

Global Fund for Women Technology Funding Strategy

Reflections and Recommendations
External Version

June 2020

Created in partnership with Whose Knowledge?

[Summary](#)

[Context](#)

[Background and definitions](#)

[Critical need for this strategy](#)

[Methodology](#)

[Inputs](#)

[Rationale and Limitations](#)

[External Challenges and Opportunities: Funding Landscape](#)

[Internal Challenges and Opportunities: Learning from Global Fund for Women](#)

[Recommendations](#)

[Overall principles](#)

[Focus Areas](#)

[Area 1: Technology in Feminist Safety and Security](#)

[Area 2: Technology in Feminist Advocacy and Communications](#)

[Area 3: Technology in Feminist Knowledge and Memory](#)

[Area 4: Feminism in Technology Infrastructure, Design and Access](#)

[Niche Roles: Support Beyond Funding](#)

[Convening](#)

[Learning](#)

[Amplifying](#)

[Next Steps](#)

Summary

There is a significant gap in funding for feminist movements and women, girls, trans and gender non-conforming human rights defenders who are creating and using technology, particularly in the Global South. A proactive technology funding strategy led by Global Fund for Women and its networks can support grantee partners to respond more effectively to the challenges and opportunities that the internet and other technologies bring to feminist organizing around the world.

Global Fund for Women's Technology Strategy can be used programmatically to:

- *deepen and amplify current work by individual grantee partners; and*
- *test new and exciting intersectional, cross-cutting, collective, and collaborative approaches, both internally within Global Fund for Women and with its extended community of grantee partners.*

Global Fund for Women should focus on four main areas of technology funding:

Area 1: Technology in Feminist Safety and Security

Area 2: Technology in Feminist Advocacy and Communications

Area 3: Technology in Feminist Knowledge and Memory

Area 4: Feminism in Technology Infrastructure, Design and Access

Global Fund for Women's niche roles in executing this strategy are:

- *Funding*
- *Convening*
- *Learning*
- *Amplifying*

Each focus area and niche role (apart from funding) has a list of concrete recommendations and implementation ideas for Global Fund for Women.

Overall principles to keep in mind:

- *Continue offering multi-year, unrestricted and flexible funding.*
- *Consider higher funding amounts and working in partnership to support grantee partners' needs for technology at the right scale, e.g. human rights defenders, adolescent girls, and women framers.*

- *There is untapped potential to bring in new tech funding from donors, with the right stories and strategies.*
- *Support is about more than just money.*
- *Grantee partners are already leading work on technology and have significant expertise to share, and regional and local context matters.*
- *Technology is a useful tool, but it can't replace the deep context-specific expertise and sense-making of humans.*
- *Consider a tech strategy to be fundamentally about movement building.*

Global Fund for Women would like to acknowledge Whose Knowledge? who co-created this bold and powerful strategy that combined intellectual curiosity, nuanced insights, and radical feminist politics.

Context

"The internet affects every single issue we (feminists) have been working on. We need a feminist articulation of what these issues are and the Feminist Principles of the Internet (FPIs) have been a really useful way to bridge and connect with feminist movements in different parts of the world because it (these principles) came from the feminist movement. Now it's time to see how can we support to have these principles translated into practices." - Technologist WHRD

Background and definitions

"Technology" is understood in multiple ways in different contexts. For the purposes of this document, we are defining "technology" as a broad set of internet-enabled digital technologies, tools, services and infrastructure.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Websites, browsers, search engines and other web-based tools and platforms;
- internet-enabled voice devices like smartphones;
- voice services like radio and podcasts that can be listened to via the internet; and
- internet infrastructure like mesh networks, and the underlying socio-technical and physical infrastructure (submarine cables, satellites, protocols, standards etc).

Access to the internet and internet-enabled digital technologies and platforms is obviously uneven, and significantly rooted in historical and current structures of power and privilege. Even so, access to internet infrastructure and services is rapidly expanding, including for women and girls (for instance, smartphones are becoming more ubiquitous, even within rural households and deeply marginalized communities). Over 50% of the world is online today.ⁱ 75% of the world's online population is from the Global South,ⁱⁱ and 45% of all women in the world are online.ⁱⁱⁱ Beyond browser-based access on devices like laptops and personal computers, 4.68 billion people have mobile phones.^{iv} In the list of the ten countries with the highest number of smartphone users, are China, India, Brazil, Indonesia and Mexico.^v

As a feminist fund, Global Fund for Women cannot afford to ignore the challenges and opportunities the internet, and internet-enabled technologies, bring to feminist organizing, especially now in our post-COVID-19 world. Grantee partners, in particular the organizations based in the Global South, are relying on technology for their digital security and advocacy work. At the same time, feminist activists and their communities, particularly women's human rights defenders and LGBTQI activists, are increasingly facing the excesses of late stage capitalism, ongoing or neo-colonialism, and growing authoritarianism, extremism and fascism both in their everyday lives and also online. Concerns of privacy, security, surveillance, and online harassment have to balance with the possibilities of global solidarity, healing justice, and advocacy. For instance, activists use platforms like Signal and WhatsApp to communicate and organize, even while they battle concerns with Facebook (which owns WhatsApp) as being part of the problem. These companies own all the content that is produced on their sites, are known to share data with governments and often fail to protect activists.

To respond to this set of manifold, complex issues and experiences, a proactive funding strategy led by Global Fund for Women and its networks needs to consider internet-enabled technologies in the broader context of movement building. In particular, this strategy could and should infuse feminist values and principles into these digital spaces, and support feminist-led design and architecture of platforms, applications, and infrastructure.

Critical need for this strategy

"Technology is the invisible infrastructure layer on all our lives...and feminist movements are organizing differently now because of technology." - Technologist WHRD

“Racist bigots are spending lots of money on tech and infrastructure. Our movements are not. White men are investing, while we aren’t. And so the distribution of power is not yet being challenged.” Technologist WHRD

There are a few significant reasons why Global Fund for Women needs a technology strategy that is both responsive to current grantee partner needs, and proactive in ways that can support feminist movements more broadly, including with resource mobilization.

- Whether it’s marked explicitly or not in their proposals and reports, grantee partners are increasingly using internet-enabled technologies in different aspects of their work, e.g. women farmers using banking technology.
- The nature and impact of these technologies is highly dynamic, fast changing, and sometimes unpredictable in both positive and negative ways. They also affect individuals, organizations, communities, and movements in multiple ways simultaneously and powerfully. At all these levels, feminist spaces require resources and support.
- Right now, most direct funding for technology comes from non-feminist funders, and goes to large Global North organizations, very few of which are explicitly feminist.
- This funding rarely shifts the dynamics of power held by technology companies, governments, and regressive non-state actors. As a feminist technologist from the Middle East that we interviewed noted, because feminist technology and infrastructure are not being funded and supported, these power dynamics go unchallenged, and deepen already existing social inequalities.
- In particular, the kind of funding and work being done in internet-enabled technologies currently tends to be individual-oriented, including in social justice initiatives working on privacy and surveillance issues. There is an urgent and critical need to understand how technologies affect and can be affected by, communities and movements. **A feminist and social justice movement building and movement sustaining lens in technology is therefore not only necessary, it is critical and unfortunately rare.**
- There is a concerning trend to “automate” deep human experience and expertise, including within social justice efforts. A feminist technology policy would seek to create and use technology for good where appropriate and would critique its use in places and spaces where machine-learning systems and processes deepen discrimination and violence. In particular, “scale” without context can be ineffective at best, and dangerous at worst. This is why Global

Fund for Women's approach of using context-based, local and regional expertise to drive global change - whether through staff knowledge or grantee partner expertise - is also critically needed for technology-driven efforts.

- Relatedly, technology infrastructures can scale within local and regional contexts in ways that can support collective grantee partner work, as well as learning and mentoring across partners. Creating this form of collective infrastructure - for example, shared hosting, design, and distribution costs for a set of websites or tools - is a critical need in places and regions where access to internet-infrastructure is uneven, and where some grantee partners have far greater expertise and experience than other grantee partners in using these technologies safely and securely.
- Finally, COVID-19 has laid bare the structural inequalities built into our world, and it's clear that women, girls, and marginalized communities will be particularly hard-hit. As we transition to a more virtual world, it's essential that these communities have access to and control over internet-enabled technologies.

Methodology

Recommendations for a technology strategy were requested by Global Fund for Women's Programs Team in late 2018 and completed by Whose Knowledge? from June - August 2019, funded by a partnership grant from Global Fund for Women.

Inputs

Interviews with Global Fund for Women's staff and board (listed in alphabetical order):

- Aissata Sall - Program Director Consultant, Adolescent Girls' Rights
- Amelia Wu - Senior Director of Operations and Partnerships
- Brittany Jenkins - Program Officer, Economic Justice
- Catherine M. King - Executive Producer
- Cinthia Carvajal - Program Officer, Grantmaking and Movement Building
- Erin Williams - Program Director, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
- Kara Wuest - Social Media Specialist
- Latanya Mapp Frett - CEO and President
- Leila Hessini - Vice-President, Programs
- PeiYao Chen - Vice-President, Impact & Effectiveness

- Randy Trigg - Senior Information Management Officer
- Richard Socher - Board Member
- Sangeeta Chowdhry - Senior Program Director, Economic Justice
- Zahra Vienuve - Program Director, Freedom from Violence

Interviews with external sources familiar with tech landscape + Global Fund for Women:

- Rufaro Kangai - Global VP Tech for Good at the Tech Museum of Innovation, and former Program Director, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights at Global Fund for Women. Rufaro had been holding past work on Media & Tech at Global Fund for Women.
- Jac SM Kee - Malaysian feminist activist, technologist and writer. Former head of the Women Rights Programme at the Association for Progressive Communications. Jac is an influential feminist activist working with media and technology.
- Esra'a Al-Shafei - Bahraini civil rights activist, technology specialist and the founder and executive director of Majal and its related projects. Esra'a is an influential feminist and LGBTQIA activist working with media and technology.

To honor the expertise, experience, and insights of everyone who spoke with us, we have added people's exact words to this document where appropriate, with light editing for readability.

Documents provided by Global Fund for Women:

- Champions for Equality Strategy: Technology Initiative (2019)
- Nine Johnson & Johnson Technology grant final reports written by grantee partners from FY 2017-18
- [Brave, Creative, Resilient - The Global State of Young Feminist Organizing](#) report published by FRIDA and AWID (2016)
- Grantee Experiences, Perceptions and Preferences: 2013 Report to Global Fund for Women, by Redfern Research

In addition, Whose Knowledge? was invited to facilitate a session in February 2019 with Champions for Equality, a special group of Global Fund for Women's donors. This session also helped us understand the backgrounds and interests of some of Global Fund for Women's donors in this space.

The Whose Knowledge? team's own research and experience working at the intersections of media, technology and feminist activism, including collaborations with different individuals, organizations and communities in these spaces, has also supported this document. Unless otherwise referenced, data in this report comes from the websites of the organizations mentioned.

Rationale and Limitations

We built the technology funding strategy for Global Fund for Women around learning from within the organization. The round of conversations with board, executive and staff members was designed to gather and map the opportunities, challenges and expectations Global Fund for Women is currently grappling with.

Due to timeline and scope of work constraints, the process did not allow us to interview grantee partners. This has been a significant methodological constraint for us. We strongly recommend that as Global Fund for Women implements this strategy, that grantee partner's inputs, expertise and feedback are incorporated firsthand.

We had also hoped to gather the inputs of grantee partners by attending the Decolonize the Internet conference to be organized by a grantee partner in Kenya by August 2019, which would have included a strong focus on media and technology from grantee partners in East Africa. This meeting has been postponed, and so those inputs are missing. This, too, would be an incredibly important input to include in the implementation.

External Challenges and Opportunities: Funding Landscape

"Most tech funding goes to US-based and led orgs, led by men. People fund the same people over again. Amnesty International is too big to fail, but also too big to innovate, take risks, or lead on how we take care of each other differently. We can't build a sustainable feminist movement if we don't fund tech and infrastructure." - Technologist WHRD

Who is funding media and tech for feminist movements and women, girls, trans and gender non-conforming human rights defenders, especially those in the Global South?

- There is a significant divide between what "tech funders" are funding (Global North organizations, traditional "techies", etc) and what human rights funders are funding.
- There is a significant gap in funding for feminist and women's human rights defenders who wish to create technology in the Global South.
- A funding bias remains towards straight white cis-gendered men and the Global North as the people leading spaces where the internet is primarily designed and governed from, and where English-led technologies are primarily created.

Large foundations and bilateral agencies are not filling these gaps

- Funding for technology and "development" or women's rights are generally entirely separate portfolios and bringing them together takes collective effort from program officers and potential grantee partners.
- Most tech funds are given to large organizations based in the Global North, rather than women's or feminist groups in the Global South.
- Development/women's rights funding is more likely to go to the Global South, but still going mostly to large, scaled initiatives and organizations, rather than cutting-edge groups in local contexts that are disrupting the status quo.

Tech companies are not filling these gaps

- Silicon Valley investments in women mostly focus on women in the US and/or on diversifying worker pipelines for their companies.
- When companies invest in the Global South, it's generally a 1-way technology transfer, focused on distributing technology that's been developed in the Global North to these "emerging markets."

Tech and open knowledge nonprofits are not filling these gaps

- Funds are rarely explicitly going to women human rights defenders or supporting the feminist movement internationally.
- The bulk of funds from these organizations are still going to Global North groups and organizations.
- Technology distribution still moves North to South, which means that solutions created in Silicon Valley or Europe attempt to meet the needs of Global South communities, which can make them less effective and equitable.

Investment funds for women are not filling these gaps

- These funds do not primarily focus on women, and when they do, they do not tend to have a rights-based approach or interest, instead looking at their support

as primarily investment capital in individuals or organizations. They fund both in the Global South and North.

Feminist funds could fill these gaps. Feminist funds are beginning to focus on technology, though funding is often limited.

Internal Challenges and Opportunities: Learning from Global Fund for Women

Through our interviews and background research, we observed a few key patterns in how Global Fund for Women internally thinks about its work in general, and around technology in particular. We found each pattern to include elements of both challenge and opportunity.

Trends in Global Fund for Women's own funding for technology so far have been reactive rather than proactive, and tech-related donors have given primarily restricted grants.

- Challenge: Restricted grants do not support infrastructure funding. Not all technology work is a “project” (for e.g. many grantee partners are using social media and want to build capacity in that regard, or have regular hosting costs for their website, apps, and other internet-enabled tools. This work is ongoing, foundational, and often invisible, rather than a project-based effort). Even as Global Fund for Women “converts” its own restricted grants into unrestricted general support for its grantee partners, the internal challenges remain of who then manages the “technology focus” and how reporting is done back to the donors.
- Opportunity: Because Global Fund for Women is based near Silicon Valley, there is untapped potential to bring in new tech funding from high net worth donors, if the right stories and strategies are in place to support more proactive fundraising.

Technology cuts across all Global Fund for Women's issue areas, but someone needs to champion the work.

- Challenge: Having a technology strategy sit under one program officer or issue area, as it has in the past, does not support cross-cutting work, especially when everyone's plate is already very full. At the same time, this work needs people responsible for supporting more proactive work around this strategy.

- Opportunity: Global Fund for Women already has examples of cross-cutting work (for e.g. a focus on adolescent girls and climate justice). Building a set of champions to hold technology at the heart of programmatic funding could help the organization experiment with other ways of holding cross-cutting work together without anyone being overwhelmed. It might be exciting and energizing to use this strategy as testing ground to break down silos in the organization, especially as COVID-19 has thrust us all into a more virtual world.

Most staff members at Global Fund for Women do not think of themselves as technology experts.

- Challenge: Women disproportionately see themselves as not being technology experts. This is a feminist issue, and Global Fund for Women will need to grapple with it. This fear of not being “experts in technology” is not an unusual position for feminists, for women, and for others from marginalized experiences and communities.
- Opportunity: Everyone who uses technology is an expert in their embodied experience with these tools. Everyone uses technology every day and wants to learn more. That's a great starting point for building capacity together, learning from grantee partners and others working in technology spaces. Even more significantly, the majority of all internet users are from marginalized communities, especially from the Global South, and our expertise and experience is needed in order to build more effective and localized tools and platforms. This too is an opportunity to shift from a position of disempowerment to empowered advocacy and funding around technology.

Many Global Fund for Women staff members wish they had more stories and strategies from grantee partners about how they are creating and using technology to forward their work.

- Challenge: The development team needs relevant stories from grantee partners in order to fundraise. The program and learning teams receive these stories from grantee partners and movements, but not always in ways that are easy to share. Collective sense-making and sharing of stories and strategies can improve.
- Opportunity: Building a shared bank of stories about how technology is forwarding or challenging the work of women's human rights defenders could unlock more funds for grantee partners to do critical work. This could start with periodic collective sense-making and sharing across the advocacy, program, learning and development teams.

Connections between grantee partners are missing or sporadic.

- Challenge: Grantee partners have limited visibility into how other feminist groups are using or creating technology in order to forward their work. This means extra time, funds, and energy is spent on independent re-creation, when it could be more effective to adapt or partner instead.
- Opportunity: Grantee partners have tried a lot of things and learned so much along the way that they could share with each other. Global Fund for Women is in the perfect position to convene and connect across groups, communities, and movements, so that learning about technology is shared within and across multiple contexts.

Grantee partners are using tech and media every day for sharing news and knowledge

- Challenge: Grantee partners using tech as part of their various human rights approaches can't clearly separate it out as an issue area or project.
- Opportunity: Global Fund for Women has a strong history of supporting grantee partners with flexible unrestricted grants that allow grantees to put funds where they most need them. This is useful for funding technology and media work.

Donors want metrics, but metrics don't always tell the full story

- Challenge: Donor trends to ask for quantitative information can be challenging, particularly in a space like technology-related strategies where numbers are relatively easy to pull, whether as website visits or social media likes! Yet - as in all other deep work - numbers without context have little meaning.
- Opportunity: Technology-enabled activism is a significant space in which to test offering donors and others a framework that includes transactional metrics (that are important and countable; e.g. page views, downloads, etc) as well as transformational metrics (that are important and uncountable; e.g. policy or social norm change through online advocacy).

Recommendations

Global Fund for Women's Technology Strategy can be used programmatically to:

- deepen and amplify current work by individual grantee partners; and
- test new and exciting intersectional, cross-cutting, collective and collaborative approaches, both internally within the Global Fund for Women and with its extended community of grantee partners.

Overall principles

Here are some things to keep in mind for supporting grantee partners' technology needs:

- *Continue offering multi-year, unrestricted funding whenever possible, including for technology.* Setup and maintenance for technical infrastructure takes time and often involves hidden costs. Giving grantee partners flexibility to put funds where they are most needed is critical and has always been a Global Fund for Women principle.
- *Consider higher funding amounts and working in partnership to support grantee partners' needs for technology at the right scale.* Very small grants often aren't enough to sustain an organization's technology needs, especially now as virtual and online organizing has increased post-COVID-19. While Global Fund for Women has always supported general, flexible funding, the size of its grants may not always support newly evolving technological constraints and costs. Joining with other sister funds and working with donors to build shared understanding and partnership for funding is important.
- *Explore the untapped potential to bring in new tech funding from donors, with the right stories and strategies.* This is an area that appears ripe for more proactive fundraising and outreach to high net-worth donors. It will require equipping the development team with some good stories to illustrate effective feminist technology strategies, which Global Fund for Women's program team can already access.
- *Explore the untapped potential to bring in new technology partners, who will be able to support as well as gain from grantee partners' experiences.* Beyond funding, partnerships with technology-related groups might yield significant gains in terms of advocacy and amplification, for instance, with organizations like Electronic Frontier Foundation, and the Association for Progressive Communications. In turn, these organizations would gain from the extensive feminist experience and expertise, especially from the global South, of Global Fund for Women's grantee partners.
- *Support is about more than just money.* Our recommendations include in-kind resources like convening spaces or pooling different kinds of expertise.
- *Grantee partners are already leading work on technology and have significant expertise to share.* It can be tempting for Global North donors to want to offer Global North technology and expertise to Global South grantee partners, or to think that technical solutions built in Silicon Valley will be most useful for feminist activists around the world. Global Fund for Women understands how important it

is to trust and value the expertise of grantee partners. We encourage you to continue championing grantee partners as experts in technology as well.

- *Technology is a useful tool, but it cannot replace the deep context-specific expertise and sense-making of humans.* Global Fund for Women's programs team has a wealth of expertise and sense-making about grantee partners, issues and regional contexts that cannot be replaced with automated systems. The same is true of grantee partners. This expertise cannot be effectively automated or outsourced to machine learning and so-called artificial intelligence. We need to keep investing in the humans who understand the context, and let technology be a tool and architecture that assists these humans.
- *Consider a tech strategy to be fundamentally about movement building.* By connecting across different partners, issues and regions, and by co-creating tools and solutions, we build stronger movements.

Focus Areas

Global Fund for Women should focus on four main areas of technology funding:

Area 1: Technology in Feminist Safety and Security

Area 2: Technology in Feminist Advocacy and Communications

Area 3: Technology in Feminist Knowledge and Memory

Area 4: Feminism in Technology Infrastructure, Design and Access

Areas 1 & 2 are already well established in Global Fund for Women's existing grantee portfolios, while areas 3 & 4 represent newer and underfunded opportunities.

Area 1: Technology in Feminist Safety and Security

"We have to think about our grantee partners when their accounts are hacked, or they're experiencing oppression by their governments, what will we need to do to counter false information, how to strengthen our IT systems to support this..." - Global Fund for Women staff member

- Safety and security have been top issue areas for the majority of the Global Fund for Women staff we have interviewed, evidenced by the development of Global Fund for Women's new "Safeguarding Policy." There is already substantive awareness on how funding digital security workshops is crucial to address the increasing threats feminist groups are currently facing around the world.

- Repressive governments and regressive or “uncivil” society organizations are increasingly investing in technology to counter the work of feminist organizations, especially through surveillance.
- Even though feminist organizations are dealing with more complex, tech-based threats, they are not being properly funded to create and use safer tools to protect and defend themselves, their work and their communities.
- At the same time, frames, tools, and practices around digital security are often led by Global North based organizations like Electronic Frontier Foundation. While their work is critical, the frames are often individual-based rather than the multiple levels - from individual to collective - at which Global Fund for Women grantee partners work.
- Increasing government securitization and surveillance with support from technology companies, is an especially important issue to pay attention to in many countries across the global South, and has only augmented during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic through contact tracing, new digital ID systems, and immunity passports.

Recommendation 1: Prioritize funding the most targeted, at risk organizations. For example, organizations working with women’s reproductive justice and LGBTQI communities.

Recommendation 2: Fund organizations that are creating their own contextualized solutions, as autonomy is key to safety and security.

Recommendation 3: Support grantee partners to build out and amplify localized, context-specific digital security tools and practices.

Recommendation 4: Support convenings where grantee partners who have developed expertise and lead solutions in this space can share and brainstorm strategies with other grantee partners who are working in similar contexts.

Grantee partner highlight

[Luchadoras](#) is a feminist organization based in Mexico that investigates cyber violence against women, advocates to authorities and with internet platforms to improve policies, and offers digital self-care workshops for girls, youth, and women. This organization has helped raise public interest in digital violence in their country.

Area 2: Technology in Feminist Advocacy and Communications

“We need to use tech for advocacy more, and do it thoughtfully, and locally... We have a sense of responsibility towards this.” - Global Fund for Women staff member

“Groups like FEMNET are doing such important work at the intersections of advocacy, social media, and tech... they give people outside the continent a way to see what’s happening with women’s human rights and feminist solidarity in Africa.” - Global Fund for Women staff member

- Significant numbers of Global Fund for Women grantee partners are using online technology and media platforms to amplify and advocate for their work in several ways.
- Advocacy-related work will continue to be a key method in which partners use internet-enabled technologies, but smaller groups, or groups that are not as tech-comfortable, do not have the infrastructure to do this on their own.
- Not all groups realize the costs involved in their use and creation of tech and media, groups using older budget templates may not yet have line items for tech.
- Interviews pointed out that there may be a generational or geographical gap in this usage; girls and younger women-led groups are more comfortable with this form of advocacy, as are more urban-located groups.
- Examples that came up repeatedly included partners using hotlines, apps, and social media spaces to mobilize and advocate for key issues like abortion rights.
- Other powerful methods include using the intersection of arts and the internet to create radical forms of advocacy, for instance on platforms like Instagram and Patreon.

Recommendation 1: Build Global Fund and grantee partner collaborations across specific issues that have or need a strong online and creative component. For example, Global Fund for Women can support all partners in a particular issue to use social media and a shared communication strategy/timeline.

Recommendation 2: Fund convenings or knowledge-sharing sprints led by grantee partners with strong capacity in this area (e.g. adolescent girls groups brilliantly using social media) to share that expertise with others working in similar context or issue areas.

Recommendation 3: Support regionally or locally based communications infrastructure across a set of partners. We caution against assuming that it is always best to start this at a “global” level; more regional and local platforms will be able to share contexts, languages, and frames much more easily and powerfully. For example, Global Fund for Women might support a shared tech and media team based in Kenya that supports work by partners across Kenya and across East Africa.

Recommendation 4: Encourage groups to estimate and budget for tech and media work in their organizational budget or find ways to have local tech partners or technologists who can offset these costs. For example, several groups work with local cellular providers around hotlines and text-based services.

Grantee partner highlight

[Apps and Girls](#), in Tanzania, developed an online platform for accessing contraception and abortion services easily, safely, and inexpensively. They did this through mentoring and supporting the tech expertise of girls.

[The A Project](#), in Lebanon, has a sexuality hotline using media and tech, and has build capacity to use tools like podcasts to disseminate knowledge on bodily rights.

Area 3: Technology in Feminist Knowledge and Memory

“We’ve lost feminist herstories. AWDF had a project looking at African Feminists, our ancestors, women who have been shaping feminist discourse across the continent. Women in Memory Forum in Egypt too. We need a database that can be a repository for these stories. There’s so much that we’re losing, we need to make it a key part of what we’re building.” Global Fund for Women staff

- The internet’s information and knowledge base is deeply skewed towards white, male, cis, and Global North experience.
- Wikipedia, the fifth most-visited website in the world is a good proxy indicator of public knowledge online. Yet it is written primarily by white men from Europe and North America. Only 20% of the world edits about 80% of Wikipedia’s global content currently, and we estimate that 1 in 9-10 of Wikipedia editors self-identifies as female.^{vi}

- What's happening online is replicating and, in many cases, deepening the exclusions and erasures of the offline world. Only about 20% of published books are freely accessible in the public domain and 10-15% are in print, according to Google research conducted in 2010. In a world of 7 billion people speaking 7,000 languages and dialects, we estimate that only about 7% of those languages are captured in published material.^{vii} A smaller fraction of the world's knowledge is converted into digital knowledge, and an even smaller fraction of that is available on the internet.
- This implies that there is an urgent need to bring feminist herstories and knowledges on to the internet - not only for the sake of preserving them, but to make humanity's knowledge of itself more accurate and complete. We need to make this knowledge free and open to all, where appropriate (for example, sacred knowledge of indigenous groups may not be openly shared) and create a feminist "knowledge commons".^{viii}
- We at Whose Knowledge? call this lack of digital knowledge from marginalized communities - including women and girls - the "hidden crisis of unknowing". This foundational crisis of not knowing each other as fully and as well as we could and should, is a key factor in many other forms of crises and violence in the world.
- Feminist knowledge and memory production is a particularly important inter- and multi- generational space, in which both knowledge and strategies across generation, time periods, and geographies can be shared.
- Many grantee partners are already using feminist media outlets, journals, and other media spaces for both advocacy and knowledge/memory work, but this is a fragile ecosystem that needs support.
- Archives - whether oral, visual, or textual - are key spaces through which to disseminate thoughtfully created and curated feminist knowledges and histories. For example, Okvir, the LGBT*QIA group in Bosnia-Herzegovina, has created a powerful oral archive of testimonies from queer activists during the Bosnian war.
- This aspect can be supported by Global Fund for Women, on its own, and in collaboration with its sister funds and grantee partners.

Recommendation 1: Fund individual grantee partners to do more knowledge production work both within their own communities and across their regions.

Recommendation 2: Support collaborative initiatives to record, preserve and disseminate feminist histories and knowledges.

Recommendation 3: Encourage every Global Fund for Women grantee partner convening to have a feminist knowledge production session or worksprint, like a Wikipedia edit-a-thon or a photo archiving effort.

Recommendation 4: Facilitate regional and global initiatives for inter/multi-generational interviews. For example, on strategies around specific issues, imagine a young SRHR activist in conversation with an older SRHR activist in either the same region or across regions discussing their contexts, their strategies and new possibilities of doing this work.

Grantee partner highlight

[Women's Museum Istanbul](#) works to present women's histories in an inclusive way in Istanbul and across Turkey, using digital and non-digital means.

Area 4: Feminism in Technology Infrastructure, Design and Access

"The question of who has access to influential roles within the sphere of media, technology and online-based resources and knowledge... is very relevant to feminist conversations about power, representation, and a just distribution of resources." - Global Fund for Women staff member

- Tech infrastructure, design and access led by feminist organizations or collectives is a deeply underfunded area.
- There is a strong need to infuse feminist politics, values, and practices in the development of digital technologies and design of tools, platforms and services online.
- Technology is primarily created by corporations or is state owned - both tend to not incorporate feminist values or are usually unfriendly to feminist politics and practices. Corporates like Facebook have problematic privacy policies, including the recently enforced ['Real Names' policy that adversely affected LGBTQI and Native American communities](#).
- Beyond the specific safety and privacy issues of human rights activists, girls, women and people of color are often at significant risk to online harassment and bullying. The United Nations Report on Cyber Violence against Women and Girls

[found that 73% of women have been exposed to, or experienced, forms of online violence.](#)

- Feminists and feminist values remain missing from internet-based technology. Very few feminists are leading and influencing internet infrastructure and governance. These activists are often missing in events and decision-making, production of digital technologies spaces so far.
- WHRDs can't continue to work online if infrastructure costs, like server costs, are currently not being funded by existing grants portfolios.
 - Example: [Ahwaa](#) is a community-run portal where queer Arabs can organize and discuss their pressing issues, including safety and security practices. Server and other infrastructure costs remain a challenge for this group.

Recommendation 1: Prioritize funding technology infrastructure, design and access so the internet doesn't continue to be deeply un-feminist in both the creation and the use of online tools and platforms.

Recommendation 2: Support grantee partners and specific Global Fund for Women staff members to attend spaces where activism meets technology. For example: [Internet Freedom Festival \(IFF\)](#) or [RightsCon](#). In a phased approach, the goal is to create a critical mass of staff members and grantee partners that will then attend internet infrastructure and governance events. For example: [Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers \(ICANN\)](#), [Internet Engineering Task Force \(IETF\)](#), [Internet Governance Forum \(IGF\)](#) and the [UN's World and Information Society Forums \(WSIS\)](#).

Recommendation 3: Facilitate conversations, collaborations and convenings between feminist technologists and grantee partners within the region they are in, so that the infrastructure gets strengthened, Global Fund for Women staff, donors, and grantee partners learn from each other, and the technology sector in turn understands the context of feminist activism better.

Recommendation 4: Advocate for and amplify the voices of activists who are advocating for a feminist and decolonized internet so that women, girls and trans folks are experiencing a safe, accessible and welcoming internet. Example: Global Fund for Women supported grantee partners to attend the first Decolonize the Internet (DTI) conference, hosted and organized by Whose Knowledge? in Cape Town, South Africa in July 2018. A grantee partner is now planning to host their own local version of DTI in Kenya.

Grantee partner highlight

[Association for Progressive Communications \(APC\)](#) is a global network that has been a leader in this space, including pushing for policy changes and developing the Feminist Principles of the Internet.

[Feminist Approach to Technology \(FAT\)](#) works on empowering women and girls to access, use, and create technology through a feminist rights-based approach, primarily in under-resourced areas of India.

Niche Roles: Support Beyond Funding

These are some practical ideas for the ways that Global Fund for Women can draw on its own, and its grantee partners' niche expertise, experience, and reach in this area.

Convening

Idea 1: Convene a tech advisory group of Global Fund for Women program officers + a few grantee partners and advisors.

- This group (not more than 5-7 people) should meet periodically, say once every 3 months

Idea 2: Host a monthly virtual call with specific grantee partners, sister feminist funds and feminist technologists, where you discuss different issues of tech that they are using/need in their work. As a follow up, Global Fund for Women can facilitate the following practices:

- Buddy up grantee partners in a specific region
- Buddy up older and younger grantee partners, where younger partners can support digital security and related issues, while older partners can build out the feminist history of the region with them.

Idea 3: In already existing or planned convenings and events by and with Global Fund for Women (including donor trips), have a tech related session in which grantee partners, staff, and donors can discuss some of the tech related issues. For example:

- Share online safety and security practices across regions and inter/multi-generational organizations
- Have an underlying thread of knowledge production/curation (e.g. take pictures of the folks present - if safe - for Wikipedia, do interviews where activists interview each other for 5-10 min, create Global Fund for Women space on website, where these get uploaded)

Idea 4: Hold awareness raising and strategy sessions hosted by Global Fund for Women with donors and grantee partners.

Learning

Idea 1: Tag reports with the four recommended tech funding categories so that Global Fund for Women can better track these categories and learn over time.

Idea 2: Use virtual convenings aimed to have learning type conversations, led by grantee partners expertise or invited speakers.

Idea 3: Pilot grantee partner reports from this portfolio, using a "[learning patterns](#)" format that focuses on problems, solutions, and adaptation for different contexts.

- Tech organizations like the Wikimedia Foundation use learning patterns to help build movement knowledge over time.
- Examples of learning patterns Whose Knowledge? has created include:
 - [Centering Marginalized Communities](#)
 - [How to add high resolution images of notable women at edit-a-thons events](#)

Idea 4: The tech strategy can pilot learning from different grantee partners, where there is a focus on both stories and strategies.

- Each grantee partner story can include, for instance, the top 3 strategies that the grantees feel have made their work powerful, including a technology-enabled strategy.
- In addition, a portfolio of grantee partners working on broader issues, for example on economic justice and migrant work, can share specific grantee-led stories and strategies across the issue, including technology-enabled ones.

Amplifying

Idea 1: Global Fund for Women and its grantee partners can amplify feminist work - its urgency, stories and strategies - most effectively via internet-enabled technologies.

- Many grantee partners already use their websites, and social media channels, to do this amplification well.
- What might be exciting is the opportunity for grantee partners to mentor and amplify each other in this process. For example, urban-based partners to share and spread the work of rural-based groups with less effective internet access, or for girls and young women-led groups who are already technologically comfortable, to support the technological capacities of others who may not be.

Idea 2: Support grantee partners to be in technology and technology-related spaces

- Fund individuals and groups through travel and other support to participate and lead sessions in events, conferences, and policy spaces around the internet and technology.
- For example, Global Fund for Women's grantee partners at the Decolonizing the Internet conference in Cape Town last year, as well as at Wikimania immediately after, helped them promote the issues of feminist politics and human rights amongst a group of open knowledge advocates, and in turn helped them learn how to bring their own knowledges online in spaces like Wikipedia.

Idea 3: Create concentric circles of amplification through Global Fund for Women networks. At the same time, start amplifying this work in unexpected and unusual spaces.

- This strategy could be used to create very specific issue- or strategy- based advocacy and amplification efforts through the network of feminist funds and human rights funders. For example, on climate change or economic justice.
- Simultaneously, advocacy and amplification of feminist values and strategies - especially from the Global South - in technology and policy spaces like the IGF, IETF, ICANN, WSIS and others would be effective.

Idea 4: Highlight movement expertise on these technology issues and amplify in different languages.

- Already existing grantee partners expertise can lead this amplification effort and demonstrate how feminists can and should be at the center of these issues.
- Most significantly, the internet - and knowledge on the internet - needs to be more multilingual, and feminists can be at the forefront of making it so.

ⁱ From the Global Digital Suite of reports in 2018: <https://wearesocial.com/us/blog/2018/01/global-digital-report-2018>

ⁱⁱ Internet World Stats: <https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>. There are a few ways to look at this distribution of access: first, from the perspective of physical geographies, because most of the world's populations are located in the geographies of Asia and the Pacific Islands, Latin America and the Caribbean, Sub Saharan Africa, and the Middle East and North Africa. Secondly, even within these physical geographies, access is uneven across rural/urban divides, and income inequalities. Capital cities, urban areas, and economic zones where capitalism has made investment "worthwhile" have better access, while marginalized communities still do not have easy access. Finally, looking at political geographies, what is often called "the global South in the global North" (marginalized communities in otherwise highly resourced regions) continues to be woefully under equipped in internet infrastructure. As an example, Native American communities in the United States.

ⁱⁱⁱ From the International Telecommunication Union's 2017 report: <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/ICTFactsFigures2017.pdf>

^{iv} Statista: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/274774/forecast-of-mobile-phone-users-worldwide/>

^v NewZoo analytics: <https://newzoo.com/insights/rankings/top-50-countries-by-smartphone-penetration-and-users/>

^{vi} From our article in Nature: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-07506-7>

^{vii} From the Decolonizing the Internet's report: <https://whoseknowledge.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/DTI-2018-Summary-Report.pdf>

^{viii} An example of one such documentation is the Global Feminist Journeys timeline hosted by the Center for Women's Global Leadership, to mark 25 years of the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993: <https://globalfeministjourneys.com/#event-universal-declaration-of-human-rights-udhr>