

Resource and Donor Mapping for Human Rights of Women

South Asia Women's Fund

Background

Women's human rights have been historically under-resourced and supported sites of work in the social justice sector. The evidence of this can be witnessed from the lack of resources allocated by states to women through the UN, in the garb of UNIFEM, which is the least resourced specialized agency, which not even an independent agency, drawing its mandate from and working under the aegis of UNDP. AWID has undertaken pioneering work in tracking the access to resources for women's groups and organization working on women's human rights, and sharing it through its *Fundher* reports as well as its "Where is the Money for Women's Work" project.

This trend of limited support to women's rights is reflected in South Asia, in terms of indigenous giving as well as in giving by traditional donors. While the broad trends have been mapped by reports such as AWID, much more work is required to surface a detailed profile of the region in terms of availability of resources- especially fiscal, but also others and track their movement, in terms of groups and beneficiaries.

In fact even in terms of participation in the these global projects of mapping resources, participation from South Asia has been extremely limited, given that a large number of groups do not have access to such processes, especially processes that tend to depend on technical resourcefulness such as computers and internet for ensuring participation. Further, the mapping of availability of resources undertaken was of traditional donors, and as such a large segment of available resources such as small indigenous funds, family giving, giving in kind is still to be tracked, and is also untapped. The latter provides the opportunity to identify and tap into new sources of resources for rights work undertaken by women's groups and organizations.

South Asia Women's Fund began as a grant-making organization in 2004 and over the years has evolved into a philanthropic organization dedicated to human rights of women in the region. It is also committed to ensuring consistent and sustainable resources for the strengthening of the women's movement in the region. Given the recent recession, and the shrinking of existing resource base for women's rights work, it is committed to advocating for expansion of women's share of resources at all levels as well as identifying and tapping into newer resources, which are non-traditional. It is also committed to advocating for and harnessing resources from corporate social responsibility, as well as the other giving by public and corporate sector undertakings, and making them available for women's work.

Context

Most countries of South Asia have been home to mass struggles for independence and social justice; and anti-colonial and anti-imperialist movements. This history of people's movements, while creating a great social conscience and consciousness amongst common people, has also created a social discomfort with the idea of money for social change. Despite being witness to one of the most corrupt political systems, the region still expects voluntarism as the principle that guides the social justice sector. So, it remains suspicious of non-governmental organizations that are funded, seeing them as possible western stooges, corrupt or irrelevant to social change- in case they have state funding.

This may well be tracked to the fact that the people were not privy to ways in which the great movements for independence were resourced, as these issues were not matter of public discussion. So, if the staff of an NGO is paid at a decent level, that in itself seems to be evidence of the NGO "profiting" from the marginalization of people. This discomfort with money has been stoked by a largely middle class leadership of people's movements, which has equally targeted organized funding as a negative value, being seen as leading to "NGOisation" of the movement.

In this discourse on funding, the women's groups have had an uneasy truce. There are large issues that have been taken up, by groups through collective activism, and the issue of resources has not been brought up. In some instances, organizations have pooled in their resources, (which have been from organized funding) and then undertaken a transparent accounting. However, these monies have been extremely small, and largely to do with events and particular expenditures, which have nothing to do with salaries etc.

It is only recently that resource allocation and challenging its location has become an issue that is being raised by women's groups, given that the large organizations that have been working at the community level, have been taking up resources for women's work, and have not delivered, in the women centric way as was expected. These programmes- such as the self-help groups; have used women in instrumental ways, without ensuring their ownership and control of resources, dismantling patriarchy, or their access to and exercise of their human rights.

It is in this context that SAWF will be undertaking a baseline research to identify and map:

- The availability of resources for social justice work
- The allocation for women's human rights work within that, and
- The access of women's groups and organizations to these resources

The baseline will also track in kind resources that can be used for social justice work, and may be made available to women's groups and organizations.

Objectives

1. To baseline available resources for human rights work, and track allocations for women's rights work and to women's groups and organizations
2. To identify the obstacles and challenges faced by women's groups and organizations in accessing resources for undertaking their activism and work to ensure human rights of women.
3. To identify and create a data base of information on available resources: fiscal, technical and in kind, that can be used to strengthen women's movements for human rights in the region
4. To identify areas for capacity building and support required by women's groups to enhance and strengthen their outreach and access to required resources
5. To widely share the outcomes of the baseline research, and use it as a strategic advocacy and planning document to augment women's access to resources to support and strengthen their struggles for human rights

Programme of Work

1. Planning meeting
2. Identifying partners as well as human resource
3. Building Tools for baseline study, and for national surveys (so personnel identification)
4. Data Analysis and outcome consideration
5. Sharing of outcomes and building recommendations
6. Launch of report
7. Creating advocacy kits, country specific fact sheets
8. Building an implementation plan

Out Comes

- Coming together of women's movements in the region, to enable a wide challenge for ensuring women's human rights in their own realities,
- Leveraging of national and sub-national work, to build a strong regional mandate and agenda,
- Emergence of region specific, critical and uncharted WHR issues in the agenda of funding agencies, and
- Firm, evolving and flexible fund-raising strategies for traditional and other givers, including corporate houses, private giving etc.