



Local Resource Mobilization Case Study

CASE STUDY 3

NOVEMBER 2015

Fondo de Mujeres del Sur

This case study explores strategies, challenges, and opportunities with Fondo de Mujeres del Sur's (FMS) local resource mobilization. FMS was created in recognition of the shortage of available resources for women's rights organizations in Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay. The Fund's proactive engagement with corporations and individuals who haven't yet supported women's rights is challenging the perception that Argentina has already realized full gender equality and is raising funds and awareness about the rights violations women still face. FMS's experimental "direct dialogue" strategy is also helping the fund understand which issues resonate most among the general public, informing its future communications and local resource mobilization efforts.

Fondo de Mujeres del Sur

At-A-Glance (\$=USD)

- Since its founding in 2007, FMS has grown from two staff to seven and from an annual budget of \$60,000 to \$440,000.
- In 2014, FMS made 51 grants in support of 28 groups working on issues ranging from environmental rights to young women's empowerment.
- Through less than four weeks of volunteer outreach in Córdoba and Mendoza, FMS raised \$2,400 from 94 individuals.
- Through a partnership with Flecha Bus, FMS receives a 50% discount on all bus tickets purchased, amounting to a cost savings of \$1,200 in 2014.
- In collaboration with Argentine universities and the government, FMS has received support from over 20 volunteers, bringing new skills, increasing the fund's capacity, and raising the visibility and reach of its work.



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I. THE STATE OF PHILANTHROPY IN ARGENTINA

Argentina has a long history of philanthropy, originating in the early 1600s among women involved with the Catholic Church. The second phase of Argentine philanthropy developed after independence, closely linked with the state. *Sociedad de Beneficencia*, a quasi-public institution primarily funded by the state and run by wealthy women, became the largest institution for public assistance until the formation of the Eva Perón Foundation by the First Lady in the 1940s.¹

While the Eva Perón Foundation was closely tied to the state and the political power of the President, Evita promoted a new approach to philanthropy, one that moved beyond a sole focus on charity and incorporated some principles of social justice to help alleviate poverty. Evita argued that “beneficence was an insult to the dignity of the poor that only relieved the guilty consciences of the rich.”²

These institutions laid the groundwork for modern philanthropy in Argentina, where the majority of contemporary foundations are associated with companies or the state. Research conducted by El Grupo de Fundaciones y Empresas in 2005 found that 60% of the foundations sampled were founded after 1990, the majority are based in Buenos Aires, and the most funded issue is education. In addition, the most frequent type of support is in-kind donations, followed by financial support.³

Fondo de Mujeres del Sur (FMS), an Argentine women’s fund that mobilizes financial and technical resources in order to promote women’s rights in Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay, practices a different model of philanthropy. Through its grantmaking, FMS supports women’s organizations through an equal and transparent partnership, based on the conviction that women have enormous potential to be agents of social change.



1. Thompson, Andrés A., and Anahí Viladrich. “Women and Philanthropy in Argentina: From the Society of Beneficence to Eva Perón.” *Voluntas, Especial Issue: Women and Philanthropy* 7.4 (1996): 336-49. Web. <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2FBF02354157>
2. Thompson and Viladrich, 344.

3. “Estudio de Inversión Social Privada Local y Cooperación Internacional en la Argentina.” Grupo de Fundaciones y Empresas (GDFE) and Red Argentina para la Cooperación Internacional (RACI). 25, 29. Web. <http://www.raci.org.ar/new-publication-study-on-local-private-social-investment-and-international-cooperation-in-argentina/?lang=en>

II. WHO IS FONDO DE MUJERES DEL SUR?

“When we speak about feminist philanthropy, it isn’t just to raise and give more resources to women, but also to create consciousness about the importance of investing in social change.” Natalia Eberbach, Communications and Local Fundraising Program Officer, Fondo de Mujeres del Sur

FMS was created in response to a lack of available resources for women’s rights organizations in Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay, particularly at the grassroots level. Since its founding in 2007, FMS has grown from two staff to seven and from an annual budget of \$60,000 to \$440,000. In 2014, FMS made 51 grants in support of 28 groups; each grant averages \$7,000. FMS’s vision is to build bridges between those that have resources and those with power to enact long-term change.

FMS supports women’s rights organizations through making grants, organizing trainings and networking opportunities for grantees, and providing ongoing technical assistance and administrative support. Its objective is to ensure that resources reach groups that face the highest geographical, social, and cultural difficulties in accessing funds to develop their ideas and projects, such as indigenous and rural women. FMS supports groups working on a variety of issues, including economic, social, cultural, and labor rights; sexual and reproductive rights; sexual diversity; political participation of women; and eradication of violence against women.



Partnership

Partnership is one of FMS's core values and strategies. The Fund partners with sister funds across Latin America on several initiatives, leveraging additional resources and sharing lessons learned across the continent:

1. **Labor Rights:** From January 2012 to December 2014 FMS partnered with sister funds Fondo Alquimia (Chile), Sociedad Mexicana Pro Derechos de la Mujer, Semillas (Mexico), and Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres (FCAM, Nicaragua), and women's organizations across Mesoamerica and the Southern Cone on an initiative to support female workers in the region. This initiative aimed to increase the visibility of female factory and domestic workers, advance legislative changes and compliance with international labor rights guidelines, and empower female workers' movements in the region. The project was supported by the Dutch government FLOW fund and complemented by UN Women.
2. **Young Women's Citizenship and Human Rights (2009-2010):** This partnership between FMS, ELAS, Fundo de Investimento Social (Brazil), and

Fondo Alquimia (Chile) made grants to strengthen the political leadership of young women and their organizations. FMS believes that "committing to strengthening the capacity of young women in social movements means investing in the necessary generational renewal to guarantee the continuity of women's battle for a dignified life with equal opportunities." This project was supported by UN Women.

3. **Sexual Diversity:** Over the 2008-2010 period six Latin American and Caribbean women's funds united forces to collectively mobilize resources in support of sexual diversity in the region. "Beyond invisibility: The Latin-American women's funds mobilize resources on behalf of lesbians, bisexuals and transgender" raised \$1,786,000 from international sources within two years to support 66 organizations in 17 countries.
4. **Environmental Defenders in the Eco-Region "Chaco-Americano":** This partnership, which runs from 2014 - 2017 and is led by FMS, is in collaboration with a Bolivian women's organization and an environmental organization in Argentina. This initiative makes grants and

provides technical support to strengthen the political leadership of women particularly indigenous women in rural areas, in the Chaco-Americano, a region that covers parts of Argentina, Paraguay, and Bolivia. This project is supported by the European Union.

5. **Women and the Environment:** FMS is also currently exploring collaboration with five women's funds and two environmental funds based in South America to focus on women and the environment across the continent.
6. **CONMUJERES:** FMS is currently the focal point for CONMUJERES, a consortium of women's funds from Latin America. The main objectives of CONMUJERES are to strengthen the capacities of women's funds in Latin America and advance women's rights in the region through collectively mobilizing local resources. CONMUJERES is working in alliance with other members of the International Network of Women's Funds to further strengthen feminist philanthropy in the region and cultivate additional local sources of support.

III. FONDO DE MUJERES DEL SUR'S LOCAL RESOURCE MOBILIZATION STRATEGIES: CHALLENGING PERCEPTIONS

"All women share a situation of domination, whether the woman is a company director or a domestic worker. We understand that as all women experience this situation, women who have money need to donate so that other women who have less access to resources can move forward. This is how we think of our local resource mobilization, as a way to achieve social change." Natalia Eberbach

One of FMS's primary objectives is to promote a culture of philanthropy for women's rights in Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay. FMS's local fundraising efforts are aimed at raising awareness among individual and corporate donors that by investing in women, they are contributing to building a more just and equitable society for everyone. In 2014, FMS raised \$13,589 from local sources.

Local resource mobilization is a newer area of exploration for FMS and the fund is currently engaged in two strategies showing significant promise. FMS recognizes that it is playing an important role in helping to foster a philanthropic culture that prioritizes long-term social change, even if not all of its efforts to date have been financially profitable.

1. Direct Dialogue

Since launching its "direct dialogue" campaign, a street outreach pilot initiative in December 2014, FMS has raised \$2,400 from 94 individuals and a total of 120 have expressed interest in staying informed about FMS's work. FMS is raising approximately \$600 per month on a continuous basis from individuals it connected with through this campaign.

FMS developed this strategy to test the perception that people in Latin America are only interested in donating to charity, not supporting social change. The objectives of this strategy go beyond solely raising funds and include increasing awareness about women's rights, raising the profile of FMS, and widening understanding about the role of women's funds.

FMS carried out the first trial in Córdoba where the Fund is based. Córdoba is also one of the most conservative cities in Argentina, which has proven to be one of the biggest challenges with FMS' local resource mobilization. Between December 9 and December 19, five street fundraisers trained by FMS asked people about their interest in four issues that FMS supports: 1) environmental rights, 2) labor rights of domestic workers, 3) ending gender-based violence, and 4) sexual and reproductive rights. During each engagement, the street fundraisers spoke about the work of the fund's grantees and gauged interest in making a donation or becoming more involved.

This first experience of street dialogue surpassed staff expectations. Twenty-six people donated to FMS by credit card, most of them committing to make donations on a monthly basis, and over 100 people expressed interest in either donating in the future or learning more about FMS.

After this initial engagement, FMS staff called those who indicated interest in order to: 1) confirm the donations and process the charges; 2) better understand participants' interests; 3) inquire whether those who made a one-time donation would join FMS's ongoing donor network; and 4) begin to develop longer-term relationships with these individuals as part of a strong and diverse constituency of support for women's rights.

Through these calls, FMS learned that environmental defense was of greatest interest, followed by addressing gender-based

violence. Individuals seemed to have less understanding about the rights of domestic workers.

Building on the success of the first test in December, FMS street fundraisers took to the streets again the following March. In this second run, two street fundraisers spent 12 mornings speaking with people in the streets of Córdoba and 3 days in Mendoza. They found that the most effective approach was to frame FMS's identity as "a women's organization that supports other women's organizations" and ask which of the four issues that FMS supports people care about most by sharing the work of grantees. Street fundraisers quickly learned that sexual and reproductive rights did not resonate with most people and shifted their approach to focus on environmental rights and addressing gender-based violence. They also learned the most effective profile of people to speak with, as well as the most strategic locations in Córdoba for approaching people. Based on this experience, men between the ages of 20 and 50 were the most likely to donate.

This strategy has helped the fund strengthen its work in four key ways:

1. Learned more about how to engage with and maintain interest of individual donors
2. Learned which of FMS's issues resonate most with the general public
3. Broadened the constituency of support for FMS's work
4. Raised awareness of women's rights issues

In order to develop this strategy, FMS collaborated with Proa Consulting, a local organization with expertise in direct dialogue engagement. Proa and FMS trained street fundraisers on how to



approach people and occasionally meets with FMS to collectively brainstorm about how to address challenges that arise.

To date, FMS has pursued this strategy without financial resources to invest in a broader campaign. While successful in engaging additional people in feminist philanthropy, it hasn't yet yielded significant financial support compared with the effort invested. Based on the promise of this strategy thus far, FMS is currently conducting its third iteration of this campaign in Córdoba and hopes to double the number of donors and funds received. FMS also plans to conduct similar outreach in three other cities - Buenos Aires, Rosario, and Mendoza - and is currently seeking investors to help support expanding the direct dialogue strategy.



2. Interns and Volunteers

Interns and volunteers help to increase FMS's capacity, bring new skills to the fund, and increase the visibility and reach of its resource mobilization. To date, more than 20 volunteers have donated time to strengthen the fund's work.

FMS engages volunteers through partnerships with three entities: 1) Argentine universities; 2) the government; and 3) organizations that bring international student volunteers.

FMS participates in "First Step," a government program that places young people without prior career experience with organizations and covers their salaries for one year. This program helps FMS to bolster its capacity and accomplish more within the constraints of its current budget. Since engaging with the program, FMS has hired two participants after their year of work to join the FMS team.

All of FMS's current work related to translations, video editing, administrative support, and social network management is contributed by volunteers under staff supervision.

In addition to its two primary areas of focus, FMS engages in other local resource mobilization strategies:

Individual Donor Network

In 2014, FMS raised \$4,500 through its individual donor network, comprised of 40 members. The individual donor network started in 2011 in Córdoba. At the beginning, FMS encountered a number of challenges and questions: where should it begin outreach efforts? Who should be targeted? How could enough money be raised through the network to at least balance the resources invested?

As FMS approached women considered to be successful and prestigious, it found that these women were reluctant to

financially support other women for two main reasons: 1) a belief that aspects of feminism discriminate against men and 2) that women supported by grantee organizations didn't do enough to "make it" on their own. FMS ultimately decided to focus its efforts on women and men already committed to the women's movement. The Fund started by organizing dinners to coincide with grantee convenings. At the three dinners to date, they have facilitated connections between grantees and others working on the same cause, such as between domestic workers and legislators who have influence over relevant policies. These dinners, held in Córdoba and Buenos Aires, have successfully linked grantees with individuals previously unfamiliar with their work and yielded small financial returns.

FMS minimizes the resources it devotes to the network by integrating fundraising into larger awareness-raising events, rather than organizing specific fundraising events to bring in new donors.

Corporations

FMS's most successful resource mobilization strategy with companies has been securing discounts. One example is FMS' relationship with Flecha Bus. Flecha offers FMS a 50% discount on any ticket purchase, saving FMS \$1,200 in 2014. This is a significant cost savings for FMS, as the fund often purchases bus tickets for grantees to attend meetings. As Argentina is such a large country, many travel long distances (up to 20 hours) to attend these meetings. This discount offers FMS the flexibility to redirect those funds to other areas of work where needed. The fund is in the process of trying to establish similar relationships with national airline companies, especially in support of its work in Paraguay and Uruguay.

FMS has documented the interests of nearly 160 other corporations, a mix of local and international companies based in

Argentina working in sectors such as cosmetics, transportation, petrol, and banking. This research was supported in part by a volunteer economist who donated her time to help the Fund explore options for securing corporate support.

Through this research the Fund discovered that companies mostly support children's issues and charity, not progressive social change. In addition, Argentina's tax benefits only support organizations that offer similar services to the government, such as health and education, which provides corporations less of an incentive to donate to women's rights groups.

In 2014, FMS began one-on-one meetings with corporations with the assumption that female directors would be the most sympathetic to its mission. In actuality, female directors were more difficult to convince of the value of supporting women's organizations, as many felt that women who needed that type of support didn't work hard enough to succeed. These female executives became particularly defensive when FMS staff spoke about its work with domestic workers in factories and in the home. They felt that if they are expected to be able to "do it all," other women should be able to as well. Male executives, on the other hand, expressed understanding the additional challenges women face, such as the potential need to quit their jobs after childbirth to be primary caretakers at home. For FMS, these reactions highlighted the critical importance of feminist philanthropy challenging the assumption that some women do not "work hard enough" and underscored FMS's commitment to changing collective consciousness to understand the dynamics of privilege and marginalization.

Government

In 2014, FMS received a one-time grant of 50,000 pesos (approx. \$5,500) from the Institute Against Discrimination and



Homophobia, a national governing body. The grant is restricted support to cover expenses associated with annual grantee convenings. This was the first time FMS received government support. FMS has initiated a registration process at other local government bodies to try to secure other funding.

Board of Directors

To date, FMS has focused its local fundraising efforts in Argentina and is now developing a strategy for local resource mobilization in Paraguay and Uruguay involving its board members.

FMS's Board of Directors is composed of prominent feminists and academics, including one in Paraguay and one in Uruguay. As these two Board members are well known in their respective contexts, the first step is for them to send recommendations of local contacts to begin discussing financial support.

In Paraguay, FMS has received some in-kind support. In 2013, Doctors without Borders (MSF) closed its office and donated its office infrastructure and media and other contacts to FMS Paraguay. The contacts list has been very valuable, as FMS now knows who was interested in MSF's work and would likely be interested in learning more about FMS.

IV. CHALLENGES TO EXPANDING SUPPORT

Perceptions about Women's Rights

One of the biggest obstacles FMS faces with local resource mobilization is the conservative nature of Córdoba, the city in which it is based. FMS plans to expand its fundraising efforts to more progressive cities, such as Buenos Aires, and explore opportunities in those locations.

A related challenge with perceptions of women's rights are the views of the current pope of the Catholic Church. While considered by many to be more liberal than past leaders of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis has expressed views about gender that do not align with the views of most women's rights advocates. The Argentine Pope is very popular in the country, where 91% of people surveyed have a favorable impression of him, and his statements have a large influence on public perception.⁴

In Argentina there is also a general perception that women are already equal, especially since there is a female president, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. FMS has found it difficult to raise funds for women's rights in this climate.

Understanding of the Role of Women's Funds

A priority for the Fund is increasing the visibility of FMS in Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay as a well-known advocate for women's rights. FMS is trying to address the lack of understanding about its identity and role as a women's fund. FMS has found that as it doesn't engage in "normal" NGO activities, some people find its work difficult to understand, as they are more familiar with international NGOs such as Greenpeace and Amnesty International. Through its partnerships with other women's funds in Latin America, it is recognized more on a regional level than locally.

The direct dialogue campaign has been helpful in addressing this knowledge gap; however, funding to support communications is critical to making further progress on this objective.

All expenses related to FMS's local resource mobilization work to date have been covered out of its core budget. FMS has found it particularly difficult to secure funding to support local resource mobilization and communications. As a result, the Fund had to significantly reduce the hours of its communications staff person last year. However, it was able to turn this challenge into a new practice by bringing on additional volunteer support to help with communications, which has worked well.

4. Pew Research Center. "Chapter 9: Views of Pope Francis and the Catholic Church." *Religion and Latin America*. Web. <http://www.pewforum.org/2014/11/13/chapter-9-views-of-pope-francis-and-the-catholic-church/>

(Dis)Incentives for Philanthropy in Argentina

Argentina provides limited tax incentives for philanthropy. Individuals making a donation to a nonprofit organization can deduct up to 5% of their adjusted gross income; however, this only applies to organizations providing specific services, such as health, education, or science. There is no tax incentive for giving to organizations working for social justice; therefore, donations to FMS are not eligible for this deduction.¹ This lack of incentive has made fundraising from individuals even more difficult.

A series of laws passed in 2011 to restrict foreign exchange transactions have proven problematic for FMS' fundraising from international donors, creating even more of a need to raise resources locally.² In FMS' experience, these laws have ensured that once money enters Argentina, it is nearly impossible to transfer the funds outside of the

country. In July 2012, FMS was denied purchase of foreign currency by the Federal Administration of Public Revenue when it attempted to transfer funds to grantees in Paraguay and Uruguay. FMS promptly filed a complaint with the Central Bank of Argentina, from which it has yet to receive a reply. At present, private banks can make small cross-border transfers of less than \$5,000 for payment of services, but not larger amounts.

In order to circumvent this challenge, FMS created FMS Paraguay, which could receive funds directly from donors to support its grantees in Paraguay and in Uruguay. Establishing FMS Paraguay was instrumental in receiving a recent grant from the European Union, as it enabled FMS to lead a regional project and transfer money without difficulty to Argentina and Bolivia. Transferring these

funds would not have been possible if the grant was given directly to FMS Argentina.

As it is not clear if this is a temporary or permanent policy, a climate of uncertainty exists about how foundations in Argentina will be able to receive grants from international donors to support work outside of the country. Funds raised locally do not have this restriction, making local resource mobilization even more critical.

Source:

1 "Argentina profile." Nexus, Charities Aid Foundation, and McDermott Will & Emery. Nov. 2014. Web. <http://www.nexusyouthsummit.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Argentina.pdf>

2 "The Index of Philanthropic Freedom, 2015." The Hudson Institute. June 2015. 34-35. Web. <https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.hudson.org/files/publications/2015.06.15IndexofPhilanthropicFreedom2015.pdf>

V. THE PATH AHEAD

Through just under five years of engaging in local resource mobilization, FMS has discovered several strategies with significant potential, including direct dialogue, volunteer support, and corporate engagement. As Argentina, where FMS is based, is such a large and diverse country, the Fund recognizes the need to have distinct fundraising strategies for each major city. In addition, FMS has not yet explored local fundraising strategies in Paraguay and Uruguay and intends to investigate opportunities there in the future. Ultimately, FMS's local resource mobilization work aims to create a stronger local community of support for women's rights and challenge assumptions about women's rights already being fully realized.

FMS has identified five needs for strengthening its local resource mobilization work moving forward:

1. Resources to invest in experimenting with potential fundraising and constituency-building opportunities, particularly expanding its direct dialogue strategy to other cities in Argentina;
2. Resources to invest in increasing FMS' visibility;
3. Additional local contacts with access to influence and resources;
4. Training specific to effective local resource mobilization; and
5. Additional opportunities for discussion among women's funds about the challenges they are facing with local resource mobilization.



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- 1) African Women's Development Fund (pan-African, based in Ghana);
- 2) Fondo Alquimia (Chile);
- 3) Fondo de Mujeres del Sur (based in Argentina and also funds in Paraguay and Uruguay);
- 4) HER Fund (Hong Kong);
- 5) MONES, Mongolian Women's Fund (Mongolia);
- 6) Reconstruction Women's Fund (Serbia);
- 7) Semillas, Sociedad Mexicana Pro-Derechos de la Mujer (Mexico);
- 8) South Asia Women's Fund (based in Sri Lanka and also funds in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan);
- 9) Ukrainian Women's Fund (based in Ukraine and also funds in Belarus and Moldova);
- 10) Women's Hope Education And Training, WHEAT Trust (South Africa).

All of these case studies and an Executive Summary are available at: www.inwf.org