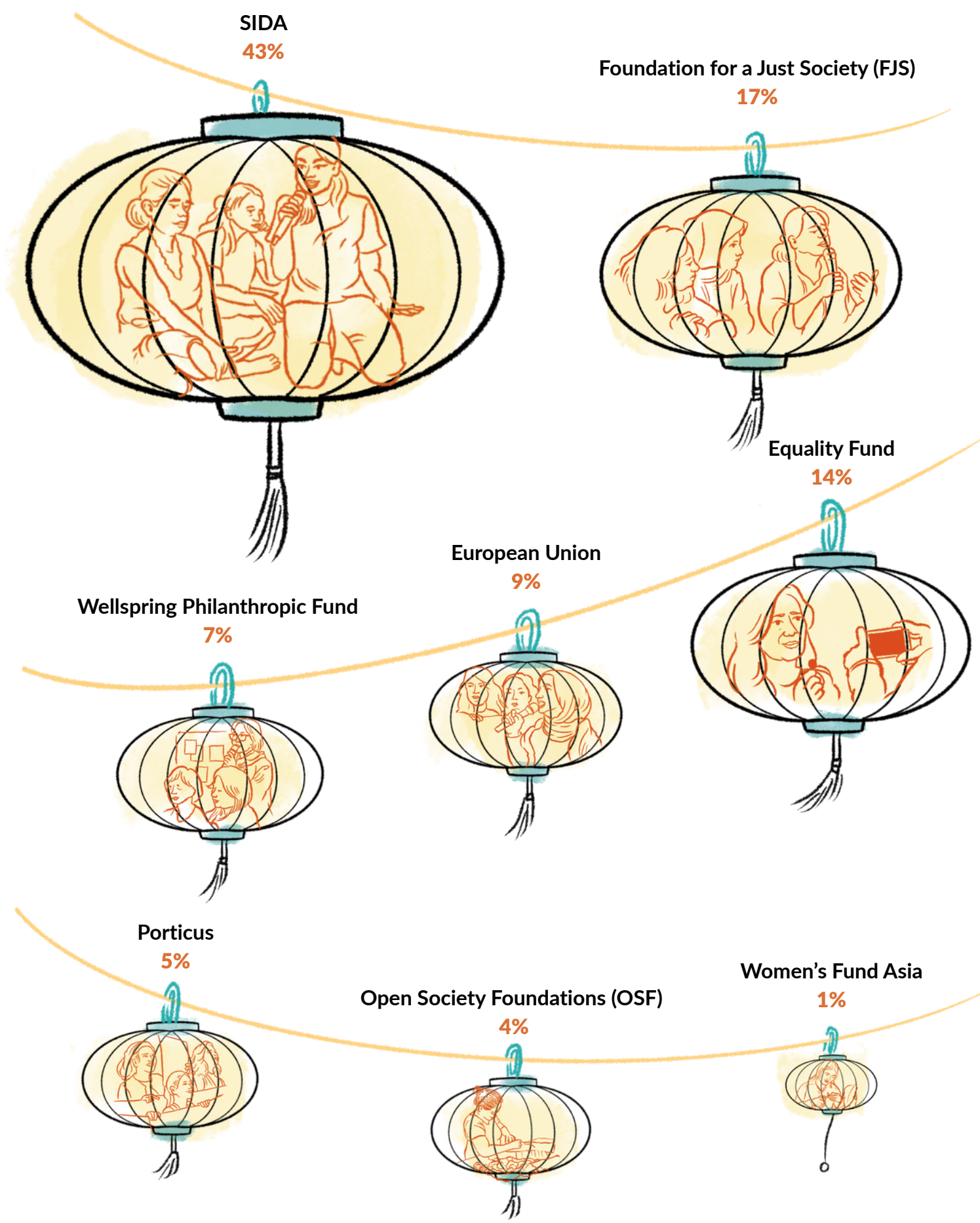
Financial Narrative & Accounts

In 2025, APWLD secured USD 2,925,221 in grant funding, with total expenditures of USD 2,592,430. Resource mobilisation proved challenging due to shifting funding landscapes driven by overlapping global crises, including escalating wars, worsening debt distress and the climate crisis. Programme costs for the year constituted 81.3 per cent of total costs, while institutional development costs, which includes network support, non-programme resources, publications and materials, member governance meetings and staff development constituted 12.5 per cent and administrative costs, 6.3 per cent. In 2025, we directly supported 55 women's rights organisations and their communities from 15 countries. Our financial accounts have been audited and approved by NB Accounting-Audit Services Co., Ltd., who have reported that our accounts are prepared in accordance with Thai and International Financial Reporting Standards for non-publicly accountable entities, as well as the terms and conditions of our donor contracts. The APWLD auditor was also requested to undertake management auditing to ensure continual improvement of our finance, accounting and systems management.

APWLD Expenditures in 2025



Funds Received in 2025





Our 2025 Funders

We acknowledge the support of the following donors and funding agencies in our work to advance women's human rights and Development Justice in Asia and the Pacific.



**Thousand
Currents**



Wellspring
Philanthropic Fund



Women's Fund Asia



SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION AGENCY



Acronyms

AJAR	Asia Justice and Rights	CS FfD Mechanism	Civil Society Financing for Development Mechanism
APFF4	Fourth Asia Pacific Feminist Forum	CSFWF	Cambodian Food And Service Workers Federation
APFSD	Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development	CSO	Civil Society Organisation
APHR	ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights	CSW69	69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women
APM	Annual Planning Meeting	CWR	Center for Women's Resources
APRCM	Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism	ECE	East-Central Europe
APWLD	Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development	EILER	Ecumenical Institute of Labor Education and Research
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations	EJN	Earth Journalism Network
ATA	Anti-Terrorism Act	FAM	Feminist Accountability Map
BAM	Belém Action Mechanism	FEIM	Fundacion Para Estudio E Investigacion de la Mujer
Beijing+30	30th Anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action	FEMNET	African Women's Development and Communications Network
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action	FfD	Financing for Development
CCC	Clean Clothes Campaign	FfD4	Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	FLTP	Feminist Legal Theory and Practice
CERNET	Community Empowerment Network	FPAR	Feminist Participatory Action Research
CHR	Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines	GAP	Gender Action Plan
COP30	30th Conference of the Parties	GC	Group Chat

GBV	Gender-Based Violence	LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
GCM	Global Compact for Migration	LATINDADD	Red Latinoamericana por Justicia Económica y Social
GTC	Gender and Trade Coalition	LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual +
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development	MAB	Movimiento Agroecológico Boliviano
HRC	Human Rights Council	MCR	Multi-Country Research
IFI	International Financial Institutions	MCRR	Multi-Country Rapid Research
ILC	International Labour Conference	MPs	Members of Parliament
ILO	International Labour Organisation	MST	Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra /Landless Workers Movement
IMA	International Migrants Alliance	MYR	Mid Year Review
IMF	International Monetary Fund	NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
IMRF	International Migration Review Forum	NewsLab	News Laboratory
IPPF ACRO	International Planned Parenthood Federation Americas and the Caribbean Regional Office	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
JELI	Just Economy and Labor Institute	NIWF	National Indigenous Women Forum
KMU	Kilusang Mayo Uno	NUPL	National Union of People's Lawyers
KOCUN	Korea Center for United Nations Human Rights Policy	PARI	People's Archive of Rural India
KPNS	Sipitanggari Fisherwomen Community	PDG	Paghida-et sa Kauswagan Development Group
KWAU	Korea Women's Associations United	PrepCom	Preparatory Committees

SDF	Sustainable Development Foundation	UN ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals	UNGA	UN General Assembly
SEDRA	Federación Planificación Familiar	UN OHCHR	UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
SRA	Southern Riders Association	U.S.	United States of America
STUM	Solidarity Trade Union of Myanmar	VNR	Voluntary National Review
TFPSA	Terrorism Financing Prevention and Suppression Act	WHRDs	Women Human Rights Defenders
UN	United Nations	WLB	Women's League of Burma
UNCC	United Nations Conference Center	WLF	Women Leader Foundation
UNCTAD16	16th session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	WMG	Women Major Group
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	WONARPI	Women's Network Against Rural Plantations Injustices
UN ECOSOC	62nd session of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies	WOREC	Women Rehabilitation Centre

Layout and Design by: Gerimara Manuel

Year of Publication: 2026

Copyright © 2026 Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development

Address: 189/3 Changklan Road, Amphoe Muang, Chiang Mai 50100, Thailand

Phone: (66) 53284527, 284856

Fax: (66) 53 280847

- ✉ apwld@apwld.org
- 🌐 www.apwld.org
- f www.facebook.com/apwld.ngo
- 📷 @apwld
- ✂ apwld_
- ▶ Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development

