

Advancing feminist action for climate justice

Introduction

The Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action¹ (GAGGA) aims to ensure that governments, investors and donors respond to the collective demands of people-centred climate justice and women's rights movements from the Global South. Women² in particular are leading relentless struggles against land grabbing, deforestation and the extraction of natural resources, as well as strengthening and bringing forward gender-just climate solutions that ensure care for all people and planet.



Photo: Ben den Engelsen

The year 2021 was a pivotal moment for decision-makers to step up and take urgent action to avert climate catastrophe. In the words of UN Secretary-General António Guterres, the picture painted by climate scientists should be understood as a 'code red for humanity'. Fortunately, the demands of climate justice movements are becoming more central in climate discussions and negotiations. The space to bring forward feminist and intersectional visions to address the environmental and climate crises increased in 2021, particularly at the international level. There is growing recognition by government actors, intergovernmental agencies, and funders of the multi-layered aspect of the climate crisis and its links to historical systems of oppression, including capitalism, patriarchy, colonialism and racism. Examples include the UN Generation Equality Forum, where one of the six Action Coalitions focuses on feminist action for climate justice; the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), where momentum was built to implement the Gender Action Plan agreed at COP25; and the 2022 UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66), which focused on achieving gender equality in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes.

The year included some concrete, hard-won victories. The United Nations Human Rights Council passed a resolution recognising access to a healthy and sustainable environment as a universal right, which will strengthen the pathways to address the environmental and climate crises through a human rights approach. Governments made some key commitments at COP26, including 'phasing down' coal use, reductions in methane emissions and ending deforestation by 2030. An increasing number of public and private actors have committed to fossil fuel divestment, and a Dutch court ordered Shell to reduce its carbon emissions, the first time a company has been legally obliged to align its policies with the Paris Agreement, the global framework agreed to in 2015, aimed at limiting global warming to well below 2°C and pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C.

¹ Launched in 2016, GAGGA is a consortium led by [Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres](#) (FCAM) in collaboration with [Mama Cash](#) and [Both ENDS](#). GAGGA rallies the collective power of women's rights and gender, climate and environmental justice movements around the world.

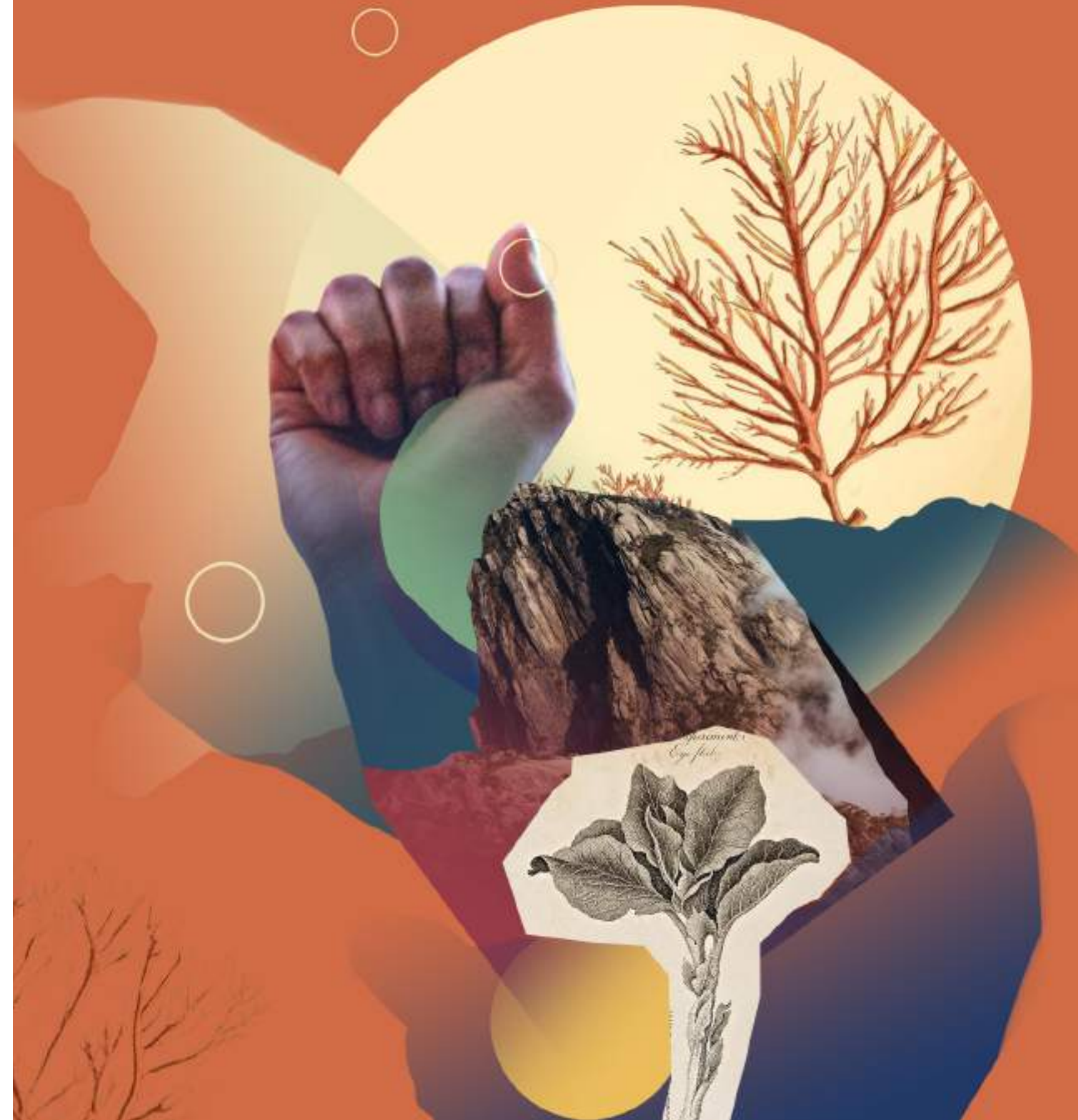
² When using the term women and girls' environmental defenders (WGEDs), GAGGA includes women, girls, and intersex, trans and non-binary people.

Grave challenges remain

But much remains to be done. Global actors are not doing enough to address the root causes of the climate crisis. Global carbon emissions in 2021 were the highest in history. Governments have yet to make good on their Paris commitments, including climate finance. Fossil fuel industries remain heavily subsidised, and the private sector and actors like international financial institutions continue to promote and support false climate solutions. COP26 was deemed the most exclusionary ever, with COVID-19 restrictions, lack of access to vaccines, a shortage of affordable accommodation, and other barriers severely limiting the participation of participants from the Global South.

Meanwhile, at national and local levels, civil society organisations, social movements and communities confronted multiple, interconnected socioeconomic and environmental pressures –exacerbated by the pandemic– including poverty, racial and gender inequalities, political instability and climate-related disasters. Women and girl environmental defenders worldwide continued to face structural violence, including state-sponsored violence and corporate extractivism. Now more than ever, GAGGA's work is essential.

GAGGA in 2021: Key figures



Key figures

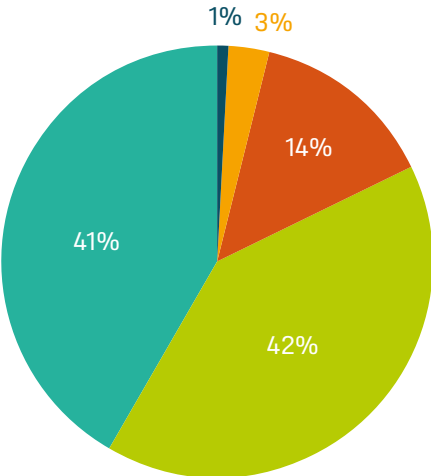
The year 2021 marked the first of GAGGA's new 'Women Leading Climate Action' programme, which builds on the results and the strong network we've established since 2016. GAGGA provided €4.4 million in grants to GAGGA network partners. GAGGA partners include a broad diversity of women-led community-based organisations (CBOs) that are leading transformative gender-just climate action, women's and environmental justice funds, and NGOs.

In 2021, GAGGA supported:

358 community-based organisations | **28** NGOs | **24** funds

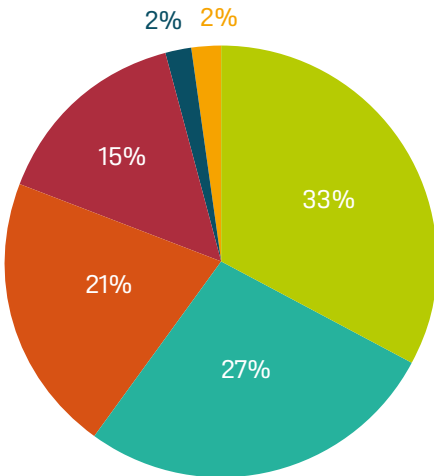
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Regional Distribution CBOs



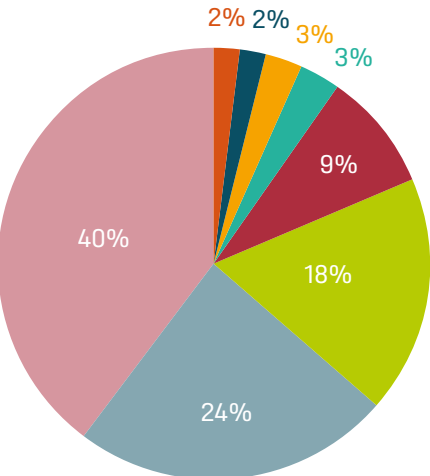
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- PACIFIC

Regional Distribution Funds & NGOs



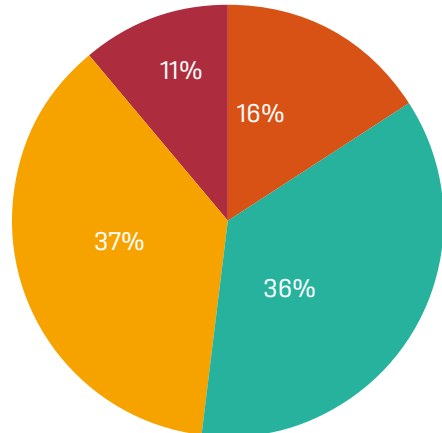
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- PACIFIC
- GLOBAL

Main Identity of CBOs



- LBTQI
- PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
- AFRO-DESCENDANT
- N/A
- YOUTH
- INDIGENOUS
- PEASANT/RURAL
- OTHER (PERI-URBAN AND URBAN; MIGRANT; DOMESTIC WORKERS)

2021 Budget Distribution Funds & NGOs



- OWN INTERNAL STRENGTHENING
- DIRECT GRANTMAKING
- STRENGTHENING CBOs CAPACITIES
- DIRECTLY INFLUENCE EXTERNAL ACTORS

2021 highlights



Marcia Mura (pictured on the left) is part of the Mura Indigenous collective in Brazil, who participate in regional and national Indigenous movements fighting for social and environmental rights.

1. Strengthening local women's leadership, resilience and capacities to advance gender-just climate actions and solutions

GAGGA provided a range of financial and non-financial support to community-based organisations (CBOs) to strengthen their work around gender-just climate action. With GAGGA support, **Women in Action Against Mining in Asia (WAMA)** organised a skill share involving women from Indonesia, West Papua, Mongolia, the Philippines, India and Cambodia. Due to COVID-19, the skill share, which focused on the impact of the extractives industry on water, was held online across three virtual spaces. The virtual spaces harnessed women's local knowledge, experiences and traditional ways of preserving water; provided training for investigation of impacts of mining operations on water sources; and strengthened understanding about women's relationship to water and how threats to water are threats to women's rights.

In Uganda, **Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO)** conducted several local community engagements in 2021 to empower women, youth and the elderly with knowledge of the benefits of off-grid solar energy and access. Women and youth solar clubs were established to support further advocacy work. Through the clubs, women and youth worked with local communities to promote the adoption of off-grid solar energy as well as clean cooking and lighting. With the support of AFIEGO, they also engaged in advocacy to increase women's participation in developing and implementing clean energy policies, especially those on increasing the use of renewable energy at the community level. [The Uganda Bureau of Statistics recently reported that solar energy connections increased from 18% in 2017 to 39% in 2020.](#) Through their work, AFIEGO, together with the women and youth from the solar clubs, hopes to continue contributing to this increasing trend.

GAGGA partner funds and NGOs also enhanced their capacities to engage in, lead, document and/or promote gender-just climate solutions in 2021. Through the leadership of **Fondo Acción Solidaria, A.C. and Fondo Semillas**, and with the support of Both ENDS and FCAM, environmental justice and women's funds in Latin America developed a joint communications and advocacy strategy to strengthen their collective work around gender and climate justice. The process was facilitated and supported by La Sandía Digital, a feminist strategic communications organisation, and has led to increased knowledge amongst those involved on effectively communicating about gender and climate justice.

Colectivo CASA, which works with Indigenous communities in Bolivia, provided environmental training to women defenders affected by mining in Oruro. They co-developed and implemented the community-driven campaign '[Mujeres Defensoras Promoviendo la Justicia Climatica](#)' (Women defenders promoting climate justice) which relies on rainwater harvesting systems. The water collected is used for food production, contributing to the food sovereignty and security of the community. The communities reutilised PET bottles for trickle irrigation, painted awareness-raising messages on water tanks, and are working to ensure reforestation to protect local water sources.

2. Linking climate, environmental and women's rights movements

Linking is an essential part of GAGGA's work, as it contributes to the sharing of knowledge and the facilitation of mutual learning amongst network partners. To launch the first year of the new GAGGA programme, GAGGA alliance members organised three virtual sessions to foster connections amongst partners, build collective understanding of the new programme, and identify and strengthen collective interests, momentum and resources. The sessions brought together more than 80 people from GAGGA alliance members, strategic allies, partners funds, NGOs and CBOs.

Development of new cross-movement partnerships to advance gender-just climate solutions – and strengthening existing ones – was a key focus of GAGGA partners in 2021. In Africa, **WoMin** continued to build the **Africa Climate Justice Collective (ACJC)**, which aims to support organising, movement-building, and convergence, with a special focus on women's organising and voices for climate justice. In May, ACJC hosted its first sub-regional gathering, the Francophone Climate Justice Gathering in Cote d'Ivoire. Attended by some 32 participants from 14 countries in North, West, and Central Africa, the event was an important step in deepening the climate justice movement across the entire region, embracing diversity of language, culture, ethnicity, and sectors.

In January, **350.org**, one of GAGGA's strategic allies, organised the [Global Just Recovery Gathering](#), a three-day event that brought together thousands of climate leaders and activists from all over the world. The gathering featured 196 sessions translated into nine languages, with more than 80 panellists and artists from 33 countries. The gathering had a strong gender justice focus throughout and included 14 sessions with a specific feminist lens, including two organised by GAGGA: [Equity, solidarity and collective care for people and nature – Gender-just-community-based systems and practises for a just recovery](#), and [Cross-movement collaborations for a more gender and climate-just world – Experiences from GAGGA](#).

3. Influencing governments, investors, and donors for gender-just climate solutions

GAGGA members and partners led a variety of lobbying and advocacy initiatives to influence governments, investors and donors in 2021. Through the support of **LILAK**, in the Philippines, Indigenous women from different communities formed task forces to promote their agenda in the 2022 elections, including calls for gender and climate justice. The task forces participated in campaigns with other movements and networks to ensure that Indigenous women's voices were included in their agendas. In the end, three significant national agendas integrated the Indigenous women's electoral agenda: the Green Agenda, formulated by environmentalists and climate justice activists; the Women's Agenda, formulated by the broad national women's movements; and the Indigenous Peoples' Agenda, formulated by different national and regional formations of Indigenous peoples' groups. The national agendas were part of advocacy campaigns around the 2022 elections.

Since 2017, GAGGA's Latin American partners have organised the annual **#WeWomenAreWater** campaign, from International Women's Day (March 8) to World Water Day (March 22). In 2021, [GAGGA and partners made the campaign global by involving partners from Africa and Asia](#). The aim was to make governments, investors and international development banks aware of how fossil fuel investments/actions are leading to climate change-related water scarcity and contamination in communities, as well as the role and leadership of women as water defenders. The campaign brought together diverse partner organisations within GAGGA to build a strong advocacy platform related to women's rights and water. Around 37 organisations participated in the campaign on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, showcasing 19 stories from partners in Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nigeria, Peru, and South Africa. The campaign received almost 3,000 page views on the GAGGA website. The GAGGA Twitter page earned 48.7K impressions and was visited over 9,000 times during the campaign.

GAGGA celebrated a significant result in October when ABP, the Dutch National Civil Pension Fund, announced a strong policy to sell off investments in coal, oil and gas producers by 2023. This decision follows years of campaigning by Both ENDS, together with partners in Brazil, Nigeria and Uganda, who were able to speak and engage directly with ABP about its investments and responsibilities for human rights and environmental violations in their localities. In Nigeria, Nigerian partners **Kebetkache**, **Obelle Concerned Citizens**, and **Lokiaka** engaged in dialogue with ABP and Shell Nigeria on a variety of issues, including women's involvement in negotiations and decision-making processes around oil governance, routine gas flaring, and the need for Shell to clean up polluted water and farmland.

GAGGA continues to advocate towards the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to ensure that GCF funding is spent in a gender-just way and reaches local women-led CBOs. In 2021, three informal sharing and learning sessions were held involving 12 GAGGA partners who are engaged in GCF/climate finance processes at national level. The learning sessions enhanced the capacity, knowledge and solidarity between NGOs advocating towards their (local and national) governments. In addition, Both ENDS continues to engage directly with the GCF Board, actively engaging in online board meetings and in developing joint inputs to proposed accreditations and project proposals. Both ENDS and partners **International Analog Forestry Network (IAFN), CENDEP Cameroon and Proyecto Ayurveda** in Puerto Rico provided feedback to the GCF Secretariat on its Sectoral Guidelines regarding Ecosystems and Agricultures. Agroecology is now recognised as one of the objectives in the Sectoral Guidelines draft, which will be brought to the GCF Board in 2022.

GAGGA worked with strategic allies Global Greengrants Fund, Prospera and WEDO to lead actions to influence key decision-making actors in important spaces. The four-part virtual series '[Sustainable Solutions – Centering Gender Equality in Climate Action](#)', brought together more than 30 representatives from different government donors and European private foundations to collectively discuss the importance of supporting and resourcing women-led climate action, results and lessons from funders who are already supporting this work, and key opportunities. As part of the **Feminist Action for Climate Justice action coalition**, one of the six action coalitions of the Generation Equality Forum, GAGGA and Global Greengrants Fund [launched a commitment campaign](#) to mobilise \$100 million for feminist action for climate justice over the next five years. The campaign includes a commitment to flexible, multi-year support to organisations led by women, girls, and trans, non-binary and intersex people working on the frontlines of climate action. The Dutch government agreed to ensure that the €37 million they provided to the GAGGA 'Women Leading Climate Action' programme is part of this campaign.

In the lead-up to COP26, GAGGA, Global Greengrants Fund and WEDO launched a '[Call to Action for Gender-Just Climate Finance](#)', aimed at government representatives attending and negotiating at COP26. Through our contacts with the governments of Canada, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom, and in partnership with the Equality Fund, we held bilateral conversations with government representatives to advocate for gender-just climate finance. The engagement strengthened relationships with these governments and with key allies who can support us in our advocacy. In addition, WEDO through the Women and Gender Constituency, hosted a virtual training series on advocacy to strengthen capacity among feminist advocates to engage in COP26.

As part of the Ford Foundation Natural Resources and Resilient Women Initiative, GAGGA completed a mapping and consultation process to better understand how

community-based women and girl-led groups, collectives and organisations that are defending their land, territories, and natural resources define structural violence, and their strategies to prevent and respond to it. The mapping led to an [internal report](#) as well as a [publication](#) aimed at donors. Following the report, GAGGA secured an additional \$1 million for three years from the Ford Foundation to provide financial support to organisations led by and made up of (young) women, girls, and trans, intersex and non-binary people who are facing structural violence in their vital work to defend land, territories and the environment.

4. Ensuring collective and inclusive ways of working

Since its inception, GAGGA has taken an intersectional and movement-building approach, ensuring that community-based organisations led by women, girls, and trans, intersex and non-binary people — particularly from historically excluded populations — have the resources, capacity, knowledge and connections to strengthen their own solutions to the climate crisis. GAGGA aims to ensure that these organisations actively participate and have a voice in key decision-making processes that directly affect them, their communities and their environment. To that end, our efforts in 2021 included, among other things:

- Direct invitations for the participation of partner CBO representatives in panels, events and meetings and in key decision-making spaces at local, national and international levels. At the international level, together with the support of partner funds, we provided needed skills and resources, including stable internet connection, translation support and joint preparation for effective participation.
- Translation of publications and relevant documents as well as simultaneous interpretation during sessions in at least English, Spanish, French and Portuguese. When possible, we also add Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi, Tagalog, Nepali, Georgian, Swahili and Mongolian.
- Ensuring collective spaces accommodate partners in different time zones at suitable times.
- Sharing GAGGA's participatory, inclusive and feminist principles, e.g. through a [video in English, Spanish and French](#) on the importance of centring the voices, demands and proposals of women, girls, and trans, non-binary and intersex people with regard to their environmental and climate actions, and ensuring they are supported to lead their transformative work.

Given the new GAGGA programme and the addition of new allies, we undertook a thorough review of our structure with the aim of further strengthening our ways of working and our ability to respond to new and emerging needs of the programme. The

process resulted in strengthening the coordination unit, steps toward strengthening regional-level coordination, and development of an ad-hoc advocacy working group structure to ensure flexibility around our collective advocacy work. With regard to the latter, COP26 gave us a great opportunity to put the idea into practice. An ad-hoc working group of representatives from Both ENDS, FCAM, Mama Cash, Global GreenGrants Fund, 350.org and WEDO successfully:

- Launched the '[Putting justice at the heart of climate action](#)' blog series that ran for the two weeks of COP26;
- Organised a [COP26 side event on gender-just climate finance](#);
- Launched a [Call to Action for Gender Just Climate Finance](#), which was shared with our network of government contacts.

It was a strong collaborative work effort which harnessed our strengths as a collective and established a strong foundation for our advocacy moving forward.

5. Collaboration with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

GAGGA is pleased to be a Strategic Partner of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Highlights of our collaboration with the Ministry in 2021 include:

- The '[Sustainable Solutions – Centering Gender Equality in Climate Action](#)' series, which the Ministry co-sponsored and participated in as a key speaker.
- Creation of space for partners to provide direct inputs and have conversations with Dutch representatives on the GCF Board as well as on the Inter-American Development Board, bringing forward urgent issues related to limited inclusion of historically excluded communities, human rights violations and lack of transparency.
- Collaboration with Dutch embassies to build awareness of specific cases and contexts GAGGA partners are working in. For example, together with the Dutch ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Congo, we were able to organise a meeting to hear from GAGGA partners directly regarding the impacts of Inga 3 Hydropower Project. After this meeting, the embassy and the groups advocating against Inga 3 continued their engagement.
- Engagement with the Dutch government and Parliament on issues of gender, climate and biodiversity through the guidance of Both ENDS and Mama Cash, including through the publication [Intrinsically Linked: gender equality, climate and biodiversity](#), which included key recommendations in the lead-up to COP26.

Conclusion

The first year of the GAGGA 'Women Leading Climate Action' programme resulted in significant achievements, despite challenging circumstances. We have been able to reach and support a diverse group of women-led CBOs leading transformative gender-just climate action, including in countries new to the GAGGA programme, such as Brazil, Mexico and South Africa. We have strengthened our relationships with partners through collective learning and advocacy for climate justice, and have led and supported more targeted advocacy towards governments, donors and investors. We are excited to build on this momentum in 2022 and to collectively move closer to the transformative systems change needed for gender, environmental and climate justice.



Photo: Terini Manchanda

