

GEO Member Spotlight



In the U.S., only 7.3 percent of total private foundation dollars are given to programs that address the rights of women and girls, according to the Global Fund for Women

This means organizations like the Global Fund for Women, which works to directly support women throughout the world, have their work cut out for them. Since its inception in 1987, the fund has granted more than \$93 million to more than 4,400

women's groups in six continents.

It comes as no surprise that a great deal of the work that the fund does is based on trust and honesty with grantees.

“With the Global Fund, we work in an atmosphere of trust that allows us to be sincere,” wrote one grantee from Argentina. “We tell the fund when things do not go well and when they do. We are transparent and this is the most important thing.”

The fund is deliberate in fostering this atmosphere, said Caitlin Stanton, senior program officer for learning, monitoring and evaluation.

Using grantee perception surveys, which include both grantees and declined applicants, the fund receives helpful, anonymous feedback on grantee support. The fund has even ensured that women's groups from any part of the world may write to the fund in any language.

The fund works to represent the communities they serve in the leadership of the organization. Its board and advisory council include local activists who know the realities facing women around the globe, and the majority of the board is from outside of the United States.

“This means that at the highest levels of leadership, grantee voices are represented in decision making for the organization,” Stanton said.

When it comes to quality reporting and investment in evaluation tools, the Fund found that one helpful strategy was to remind grantees that the Global Fund for Women is also a grantee itself, since it is publicly funded.

“We don't know exactly why this is, but we suspect that when grantees know we have shared at least a few similar experiences (reporting to a donor, etc.), it adds a sense of solidarity,” Stanton said.

Perhaps, this is a hidden value for intermediary funders, community foundations and other publicly-funded foundations, she added. Funders may want to explore how this role can be leveraged. For example, private foundations may want to work more with intermediary and community foundations regarding specific learning or evaluation goals for a grantmaking initiative, Stanton said.



Caitlin Stanton, Senior Program Officer for the Global Fund for Women

Quick Facts From The Global Fund For Women

Violence Against Women and Girls

Around the world, one woman in five is likely to be a victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime. *World Health Organization, 2005*

Health Status

Women in sub-Saharan countries have a 1 in 16 chance of dying in pregnancy or childbirth, compared with a 1 in 2,800 risk for women from developed countries. *UNIFEM, 2006*

Access to Education

Every year of a mother's education corresponds to 5 to 10 percent lower mortality rates in children under the age of five. *UNFPA, 2005*

Political Power

Women hold only 14 percent of parliamentary seats worldwide. Only 11 countries have met the UN target of 30 percent female decision-makers. *UNIFEM, 2006*

Economic Status

Women constitute about 70 percent of the world's absolute poor — those living on less than a dollar a day. *National Council for Research on Women, 2005*

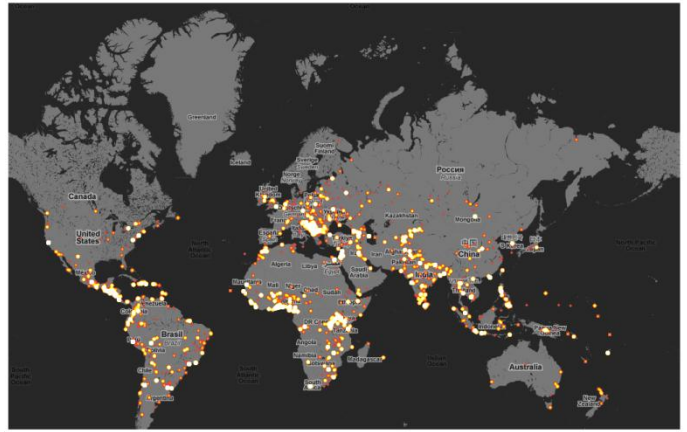
More statistics from the Global Fund for Women [are available here](#).

Flexible Support in an Unpredictable World

The Global Fund for Women has advocated for and defended women's human rights by making grants to support groups in 172 countries since 1987.

Given the shifting nature of politics and current events across these regions, it's important to the fund that each of its grantees be able to adapt to emerging needs.

Flexible funding is a pillar of the fund's philosophy, and it has provided general operating support for most of its history. This year, the fund collaborated with Lyndi Hewitt, a sociologist at Hofstra University, to examine [how flexible funding can benefit grantees](#). Her research found that unrestricted, consistent funding was more likely to increase an organization's capacity to identify and respond strategically to new opportunities and threats than restricted funding.



Mapping the Movement

This map explores where a relationship between the Global Fund for Women and grantee groups is more likely to yield a higher movement-building impact. The brighter the hot spot, the stronger the collective power.

“Having a proven tool to support the development of this capacity should be relevant to most funders, not just those interested in ‘capacity building,’” Stanton said. “It was really exciting to see the research GEO presented in [its recent report](#), because it echoed some of our own research this year.”

The fund also fosters adaptability through its final reports. The reports ask grantees to report on progress while, at the same time, supporting grantees to be nimble and effective in rapidly shifting contexts.

“This means we may view a grantee reporting that their plans changed mid-year as a positive sign rather than a negative one,” Stanton said. “This willingness to look at how the grantee’s work is actually unfolding creates more opportunities for honesty.”

Widening the Lens on Scale

Earlier this month, Stanton had the opportunity to attend the 2012 GEO National Conference. When reflecting on what ideas have stuck with her in the weeks afterward, she replied that the conversations on approaches to scale stood out to her.

Due to the Fund's focus on the unique context in which each of their grantees operate, approaches to scale that are overly-reliant on replicability aren't very feasible. However, when the lens on scale widens to include scaling through networks, knowledge-sharing and advocacy, opportunities to support scaling up become much clearer, Stanton said.

She offered the example of a grantee in the Philippines that successfully prosecuted a case of rape under the Optional Protocol of the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). It was the first case of sexual violence to be decided by the protocol.

“It might be a strategy that could ‘scale’ through being a test case of a tool that can be used by other prosecutors in countries that have ratified CEDAW,” she said.

Global Fund for Women was one of five organizations selected to receive a scholarship from the Marguerite Casey Foundation to attend the 2012 GEO National Conference in Seattle. To find out more about the Global Fund for Women visit their website at globalfundforwomen.org