



Issues Affecting Women Programme

Strategic framework

**Supporting women and girls to
be safe, free, and have an equal
opportunity to thrive.**

Strategic Framework for the Issues Affecting Women Programme 2024 – 2029

Supporting women and girls to be safe, free, and have an equal opportunity to thrive.

For more than 20 years, the Issues Affecting Women Programme (IAWP) has funded organisations and movements around the world.

All women and girls should be safe, free, and have an equal chance to thrive. Yet, every day, women experience violence and discrimination, and are denied the freedom to decide how they will live. This undermines their health, safety, dignity, and independence.

We find inspiration from strong and vibrant organisations and movements, built and led by women. These courageous people transform lives and communities across the world. Supporting these leaders, organisations, and movements is at the heart of what we do.

Approach

Women everywhere deserve to lead lives with safety and dignity. Achieving this requires a wide array of long-term efforts. To that end, we resource and support different groups – from women’s funds, women’s organisations, networks, and emerging collaboratives to community-based groups. We support multiple strategies: survivor and victim services; norm and systems change; movement strengthening; communications; organisational capacity-strengthening; and collaboration. We provide core and long-term funding to these organisations to create positive and lasting change.

Our role

Oak’s primary contribution is as a grant maker. We are also a movement ally, connector, and philanthropic partner.

As a grant maker

- We seed and sustain the emergent, the urgent, the long-term, and often invisible or underfunded.
- We support material, organisational, and care needs.
- We facilitate the connections between different organisations and efforts.
- We offer support for organisational development and capacity strengthening.

As a movement ally and connector

- We highlight important evidence and stories of success and change.
- We open doors and make connections.

Through our philanthropic collaboration

- We work with other funders and seek to increase the overall amount and flexibility of funding to support women to be safe, free, and have an equal opportunity to thrive.
- We collaborate with other funders to encourage multiple investments in the kinds of convenings, spaces, and grant-making approaches needed for organisations to come together, learn from one another, and connect across issues.

Grant-making strategies

We focus on cross-cutting strategies that build women's movements and resource women's funds. We also support specific issues that aim to: **end domestic violence; expand access to community health; stop psychological violence; and prevent trafficking and exploitation.**

Strengthening women's movements

Research shows that strong, vibrant, resourced women's movements are the most effective levers to support women and girls to be safe, free, and have an equal opportunity to thrive. Women's movements enable women to find their voice, develop shared leadership, and work together. For us, movement building is both a cross-cutting approach for all grantee partners and a stand-alone strategy.

We support efforts that:

- Strengthen connections across the movement ecosystem
- Strengthen diverse and inclusive leadership
- Resource strategies and capacities that focus on building positive narratives
- Encourage and strengthen outreach, organising, and mobilisation.

Support partners to create conditions to prevent crises, build resilience, and sustain peace.

Resourcing women's funds

Over the last decade, our grant-making has aimed to strengthen the visibility, capacity, and scale of women's funds to better compete for and manage larger grants for wider reach. Today, women who want to mobilise resources for their communities and constituencies are creating new funds in geographies and on issues that have difficulty attracting funding.

We support efforts that:

- Seed, strengthen, and support women's funds by resourcing small and nascent women's funds in underserved geographies, while continuing to collaborate with larger international women's funds for learning and influence
- Nurture the growth of a diverse and connected ecosystem of women's funds
- Strengthen the connections and collaborative capacities within the women's funds ecosystem as well as with broader women's movements
- Increase access to resources for women and girls living in conflict, emergency, and crisis situations to meet their immediate needs, and protect and defend their lives and their rights.

Ending domestic violence

Domestic violence service providers and organisations working to end intimate partner violence are developing innovative, practical responses, and solutions that support women and their children to find safety and thrive.

We support efforts that:

- Foster the development of services, and support programmes that centre the voice, dignity, and expertise of survivors and their communities to end and prevent domestic violence
- Support survivors to be safer, achieve justice, and win respect
- Support survivors to access the services they seek and to lead changes in society
- Increase young people's awareness of domestic violence to prevent and stop it.

Making the invisible visible - stopping psychological violence



Strong, healthy relationships are linked to lower rates of anxiety and depression, higher self-esteem, greater empathy, and more trusting cooperative connections. Unfortunately, not all relationships are healthy and strong. Abusers use psychological violence, sometimes alongside physical and sexual abuse and violence, to trap survivors and deprive them of their freedom.

We support efforts that:

- Improve understanding by generating more evidence about the tactics used by abusers and to assess the value of interventions
- Support community and legal remedies that prioritise the needs of survivors
- Help survivors overcome obstacles to financial stability and access quality support services
- Increase awareness of psychological violence and promote approaches to prevent it.

Expanding access to community health

Access to healthcare ensures that we all have the opportunity to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. For women, in particular, access to healthcare is crucial as it encompasses a wide range of services, including maternal care and preventive screenings. These services not only

improve women’s health outcomes but also contribute to the wellbeing of families and communities.

We support efforts that:

- Increase women’s access to a full range of support services
- Strengthen and expand education to contribute to the wellbeing of families and communities

Preventing trafficking and exploitation

Our strategy for preventing trafficking focuses on preventing harm and improving the conditions for all women working in vulnerable sectors, focusing on work that is informal, invisible, often rife with exploitation and trafficking, and includes a large female workforce.

We support efforts that:

- Increase access to services and justice for women who have experienced trafficking and exploitation
- Support solutions that include community organising, leadership development, and civic engagement
- Support women workers to ensure greater corporate accountability for safe and dignified working conditions across the supply chain
- Support safe and informed migration for those who choose to migrate.

Our commitment to learning

We are committed to learning from and with our grantee partners. We nurture a learning culture to share insights about the changing context, emerging movement strategies, and effective approaches. We help our grantee partners to strategise, connect, and learn from each other. We celebrate their achievements and support them in communicating their successes.

Our team

We are passionate, experienced, and dedicated. We recognise that the funding areas overlap and are connected; therefore, we work together as a team across our funding areas.

Our grantee partners

For information on our current grantee partners, visit our grant database on our website or read our latest annual report. Visit our website page to learn more about our partners' work. We publish stories on a regular basis that help explain our grant-making approaches.

Requests for support

Organisations that fit our current strategy can submit an enquiry through our website: <https://oakfnd.org/submit-enquiry/>. We know it can be challenging for organisations with limited resources to connect with funders, and we do value and consider all submissions, but an enquiry does not guarantee a formal invitation to apply for funding. In addition, we only approve a few submissions through our online letter of enquiry process each year.

Contact us

If you would like to speak to us, please email us on info@oakfnd.ch