

In Movement Together:

Funding Feminist Activism Globally

STRATEGIC GUIDE 2021 – 2030 SUMMARY



Imagine a world where you wake up every morning to laughter and love. Where the air and water are clean, healthy food is plentiful, and you feel a sense of purpose and connection with others and the earth.

Imagine a world where the lives and work of all people are equally valued, and we live in harmony with each other and the planet. Where our boldest hopes and bravest dreams are our daily realities. Where justice and joy make up the fabric of our communities and relationships.

This is the world that Mama Cash is working toward, in our ten-year strategy *In Movement Together*, in partnership with feminist activists and the allies and funders who support them.

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This is

Mama Cash



Mama Cash works to ensure that feminist collective action led by women, girls, and trans and intersex people is resourced, supported and connected within and across social movements. We use our role as a feminist funder, our experience supporting feminist activism, and our geopolitical location in the Netherlands to mobilise and move funding to feminist initiatives and groups. We do this work in partnership with other feminist organisations, women's funds and social justice grantmakers and donors.

Our history

It all began in 1983 with five lesbian feminists in Amsterdam. One of them had inherited a substantial sum of money, and together they created a fund to financially support and stimulate women's activism. They were activists themselves, and from the beginning Mama Cash was rooted in feminist movements.

As these founders developed Mama Cash's grantmaking strategies, they believed that making fundamental change demanded radical action. New and unconventional proposals with a focus on issues viewed as contentious by the wider society were preferred. Black women, older women, lesbians, sex workers, refugee women, and girls all received

funds to organise and launch ground-breaking cultural and political projects that helped to build solidarity and move people to action.

Over time, as feminist political analysis has broadened and deepened, we have expanded our mission to reflect these realities of feminist movements. In 2012, we included support for trans people's rights in our mission, and in 2018, we added support for intersex people's rights. Over the course of almost four decades, Mama Cash has grown, yet our core identity and mission have not wavered. We remain a funder of bold feminist activism.



Mama Cash's founders in the 1980s.

Our vision and mission

VISION

Every woman, girl, and trans and intersex person has the power and resources to participate fully and equally in creating a peaceful, just and sustainable world.

MISSION

Courageous women's, girls', and trans and intersex people's human rights organisations worldwide need funding and supportive networks in order to grow and transform their communities. Mama Cash mobilises resources from individuals and institutions, makes grants to these self-led, feminist organisations, and helps to build the partnerships and networks needed to successfully defend and advance women's, girls', and trans and intersex people's human rights globally.



DIVA for Equality, Fiji

Our values

CURIOUS - we believe that a more just and joyous world is ours to create and discover. We foster our own and others' learning by intentionally making space to explore and experiment and dreaming big.

INCLUSIVE - we know that collectively, we are wiser and stronger. We are dedicated to forging strong partnerships with all who share our vision, based on respect, trust and solidarity and centring the leadership of those most affected by injustice.

COURAGEOUS - for women, girls, and trans and intersex people reaching for liberation, the stakes are high and the outcomes matter. We remain determined and dare to make bold choices, even in the face of great opposition and difficulty. We are responsive to changing circumstances and seek to match the courage of the movements we support.

ACCOUNTABLE - we recognise that we are in community with others and are accountable to those we share this work with. We commit to openness in giving and receiving feedback, transparency and power-sharing in our decision-making, and honesty in our communications.



Venir a Sur Conference in Mexico City, 2018

2.

The world around us



Throughout the world, human societies are designed and organised unjustly. The lives and work of all people are not equally valued, and human beings do not live in harmony with each other or with the planet. This situation is both unfair and unsustainable.

The current reality

We know that injustice and inequality remain persistent around the world, affecting the lives of women, girls, and trans and intersex people everywhere. Gender-based violence continues at alarming rates worldwide, while the rise of authoritarian leaders and governments in many countries and growing anti-rights movements that oppose so-called ‘gender ideology’ are particularly attacking women, girls, and trans and intersex people. Climate change is a planetary crisis that disproportionately affects women, while women and girls make up 80% of the people being

displaced by it. Material and financial resources are unjustly distributed in all societies with dramatic consequences for the well-being of women, girls, and trans and intersex people.

Despite these challenges and injustices, we know that feminist activism works to advance social justice and the rights of women, girls, and trans and intersex people. Courageous feminist activists working together have been able to secure rights and shift social norms on a wide range of

issues, including gender-based violence, economic rights, reproductive rights and political rights and representation. In the quarter-century since the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, statistics show progress: more girls are going to school, fewer girls are entering early marriages, more women hold leadership roles.

The start of the 2020s has been indelibly marked by the COVID-19 global pandemic and uprisings in defence of Black bodies and lives around the world. Activists' work to respond to the unequal consequences of the pandemic as well as to lift up and defend Black life show us how long-entrenched norms, behaviours, and systems can be changed – even overturned – when we are intentional and committed.



Chola Contravisual, Peru

The next decade

The decade ahead is critical for a number of reasons. It will be crucial for preventing the worst consequences of climate change. The role of data and technology will continue to dramatically affect our lives in the coming decade – with liberating possibilities but also with great potential for surveillance and violations of people’s rights to expression and privacy. And the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must be implemented by 2030. In short, the coming ten years is a critical period for many of the political efforts that Mama Cash supports to address gender inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, and threats to open, democratic societies.

This is one of the reasons we are launching our first 10-year ‘plan’. Another is that it takes time to build up the strength and power needed to tackle these challenges effectively. Developing our efforts over a longer-term time frame, while using shorter planning cycles of two to three years, will help us to generate momentum, strengthen and sustain our work, and, at the same time, provide us the ability to pivot and react flexibly to rapid and complex changes.

Worldwide, feminist movements are critical actors in creating fairer and more just societies, and they are rising to meet new and long-standing challenges. Yet their resource needs remain unmet by the funding sector; they continue to receive less than 1% of all gender-focused aid for example. This moment, therefore, requires Mama Cash to deepen and strengthen our work to support and propel this collective work forward. We are determined to do our best to match the courage, need and opportunity of the moment and the movements we work with.



National Indigenous Women Forum, Nepal

3.

Backing feminist movements



Our new Strategic Guide was crafted through a process involving consultations with feminist activists around the globe, current and former Board and staff, members of grantee-partner groups and allied organisations, as well as an evaluation of our last strategic plan, thought pieces that we commissioned from feminist activists, and trends analysis that we developed to inform our thinking.

Given who Mama Cash is, the world around us, and our understanding of how change happens, Mama Cash will work in two core focus areas through the next decade to back feminist movements making change: Movements and Money. This work will be supported through two operational pillars: People and Purpose. We will also intentionally cultivate room for experimentation (The Orchard) and for learning throughout our work.

Movements

Mama Cash continues to take a movement building approach in supporting feminist activism, because movements are critical to making change – and to making change last. As movements depend on a variety of actors working collectively, starting in 2021 we now fund multiple elements of movements, including: individuals, collectives, groups, organisations and networks. In addition, we no longer limit our grantmaking by themes or national borders. In an effort to be responsive to feminist movements as they are

organising today, we are organising our grantmaking by type of funding and are open to making grants anywhere in the world.

Mama Cash channels resources to feminist movements around the world using two strategies: **grantmaking** to support feminist collective action, and **accompaniment** to support them to be stronger movement actors. These strategies are underpinned by a unifying approach: participatory grantmaking.

Our participatory **grantmaking strategy** builds on Mama Cash's experience and what we have learned from others in the field and works towards making sure that all our grant decisions are made by activists. Participatory processes make our grants responsive to activists' contexts and realities and strengthen our accountability to movements.

The **accompaniment strategy** supports grantee-partners to obtain, improve, and retain skills, knowledge, tools, equipment, and other resources needed to fulfil their missions. This can take shape as financial and non-financial support. Mama Cash's basic criteria for all funding streams prioritise groups, individuals, and women's funds that:



Fearless Collective, Sri Lanka

- Work from a feminist perspective.
- Are self-led by the women, girls, trans people and/or intersex people they work with.
- Have the promotion of women's, girls', and trans and/or intersex people's human rights as their primary mission.
- Focus on under-addressed or contested issues.
- Push for structural change.

Our grantmaking and accompaniment aim to support and strengthen feminist movements so that they are autonomous, pluralist, inclusive and resilient.

Our success will mean that:

- **Feminist movements are stronger.**
- **Feminist movements are more coordinated.**
- **Feminist movements are making change.**

Money

Mama Cash continues to focus on the role of money because change happens when movements are well-resourced. This means that donors are critical actors in our work, especially donors that are committed to listening to, and partnering with, activists and movements.

Mama Cash mobilises money from individual and institutional donors toward feminist movements via two complementary strategies: **fundraising** and **donor influencing**. With each, we are committed to ensuring that **more and better** money moves to feminist movements: through Mama Cash, via other women's funds, and/or from other funders directly to groups and activists. In all our fundraising and influencing work, we intend to deepen partnerships, including with peer women's funds. We see partnership and collaborative work as a crucial way of bringing better resourcing to feminist activism.

Given the resourcing needs of feminist movements, we have set ambitious fundraising targets for the next ten years. In order to deliver, we will focus on building our

brand awareness, creating a robust prospecting system and continuing to adapt and refine integrated fundraising campaigns inviting more individuals within and outside the Netherlands to join us. In our institutional fundraising, we seek to renew crucial partnerships while building a strong pipeline of future opportunities and potential new funders.

Through our influencing work, we aim to mobilise more, but also better money, and we are bringing greater focus to advocacy for ‘better’ money: money that is made available and accessible to feminist movements. We are committed to sharing our insights and those of grantee-partners on how to resource these movements so they can thrive in a context of growing anti-rights efforts and climate change.

Our success will mean that:

- **We secure more funding from individual donors.**
- **By 2030, we annually raise €25 million in funding from all sources.**
- **By 2030, we annually leverage, through our influencing work, double what we fundraise for Mama Cash for feminist movements.**

People and Purpose

Our core focus areas and strategies are supported by two operational pillars.

PEOPLE: as a feminist social justice organisation, we aim to live our values and principles. Specifically, we actively work to be an inclusive organisation, where pluralism and diversity are valued, respected and built upon, equity is a right, and our Supervisory Board, Managing Board and staff body are reflective of the feminist movements we work with.

In the coming years, we seek to have more staff based outside the Netherlands in order to strengthen our connections with the movements and activists we work with and will further develop our organisational culture and systems to enable stronger virtual working and collaboration.

The **PURPOSE** pillar includes practical aspects of our organisational functioning, and we will strengthen our operations and systems so that we can adapt to and anticipate new needs. We want Mama Cash to be as flexible and responsive as the feminist movements that we are supporting.

Developing a sustainable, feminist approach to operations includes monitoring and reducing our environmental impact and ensuring an ethical approach in our supply chains.

Purpose for us incorporates Learning, Monitoring and Evaluation (LME), Finance and Grants Administration, IT and Office Management, and Risk Management and Quality Control.



Women's Health and Equal Rights, Nigeria

The Orchard

An orchard is an intentional use of resources for the cultivation of trees that produce food. 'The Orchard' at Mama Cash is an intentionally held space to explore and experiment with new ideas that help us implement our mission. Ideas we have already identified to pilot and explore are:

- *Casa de Mama Cash*: our dream is to buy or build a physical space for feminists – and Mama Cash's office – in Amsterdam.
- Feminists' (ex)change: building on the concept of learning by doing and reciprocity, we are interested in staff exchanges with organisations, groups, collectives or funds that are in active partnership with Mama Cash.
- Brave Space: we want to support partners and staff to try out the resource mobilisation and fundraising models that are untested, unproven, daring, and/or 'possibly impossible'.

Learning for change

Mama Cash aims to take a feminist, participatory and adaptive approach to learning, monitoring and evaluation. This means that we seek to understand, support and address the needs and realities of feminist activism and movements as part of our process.

Through our learning, monitoring and evaluation we aim to gain insights about whether we are doing what is needed to catalyse change, to improve our practice, and to build our collective strength for creating transformational change with feminist movements.

Mama Cash is always developing and growing, through a cyclical process of planning, implementing, evaluating, learning from and adapting our practice to better respond to the needs of feminist movements. As an engaged feminist organisation, we aim to continually build our awareness and understanding about what feminist activists and movements want and need from funders in order to thrive and do their work well, and to improve our contribution to their agendas.



Mujeres de Xochilt, El Salvador

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