

Count Me In! (CMI!) Consortium

NARRATIVE ANNUAL REPORT 2019

1 May 2020



Count Me In! in 2019: Shifting Power

In 2019, the Count Me In! Consortium continued to count in the voices of women, girls and trans¹ people working to advance gender equality and human rights. Our progress to date builds on four years of strengthening women's, girls' and trans people's² organisational capacities at local, national, regional and global levels to lobby and advocate for their human rights, develop networks and cross-movement collaboration, hold decision makers to account, contribute to changes in laws and policies and build collective power to mobilise people and organisations globally.

This report presents key accomplishments of 2019. It includes stories of change that illustrate the impact and results of CMI!'s strategies to achieve its outcomes. Central to these stories of change is how CMI! members and partners have worked to shift and share power: ensuring that the voices, priorities and strategies of women's rights movements inform decision- and agenda-setting spaces at local, regional and international levels.

Vision and strategic goal

In partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, CMI! strengthens organisations and movements fighting for the rights of women, girls and trans people and by doing so we contribute to creating safe, inclusive and enabling environments for their work. Through financial and strategic support, we support feminist and women's rights organisations (WROs) and women's human rights defenders (WHRDs)³ in their efforts to organise, lobby and advocate for the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence, for economic justice and for sustainable resourcing. In addition, CMI! members conduct direct advocacy that brings our collective experience and capacity to the global level.

Theory of Change

Our Theory of Change is that women's human rights defenders and organisations, particularly those that are self-led by the constituencies they represent and that act collectively within larger social movements, play an essential and catalysing role in bringing an end to the inequality and injustice experienced by many millions of women, girls and trans people worldwide and in securing respect for gender equality and justice.

CMI! uses four principal strategies to achieve its long-term goal of gender equality and respect for the human rights of women, girls and trans people. We work to strengthen our partners — through

¹ Trans people's gender identity or expression differs from the gender that was assigned to them at birth. Some trans people identify and present themselves as men or women; others identify with a non-binary category. We use the word "trans" as a placeholder for the broad range of names and identities claimed by people around the world, including: transwomen, transmen, fa'afafine, leiti, fakafafine, akava'ine, mahu, vakasalewalewa, palopa, Sistergirls, Brotherboys, whakawahine, tangata ira tane, muxhe, omeguid, travesti, two-spirit, hijra, bandhu, mangalamukhi, kinnar, thirunangai, thirunambi, khwaja sira, meti, katoey, waria, mak nyah, kua xing nan, trans laki-laki, transpinay, transpinoy, kwaa- sing-bit, transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, gender non-binary, gender diverse, gender non-conforming and agender people.

² Throughout this document when we use the word 'women' we use it as a short-hand for women, girls and trans people.

³ CMI! uses the term women's rights organisations (WROs) and women human rights defenders (WHRDs) as short-hand for all women's, girls' and trans people's organisations and human rights defenders.

capacity-building, strategic resourcing, knowledge-building and communications. CMI! members also engage in direct lobbying and advocacy.

Global Context

In a context of increasingly closing space and growing anti-gender movements, amplifying the voice, visibility and collective power of women, girls and trans people on the frontlines of crisis and change is critical. From our vantage point as part of and in support of women's, girls' and trans people's movements, we are challenging growing political repression and economic injustice and are mobilising to ensure that the voices of those often neglected or repressed are heard. Advocacy is being met with harsh backlash, threatening rights already won and undermining future capacity to advance human rights and gender justice. These attacks occur on local and global levels and come from a range of actors and forces that operate also through political, economic and social institutions.

Examples abound: President Duterte promoted rape as a police and military weapon in the Philippines. In Uganda, the government continues to actively persecute lesbian and bisexual women and transgender people, despite the court's rejection of the Anti-Homosexuality Act of 2014. In India, the right-wing government is spurring anti-Muslim and caste-related violence in the country, leading to riots. In Guatemala, President Morales refused to renew the mandate of the UN-backed International Commission against Impunity. Zimbabwe has become a militarised state where the rule of law is absent. Sex workers continue to face hostile and dangerous contexts the world over, including in international agenda-setting spaces where they are advocating for their rights.

In 2019 we saw anti-rights forces intensify their assaults on women, girls' and trans people on the frontlines. Nevertheless, there are encouraging successes that have followed ongoing organising, lobbying and advocacy by women's, girls' and trans people's rights movements around the world. In 2019, we witnessed the first large-scale Indigenous women's march in August in Brazil, which brought together more than 100,000 rural women as they stood up against closing civic space and marched for democracy, justice and equality. We saw sex worker rights movements continue to grow globally in size and visibility, with more and more human rights organisations supporting sex workers' rights and advocating for the decriminalisation of sex work. As you will read further below, thanks to the strategic partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, sex worker activists were actively and vocally included at the Commission on the Status of Women in New York. In India, trans rights activists mobilised against the Transgender Persons Bill on social media. LGBTI activists in Botswana and Angola celebrated long-demanded legal and legislative victories. Women's rights activists are also coming together across continents and movements to organise and advance feminist approaches to economic justice, and to demand corporate accountability. Women domestic workers and garment workers celebrated victory with the adaptation of the ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment in the Workplace. And as CMI! we continued to successfully influence the funding landscape, for example through advocacy towards the Spotlight Initiative.

CMI!'s Impact: stories of change

In 2019, CMI! continued to support and strengthen the capacities of activists, organisations and movements that are working tirelessly to claim and secure their rights. The stories selected reflect a

variety of strategies to bring about transformative change. We lift up examples of local and international advocacy efforts across different geographies and themes. Collectively, these stories illustrate how women's rights advocates are holding the line, changing laws and policies, and influencing norms, (funding) practices and national, regional and international agenda-setting spaces. They illustrate what is gained by counting in the voices of women, girls and trans people, particularly those representing structurally excluded constituencies. They demonstrate how being able to work through global mechanisms has provided women's rights advocates crucial entry points for regional, national and local actions.

Our first story demonstrates how the fight for rights transcends national borders, by showing how garment and domestic workers built and asserted their collective power. The second story demonstrates how CMI!'s strategic partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs ensured sex worker rights advocates gained unprecedented access to UN spaces and were given a space at the table to speak on their own behalf, rather than being spoken about or excluded from consideration altogether. The third story illustrates how local efforts led to the establishment of a protection committee that responds to sexual and gender-based violence.

Finally, two updates illustrate the power of CMI! and other organisations coming together. We first provide an update around our work towards an international legally binding instrument that aims to regulate transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights. Second, we show how CMI! has successfully advocated for the Spotlight initiative funding to be made more accessible to women's rights organisations.

Story of change: Supporting marginalised women workers to build and assert collective power.

Hundreds of millions of women and girls worldwide are employed in the garment and domestic work sector, where violence, harassment, labour and human rights abuses are common. Organising by workers in both sectors is extremely difficult and frequently met with dismissal, repression and violence, perpetrated both by management and the state. On top of this, women workers are often confronted with discrimination and excluded from decision-making and leadership within male-dominated labour unions.

CMI! works in multiple ways to support marginalised women workers to build and assert collective power – in their workplaces, in their homes, in local communities and on a global level. This story of change focuses on CMI!'s collaboration with and support of three labour rights organisations: Cambodian Alliance of Trade Unions (CATU) ; the Textile, Garment and Clothing Workers Union (TGCWU) in Sri Lanka; and the domestic workers' union, Sindicato de Trabajadoras Domesticas Similar y a Cuenta Propia - SITRADOMSA (Domestic and Self-employed Women Workers Union) in Guatemala. The story highlights complementary approaches by JASS, which provides political facilitation and co-organises activities to build women workers' leadership, and Mama Cash, which provides funding and accompaniment support to groups of women workers.

In Cambodia, there is little space for women workers to develop a critical and collective analysis for political organising. Trade unions are dominated by male leaders, many of whom are under the influence of the state or factory owners. Since 2017 JASS has organised cross-movement (e.g. labour, land, LGBT, etc.) meetings of women activists in Cambodia to share analyses and build a bigger and more collective picture of the economic and political context shaping women's rights in the country. To increase the political power and leadership of women garment workers, JASS initiated a

collaboration with the Cambodian Alliance of Trade Unions (CATU) in 2019. CATU, which has a membership of 10,000 people, has incredible potential to challenge the political and economic system and build the collective political power of women workers. In developing this work, JASS has worked closely with Yang Sophorn, a CATU leader who has participated in numerous JASS activities, to develop a programme to support women workers in building a political and economic analysis and organising to be more effective. Given the political context, JASS used under-the-radar strategies and consciousness-raising processes to support women garment workers' activism alongside allies such as the Workers' Information Center (WIC) and Solidarity Center. The collaboration between JASS and CATU is designed to engage the CATU women in a feminist power analysis, feminist movement-building strategies, and popular education methodologies to support them to question traditional approaches (e.g. the limitations of minimum wage advocacy when cost of living continually rises) and to explore appropriate, effective and adaptable strategies while challenging patriarchal norms within their formations.

As part of the collaboration, in August 2019 JASS and CATU co-organised a workshop with 26 women leaders from CATU's local union, representing 13 factories engaged in the global garment industry to build solidarity and develop a shared analysis of the political and economic context. Using JASS's power framework (translated in Khmer) and an adaptation of *The Master's House*, a methodology used by JASS to understand patriarchy as a system, participants explored how to ensure that the strategies they use go beyond tactical short-term approaches. They examined how power operates both within the global economy and trade unions (e.g. through male union members and leadership) and the links between patriarchy and capitalism. Participants also examined gender-based violence at work and the mechanisms that exist to address it, exploring women's leadership and alternative forms of organising using art, expressive actions, etc. to build more democratic practices. As a result, women gained confidence and critical awareness that enables them to strategise for increased power whilst minimizing risk, for example, taking demands directly to the Ministry of Labour rather than through union structures or using a combination of covert (such as performance art) and overt tactics.

JASS also supported women garment workers from CATU and the Workers' Information Center (WIC) to participate in a Regional 2019 Convening on Defending Rights in Hostile Contexts - building on their engagement in a similar but global convening in 2017 and CMI!'s Money & Movements in 2018. These spaces served to deepen participants' understanding of protection and safety introduced in in-country processes and to influence actors working on these issues from the perspectives and leadership of women garment workers. This work was further replicated in Thailand and the Philippines.

As noted above, violence against women working in the garment⁴ and domestic sectors⁵ is rife: an estimated 73% of domestic workers in Guatemala, most of whom are Indigenous women, are victims of sexual, physical, verbal and psychological abuse. Most domestic workers are hired informally and are not legally entitled to a working schedule, limited working hours, weekly rest, public holidays or the payment of benefits. In 2019 CMI! – through provision by Mama Cash of core, flexible funding

⁴Asia Floor Wage Alliance, *National People's Tribunals on living wage for garment workers in Asia*, 2014, accessible at: <https://asia.floorwage.org/resources/tribunal-verdicts/synthesis-report-of-all-the-national-peoples-tribunals>.

⁵ATHRADOM, *Situation of women domestic workers, maquila and rural workers in Guatemala*, accessible at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/GTM/INT_CCPR_CSS_GTM_30245_E.pdf

and accompaniment – supported two women-led unions, The Textile, Garment and Clothing Workers Union (TGCWU) in Sri Lanka and Sindicato de Trabajadoras Domesticas Similar y a Cuenta Propia (SITRADOMSA) in Guatemala, in their efforts to connect local, national and global activism aimed at securing their rights to freedom from violence and decent work.

On the national level, both SITRADOMSA and TGCWU have long advocated for ratification by their national governments of the landmark ILO Domestic Workers Convention 2011, which recognises the human and labour rights of domestic workers. The two groups have also been advocating for a new, critically important ILO convention aimed at ending violence against women workers. SITRADOMSA has met with relevant stakeholders, such as the International Trade Union Confederation, which represents more than 200 million workers, and with ILO representatives and important workers' federations in Guatemala, such as Unión Sindical de Trabajadores de Guatemala (Guatemala Workers' Trade Union), to inform them about workplace violence and insist on increased protection and access to justice for women workers.⁶

In 2019 SITRADOMSA and TGCWU took their message to the 108th (Centenary) Session of the International Labour Conference held from 10 to 21 June 2019 in Geneva. Participation in the ILO Conference, where the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention was on the table, was seen by the groups as both necessary and strategic. Core funding and accompaniment from Mama Cash was vital for enabling the groups to attend, including managing the lengthy and bureaucratic process to obtain visas and make travel arrangements and engagement in negotiations with respective alliance partners (e.g. Asia Floor Wage Alliance) prior to the Conference to agree to their role as delegates.

SITRADOMSA's participation at the ILO conference was seen by the group as an achievement in itself. In their own words: "Having participated in the ILO Conference is a very exciting achievement for SITRADOMSA and workers mainly because we are the ones who face violence and harassment in the world of work. Having participated in the debate, analysis and reflection of the Convention, and being able to meet with governments and business representatives was extraordinary and we have felt the emotion that we can achieve our goals."

For TGCWU, which participated in the ILO Conference representing women workers on behalf of Asia Floor Wage Alliance, participation was important because it enabled them to bring local, hands-on experience to an international decision-making space. TGCWU has been actively involved in researching, and documenting cases of sexual harassment of garment sector workers. Their participation meant that women could make their voices heard in a traditionally male-dominated space: "It was very important to me, as a grassroots-level worker and a member of a newly established trade union to participate in such an event. It was a dream come true and a rare opportunity. In Sri Lanka, it is always men who participate in these conferences."

SITRADOMSA and TGCWU contributed to the successful collective effort that led to the landmark passage of the Violence and Harassment Convention, with 397 votes in favour. Since then, the groups have turned their attention to ratification to ensure that the Convention becomes legally binding in their countries. The participation of SITRADOMSA and TGCWU in the ILO conference and their

⁶ For example, SITRADOMSA was invited by ILO to address the 36th session of the Human Rights Council entitled "Rights and empowerment of indigenous women: catalysts for an inclusive and sustainable economy" in Geneva, reported in SIDA-ILO Partnership Programme, Final Report 2016-17, accessible at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---exrel/documents/genericdocument/wcms_369803.pdf

experience doing advocacy work to promote women's labour rights has enabled them to leverage access to key national decision-making spaces. Following the ILO Conference, SITRADOMSA held a meeting with the Guatemalan Minister of Labour and additional follow-up meetings have been scheduled. In Sri Lanka, TGCWU was invited by peer organisations to share its experience at the ILO conference, exchange good practices and collaborate further in bringing working conditions in the Sri Lankan Free Trade Zone in line with international standards. According to TGCWU, "After our participation [in the ILO Conference], we have gained value to our union."

With the support of CMI!, the leadership and influence of women garment and domestic workers has grown at the local and national level in Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Guatemala, and the international level. Their growing experience in organising, networking and advocating for their rights has also strengthened their confidence in social change. Overall, it has shown how their participation in key advocacy spaces - thanks to the support of CMI! - helps to build strong and inclusive women's rights movements.

Story of change: Advancing sex workers' rights to social protection

In 2019, for the first time in history, sex workers occupied centre stage at an official event during the United Nations' largest annual gathering on gender equality and women's rights, the 63rd meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). On 14 March, 2019, thanks to effective collaboration involving CMI! consortium members and partners, and the governments of the Netherlands and Uruguay, the CSW featured a groundbreaking panel that included sex worker activists and a discussion on the topic of sex work from a sex workers' rights perspective. The panel included Mette Gonggrijp (the Netherlands' Director of Social Development/Ambassador Women's Rights and Gender Equality), Catherine Healy (New Zealand Prostitutes Collective (NZPC)), Mariella Mazotti (Director National Institute of Women, Uruguay) and Lala Maty Sow Ndaiye (African Sex Workers Association and And Soppeku, Senegal), and was moderated by CMI! member CREA's Director, Geeta Misra.

The event had several important results. For sex worker rights activists – and the movements they represent – occupying a central position on stage at a formal, high-level decision-making space is a significant achievement that helps to advance the influence and power of the sex worker rights movement. Ndaiye, a member of the African Sex Workers Alliance (a grantee-partner of Mama Cash and the Red Umbrella Fund), and Healy of the New Zealand Prostitutes Collective are both prominent members of the sex workers' rights movements within their countries and beyond. The two leaders shared their expertise on advancing the human rights of sex workers. In Senegal, self-organised sex workers have strengthened the voices of sex workers by providing leadership and human rights training programs for over 2,000 sex workers. They have also carried out advocacy work to advance the health and human rights of female, male and transgender sex workers, including those living with HIV and those who use drugs. All panelists made a strong case for including sex workers in all decision-making levels that impact their lives, acknowledging the specific obstacles they face to carry out their right to make decisions.

The event highlighted the need to recognize sex work as *work*. This entails not only respecting sex workers' agency and capacity to make decisions as rights holders, but also ensuring their access, as workers, to social protection – the specific theme of this CSW. Since sex workers have long been

excluded from discussions about access to social protection and labour rights, the subject was new to many in the audience, which consisted of some 100 representatives of governments, UN agencies and women rights movements. The panelists discussed how governments can protect sex workers' rights to social protection, with decriminalisation of sex work as the first significant step needed to increase sex worker's access to basic rights. Ambassador Gonggrijp shared the findings that decriminalising sex work can prevent 30% of new HIV infections and leads to better interaction between social workers, the police and sex workers. Decriminalising sex work also strengthens anti-trafficking efforts, as many evidence-based studies show. Next to decriminalisation, the panelists discussed the importance of training police to work with sex workers to reduce violence against them, stigma, trafficking and exploitation. In New Zealand, for example, following the decriminalisation of sex work in 2003, sex worker rights activists implemented activities with police to build mutual trust and understanding. NZPC and the police jointly developed a guide for workers who have experienced sexual assault, which Healy described as resulting in vitally important change: sex workers now experience better support from police in case of harassment and violence, regardless of their work.

The event demonstrated the added value of the strategic partnership between CMI! and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Successful collaboration with the Dutch government was key to the success of the event, as the partnership enabled CMI! to leverage access to the UN and ensure that the panel was part of the formal programme of CSW. The event also showed how CMI! is uniquely capable of bridging different social movements to advocate inclusively for women's rights and showed the strength of the diverse approaches and constituencies of consortium members: CMI! members engaged in intensive preparation, including close collaboration with the panelists, division of key tasks among CMI! partners according to each other's knowledge, language skills and location, and mobilizing key people and sex workers' rights activists to attend the session.

The panel succeeded in articulating a strong sex workers' rights perspective in an important international policy space and resulted in new allies for the sex worker's rights movements. The Chair of the UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice and the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women voiced their appreciation for the event and invited sex workers for a discussion about using UN mechanisms to challenge human rights violations. The event also opened the door for governments to show stronger and broader support for sex worker rights. Mariella Mazziotti, Director of the National Institute of Women of Uruguay, stated that 'at the governmental level, but also at the UN level [we need] to support and strengthen women's rights organisations, giving the reality that they face and because we will be able to build better social policy and better laws and services.' When Dutch Ambassador Mette Gonggrijp proposed that the event 'should become an annual tradition', her words were met with fervent applause. We are well on our way, as CMI! was organizing another sex worker panel at the 2020 CSW, together with the governments of The Netherlands and New Zealand. Unfortunately this event did not take place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic which led to the cancellation of the 2020 CSW.

Story of change: Building collective protection for women, WHRDs and their organisations

CMI! has contributed significantly to the development and implementation of collective, holistic and intercultural approaches to security, safety and well-being for marginalised women in general, and WHRDs and their organisations in particular. CMI! creates spaces for awareness-raising, analysis and

networking, conducts research, knowledge building and advocacy, and provides flexible and responsive financial support to WHRDs and their organisations (e.g. both rapid response and long-term grantmaking) – all of which contribute to building collective protection for women, girls and trans people.

In 2019 CMI! responded to urgent cases of gender-based and sexual violence against women and girls in two camps set up in the aftermath of Cyclone Idai. The cyclone, which struck Southern Africa in March, displaced over a hundred thousand people in Malawi. A rapid response grant from Urgent Action Fund – Africa to the Zomba Urban Women Association (ZUWA) Malawi enabled the establishment of two protection committees at Kachulu and Nchenga camps in Zomba District, Malawi. Through the committees, ZUWA sensitized 45 members of the community on laws that protect women and girls from violence, and facilitated discussions and development of a plan to address gender-based violence in the camp, including monitoring visits in the camps. Alongside this, ZUWA organised a solidarity walk against rape and a sporting event (a netball bonanza) involving girls from both primary and secondary schools around the Mwambo area. A functioning Formal Complaint and Response Mechanism was established at both camps. The Mechanisms receive and document complaints of violence, and refer women and girls for care, support and follow-up when needed. ZUWA's strategies built upon important lessons learned in the past, including the value of involving the larger community, including men and boys, in reducing violence against women. The group's approach, drawn from experience, sees the committees and the feedback and monitoring system as part of broader sensitization and awareness-raising processes and not as an end in and of itself.

The Malawi case shows how CMI!'s rapid response grants contribute to building collective protection for women and girls at the community level. Complementing this work in 2019 were CMI! interventions focused specifically on WHRDs, including creation of safe spaces for activists to strengthen alliances, reenergize and build collective strategies to confront structural injustices, violence and threats. For example, UAF-LAC supported the Honduras Women Human Rights Defenders National Network to carry out a large national convening in June involving no less than 1,200 women activists from across the country working on diverse issues. The most significant impact achieved through this action was the creation of the National Assembly of 'Luchadoras' (Fighters) Honduran Women. This new cross-movement network allows feminist, Garifuna, indigenous, black, 'campesinas', urban and young women activists to have a collective louder voice and a stronger platform to encourage joint advocacy strategies and respond collectively to current threats against WHRDs and communities resisting gender-based violence, drug trafficking, militarization, extractivism and impunity.

On a regional level, as part of our collective work to support the Mesoamerican Initiative of Women Human Rights Defenders (IMD), AWID completed the training and support required for IMD to take over administration of the registry of attacks, a unique and critical tool to track and analyse incidences of violence and inform strategic responses and advocacy.

In Asia, CMI! supported development of a shared analysis about the context and complex power dynamics for collective protection and feminist movement-based strategies. Last November, CMI! member JASS, with two allies, including CMI member UAF, brought together a diverse mix of 46 activists in a regional convening in Southeast Asia focused on Defending Rights in Hostile Context. Participants came from Thailand, Cambodia and the Philippines, three very risky contexts in the

region, and included frontline activists from a range of organisations, including indigenous, LGBTQ, environmental and labor rights organisations. They were joined by national and international human rights organisations and allied donors. CMI! is following up with allies and funders in each country to explore how to integrate new opportunities, relationships and pathways into existing plans for 2020 strategies. New connections were made as groups not previously working with each other are now collaborating to increase their impact. Power analysis and collective protection as well as movement strategy workshops are being developed in different countries as a result of this convening. Regionally a joint workshop on power analysis and collective protection is being planned.

Update: Toward a feminist just economy, Feminists for the UN Binding Treaty

Since 2016, CMI!, led by AWID, has supported the establishment of a feminist group to influence the process under the United Nations Human Rights Council towards an international legally binding instrument to regulate transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights. The overarching goal of this work is to ensure that corporate accountability is squarely on the agenda of women's rights organisations, to shed light on the scale and scope of corporate impunity worldwide, and to create momentum for groups interested in pursuing feminist visions for just economies. The engagement in the treaty process itself continues to be premised on consolidating feminist collective power to stop corporate human rights abuses and violations.

Corporate abuse is deeply gendered and disproportionately affects women from marginalised communities. However, their voices are rarely heard in the debate around business and human rights. The feminist group, which succeeded in bringing together 15 partners in 2017 and is now known as Feminists for a Binding Treaty (F4BT), has addressed this by giving voice to these groups. For instance by inviting the Manushya Foundation from Thailand to the table, who placed sex workers rights on the feminist agenda for corporate accountability. Or by working closely with the Council of the Wuxhtaj Peoples from Guatemala or the Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL) who were both invited as panelists at a F4BT side-event at the UN in Geneva.

By now, F4BT is among the three recognised coalitions in the treaty process and has become a significant voice in the treaty process. In addition to ongoing coordination, F4BT organises strategy meetings prior to the annual sessions of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group (OEIGWG) in Geneva. In 2019, a feminist corporate accountability advocacy retreat was held to build capacity, strategise long-term, diversify its membership and increase participation of feminist organisations from the global South in the treaty process. As of August 2019, F4BT has grown to include over 30 organisations and 60 members worldwide in its e-list. Most significantly, F4BT has succeeded in securing signatures of 376 feminist and allied organisations to a unified feminist statement for a binding treaty – a vital tool for advocacy, mobilisation and media efforts. The statement's supporters represent significant diversity in terms of both geography and theme. Through the statement, F4BT has effectively demonstrated broad feminist support for the treaty, and helped to build long-term feminist alliances to challenge corporate power, both as part of the treaty process and beyond.

Prior to the 2019 5th OEIGWG, F4BT published an assessment of the revised draft text of the treaty and collective priority demands in the Business and Human Rights Journal. In Geneva, CMI! through AWID contributed to the organisation of the first-ever African-led civil society side event where African States were urged to play a more visible role in the treaty process.

F4BT has succeeded in securing recognition of feminist demands by important actors in the treaty process, not only by civil society partners but also expert panelists and states, including Mexico, Uruguay, Namibia, South Africa, Ecuador and Palestine⁷. The importance of a gender and human rights perspective was emphasised multiple times in the official report of the 2018 session and the 2019 revised draft included language that stemmed from lobbying and advocacy by the F4BT. Although the revised draft overall remains weak, two key tenets of effective respect for human and labour rights – human rights due diligence and access to remedy – feature prominently in the text.

CMI!'s strategic partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has helped ensure fruitful dialogue about the treaty, women's rights and corporate accountability. A meeting in May 2019 involved representatives of the Dutch government, CMI! members AWID and lobby partner WO=MEN.

Update: Spotlight Initiative

Since 2017, when the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative was first launched, CMI! has successfully worked to ensure that this landmark funding initiative includes direct representation of feminist voices and that funding is directed toward self-led women's, girls' and trans peoples' rights groups working at local and regional levels. CMI! made a strong case that women's rights activists must play a central role in helping define, implement and track funding mechanisms in order for the funding to effect positive change in the lives of women, girls and trans people. CMI! has mobilised feminist movements around the world, coordinated ongoing advocacy and worked with them to share information from country to global level and back again. We have built strong relations with the Spotlight Initiative Secretariat, ensuring that we are able to provide critical feedback.

CMI! has achieved considerable results in influencing the Spotlight Initiative. Many of the formal recommendations we presented in 2018⁸ are now fully or partially implemented, and most others are currently under consideration. Among the recommendations implemented, the newly-created Civil Society Global Reference Group (CS-GRG) is made up of a majority of constituency-led women's rights/feminist organisations and movements. On behalf of CMI! JASS presented us in this formation and paved the way for further CMI! representation. In 2019, through a competitive process, three CMI! representatives (staff of CREA, Mama Cash and UAF) were selected to be on the CS-GRG, as were several local partners and other feminist activists whom CMI! encouraged to apply. Members of the CS-GRG "will have a crucial role in advising the Spotlight Initiative and holding it accountable to its vision, principles and commitments, as well as in advocating for the achievement of its results."⁹ In July 2019, the three CMI! representatives, together with the others of the CS-GRG, provided strategic and critical input into the Spotlight Initiative regarding the forward-process.

Although Spotlight has been slow in setting up the national and regional reference groups, CMI! has been able to significantly influence the process. Spotlight actively sought CMI!'s advice to help analyse the composition of reference groups at country and regional levels, with a view to increasing representation of women's rights activists, especially those who are structurally excluded. In

⁷ Documentation can be found under the "Oral Statements" record on [this](#) webpage of the OHCHR.

⁸ In consultation with more than 400 activists around the world, in 2018 CMI! developed a series of recommendations for Spotlight on key issues, including participation of feminist movements, funding mechanisms, disbursement and programme implementation.

⁹ Spotlight Initiative Civil Society Global Reference Group *Draft Terms of Reference* (2019)

response, CMI! reached out to our networks and provided suggestions to Spotlight for increasing representation where low. CMI! also convened a number of reference group members from Spotlight countries across Africa in Naivasha, Kenya to share information and experiences of Spotlight implementation in their countries. Members shared concerns about poor engagement of reference groups by UN country teams, lack of transparency in Spotlight decision-making, and eligibility criteria for funding that excluded grassroots groups. CMI! conveyed these concerns to the Spotlight Secretariat, which is now supporting the Deputy Secretary General to hold UN Country Teams to account on their civil society engagement.

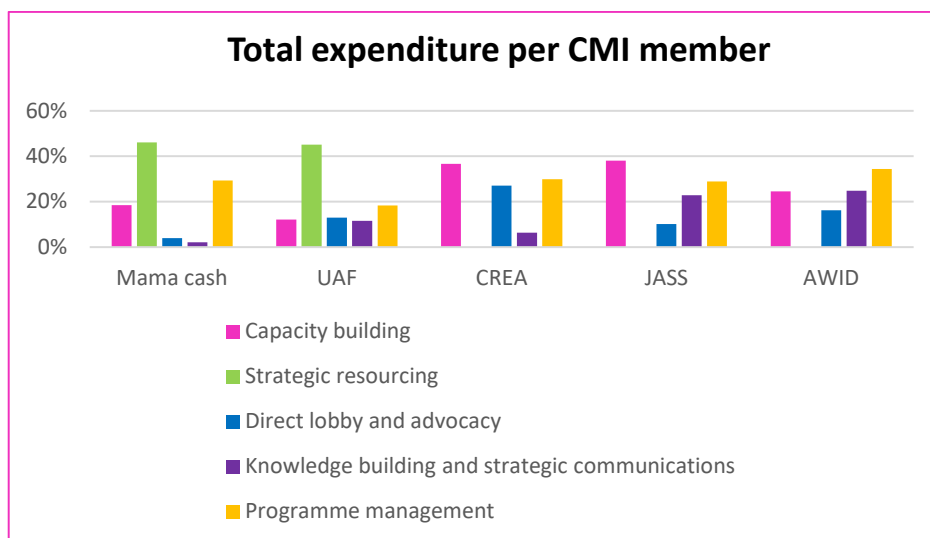
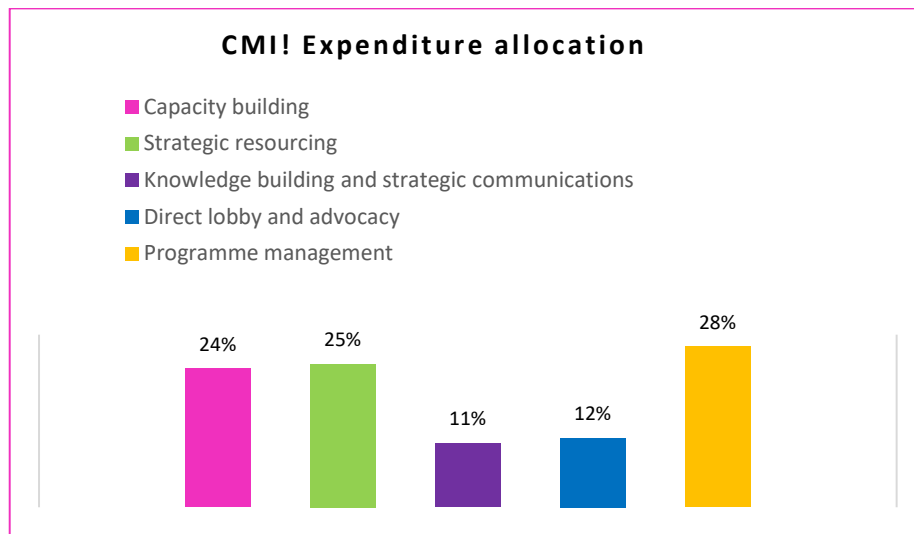
CMI! has also consistently advocated the importance of Spotlight reaching grassroots, local and feminist organisations that have generally been excluded from UN funding. This has contributed to the development of the Grassroots Action Plan by the Spotlight Initiative. This plan is to guide Spotlight Country Teams on how to fully utilise the existing UN policies and procedures to better reach and engage local and grassroots organisations as implementing partners. Grassroots and structurally excluded groups are able to harness the infrastructure of CMI! members to access funds that would have otherwise been inaccessible to co-implement work. For example, JASS provided support to strengthen local partner capacity in Zimbabwe and Malawi to apply for UNTF funds. Another major result of CMI!'s advocacy is the development of the Spotlight-Specific Integrated Protection Approach (SSIPA) to address the concerns on the situation of WHRDs at all levels of engagement with Spotlight. The SSIPA is currently being developed based on the recommendations from CMI!.

Conclusion

Despite the current backlash against gender justice and human rights, CMI! members and their partners have ensured that activists have a seat at the table and that women's, girls' and trans people's voices are heard and heeded. Our activities have ranged from direct lobby and advocacy to providing feminist leadership trainings and movement building workshops, contributing to alliance-building, and from core financial support for organisations to rapid response grantmaking, so that activists and organisations can safely advance their innovative work. Through these initiatives, our constituencies of structurally excluded women, girls and trans people have increased community support and strengthened their advocacy. They are increasing their influence and scale, and holding political leaders accountable. In a time where oppressive governments and anti-rights actors isolate women's rights and gender equality advocates, movement building - including cross-movement, regional and cross-regional efforts - is a crucial strategy for supporting the organising of structurally excluded women, girls and trans people.

Annex

The graphs below present total CMI!'s expenditure and a breakdown per CMI! member.



**Mama Cash expenditure includes RUF, WO=MEN and joint working.*

Programme expenditures by strategy

Capacity building: 24% of CMI!'s expenditures were directed to capacity strengthening of women's rights organisations and WHRDs. CMI! resources supported **47** different dialogues, convenings, training institutes and alliance building meetings. These activities allowed CMI! partners to strengthen collaborative relationships and to build alliances and solidarity across borders and movements.

Strategic resourcing: The grantmakers in CMI! (Mama Cash (incl. RUF) and the UAFs) made **143** core and rapid response grants to WROs and WHRDs, accounting for 25% of CMI!'s expenditures.

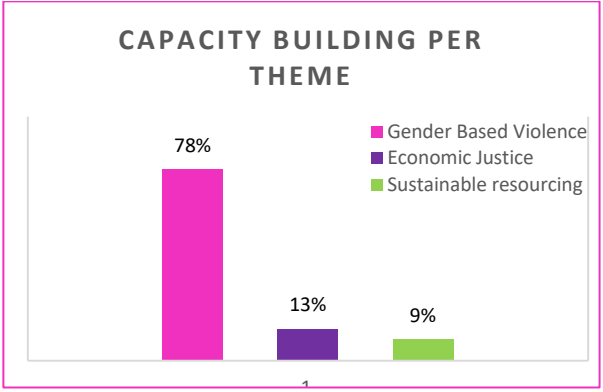
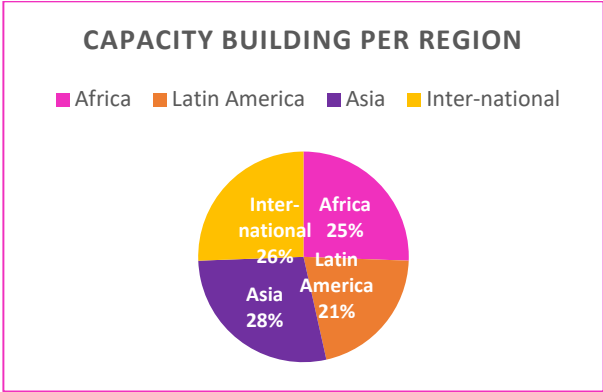
Knowledge building and strategic communications: CMI! supported **22** research and media engagement initiatives to build and share knowledge to support the advocacy work of feminist movements. This work accounted for 11% of CMI!'s total expenditures.

Direct lobby and advocacy: CMI! engaged in **38** direct lobby and advocacy efforts to advance agendas to eliminate gender-based violence, secure economic justice and promote sustainable resourcing for women's rights, accounting for 12% of CMI!'s expenditures.

Activities¹ by geography and theme

1. Capacity building

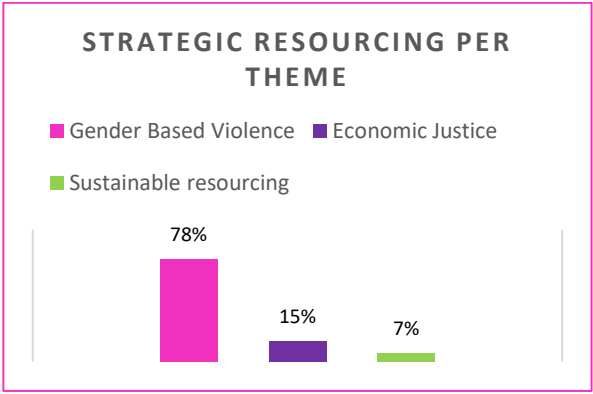
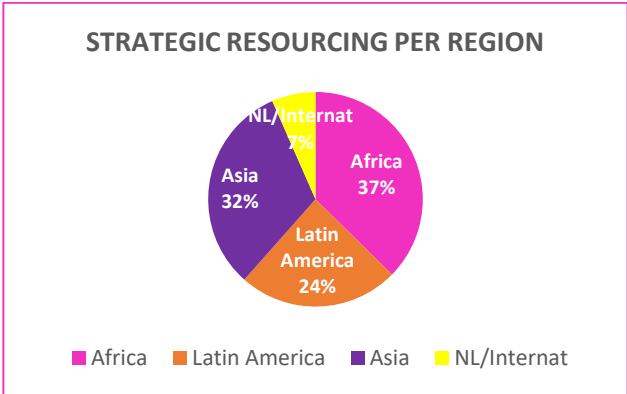
Capacity building activities took place: 1) **geographically**: 25% of activities in Africa, 26% internationally, 28% in Asia, and 21% in Latin America; 2) **thematically**: 78% of activities were focused on gender-based violence, 13% on economic justice and 9% on sustainable resourcing.



These capacity building activities created time and space for activists to share experiences, learnings and strategies and to build the analysis and trusting relationships that were crucial to strengthening sustainable social justice movements.

2. Strategic resourcing

Core support and rapid response grants were distributed:1) **geographically**: 32% of all grants in Asia, 37% in Africa, 24% in Latin America and 7% in Netherlands/International; 2) **thematically**: 78% of grants funded activities of feminist groups and WHRDs in eradicating and preventing gender-based violence, 15% in seeking economic justice and 7% in Sustainable resourcing.

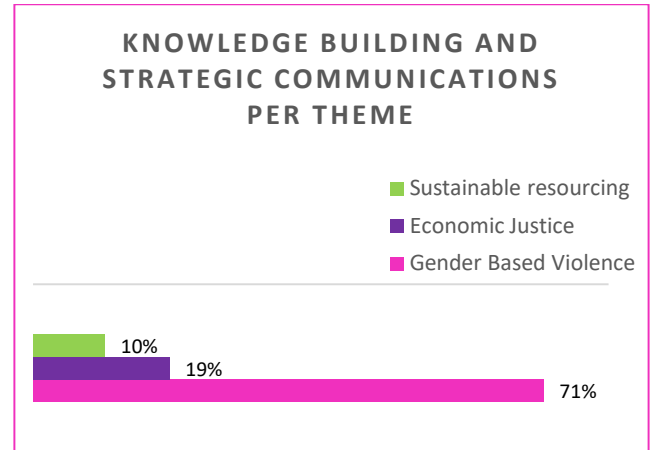


Mama Cash and the Red Umbrella Fund provided 50 core support grants, allowing CMI! partners to cover general operating costs, build their organisational capacities, and determine their advocacy priorities. The three Urgent Action Funds made 93 rapid response advocacy and security grants to strengthen and sustain feminist organisations and WHRDs poised to make important gains or facing serious threats.

¹ Activities are not equivalent to expenditure per strategy.

3. Knowledge building and strategic communications

Initiatives were divided as follows: 1) **geographically**: 41% of all initiatives were organised or funded internationally, 32% in Africa, 23% in Latin America and 4% in Asia; 2) **thematically**: 71% of initiatives were focused on eliminating gender-based violence, 10% on promoting sustainable resourcing and 19% on securing economic justice.



4. Direct lobby and advocacy

The following charts show CMI's work to advance lobby and advocacy agendas: 1) **geographically**: 54% of the work was carried out internationally, in Africa (24%), Latin America (8%) and Asia (14%) the work was carried out at national and regional levels; and 2) **thematically**: 63% of our efforts were directed at eliminating gender-based violence, 21% at promoting sustainable resourcing for women's rights and 16% at securing economic justice.

