

Resourcing and Sustaining Human Rights Defenders at the Intersection of Gender and Disability

Across the world, women, girls, and gender-diverse people with disabilities and their organizations:



Challenge rising
authoritarianism



Resist the rollback
in progress on
gender equality



Push for gender-and
disability-inclusive **sexual
and reproductive health**
services



Fight for their right to
independent living
in the community



Speak out against
the high rates of
gender-based violence
against them



Address the impact
of **humanitarian emergencies**
and **climate change** on their
rights

As **human rights abuses** against women, girls, and gender-diverse people with disabilities are **on the rise** and anti-rights and anti-gender movements are gaining momentum, **their work is now more vital than ever.**

At the same time, shifting priorities of bilateral, multilateral and private funders have transformed the funding landscape.

Historically Underfunded

Gender and disability advocates—already **historically under-resourced**—are facing even **greater challenges** in securing financial resources for advancing the rights of their communities.

Despite the fact that **one-fifth of the world's population of women have a disability**, data shows a lack of intersectional rights-based funding.



In the US

Just 0.1% of the grants from U.S.-based foundations advance disability rights and justice



Globally

Only 4% of \$1.2 B in women's rights **grantmaking** by private foundations targeted **women with disabilities**

Less than 30% of \$177.9M to advance **disability rights targeted women with disabilities**

“

In the last two years, our long-term sponsor has faced difficulties in receiving foreign funding [due to restricting normative frameworks]. This year, the major global funder of our main sponsor decided to no longer provide funding [due to changing priorities]. The rain just keeps on coming.

”

An organization of persons with disabilities operating in East Asia, responding to WEI's 2025 global survey on funding impacts

A CALL TO ACTION FOR FUNDERS:

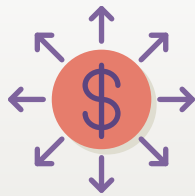


There is an urgent need for more sustainable, flexible funding and political support for grassroots organizations.



An organization working at the intersection of gender and disability in Sub-Saharan Africa, responding to WEI's 2025 global survey on funding impacts.

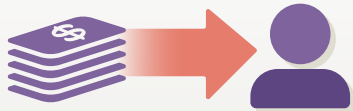
To break these patterns funders can:



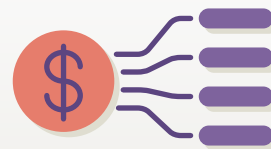
Significantly expand investment in organizations led by women, girls, and gender-diverse people with disabilities



Provide core, flexible, and long-term funding to those defending their rights



Make funding practices **disability accessible** and **aligned with grantees' needs and priorities**



Mainstream a gender and disability inclusion approach across all areas of funding

Learn more about the funding landscape at the intersection of gender and disability and simple actions that donors can take to ensure gender-and disability-inclusive funding.





*The work is now exhausting, draining and terrifying.
Every day, more rights are threatened.*



A survey respondent working at the intersection of gender and disability in North America and globally.

A global survey conducted by Women Enabled International in the first weeks of 2025 drew responses from more than 50 organizations working on gender issues, disability rights and/or their intersection.



The already precarious funding landscape is rapidly deteriorating, negatively impacting the continued work of organizations, as well as the lives of women, girls, and gender-diverse people with disabilities around the globe.

At least 10 organizations working at the intersection of gender and disability rights report they have ceased all operations.

"We have been forced to cease all operations despite having secured two critical grants [from the US government]"

A survey respondent working at the intersection of gender and disability in Sub-Saharan Africa

37 organizations report being forced to stop at least some programmatic work, layoff staff, and alter fundraising strategies.

"The critical services we provide to people with disabilities are at risk of being disrupted, and we are struggling to keep our mission alive due to uncertain funding sources."

An organization that works at the intersection of gender and disability in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Even organizations that have not been directly financially impacted yet, particularly those based in the U.S., anticipate and are preparing to face significant challenges in the future.

"We have not experienced cuts yet, but we think we might still experience cuts to federal grants going forward. We are trying to prepare..."

A survey respondent working on disability rights in North America.

Some respondents emphasized that the current context not only has financial implications for civil society but has also created a climate of fear and uncertainty about the future.

"What is happening not only limits the organization's activities and work plans but also affects our mental health."

A survey respondent working at the intersection of gender and disability in South America.



Despite these challenges, we remain committed to advancing the rights of PWDs... We continuously seek opportunities to collaborate with like-minded organizations and push for increased government accountability and inclusive policies.



A survey respondent working at the intersection of gender and disability in Sub-Saharan Africa.