

# Feminist Economic Justice Retreat

Hosted by EDGE Funders Alliance



Nairobi, Kenya,

October 7 – 9/2025

REPORT

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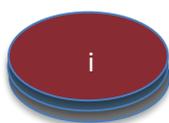
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## Report Acknowledgment

This report was made possible through the collective effort and contributions of all who participated in and supported the **Feminist Economic Justice Retreat** hosted by EDGE Funders Alliance.

Special appreciation is extended to:

- **Dinah Musindarwezo**, Facilitator, for her skillful guidance and ability to hold space with care, intention, and wisdom.
- **Jemimah Nyangasi Wabuko**, Rapporteur, for her dedication to capturing the reflections, insights, and collective learnings that shaped this report.
- **Hana ElSafoury, Crystal Simeoni, and Dinah Musindarwezo**, Reviewers, for their thoughtful feedback and editorial support.
- **All participants**, whose knowledge, experience, and passion for feminist economic justice are at the heart of this report.



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## Executive Summary & Key Objectives

The Feminist Economic Justice Retreat, held in Nairobi in October 2025, brought together feminist activists, funders, and movement leaders from across regions to reflect on the state of feminist resourcing and reimagine funding systems grounded in care, solidarity, and justice. Over three days, participants explored questions at the heart of feminist economic transformation: How can movements build sustainability without reproducing existing power hierarchies? What does care-centered, trust-based philanthropy look like in practice?

The retreat focused on the following objectives:

- **Clarifying New Economic Visions:** Addressing the shifting crises of our time by reimagining economic systems centered around care, solidarity, justice, and equality.
- **Connecting Diverse Struggles:** Strengthening connections between various feminist issues, ensuring that both local and global contexts are integrated into strategies for economic justice.
- **Grounding in Local Realities:** Understanding the impact of global economic policies on local communities, particularly marginalized groups, and fostering solidarity across movements.
- **Exchanging Resistance Strategies:** Providing a platform for discussing and sharing strategies for navigating and resisting current economic systems, while emphasizing relationship-building and self-care.

Through dialogue, reflection, and shared strategy, the retreat generated rich insights on the interconnections between care, power, and funding, and offered a vision for feminist economies rooted in autonomy, collaboration, and accountability. This summary captures key discussions, emerging priorities, and collective calls to philanthropy.

## Note from EDGE Funders Alliance

The EDGE Economic Justice Initiative (EJI) was launched to deepen collective learning and action on feminist economic justice within philanthropy. Over the past three years, EJI participants have come together to reimagine how resources can support systemic change, care-centered economies, and feminist organizing. This work has been made possible through the support of the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund.

We extend heartfelt gratitude to everyone who joined us. We would like to express special appreciation to the Kenyan feminist activists who helped ground us in the Kenyan context and show us that systemic alternatives are alive and thriving despite all the challenges and restrictions.

We look forward to continued engagement!

Hana ElSafoury on behalf of the EDGE network

## Cross-Cutting Insights

Across the retreat, participants engaged in a shared political analysis that placed care, solidarity, and power at the heart of feminist economic transformation. The learnings that emerged went beyond calls for better funding practices. They articulated what it means to resource justice, not just support projects.

- **Reform vs. Revolution:** The ongoing debate between reform and revolution was central. Some participants questioned how much energy should be spent on influencing institutions and systems that were not built for dignity versus creating new systems that center justice and equity. It was agreed that influencing the World Bank or IMF may not yield transformative results, but learning from those spaces could help shape better strategies outside of them.
- **Power Dynamics in Global Spaces:** There was an emphasis on recognizing and challenging the power structures within global economic institutions, such as the IMF and the World Bank. These institutions often prioritize profit over people, perpetuating inequality, particularly for marginalized groups. A key insight was the importance of engaging in global spaces **on feminist terms**, ensuring that grassroots struggles are heard and that local issues inform global agendas.
- **Challenges in Funding:** Funding dynamics were a major concern, particularly the growing diversion of resources away from progressive movements toward more conservative agendas. Feminist organizations, particularly those led by Black women and other marginalized communities, continue to face significant barriers in accessing funding. Participants called for more strategic and aligned funding that not only supports feminist movements but also centers their autonomy and long-term sustainability.
- **Solidarity and Localization:** Participants reflected on the importance of solidarity across movements, emphasizing that localized struggles should not be disconnected from global initiatives. While local movements are crucial in driving change, connecting them to global trends and discussions ensures a cohesive, unified approach to systemic change. There was also a focus on rethinking how resources are allocated to ensure communities have control over their own development, rather than merely being recipients of aid.
- **Feminist Economic Alternatives:** A key discussion centered on building economic systems that reject capitalist exploitation and prioritize care, solidarity, and justice. Feminist economic models were seen as alternatives to current profit-driven systems, with care work being recognized as a collective responsibility. Solidarity economies, including mutual aid networks and cooperatives, were highlighted as models that embody feminist principles of interdependence and collective wellbeing.
- **Care as Political and Economic Infrastructure:** Care was recognized as both a survival strategy and a political economy. Participants affirmed that feminist movements are sustained through care in its emotional, material, and collective dimensions, and that economic systems must be restructured to reflect this truth. The Five Rs Framework for Care (Recognize, Reduce, Redistribute, Reward, Represent) was reaffirmed as a cornerstone of this transformation.
- **Intersectionality:** Throughout the retreat, there was a strong focus on the intersectional nature of feminist economic justice. Participants emphasized the need for an approach that

considers race, class, gender, and other social determinants. In particular, the exclusion of informal workers, many of whom are women, from formal economic structures was a critical issue, as was the lack of recognition for their contributions.

- **Systemic Change, Autonomy and Sustainability Infrastructure:** The need for systemic change was underscored, particularly the shift away from donor dependency toward self-sufficiency and long-term sustainability. Movements were encouraged to build resilient, autonomous systems that do not rely on external donors. There was a call to rethink funding models to support organizations that foster independence and break the cycle of donor dependency. This requires feminist-led infrastructure such as shared funds, physical spaces, endowments, and cooperative systems that secure long-term independence from external political and financial pressures.

**Autonomy and Collective Infrastructure:** Sustainability was defined as the ability of movements to act autonomously while remaining interconnected. These insights provide a framework for ongoing efforts in feminist economic justice, advocating for more equitable, sustainable, and solidarity-driven systems that center care and prioritize marginalized communities.



*Participants during roundtable discussions*

## Feminist Alternatives and Objectives

The Feminist Economic Justice Retreat highlighted opportunities for advancing feminist economic alternatives and strategies to challenge existing global economic systems. Participants reflected on the potential for transformative change, especially through collective and localized actions. Several key ideas emerged for creating alternatives and seizing opportunities:

- **Redefining Economic Systems:** Feminist movements must push beyond temporary reforms and envision long-term, systemic transformations. The idea is to move beyond short-term survival strategies and position reforms as pathways towards revolutionary changes.
- **Building Collective Care and Solidarity:** The retreat emphasized the importance of creating community-led, solidaristic care models. Participants discussed examples such as the "**care blocks**" in Bogotá, where local communities collectively manage care services, ensuring fair working conditions and resisting privatization. This model allows for better control of care work, directly challenging the dominance of profit-driven models.
- **Agroecology and Local Procurement:** Feminist economic alternatives also include promoting agroecology and local food sovereignty. **The Landless Workers' Movement (MST) in Brazil** was highlighted as an example of how collective ownership and local procurement can be integrated into feminist economic alternatives. MST combines agroecology, food sovereignty, and public procurement to promote social justice, empowering communities to take control over their land and resources.
- **Language and Cultural Shifts:** Shifting the narrative around care work and labor was seen as essential to fostering more inclusive feminist economic discourse. Broadening the language around care, labor, and economic roles ensures that the diverse realities of marginalized groups are included in policy-making.
- **Solidarity Across Movements:** Strengthening connections between movements—labor rights, climate justice, and care—was identified as a key strategy for advancing feminist economic justice. By embracing cross-movement solidarity, feminist movements can challenge the structural inequalities that perpetuate exploitation.
- **Mutual Aid and Cooperative Models:** The retreat also discussed the value of solidarity economies such as **mutual aid networks and cooperatives**. These models are grounded in collective ownership and emphasize ecological and gender justice, presenting a viable alternative to capitalist profit-driven economies. **Sandra Moreno from RIPESS** shared an example of a solidarity-based food security initiative in Brazil, where employers contribute to a community food fund that supports local, organic food cooperatives.
- **Resisting Corporate Control:** Feminist movements are pushing back against the dominance of multinational corporations, especially in sectors like agriculture, healthcare, and infrastructure. The retreat participants advocated for more equitable control over resources and decision-making, especially in marginalized communities.
- **Technology and Youth Mobilization:** The rise of digital tools and the mobilization of Gen Z were seen as opportunities for expanding the reach of feminist movements. Digital platforms

offer an innovative way to organize, shift public narratives, and influence policy change on a global scale.

These feminist alternatives and opportunities challenge the current economic paradigm, emphasizing care, solidarity, and justice as central to economic systems. The examples from **Bogotá's care blocks**, the **MST's agroecology model**, and **solidarity economies in Brazil** provide concrete illustrations of how communities can build economic systems that prioritize collective needs, sustainability, and social justice over profit-driven motives. These alternatives provide a foundation for reshaping economies to serve the collective needs of communities, rather than the profit-driven interests of multinational corporations.

## Resistance Strategies

The Feminist Economic Justice Retreat underscored a range of resistance strategies that feminist movements are employing to challenge dominant economic models and structures. These strategies focus on collective action, reclaiming narratives, and pushing for systemic changes rooted in care, justice, and equity. Several key resistance strategies emerged from the discussions:

- **Rejection of Exploitative Partnerships:** One significant strategy discussed was the deliberate use of language and the act of refusal particularly saying “no” to partnerships, funding, or collaborations that do not align with feminist values or that reproduce unequal power dynamics. This resistance tactic, though difficult in resource-scarce contexts, was recognized as a powerful way to maintain integrity and resist systems of exploitation.
- **Reparations and Systemic Overhaul:** Participants emphasized that reparations should not only be financial but should be accompanied by structural reforms that address the root causes of inequality. Financial reparations alone are insufficient if they are not accompanied by systemic changes that prevent the repetition of past injustices.
- **Feminist Knowledge Systems:** The retreat also highlighted the importance of advancing feminist knowledge systems. This includes developing theories, definitions, and frameworks that reflect lived experiences and collective realities. Building these knowledge systems is crucial for sustaining feminist economic alternatives and ensuring they are deeply connected to grassroots movements.
- **Autonomy in Feminist Funding:** Participants called for increased autonomy in feminist funding, advocating for long-term, flexible, and trust-based funding models that support grassroots movements without imposing restrictive conditions. This would reduce the dependency on short-term donor cycles and enable feminist movements to build sustainable and independent financial systems.
- **Solidarity Across Movements and Sectors:** Strengthening solidarity across different categories of workers—domestic workers, health workers, sanitation workers, and more was identified as a key strategy for advancing collective feminist economic visions. Participants discussed the need to bridge the divide between formal and informal sectors, building shared narratives that can unite diverse movements and increase their collective power.

- **Community-led Care and Procurement Systems:** Advancing community-led care and procurement systems was presented as a direct challenge to the privatization and commodification of social services. These systems empower communities to collectively manage resources, ensuring fair working conditions and equitable access to care.
- **Agroecology and Local Production Models:** Promoting agroecology and local production models that resist corporate control was seen as an essential strategy for creating feminist economic alternatives. These models prioritize ecological and gender justice while challenging the dominance of multinational corporations in global supply chains.
- **Structural Support and Shared Infrastructure:** Participants highlighted the administrative and technical burden placed on small and emerging feminist organizations. They called for support entities or fiscal hosts that could handle administrative, financial, and digital functions such as payroll, accounting, IT, and proposal writing. This would enable activists to focus on advocacy and organizing, rather than back-office management. Participants also called for shared infrastructure, including:
  - Health insurance, pension schemes, and savings cooperatives for feminist leaders who often lack social protection.
  - Collective insurance and pension models negotiated at the movement level.
  - Investment in physical spaces, such as feminist-owned real estate and land trusts, to provide safe, autonomous, and income-generating venues for feminist convenings.

These resistance strategies are not only about rejecting existing models but also about actively creating new systems that center care, solidarity, and justice. They offer practical ways for feminist movements to build resilience and autonomy in the face of global economic inequalities.

## Principles of Ideal Feminist Funding

The role of donors and funders in advancing feminist economic justice was a central theme in the discussions at the Feminist Economic Justice Retreat. Participants emphasized that transformative funding should be sustainable, autonomous, trust-based, and rooted in care and solidarity. Ideal funding should reflect local realities, allow flexibility and self-determination, and advance structural transformation rather than short-term results.

Funders were urged to adopt more flexible, trust-based funding models that recognize the long-term nature of feminist work. This approach would move away from short-term project-based funding, which often undermines the autonomy of feminist movements. Participants emphasized that funding must support the infrastructure and capacity of organizations, not just immediate project goals.

- **Core features identified included:**
  - Funding that addresses structural inequalities.
  - Long-term, non-restricted, and flexible grants.
  - A focus on care and social protection, including trust funds for grassroots actors.
  - Shared spaces and resources to foster collaboration and collective work.
  - Infrastructure and asset financing to build organizational resilience.

- Training for feminist financial managers and fund experts.
- Rapid response and reparation-based mechanisms.
- Justice-centered funding that prioritizes dignity and power-sharing.
- Mutual aid, crowdfunding, and collective endowments to sustain movements.
- Income-generating initiatives to enhance self-reliance.
- Creation of public and feminist-led banking systems and cooperatives for ethical resource mobilization.

Participants also emphasized the need to “quantify sweat” — recognizing and valuing the invisible labor and lived experience that sustain feminist movements.

- **Endowments and Shifting Philanthropic Values:** Participants urged philanthropy to move beyond short-term project funding toward endowment models that sustain movements over time. This shift represents a values transformation — from testing organizational worthiness to investing in collective resilience and long-term impact. Funders were reminded that infrastructure support is not charity, but a strategic investment in movement stability and continuity.
- **Bold and Visionary Ideas for Feminist Funding Sustainability**
  - Participants proposed a range of innovative strategies to build sustainable and self-determined feminist funding ecosystems:
    - **Shared Endowment Funds:** Generate income to reduce dependence on external donors. This shift would align with the feminist principle of solidarity and support organizations in achieving systemic, lasting transformation.
    - **Reparation and Solidarity Funding:** Redirect resources to marginalized communities as part of historical and structural redress. Funders were urged to understand that reparations should not be limited to financial compensation but should be linked to structural changes that address the root causes of inequality.
    - **Care and Social Protection Funds:** Create feminist-led trust funds that offer safety nets for activists and organizations. This includes investments in health insurance, pension schemes, and shared physical spaces where movements can convene safely and autonomously.
    - **Feminist Corporate Alliances:** Partner with women-led and socially responsible businesses to co-develop ethical, feminist investment models for endowments.
    - **Land Trusts and Convening Spaces:** The establishment of feminist real estate ventures and land trusts was also proposed as a way to alleviate the financial burden of renting spaces, enabling movements to invest in their long-term stability.
    - **Crowdfunding and Cooperative Banking:** Strengthen community-led savings, investment, and financing mechanisms. Investment in Feminist Fund Management: Train a new generation of feminist financial professionals committed to integrity, transparency, and justice-based finance.

- **Sustainability and Autonomy:** Funders were reminded of the need to invest in the autonomy of feminist movements. Rather than continuing with short-term, donor-driven models, funding should be directed toward initiatives that support self-sufficiency. This could include investments in income-generating activities or cooperative models that allow movements to reduce their dependency on external financial support.
- **Power and Redistribution in Feminist Resourcing:** The group reflected that philanthropy often mirrors the hierarchies it seeks to dismantle. Participants called for redistributing not only resources but also decision-making power, and for funding models that enable feminist movements to define priorities, timelines, and outcomes on their own terms.

## Collective Priorities and Looking Ahead

- As the Feminist Economic Justice Retreat drew to a close, participants shared both individual and collective commitments to carry forward the lessons and actions from the convening. **Strengthening Collaboration:** Participants committed to continuing to build stronger networks and collaborations among grassroots organizations, feminist movements, and donors. This includes creating spaces for shared learning and mutual support that prioritize collective wellbeing and care.
- **Standing in Solidarity Across Movements:** Collaborate with feminist, labor, and climate justice movements to build unified resistance to austerity, privatization, and far-right resourcing. Philanthropy must align itself with those working for systemic, not symbolic, change.
- **Committing to Transformative Resourcing Practices:** A key commitment was to explore and implement new, flexible, and sustainable funding models that center care, justice, and long-term capacity building. This includes ensuring that funding supports both the immediate and long-term needs of movements, especially those led by marginalized communities.
- **Supporting Feminist Leadership Wellbeing:** Participants recognized the need for more support for feminist leaders, especially long-serving activists, who often lack access to social protection and healthcare. A commitment was made to establish funds dedicated to the health and wellbeing of movement leaders, ensuring that care extends to those who have sustained movements over time.
- **Localizing Feminist Economic Justice:** There was a strong commitment to grounding feminist economic justice efforts in local realities. Participants pledged to work toward better integration of local struggles into global frameworks and to ensure that policies reflect the needs and aspirations of grassroots communities.
- **Advancing Care-Centered Economic Systems:** Participants committed to advancing systems that place care at the center of economic models. This includes pushing for recognition of care work in economic policies and fostering solidarity economies that prioritize social and ecological justice.
- **Documenting Best Practices:** The creation of shared knowledge platforms to document and disseminate best practices was another key commitment. This would help strengthen the

coordination between women’s funds, grassroots groups, and feminist donors, ensuring that transformative practices are widely shared and built upon.

- **Funding Ideological and Political Work:** Recognize organizing, political education, and narrative change as core feminist labor that drives transformation. Fund these as seriously as programs or service delivery.



*Participants gather together to reflect*

## Resources Shared

[\*Mandates, money and movements: Gender equality, care and women's rights in international economic policymaking\*](#) (Christian Aid)

[\*Diagnosis on Philanthropy and Race in Brazil\*](#) (Fundo Agbara)

[\*Feminist Economic Justice Toolkit: A Guide for Popular Education\*](#) (Power Up! Consortium)

## List of Participants

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## Feminist Economic Justice Retreat Report

