WITH AND FOR GIRLS

Strategic Framework 2021-2025

A Fund and A Collective
A political home for girls and their allies
When I stepped into this role in 2020, I was ready to take on new challenges and bring new energies and visions for resourcing girls activism. However, I can’t say I expected my first year to be set against the backdrop of a global pandemic. Over the past year, we have shared grief and trauma, a sense of hopelessness, and constant reminders of the depth of inequality that exists in this world. We’ve lost opportunities to physically meet with each other, and had to delay or adjust our plans and expectations.

And yet, as I look back over the past year, the pandemic offered me a gift: the valuable resource of time that is often denied to activists, women and girls due to the many roles and responsibilities we hold. New to this role, I’m so thankful for the time I’ve been given to get to know the With and For Girls community as well as ensure that we settle into our new home at Purposeful.

While we may have been physically distanced, we created intimate spaces for reflection and connection to carry out a global strategic planning process. Over many online meetings that stretched our creativity, adaptability, and empathy for each other’s situations, we were able to take the time to imagine the world we want and the way we could make it a reality.

After many months of planning and co-conspiring (and despite the Zoom fatigue), we are ecstatic to share this Strategic Plan that holds our collective dreams of the future that we can create With and For Girls.

We want to extend our immense thanks to the Creative Design team made up of girls, trans and young women activists who accompanied this process, leading consultations with activists in deep conversation about contexts and grounding our new direction in their lived realities.

We are especially grateful for the With and For Girls Collective Partners who also offered their time, intellect and support all along the way. They gave us a chance to dream big and cheered us on each step as we navigated moments of uncertainty and doubt. We emerged with a sense of clarity and a re-dedication to keep girls at the centre in all we do.

Lastly, we appreciate Ruby Johnson who held this process with grace, care and gentleness. Ruby has continually brought her heart into this process and we are so humbled by the richness of the experience and the magic we’ve created with her guidance.

Working on this strategic plan has been a pocket of joy in these uncertain times; it is my hope that together, we will achieve the impossible. May we continually push ourselves and each other beyond the practical to fulfil the dreams, ideas and aspirations with and for girls.
Girls have been organising, resisting, and agitating in their communities for millennia. They are on the frontlines in struggles for freedom and liberation, fighting for access to education, to sexual and reproductive rights, to spaces for political voice, the end to child marriage and gender-based violence. From Africa’s anti-colonial movements to the Arab spring to climate justice organising and everything in between - their resistance has always sparked and sustained transformational change. And yet, too often girls are separated from resources and shut out from decision-making spaces, their power deliberately obscured and hidden from view.
Patriarchy’s insidious reach often creates organising ecosystems that deliberately obscure girls’ activism behind the very structures meant to act as agents of ‘empowerment’. Girls’ daily struggle for human rights and political recognition are often invisibilized by existing age-based cultural hierarchies that pervade organising spaces and prevent girls from accessing the resources they need. The injustice of systemic racism continues to be a global issue, and women and girls across the world are being affected by discrimination and the lack of recognition and protection for LGBTQAI- communities. With less access to resources and political recognition, girls on the frontline organising for our collective human rights are especially vulnerable to government crackdowns on protests, human rights, and free speech.

COVID-19, like any other crisis, is exposing and exacerbating the existing systemic oppression and violence that position girls to be particularly vulnerable—especially girls who face multiple forms of oppression. Public health, the economy and girls’ safety and bodily autonomy are inextricably linked. All over the world – across countries and context – girls play the role of primary caregivers. In the absence of functioning health and social care services girls become frontline health responders. Girls also face cultural pressures to provide for their families, even though they are the most likely to be distanced from assets like money, goods, services, transportation and so on. The closing of schools and other learning settings not only limit girls’ access to education, but reveals the gendered digital divide and further isolates them from communities of other girls. When girls and young women are removed from their peers, we know rates of violence, teenage pregnancy, early and forced marriage.
Grounded in girls’ realities: What girl activists and their allies are telling us they need

We formed a Creative Design Team made up of girls, young women, trans and non binary young people aged 14 - 35 years to support and accompany the Strategic Planning Process. The Design team hosted regional conversations across 5 regions in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic. From these conversations, we learned that they need:

**Accessible funding application processes**
Application processes can be more accessible to girls and trans youth through diversifying the languages, online formats and platforms used.

**Flexible funding**
Girls preferred regular, smaller grants as opposed to once-off larger grants. Seed grants and the ability for unregistered groups to access resources are also needed.

* Purposeful works with girls and their allies. This includes non-binary, trans and inter sex, young and older women activists working with girls from a transformational perspective, on intergenerational work.
Opportunities for intergenerational networking, mentoring, and collaboration

In many regions, there is a disconnect between young and older activists. There is a need for more engagement, knowledge sharing, collaboration, and deeper connectedness. However, continue to be mindful of ageist power dynamics, find new ways to do mentoring and funding that is collective and horizontal.

Opportunities for peer-to-peer support and exchange

Activists are looking for opportunities, tools and platforms for peer-to-peer exchange, which will help girls and trans youth to learn from and support one another.

Strategies and tools to prevent burnout

Activists often find themselves experiencing burnout. Capacity building, skills development, and leadership training opportunities for girls need to include self-care practices and burnout prevention.

Spaces for feedback to funders

Girls and young activists and organisations want to have feedback loops and accountability mechanisms in place with their donors.

Shift funding to support people in online spaces

As activism rapidly expands into online spaces, there is a need to invest in providing technical support and resources to strengthen online activism.

Accessible feminist and activist resources, training sessions and learning tools

Girls, young women and trans youth need resources on feminism and activism that are free, and sometimes need small grants to translate existing resources into their language.

Access and dialogue with funders

Girls led groups need exposure and to be introduced and connected with local organizations, INGOs and donor communities. Donors can influence each other towards listening, learning, co-designing and co-shaping the feminist world, while ensuring girls and young women have ownership.
The WITH AND FOR GIRLS Story

How it all began
The With and For Girls Collective was born during the 2014 Girl Summit which called for new commitments to be made to further the efforts to end FGM and child, early and forced marriage within a generation. At the summit, EMpower, Mama Cash, Plan International UK and Stars Foundation announced an annual awards initiative that would invest more than $1 million in grassroots organisations working with and for girls.

Hosted within the Stars Foundation, the annual girls’ awards would recognise exceptional grassroots organisations working on the front line to create a world where girls’ rights and well-being are recognised, respected and realised.

In particular, the award would target action and investment toward organisations and initiatives that amplify the voices and agency of girls to determine the course of their own lives, and the development of their own communities and countries.

From 2014-2018 the Collective and team, hosted at the Stars Foundation, broke new ground in children’s and human rights funding spaces, shifting narrative in philanthropy and modelling what was possible when you center girls’ participation in decision making. Their leadership and solid collaboration between the Strategic Partners was fertile ground to build the next stage of WFG future. Between 2015-2018, The WFG Collective made grants to 85 groups across 59 countries between 2015 and 2018.
Coming into Purposeful
In 2019, it became necessary for The With and For Girls Collective to find a new institutional home. After a call for proposals and a robust process, accompanied by girls and former WFG winners, Purposeful became the WFG Collective’s new chosen home. In early 2020, Purposeful and the WFG Collective were pleased to announce Purity Kagwiria as the new Director.

Purposeful’s core values:

- Taking bold action
- Many ways of knowing
- Centering lived expertise
- Deep embodiment
- Cultivating radical imagination
- Joy as resistance
- Power in diversity
- Rooted in sisterhood and solidarity

Vision: Girls are living in safety, dignity and freedom! And through it all the world is transformed!

Mission: Girl activists and their allies have access to the resources, networks and platforms they need to power their activism and remake the world for themselves.
Making sense of a new home: Becoming a fund and a collective

After months of discussion on how to best leverage the new home, and ensure clarity of purpose and structure, a new formation has emerged. Under new leadership and a new strategic framework, the work of the With and For Girls is reconceptualised into two spheres - the With and For Girls Fund and the With and For Girls Collective.

The With and For Girls Fund is the primary resourcing arm of Purposeful and Purposeful as an organisation hosts the With and For Girls Collective as we deeply believe in our collective responsibility to organise with power holders and contribute to greater accountability to girls in all we do.

**With and For Girls Fund** brings together Purposeful’s experimental feminist funding initiatives and With and For Girls’ global reach and equity. The Fund brings all of Purposeful’s funding streams into one integrated participatory grantmaking hub, resourcing girls resistance from the village to the global and everything in between, As Purposeful is a movement building hub (rather than a funding-first organisation) we have the opportunity to truly centre the needs of girls who organise. The With and For Girls Fund will use a Funding+ model, and will be fully led by the Purposeful team, drawing on our work to build collective power and transform power structures.

**With and For Girls Collective** is a collective space for diverse actors to come together to transform the funding ecosystem with and for girls. It is composed of justice funders committed to resourcing girls activism for the long term. Together, we champion and resource the WFG Fund, and influence and advocate across philanthropic and development spaces for more and better resources and practices with and for girls. Historically strategic partners have been involved in the structure and day to day operations of grantmaking, however there was broad consensus that strategic partners strength is a focus more on collective learning, advocacy and shifting the field.

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1. In addition to direct grants, support such and accompaniment and coaching
Who we are

A portal into a new way of being and doing

With and For Girls seeks to be a political home for girl activists and their allies, a portal into worlds where girls (and all of us) are free and healthy and held and seen and celebrated. Feminist organising can be painful, draining, exhausting and discouraging at times. Funding to girls is in many cases restrictive and piecemeal and power differentials are not held with care and humility. We are re-imagining a different reality on how we stay in community with girls. As funders, we will seek to create spaces where girls can experience a generosity - an abundance - of spirit and support and resources. To do this we start by reimagining grant making to truly respond to girls needs, meeting girls where they are, in ways they want to be met.

With and For Girls Fund and Collective Overarching Goals

WFG Fund:
Resource girls activism and organising in healthy, sustainable and truly responsive ways

WFG Collective:
Reorganise power in development and philanthropic practice, showing what is possible when girls are put at the centre of resource distribution
Objectives & Priorities for With and For Girls

Goal 1:
Resource girls activism and organising in healthy, sustainable and truly responsive ways

Objective 1:
Resourcing girls’ resistance: Support girls activism and organising with flexible funding, accompaniment, and connections.

Goal 2:
Reorganise power in development and philanthropic practice, showing what is possible when girls are at the centre of resource distribution.

Objective 2:
Learning to transform our practice: Develop a grounded community of learning and move towards transforming our funding practices in our institutions to recenter girls power and decision making.

Objective 3:
Reorganising power and resources: Influence funders and key actors to redistribute more and better resources to politicised girls’ work.

Objective 4:
Nourishing our home and our people: The WFG Fund and WFG Collective are thriving, well resourced, with deeper alignment in values and practice.
OBJECTIVE 1: RESOURCING GIRLS’ RESISTANCE

This is our primary and foundational purpose: to resource girls activism and organising in healthy, sustainable and truly responsive ways. To achieve this, we have an expansive Fund that is designed to support and show up for:

- Collectives led by girls 19 years and under, from all over the world
- Young feminist led collectives serving collectives or organisations led by young women, trans or intersex people under 30 that serve girls
- Older feminists working with girls from a transformational perspective, on intergenerational work.

The With and For Girls Fund is the world's first Africa rooted global participatory fund for girls' organising and activism. For too long to work Globally has meant to be a Global North institution. Instead, we are based on the African continent, with leadership and politics deeply rooted in Africa, moving resources from Africa to girls and movements across the world.

We seek to reframe what it means to collaborate across borders, grounded in values of reciprocity and solidarity, exchanging strategies and co-creating an Africa rooted Southern vision for this work.

We will fund globally, resourcing girls and their allies across the globe. At the same time, we will be exploring and experimenting around a focus country model in a number of select countries over the next five years because reaching girls who are organising autonomously requires deep connections in context. The breadth and depth of the Fund is achievable through partnerships and collaboration with other funders.

Success looks like:

- Girls have increased power and decision making in resource allocation and philanthropy
- We moved over 5,000,000 USD in flexible funding to girls and their allies by 2025
- Girl activists in informal collectives and other groupings have been prioritised through the fund
- We have practices of accompaniment and connecting girls that are responsive and in service of what girls need in different contexts
- Building off the experience of Sierra Leone, we are working in partnership with feminist funding allies to support place based grant-making in additional focus countries, reaching girls in rooted and responsive ways. We aim for 3-4 countries by 2025.
OBJECTIVE 2: LEARNING TO TRANSFORM OUR PRACTICE
The core focus of this objective will be the learning and transformation that members of the Collective can do to move more and better resources to girls. As funders that form part of this collective, it is critical we work to transform our own institutions to center girls power and decision making.

Success looks like:
- We have co-created an authentic space for vulnerability, learning and shifting power, practice and resources for funders that are part of the Collective. We are in community in our learning and reflection, grappling with what it takes to do this work
- We document and leverage our learnings as a Collective, using this to support others to move from protectionist to power-building approaches and to make the case within their own organisations
- As funders we are truly accountable to girls in how and who we fund, and in supporting their autonomous organising, working to recentering girls power within the collective and our own institutions.

OBJECTIVE 3: REORGANISING POWER AND RESOURCES
Through our collective learnings and transformations, we will influence other funders and key actors to redistribute more and better resources to politicised girls’ work

Success looks like:
- The Collective has contributed to shifting narratives around girls organising and funding politicised girls’ work
- Donors formalise and mainstream a commitment to politicized girls’ work by embedding it in their strategies, programs and budget
- Funders and other actors (including new funders) in the ‘girls’ ecosystem shift their grant-making practices to get resources more easily to girl-led and centred groups
- Girls work/organising is respected, trusted and legitimised in philanthropic spaces and beyond.

OBJECTIVE 4: NOURISHING OUR HOME AND OUR PEOPLE
Recognising that the With and For Girls Collective has undergone extensive transition in the last few years, and that the world continues to be in constant flux, this objective aims to centre care and nourishment for girls and their allies.

Success looks like:
- We have diversified, long-term and flexible financial and non-financial resources for the work of the Fund and the Collective
- We are supporting girls and non-binary people’s self and collective care and well being through grantmaking and cultivating self care spaces
- We curate regular spaces for the collective members to explore individual and collective healing.
- Purposeful and Strategic partners have prioritised time, space and resources for culture building and collective processes that decentralize power and seek to align practice and values.
How the With and For Girls Fund works

The Offering in detail

1. The Database: Connecting to the universe of girl activists and lowering barriers to identifying and resourcing girl led groups, we will have an open database where interested groups and organisations can register and then be invited to apply for funding at different moments in the year.

2. The Funding windows: Centering the unique needs of girls’ organising at the margins, providing opportunity to collaborate with a diversity of funders, we will have rolling funding windows depending on the need and changing realities of the world we live in.

3. The participatory process: Girl led decision making across the fund

4. The Funding: flexible and autonomous resources for girls and their allies. We will offer a range of different types of funding, predominantly core and flexible funding to girl led groups and their allies.

5. Collectivised Accompaniment and Capacity Support: where possible, accompaniment should be done through deep feminist partnerships with sister organisations and peer funders, within the collective and beyond, aiming not to create new infrastructure, but strengthen existing.

6. Consciousness raising, care, healing and wellbeing: In the deep dive countries we will work with young women, queer and women led organisations to curate space for consciousness raising, politicisation of risk work and healing and collective care.
# Features of the Fund

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| Annual Award | Funding ‘windows’ through the year  
 Contained award every 2-3 years (TBC) |
| One off Award | Multi-year resources |
| Capacity building support | Centering consciousness raising and political education |
| Periodic programme evaluations | Prioritising ongoing feminist documentation |
| Annual awards week in Global North | Convening and Solidarity building opportunities, connected to movement moments and rooted in Global South |
| Global North team | Regional program officers rooted in justice movements |
| Support to Girl-led and centered groups, including adult led | Centering girl-led groups, and their young feminist allies |
| Minimum income requirements | Prioritising first time funded groups |
With and For Girls Fund Advisory

Global Girl Activist Advisory

Made up of 15-20 girls and young women from across the world, this advisory will rotate every 2-3 years. The inaugural advisory will be set up in 2021 and have a role in designing the calls for proposal, reviewing and deciding on applications, bringing their knowledge and expertise of their region to the discussion around funding needs and priorities.

In addition to the main core advisory, the fund will set up / activate or reactivate decision making advisories made up of young women and girl activists from different constituencies, movements or communities depending on the needs for more in-depth support. Where the Fund has deep work in countries they will also have localised panels or advisories holding the decision making around funding that is culturally rooted, country-based or movement rooted.

Role of the advisory:

- Participate in the design of funding calls
- Decide how funding is allocated
- Support WFG Fund at key moments to monitor progress against the strategic plan.
- Support in accompaniment to grantee partners
- Engage in key advocacy and key spaces for girls funding and organising.

Composition of Advisory:

The core advisory will be intersectional and intergenerational, prioritising girls and young women (below the age of 30) with disabilities, girls and young women of colour, LGBTQIA2S youth, afro-descendant, indigenous and immigrant girls and young womxn, as well as those living in urban slum areas, rural areas, refugee camps, occupied territories and in conflict-affected settings.

A key focus is given to ensuring region and subregional spread, across movements, identities, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility, as well as being able to hold space for girls, newer to their activism, in balance with deep-rooted activists, building a mechanism for mutual understanding, responsibility and learning.

Compensation:

All work will be compensated financially, recognising the value of people’s time and expertise, and that all too often activists work goes unpaid and unseen, recognising the political importance of this commitment to offer some honorarium or economic value for people’s time. The fund will also offer opportunities for skill-building, mentoring, coaching and exchange with other advisors.
Appreciations and Acknowledgements to our Community

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Strategic partners

At present the WFG Collective is the only collaborative of its kind, drawing from different points in the girls funding ecosystem - made up of Women’s Funds, an International NGO, Public Foundations, and Private Foundations. The Collective is currently made up of the following strategic partners:

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