2020 was a year to find new ways to sustain feminist activism. In the changing and complex context, we were able to reorganise ourselves, find a new way to communicate, to maintain our network, to take care of ourselves as a community and collectively. In Paraguay, thanks to the articulation of feminist and social movements, a law was approved in September to support soup kitchens, which are key to guaranteeing food security for a large percentage of the population during the emergency. In Uruguay, LBTIQ+, feminist, social and union organisations decided to establish shared platforms for popular and territorial resistance, in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in the political scene. In Argentina, despite the differentiated impact of the crisis on the lives of women and LBTIQ+ people, we ended the year with a historic and encouraging achievement, which was made possible thanks to the political construction of the women’s movement: as of December 29, abortion is legal!

In 2021, we will continue working to strengthen feminist networks and activism that promote lives free of violence, the autonomy of women and LBTIQ+ people and a more liveable, just and equal world.
Impact of COVID-19 on our work

At Fondo de Mujeres del Sur, the pandemic made us feel like we had to rethink everything all over again. Which strategies, actions, articulations are now important? What is our role in this new reality? How do we obtain resources, distribute grants, understand what different organisations and movements needed in this historical context? If the problems had changed, then the questions and the solutions also needed to change. If the urgency affected everyone, we had to deal with what was now urgent. Thus, we decided to take several different paths simultaneously.

We decided that those organisations that were in a situation of evident social and health emergency could allocate part of their financial grants to ensure basic conditions were met. A percentage of grants were reallocated for urgent assistance, such as food, personal hygiene and cleaning. They were also used to support individual and community gardens; many women focused their actions towards agroecology, the provision and exchange of seeds. Some organisations bought material to make face masks, and others organised soup kitchens. In this way, the most immediate consequences of the pandemic and social isolation measures could be alleviated for many women and LBTIQ+ people.

We invested in connectivity: we gave special grants to organisations so that they could implement communication strategies, purchase technologies or equipment for cyberactivism, such as telephones, mobile data, internet subscriptions, modems. We contracted services and trained organisations in the safe and conscious use of digital platforms. We consulted with them and investigated which ones were more accessible, easier to use and more secure.

We strengthened our commitment to mobilise resources, so that the money reaches organisations and movements. Towards the middle of the year, within the Our Rights, Our Pride programme, a specific call was launched to strengthen LBTIQ+ activisms in the pandemic context: “LBTIQ+ activisms in times of COVID-19”. We selected 34 organisations, which received financial and technical-political support from Fondo de Mujeres del Sur from August 2020 to February 2021. Of these, 22 are located in Argentina, eight in Paraguay and four in Uruguay. The programmatic support provided by FMS aimed to strengthen institutional capacities, sustainability of activities and to address the urgent needs of the communities in their locations.

We implemented Networking for Activisms, a project aimed at preventing and eradicating gender-based violence in Argentina. It was led by Fondo de Mujeres del Sur in coordination with
Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género (ELA) and twelve associate organisations. This project was part of the Spotlight Initiative, a global partnership between the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls around the world. As part of the project, a communication campaign was organised that sought to strengthen the feminist networks created in the different locations and the community strategies for the prevention and eradication of gender-based violence, especially in the context of the pandemic, which deepened violence against women, girls and LBTIQ+ people.

As part of the global project On The Right Track, which seeks to counteract the advance of fundamentalisms and their devastating effects on human rights for women and LBTIQ+ people, we implemented Fundamentally Feminists in the subregion. Through this initiative, FMS supports nine organisations: two in Argentina, four in Paraguay and three in Uruguay.

We renewed funding for five years for Leading from the South, a feminist initiative created to support and fund activism for the rights of women, girls and LBTIQ+ people in the Global South. In this second phase (2021-2025) we innovated in the implementation model: in Latin America and the Caribbean, the programme will be coordinated by FMS and carried out, jointly, by the eight feminist and women’s funds that make up the Latin American and Caribbean Women’s Funds Alliance.

We managed to increase financial support for the We Want Us Alive programme, aimed at enhancing the strategies used by organisations that work for the bodily autonomy of women and LBTIQ+ people, as well as for their sexual and (non) reproductive rights. We are very happy to announce that, as of 2021, this programme will also be implemented in Paraguay.
In Uruguay, we obtained support from the European Union to implement a project in conjunction with Flacso Uruguay and Asociación Civil El Paso in the departments of Artigas, Rivera, Tacuarembó and Cerro Largo as of 2021. This project seeks to strengthen civil society in advocacy processes to guarantee the promotion, protection and respect of women’s rights, recognising gender-based violence (GBV) as a serious violation of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the exercise of full citizenship.

Also, FMS identified the need to build knowledge to comprehend and improve our strategies in the new and complex reality. Thus, in Argentina we undertook a national mapping of organisations that work on gender-based violence, a report on LBTIQ+ activisms in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, and a report on the way in which the organisations supported by FMS utilised strategies to keep working and support their communities in the context of the crisis deepened by COVID-19.

Much remains to be done, but if something has become clear to us, it is that together and organised we can continue working to eradicate violence, strengthen commitments to socio-environmental and gender justice, amplify their voices and promote the political participation of women and LBTIQ+ people.

Watch this video on the importance of Women’s Funds and the key role they play in sustaining feminist activism:
Fondo de Mujeres del Sur provided specific grants for the COVID-19 emergency for a total amount of **USD 366,796**.

More than **60 % of organisations** supported by FMS in 2020 **adjusted their activities and budgets** due to the pandemic.

Supported organisations used **diverse strategies to adapt** to the pandemic context and maintain their feminist activism.

- Community Responses
- Transition to the Digital World and Strengthening Capacity
- Care Strategies
- Advocacy and Monitoring of Government Measures
- Capacity Building and Strengthening
- Knowledge Generation, Recovery of Traditional Knowledge and Dialogue Spaces
- Coordination and Building Networks
- Information Dissemination / Communication
- Awareness Raising / Sensitisation

Learn more about the adaptation strategies used by organisations in [this report](#).
Grants to organisations

Fondo de Mujeres del Sur sustained and strengthened the establishment and work in five priority areas, while adjusting to the new context.

Percentages of grants per priority area

1. Leadership, voice-agency and political participation: 19%
2. Economic justice: 7%
3. Eradication of violence and discrimination: 37%
4. Socio-environmental justice: 19%
5. Diverse identities and sexualities: 19%
Organisations supported in priority countries

Grants as per priority area:

1. Leadership, voice-agency and political participation
2. Economic justice
3. Eradication of violence and discrimination
4. Socio-environmental justice
5. Diverse identities and sexualities

34 in Paraguay
11 in Uruguay
76 in Argentina
FMS’ Programmes, Projects and Initiatives in 2020

Three subregional programmes

- Networks and Alliances Free from Violence – REDAL (Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay)
- Our Rights, Our Pride (Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay)
- Strengthening Women Environmental Defenders (Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay)

One global project with subregional implementation

- On the Right Track - Fundamentally Feminists (Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay)

Two national programmes

- We Want Us Alive: Funding Feminist Core Strategies towards Women’s and Other People with the Capacity to Gestate’s Bodily Autonomy in Argentina
- Women Out Loud: Promoting Political Participation (Paraguay)

One national project

- Networking for Activisms: Enhancing community strategies for the eradication of Gender-based violence (GBV) in Argentina (Argentina)

One global project with regional implementation

- Leading from the South (21 Latin American countries)

One complementary initiative

- Let’s Get It, Sister. Towards a Feminist Philanthropy
In 2020 we provided support to:

- 159 organisations
- 32 intermediate organisations
- 120 grassroots organisations
- 7 large organisations

- 2,558 Activists
- 149,822 Indirect beneficiaries

Total amount in grants: USD 2,333,961

General grants for organisational strengthening:
- 161

Specific grants:
- 49

Grants per priority area:

- Leadership, voice-agency and political participation: 39
- Eradication of violence and discrimination: 78
- Economic justice: 15
- Socio-environmental justice: 39
- Diverse identities and sexualities: 39

In 2020 we facilitated:

- Virtual Gatherings: 9
- Training Sessions: 10
- Field Visits (online and face-to-face): 150
Strategic Programmes
The pandemic along with isolation and social distancing measures that governments have implemented to prevent its spread have led to the intensification of sexist violence, especially forms of violence in the domestic sphere.

REDAL grantees during this period played a fundamental role in their communities. They advanced steadily towards the goal of eradicating gender-based violence, providing close support, accompaniments and prevention to multiple locations in Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. The organisations were able to identify the needs of the community during the pandemic and strengthen their capacities to serve their communities.

They reached 5,893 people (indirect beneficiaries) with their actions. This number represents a significant increase compared to previous years. This is due to the almost unavoidable use of online tools and social network platforms.

Despite the fact that this change was imposed by the context, the way organisations utilised these tools led to a new field of work opening for them, which allowed them to expand the scope of their activities. Although many hope to be able to return to working face-to-face to strengthen what has been done, they will undoubtedly continue to work virtually as well because it has provided for very valuable lessons that organisations will continue to take advantage of.
Learn more about the impact of the pandemic on gender-based violence in this article.

Find out what the organisations have to say and how they’ve organised themselves in the emergency context:

Queremos decirles a las mujeres migrantes que no están solas (We want to tell migrant women that they are not alone). Only available in Spanish.

Estamos dando lo mejor para el apoyo y orientación a las mujeres que viven con VIH (We are doing our best to provide support and information to women living with HIV). Only available in Spanish.

The actions implemented by the 8 organisations supported in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay; indirectly benefited 5,893 persons
The main objective of the programme is to contribute to the strengthening of grassroots women’s groups that fight for their rights from a gender and socio-environmental justice perspective. FMS supports groups and organisations of indigenous, rural and urban women against a form of violence that affects them in a particular way: socio-environmental violence.

Paraguay and Bolivia

In 2020, we provided financial and technical-political support to ten organisations of environmental defenders. Given the context, the organisations mainly used the grants to expand their technological capacities, invest in resource development, protect food security and promote advocacy actions before local and national governments.

They invested in connectivity, communication strategies and acquired equipment for internet activism. They maintained radio programmes, they protested on the streets and on social media, they connected with strategic allies to support their actions to reclaim their rights, and held virtual forums to give greater visibility to situations of socio-environmental violence and the health and food crisis in their communities.

As part of the programme, virtual spaces for training and exchange on resource development and political training were organised in conjunction with other FMS initiatives, such as Women Out Loud and Let’s Get It, Sister.
An Online Training School for Land Defenders was also implemented in conjunction with Casa Colectivo from Bolivia. This training programme aimed to provide training and information for women defenders in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through virtual meetings and classes using courier services, 22 women defenders from 17 organisations were able to learn about the technologies and use them to give visibility to the situations that affect them.

Among the many campaigns and achievements of the grantee organisations, the actions of the following groups stand out: Mujeres de la Comisión de Víctimas de la Masacre de Curuguaty and the Coordinadora Departamental de Mujeres de San Pedro in Paraguay, Centro de Capacitación Integral de la Mujer Campesina de Tarija (CCIM-CAT), AMPRO, INMUOR and the Asamblea del Pueblo Guaraní de Yaku-Igue in Bolivia. Their projects aimed to strengthen sovereignty and food security through agroecological family vegetable gardens, and to advocate for access to productive programmes at local governments.

The groups from Paraguay called Rebeldes del Sur and Mujeres Artesanas de Santa Rosa supported protests and lobbying campaigns in favour of Law 6603 related to Support Assistance for Community Soup Kitchens, which was passed mid-September. The law aims to ensure that the Paraguayan State provides community soup kitchens with basic food supplies at least every 15 days.

Mujeres Artesanas de Santa Rosa also protested using roadblocks, established strategic alliances and undertook advocacy actions to promote negotiations with the State. They achieved the temporary suspension of the industrial monoculture of eucalyptus in their area. The Tekohá Sauce community was recognised by the Paraguayan Institute of Indigenous Affairs (INDI) thanks to their work with Plataforma Sauce Pytyvohara.

Finally, with the support of the programme and alliances with organisations, four groups of indigenous women in Paraguay have been able to access state funding to establish cultural centres: political spaces for women where they can have meetings, training sessions, plan actions, share experiences, sell their products, promote their culture and preserve their ancestral knowledge.
Argentina

In 2020, support for two new organisations was added: Taller Flotante in Entre Ríos, which works in the Paraná Delta area, and Organización de Mujeres Indígenas (ARETEDE) in Salta, whose members include indigenous peoples such as the Guaraní and the Wichí.

Most of the organisations and groups of women defenders managed to adapt their projects despite the uncertainty created by the pandemic, to the extent that the provisions relating to the emergency allowed them to.

Some groups purchased sanitary kits to be able to have meetings and comply with protocols.

Vecinxs Unidxs por un Ambiente Sano (VUDAS) is challenging the contamination caused by a bioethanol production plant in the vicinity of their neighbourhood in Cordoba. They decided to distribute to neighbours kits with a care guide and preparations that did not include alcohol gel or 70 percent alcohol, which is mainly marketed by the company with which they are in conflict.

Other groups were able to overcome the isolation barrier and got tools to connect to the internet in order to do trainings, meet with other organisation members as well as participate in meetings and workshops as part of the FMS programme.

Taller Flotante participated in the virtual meetings of the Environment Commission of the Chamber of Deputies of the Argentina National Congress, bringing the voice of women’s organisations to the debate for the approval of the Wetlands Law.

Several organisations also carried out actions to generate knowledge based on the production, edition and presentation of pamphlets, books and radio and audiovisual productions.

The programme organised a workshop on communication for advocacy. In addition, FMS prepared a report on the situation of the management and access to water in Argentina, which was submitted to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Environment.
Tri-national Meeting

Between August and September, the Tri-national Meeting of Grantee Organisations “Together, Connected and in Resistance” was held. Organisations from Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay participated. It was carried out online and was organised jointly by FMS, Fundación Plurales and CCIMCAT.

Four sessions were organised around various key themes: access to and management of safe water; rights to land and territory; extractive industries, and food sovereignty and security.

More than 150 rural, indigenous and marginalised urban women participated in the meeting, sharing stories of change, successful experiences and updates on situations of resistance regarding the problems addressed.

In addition, the issue of security and comprehensive protection of environmental defenders was introduced and a workshop was held aimed at putting together joint plans and strategies to evaluate and ensure group practices and those of women who defend the environment.

Listen to the audio recordings produced for the meeting! (only available in Spanish).

Learn more about the reality, the struggles of women defenders and how the pandemic affected them in this article (only available in Spanish).

Read here the testimony of women defenders (only available in Spanish).

24 organisations supported in Argentina, Paraguay and Bolivia
Our Rights, Our Pride

The FMS programme called Our Rights, Our Pride (OROP) provides financial and technical-political support to lesbian, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer (LBTIQ+) groups and organisations in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. It seeks to strengthen organisations that promote transformations towards a culture of non-discrimination and inclusion, favouring the advancement of human rights in the subregion.

In the new context, advances in the recognition of rights are threatened.

The consequences of the isolation and social distancing measures were aggravated by the increase in control and possible persecution by police forces of the different states. In Uruguay and Paraguay, the context of the pandemic contributed to the installation of a neoconservative agenda and the promotion of hate speech.

34 organisations supported in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay
At the same time, situations of gender violence and discrimination due to confinement worsened, with an increase in femicides and transvesticides. Furthermore, access to sexual and reproductive health policies, hormonal treatments and HIV medication were hindered or suspended.

The paralysis of various areas of the economy had a different impact on LBTIQ+ people given most of them work informally. The economic crisis also affected social organisations, which face multiple challenges to ensure their sustainability.

That is why in 2020 we held the open call for proposals “LBTIQ+ activism in times of COVID-19”. It sought to accompany LBTIQ+ organisations in their territorial and community responses, and strengthen them as central agents to guarantee rights and avoid setbacks.

70 organisations submitted applications from which 34 were selected: 26 grassroots organisations and eight intermediate organisations (22 from Argentina, eight from Paraguay and four from Uruguay).

In November 2020, we organised the First Virtual Meeting of OROP Grantees called “Get to know each other to strengthen ties”. The objective of the meeting was for organisations to share about their projects, conduct a brief context analysis, and to foster possible alliances and joint collaborations.

In December, we presented the exploratory study called LGBTTTIQ+ activism in Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. Status Report which was prepared by the research team including Guadalupe Allione Riba, Fidel Azarian, Candela Commeres Benejam, Melina Deangeli and Ana Fiol. The presentation was moderated by Agen-cia Presentes. On that occasion, a summary of the full report was presented, allowing for LGBTTTIQ+ organisations and activists to make comments, suggestions and contribute to the construction of knowledge.

You can read and download versions of the report here!
Read the testimony of Ovejas Negras, an organisation that FMS supports in Uruguay in this article (only available in Spanish).

Watch this video we made for the second anniversary of the Comprehensive Law for Transgender Persons (only available in Spanish).
Fundamentally Feminists

Fundamentally Feminists is the project that Fondo de Mujeres del Sur implemented within the framework of the On The Right Track initiative, carried out jointly by Latin American and European Women’s Funds.

The project aims to strengthen feminist, LGBTIQ+ and human rights movements to respond to attacks against democracy and human rights by religious fundamentalisms and the ultra-right in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay.

The emergence of fundamentalist discourses that deny rights to sexual diversity, the recognition and exercise of sexual, reproductive and non-reproductive rights, as well as the secular nature of States, has been growing in recent years in different parts of the world, and particularly in Latin America.

Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay are not exempt from this, which is why Fundamentally Feminists is a powerful initiative not only because of its timely and urgent nature, but also due to the transformative potential which goes hand-in-hand with support for organisations and movements.

The project articulated across three simultaneous areas: communication, research and financial support for organisations.

For communication, online workshops were organised jointly for all of Latin America, with referents and specialists from all over the world. The training sessions aimed to generate new narratives for communication on the human rights of women and LGBTIQ+ people.

In research, a joint process was developed between the Latin American Funds. From the findings, increased awareness of the actions undertaken by neo-conservative groups and their connections with local governments can be highlighted. In a practical sense, this awareness helps us to understand the context and how to strategically support organisations with the capacity to confront these conservatisms and continue broadening rights on the feminist movements’ agenda.
Regarding organisational strengthening, financial support and technical-political support were provided to nine organisations from Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay.

The proposals presented were adapted to an online format, due to the mobility restrictions, and consisted of activities such as virtual workshops and forums; feminism and youth and feminist theology training schools; community radios; the production of broadcast videos and audio recordings; online meetings for film discussions, and web pages with informative content, among other actions.

Activate during the pandemic

Many of the organisations stated that the pandemic gave them the time to discuss their internal dynamics, reflect on their work and its scope (since working virtually expanded their reach while with pros and cons). For others, the pandemic favoured the consolidation of networks to confront the effects of fundamentalisms, transforming personal experiences into collective strategies that contributed to organisational strengthening.

The regional perspective of members with regards to the advance of anti-rights and neo-conservative discourses was broadened. The importance of decentralizing the narrative and generating a rupture in the hegemonic outlook of the mass media became clear.

The importance of strengthening feminist networks and organisations was highlighted along with the need to maintain sustained work at the grassroots level in order to reach all women using everyday and clear language, on how to defend the rights they have conquered.

The project implemented by Presencia Joven, an organisation of young women based in the city of Encarnación, Paraguay, stands out. It included a Training School on Feminisms and Youth and because they had to carry it out using an online platform they had many more participants than they expected initially.
Other organisations were strengthened internally and, for some, the project became a central support, providing the opportunity to work together, in the middle of the confinement. Most organisations underwent training, with a focus on the use of technologies. A collective created the Mormazo Feminista online radio, Colectiva Durazno became specialists in podcast production and Red TEPALI promoted their School of Feminist Theology, which had a regional outreach.

Talks and videos on social networks made it possible to reach a greater number and diversity of women, as reported by Emancipa Paraguay. During periods of less restrictions, Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir Paraguay was able to carry out some face-to-face activities with young people. Red Argentina de Género, Ciencia y Tecnología (RAGCyT) prepared a situational diagnosis on the advance and growth of religious fundamentalisms in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires and organised a discussion on the subject.

Knowledge Exchanges

During the project implementation, exchanges were promoted between the groups supported as part of Fundamentally Feminists, as well as with other grantee organisations from FMS programmes such as We Want Us Alive, Networks and Alliances Free from Violence (REDAL) and Our Rights, Our Pride.

A virtual seminar-workshop titled Rights Under Attack was organised, which included the participation of prominent experts on the topic. An alliance with Fundación Mujeres por Mujeres (Tucuman, Argentina) allowed for the use of their platform which meant all groups could connect without any limit to the number of participants, as well as the participation of grantee organisations from other programmes that were invited.

The result was an interesting exchange about ideas and experiences.

This project has shown the importance of bringing together different points of view from participants from different countries and regions and it created space for sharing on cultures, idiosyncrasies, lifestyles, connections with different types of governments (centre, left, right) and how across the board the organisations encounter similar difficulties in the fight against neo-conservatism.

At the regional level, being able to work in conjunction with other Funds, leveraging our actions, undoubtedly has a significant impact. The synergy contributed to all of them being strengthened.

9 organisations supported in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay
The Women Out Loud programme has been implemented in Paraguay since 2018. It seeks to promote actions and alliances that strengthen the leadership and political opportunities of women from grassroots, indigenous and peasant organisations as well as women from popular urban sectors. Women who defend their economic, social, cultural and environmental rights and who fight against power inequalities from a gender perspective. During 2020, eight grassroots groups were supported, directly benefiting 148 activists and indirectly more than 20,000 people.

One of the strategies used by the programme was grantmaking for special support for the acquisition of computer and communication equipment, which allowed organisations to implement their work agendas in the new context.

Many purchased equipment, invested in developing communication strategies and in connectivity which facilitated communication between the members, participation in training activities and debate as well as other events such as online protests.

FMS took the necessary measures to provide support to the organisations remotely, establishing online training spaces. During May and June, workshops were held on technology use and digital security, with the aim of strengthening capacities and providing tools to transition to the digital world. In addition, exchanges were held between grantee organisations from Women Out Loud and Let’s Get It, Sister. “Activando en Alta Voz I and II” (in June and September).

Strategies on resource development were shared based on the experience of different organisations and in the context of a pandemic.

In October, the Second Forum of Political Women was held. It aimed to analyse the new ways women are doing politics at the regional level and especially in Paraguay including large social mobilisations around profound changes brought up due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
The forum included expert panelists and debates, and the participation of organisations supported by Fondo de Mujeres del Sur through different programmes such as Leading from the South; Networks and Alliances Free of Violence - REDAL; Strengthening Women Environmental Defenders; Our Rights, Our Pride, and Fundamentally Feminists.

At the end of the year, a new call for proposals was opened and 23 projects were received from different regions of the country, of which eight were selected to be implemented in 2021.

Learn more about Kuña Sorora, one of the organisations that FMS supported in 2020 in this article (only available in Spanish).
2020 was a year of hard work and great achievements for the feminist movement for legal abortion. After a period of great adversity given the health, social and economic crisis, the National Congress of Argentina passed the law that legalises and decriminalises voluntary termination of pregnancy (VTP). This law is the culmination of a long process of societal and political demands by the Argentine feminist movement. The National Campaign for the Right to Legal, Safe and Free Abortion has been fighting for this right for 15 years, ensuring the issue of abortion was on the public and political agenda. After maintaining sustained work for the social destigmatisation, the construction of a strong and organised movement and the incidence in political power, a fundamental right was conquered for the autonomy and freedom of women and other people with the capacity to gestate in Argentina.

The We Want Us Alive programme provided strategic support to organisations that are part of the aforementioned Campaign. Using a variety of proposals, the process was supported in different geographical areas, with different strategic actors and with multiple approaches. With strength and determination, grantee organisations increased their influence where they each work, demonstrating their knowledge of how to manage social demands and confront solid arguments proposed by the conservative sectors that opposed the progress of the process.
The conquest of this new right is the result of a long struggle. At the same time, it marks the beginning of a new process to ensure the right is guaranteed, ensure gender equality and respect for the bodies and decisions of women and people with the capacity to gestate.

Check out this reflection written days before the Voluntary Termination of Pregnancy (VTP) law was passed (only available in Spanish).

Watch this video in Spanish that we made ahead of time to celebrate.
Networking for Activisms
Enhancing community strategies for the eradication of Gender-Based Violence in Argentina

Throughout 2020, Fondo de Mujeres del Sur implemented Networking for Activisms: Enhancing community strategies for the eradication of Gender-based Violence (GBV) in Argentina, together with Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género (ELA) and twelve organisations of frontline defenders (OFLD) from the provinces of Jujuy, Salta, Tucuman, Santiago del Estero, Cordoba and Buenos Aires as well as from the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires.

The objective was to strengthen the institutional capacities of organisations that address gender-based violence in the target provinces. Work plans were formulated that provided grants, support and technical, political, legal and administrative tools to enhance the effectiveness of the organisations’ responses to the problem.

The actions included articulating with governments and key actors in the fields of health, education and justice at the local and provincial level, as well as with areas of gender and sexual diversity, achieving a beneficial synergy for all organisations.

In turn, the organisations articulated their actions with other community-based organisations (CBOs) of women and diversities who, due to their sexual, cultural, racial, or socio-economic identity, face situations of multiple discrimination and exposure to different types of violence.

An intensive training programme was implemented including strategies to address gender-based violence. Material for awareness-raising and political advocacy was developed and systematised.

The organisations provided psychological, legal and emergency support, as well as legal representation in gender-based violence cases.
Likewise, information was systematised and in some cases indicators for monitoring were established for use in strategic advocacy actions.

In November, the outreach and communication campaign We Get Involved was developed jointly among the 14 associates. The campaign was aimed at preventing gender-based violence by seeking greater community commitment. With reference to the pandemic context, the message emphasised the importance of feminist networks and their work to eradicate gender-based violence.

These actions strengthened the networks of civil society organisations, which were key to the effective implementation of Networking for Activisms.

This project was part of the Spotlight Initiative Argentina, a global partnership between the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls around the world.

It was led by FMS in alliance with Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género - ELA and 12 associate organisations from Jujuy, Salta, Tucuman, Santiago del Estero, Cordoba and Buenos Aires as well as from the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires.

Watch this short video in Spanish from the We Get Involved campaign.

The full version is available here.
Leading from the South

During 2020, we implemented the fourth and final year of Leading from the South (LFS) phase one, a feminist initiative aimed at financing and supporting activism for the rights of women and LBTIQ+ people and the advocacy work of organisations, movements and women’s networks at the regional, national and community levels. LFS is implemented through a consortium of Women’s Funds from the Global South made up of Fondo de Mujeres del Sur (FMS), African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF), Women’s Fund Asia (WFA) and International Indigenous Women’s Forum (IIWF-FIMI).

LFS is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. During the first four years of the programme, LFS channelled six million euros in the Latin America and the Caribbean region.

In 2020:

We support 41 organisations in 21 countries across Latin American and the Caribbean.

Grantee organisations produced 681 items of advocacy materials.

LFS indirectly benefited 24,956 people.

Organisations attended 59 advocacy events (the vast majority of which were online).

7 recommendations were issued from grantee organisations to governments and other international organisations.

We completed 33 virtual support, monitoring and evaluation visits to grantees and made 54 special and regular grants.

36 grantees established or consolidated alliances.
Find out more about the justification behind this initiative in this video.

Learn more here about the experience shared by Red de Género y Comercio, an articulation of organisations from Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Brazil that works to promote economic justice with a gender perspective.

In the context of the crisis generated by the pandemic, in 2020 we accompanied organisations in the process of re-evaluating their projects and adapting their activities to the emergency context. Innovative and creative strategies were developed, such as online training, dissemination and awareness campaigns with relevant information, virtual political advocacy actions and monitoring, strengthening of technological skills, feminist community responses, care and support strategies, generation of knowledge, learning and reflections and strengthening of networks and alliances. Thus, organisations secured and created new ways to continue with their activism.

In addition, we launched the special call for proposals from grantees and former grantees of Leading from the South called “Activisms in times of pandemic.” Through this call, financial support and technical-political support were provided to 16 organisations and networks that implemented advocacy actions and creative strategies, strengthened their resilience and promoted alliances and networks to face the crisis scenario.
Through the event support programme, seven organisations received funding to strengthen the articulation of black women’s organisations in Latin America and the Caribbean. With the Ella Pretas group project, the organisations developed instances of Afro-centred training and political and communicational strengthening, which allowed them to exchange experiences, share collective learning and define coordinated strategies.

Read an article about the work of Asociación de Mujeres Afrodescendientes del Norte del Cauca (ASOM), a grantee from Colombia that is part of this network of organisations (only available in Spanish).

In October, we held a virtual workshop on sustainability strategies and resource development at the local and international level, with the aim of providing fundraising tools to grantee organisations. Over two days we shared knowledge and experiences about the design and implementation of a resource development plan, we put into practice mechanisms to attract, manage and retain donors, and we addressed key points for the preparation of proposals for international donors.

In November, we held the IV Regional Meeting of Grantee Organisations of Leading from the South, using an online platform. More than 100 activists participated. The event marked closure of the first stage of LFS, and we analysed the challenges of the Latin American context for feminist activism, reflected collectively on the transformations and learnings that LFS contributed to promoting in the region, and discussed strategies to give continuity to the processes already started.

Review a summary of the actions promoted in these four years in this video.

Finally, we are very happy to announce that during 2020 we confirmed the renewal of the programme for five more years (2021-2025). This new phase will be implemented in Latin America and the Caribbean in a collaborative manner with other women’s funds in the region and will be coordinated by Fondo de Mujeres del Sur.

In this new phase, the commitment to strengthen women’s organisations and LBTIQ+ people, networks and alliances to generate changes and build societies where full gender equality and women’s human rights are a reality is renewed.
Let’s Get It, Sister
Towards a Feminist Philanthropy

The Complementary Initiative - Let’s Get It, Sister. Towards a Feminist Philanthropy seeks to promote the sustainability of organisations using different resource development strategies, with a focus on autonomy and durability.

In its second year of implementation, ten projects presented by organisations from Argentina, Paraguay, Ecuador and Mexico were supported. They all had to be reformulated due to the pandemic context.

Many of the projects were transitioned to virtual platforms or were rescheduled. Additionally, 30 percent of each project’s budget was reallocated to be able to provide the necessary assistance given the impact of COVID-19 and the prevention measures implemented.

In Paraguay, members of the Sindicato de Trabajadoras Domésticas de Itapúa (SINTRADI) were greatly affected by the movement restrictions.

They highlighted that, of the 200 workers in private homes that make up the organisation, 95 percent were made unemployed or were unable to return to work for months. Border closures between Argentina and Paraguay further complicated the economic situation, given that the city of Encarnacion, where SINTRADI is based, and Posadas (Argentina) are frontier cities that are characterised by their permanent exchange and ties. With flexible support from FMS, SINTRADI organised to distribute packages of food, personal hygiene items and cleaning products. They were able to assist more than 60 workers in vulnerable situations.

The organisation called 100% Diversidad y Derechos reformulated the campaign they had planned and launched ‘We all take care of each other’, an initiative aimed at countering the impact of the pandemic and the preventative measures introduced on the LGBTIQ+ population, which is especially affected. The campaign originally presented aimed to get new donors to support the organisation and make a monthly donation. COVID led to changes in the project and the campaign was reoriented to focus on one-time donations specifically for the purchase of food and personal hygiene items. Thanks to donations received the organisation reached 1,500 people with assistance.
Workshops and Discussions

Online discussions and workshops were organised across different FMS projects and programmes. ‘Activating Aloud’ was a joint cycle between Let’s Get It, Sister and Women Out Loud. It consisted of a meeting in which grantee organisations shared their experiences as well as a workshop coordinated by a specialist, which aimed to broaden skills to use some necessary tools for self-management and the sustainability of the organisations. The workshop called ‘Resources for Activisms’ was organised in conjunction with the Networking for Activisms project, and sought to strengthen the skills of organisations, with special emphasis on local resource mobilisation strategies.

Review this article to learn more about one of the organisations we support, Casa Comunidad, and find out about their strategies to deal with forms of violence and the pandemic context.
We published a book!

In December 2020, we were able to finalise a project we had had for a long time: to write the history of FMS using the voices of its protagonists.

The initial proposal was made by Liliana Hen-del, who is a psychologist, journalist and FMS Board Member. After two years of collective effort with journalists, editors, photographers, illustrators, designers and the Executive Team, we managed to wrap up 2020 with the presentation of our book: Fondo de Mujeres del Sur. A history of resource mobilisation and organisation.

The book compiles interviews with the founders, board members and directors of FMS and provides a summary of its thirteen-year history: from a “crazy” plan (to get money for women) to the current work of the organisation, which today provides financial, technical and political support to more than 100 organisations per year.

It also includes a photographic report, curated by Natalia Roca, that captures the pulse of the movements and the organisations that the Fondo de Mujeres del Sur supports.

We are so proud to be able to share it, and contribute to the creation of a feminist memory.

Sonia Tessa, Mariana Carbajal, María Eugenia Ludueña, Florencia Alcaraz, Laura Leone-lí Morey, Azul Cordo, Laura Giubergia, Noelia Díaz Esquivel and Natalia Ferreyra were the collaborating journalists. Lucía Prieto, Paula Di Carlo, Celina Mutti Lovera and Natalia Roca were the photographers. Soledad Soler and Eloísa Oliva were in charge of the editorial coordination.

You can read the book in Spanish and download it here.
Together, stronger and alive: Learn more about our campaign to incorporate more donors!

2020 prompted us to reinvent ourselves and explore new strategies to replace the campaigns that we ran for years in public spaces and at face-to-face events. Like almost all activities, we transitioned to the digital world. In this way we were able to stay connected with our donor community and open new channels to engage with other people who would like to support us.

In turn, we sought to broaden our networks and as of September in alliance with GlobalGiving (a US-based organisation) we managed to get set up to receive donations from all over the world.

Together, stronger and alive is the name of our first international individual donor campaign. It aims to strengthen our longest running programme, Networks and Alliances Free from Violence – REDAL, which focuses on organisations that work to prevent and eradicate violence against women. In a year marked by social distancing, we understood the importance of strengthening these vital networks for women and LBTIQ+ people.

In the last four months of the year, we managed to connect with 75 people from seven different countries (United States, England, Australia, Germany, France, Switzerland, Spain), and get them to commit to the causes of women and LBTIQ+ people in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. In Argentina, via the FMS website and as a result of telephone campaigns, approximately 50 people joined our community of local donors, which is currently made up of 1000 people.

Learn more about this campaign.

Find us on social media networks with the hashtag #TogetherStrongerAndAlive.
We would like to end our summary of the year with a reflection by Luz Aquilante, Executive Director at FMS. Thank you for supporting us!

2020: a year of inner reflection

The world changed and our institutional, collective and personal lives changed along with it. It was a year that forced us to look inwards at ourselves as an organisation, rethinking our team dynamics and our individual daily lives as work found its way into our homes more than ever before. Each of our homes became a kind of factory where everything had to happen: the virtual classroom of those of us who have school-aged children, conferences, workshops, courses, audits. The rationale of paid work began to mix with domestic and care work rationales which initially led to chaos and then caused hyperproductivity, until we were able to become aware that this was happening and organise ourselves, to find, in the middle of this great global shock, our well-being as a team and as people.

Working online led us to have more meetings. In the beginning, once a week; then, every fortnight, until we were able to have monthly meetings to coordinate and organise our work that had previously taken place in the Cordoba and Asuncion offices. This brought us closer together and strengthened us as a team. It allowed us to all share information and be aware of what was happening right across the different areas and spheres of our actions at FMS. From Chubut, Cordoba, Asuncion, Montevideo, Medellin to Barcelona, those of us who make up FMS were more united than ever.

When we began to work without regard for our usual office hours, with the addition of our domestic and care roles, we started talking about the right to disconnect and how to implement a series of care measures at the individual and collective level. At the same time, we implemented greater flexibility with the grantees, to support the emergency and thus ensure the sustainability of activisms in times of pandemic.
We faced the prevailing fear and hopelessness due to the collapse of the health system, our older adults, our trans colleagues who had limited access to health services and due to the deepened inequalities that had a profound impact on women. So, we made sure we were using our active listening skills while providing feminist support and flexibilisation of deadlines and grants.

Our programmes REDAL; Leading from the South; Our Rights, Our Pride; Women Out Loud; Strengthening Women Environmental Defenders; We Want Us Alive; Networking for Activisms, and Fundamentally Feminists started playing an ever more important role in the infusion of hope, well-being and care in our subregion. In 2021, we want to continue responding at the same speed as the changes that are happening and promote new leaderships, with a high degree of awareness and potential to move towards more inclusive, more egalitarian, more sustainable societies.

We want to promote strengthened, transversal, multi-causal movements, with broad transformation objectives, and to be able to continue with grants that are as flexible as possible, without labels, for the emergency, but above all to be able to continue making a difference and resisting. We are convinced more than ever that the solution to all the crises we are going through (health, economic, democratic and environmental) is collective, and that is the essence of our mission: to work collectively for the common good.

Thank you for so much from the FMS Executive Team! Hugs to each and every one of you!

Luz Aquilante

Watch the FMS end of year video in Spanish.
Women resist!
Women transform!