



JASS 2011

Annual Report

Strengthening and Sustaining Women's Collective Power

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO



JASS is dedicated to strengthening the voice, visibility, and collective organizing power of women to create a just, sustainable world for all. Our feminist movement-building and popular education strategies combine innovative learning, organizing, communications, and action to equip and energize activists, expand alliances, and mobilize women's movements for greater political influence and to ensure the safety of activists in an increasingly risky world.

Founded in 2002 as a community of practice by activists, popular educators, and scholars from 13 countries, JASS generates cutting-edge knowledge about power, movements, and change to shape theory, practice, and policies for advancing women's rights and democratic change. Working with women and diverse organizations in 27 countries, JASS' agile regional and international structure and processes are designed to support grassroots organizing as well as local-to-global solidarity and action, placing frontline activists and agendas at the heart of our social justice work.

JASS' holistic strategies empower women activists and strengthen women's movements by:

- **equipping activist leaders** from all walks of life with the confidence, information, skills, strategies, and connections they need to organize women for democratic change and to navigate risky contexts;
- **promoting and sustaining grassroots and local-to-global organizing** to build broad, flexible alliances that are responsive to urgencies and opportunities as well as rooted in the concrete demands of diverse women's constituencies;
- **mobilizing alliances for strategic political action** to engage and persuade governments and international actors to respond effectively to violations of women's rights and to advance gender equality and human rights;
- **maximizing women's use of media to amplify the visibility, appeal, and reach** of women's rights agendas and the role of women's movements in advancing democracy and justice; and
- **documenting and publishing knowledge from practice** – in multiple formats from videos to analysis to training tools – to contribute to smarter thinking and responses to inequality and women's rights challenges.

CONTENTS



From the Director's Desk	2	Feminist Popular Education	19
JASS Around the World	4	Patriarchy	20
2011 at a Glance	5	Mesoamerica: Feminist Virtual Debate	20
What Women are Up Against	6	Southeast Asia: Sex and Sexuality	21
.....		Southern Africa: Self-care and Movement-building	21
Organizing Against Violence	8		
Southern Africa: Heart–Mind–Body	9	Form Follows Function	22
Mesoamerica: Women Human Rights Defenders	10	Debates About Organization	22
Southeast Asia: One Day, One Voice	12	An Organization Whose Time has Come	23
.....			
Amplifying Voices	14	Profile Mesoamerica: Cristina Hardaga Fernández	24
Women Crossing the Tech Line	15	Profile Southeast Asia: Siti Harsun	26
Malawi Campaigns	16	Profile Southern Africa: Nana Zulu	28
Mesoamerica: Community Radio with Indigenous and Rural Women	18	
.....		Finances	30
		People	31
		

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



HOW LONG WILL THIS TAKE?

In the dash to finalize a mammoth and detailed report on a three-year grant that finished in 2011, my almost-final task was to respond to this zinger of a question on the donor's form: "What are the main (remaining) gaps for achieving gender equality in your working area?"

You've got to be kidding, right? And while I'm at it, I'll explain why poverty hasn't been solved.

My feminist sisters and I tend to roll our eyes at a question like this. "Jeez," we mutter, "How do oppression and inequality operate, in twenty-five words or less!" But, to be honest, a lot of people ask this same question. My dad – a geologist accustomed to long timeframes – once asked me, "How long do you think it will take to get women and men on an equal footing?" Maybe we need a feminist theory of plate tectonics? But seriously, that's part of our work at JASS: to explain the slipperiness of power, to complicate the view of a straight-ahead road to gender equality. Here's my attempt to answer this question, drawing on JASS' work.

Up-ending gender inequality – like any attempt to change the structures and norms of power – is ever shifting. Many feminists describe the process as a dance: two steps forward, three steps sideways, and one step backwards. As research and history demonstrate, gender inequality is hugely resistant to change, in part because it is perpetuated and reproduced everywhere and by everyone – men and women – through the deep, invisible dynamics of socialization within families. It's reinforced by institutions, media, and the threat of violence at home and, often, in public too. And gender inequality dovetails with other institutionalized forms of discrimination like race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality.

Worldwide – from the USA to Egypt to South Africa to Brazil – we are witnessing sustained political backlash against women's rights and freedoms. This is provoked in part by important legislative and policy gains from previous decades: the ratification of CEDAW by hundreds of countries, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Cairo Platform, Resolution 1325 recognizing rape as a war crime, and many other milestones that women fought long and hard to achieve, at a global convention or in a village court.

At JASS, we recognize the inevitability of conflict if our strategies are successful and we plan accordingly. In the face of growing insecurity in many countries, we assess and re-assess risk and tensions, both within alliances and in terms of the impact of our strategies. We want to maximize gain and minimize conflict as we inch forward and sideways.

Coming back to that question: JASS' approach to organizing always centers around a shared understanding of the context. So, I could draw on those discussions to pinpoint key gaps and challenges that threaten gender equality. These would include:

- **Social and political mobilization against women's freedoms and rights by powerful right-wing groups.** Many, operating in the name of religion, have successfully reversed legislative gains in sexual and reproductive health, for instance. This is one reason why JASS increasingly seeks out alliances with progressive religious groups and emphasizes how gender equality is good for families.
- **Economic insecurity.** Since 2008, women have borne the brunt of economic volatility and growing poverty. Consumed by the survival demands of families and communities, they find it even harder to sustain their activism. Many are forced to migrate in search of work, under even more dangerous conditions.

- **The downsizing of governments facilitated by economic crises and the austerity agenda.** Who can enforce women's rights when there is no functioning government? But many are slashing social safety nets without offering affordable alternatives. Many lack the basic legal and health systems necessary if rights are to be a reality.
- **Militarization and the closing of democratic space.** Governments have routinely responded to insecurity by ramping up the role and firepower of police and military, and in turn, resorting to repression – often against citizen activists, supposedly to reduce conflict. Trading rights for security is increasingly the norm.

With a clear eye on these volatile, democracy-threatening dynamics, JASS strengthens and builds networks at all levels not only to mobilize influence, but also to ensure the safety of activists and their organizations. And in the face of many hurdles and setbacks, women's persistence and resilience remain the hope and promise for a better future. This annual report seeks to bring this complex reality to life through the struggles of extraordinary women around the world who are making a difference in small and big ways.

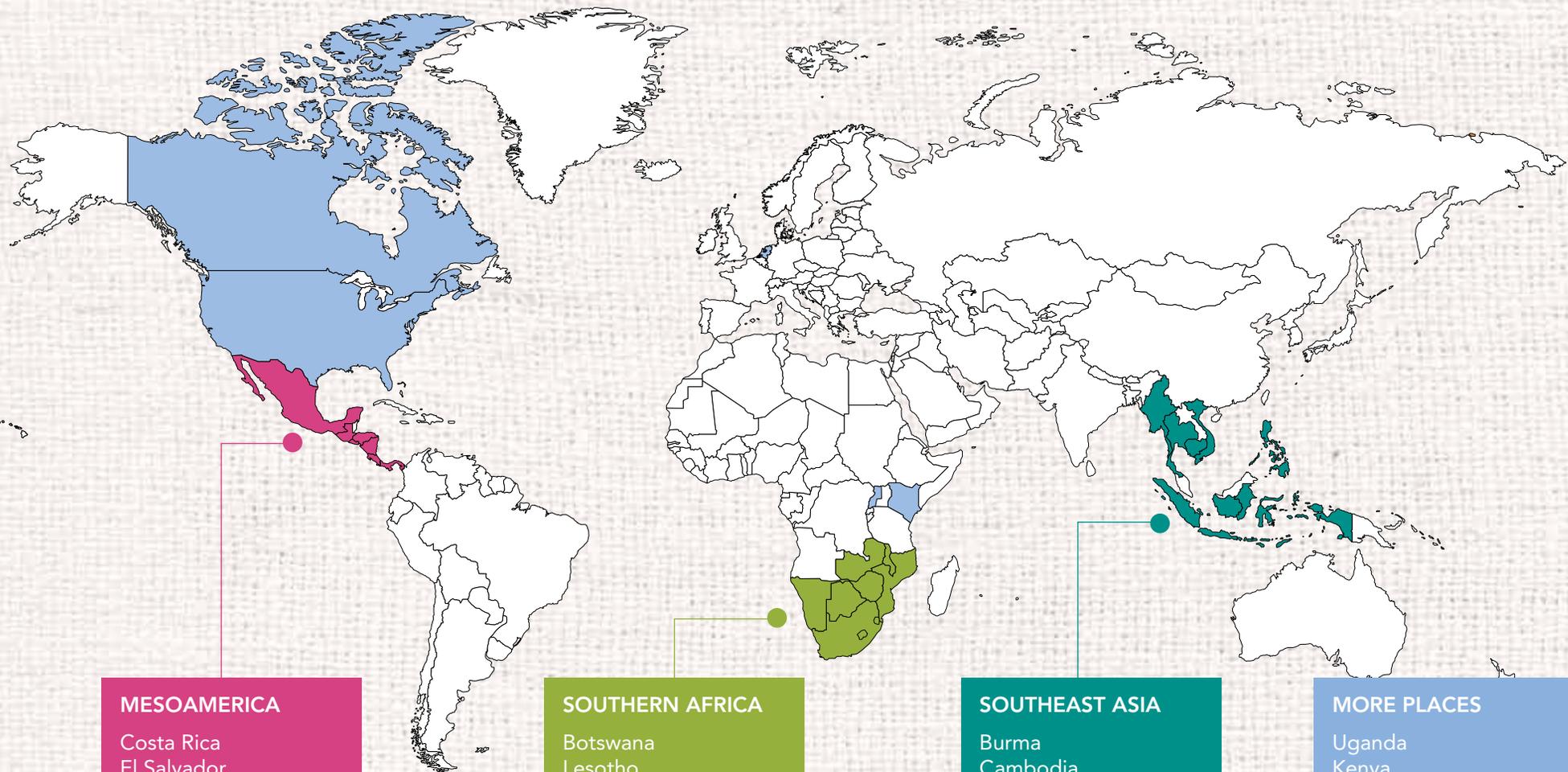
As the African proverb goes: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." On behalf of JASS, I want to thank our dedicated allies, friends and supporters for inspiring and sustaining us, and for believing in JASS' outside-of-the-box approach. We recognize that our own work and success shines because of all of you who continue to fight for a better world in big and small ways.

As always, we welcome your feedback about this report and look forward to staying connected.

Onward and forward.

Lisa Veneklasen, JASS Executive Director





MESOAMERICA

- Costa Rica
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Mexico
- Panama
- Nicaragua



SOUTHERN AFRICA

- Botswana
- Lesotho
- Malawi
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- South Africa
- Swaziland
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe



SOUTHEAST ASIA

- Burma
- Cambodia
- Indonesia
- Malaysia
- Philippines
- Thailand
- East Timor
- Vietnam



MORE PLACES

- Uganda
- Kenya
- The Netherlands
- Canada
- USA



JASS AROUND THE WORLD

PEOPLE, PROGRAMS AND PLACES

2011 AT A GLANCE

2011 was a year of citizen uprising. As JASS Executive Director, Lisa VeneKlasen, writes in her article for openDemocracy (November 10, 2011):

“What with claims of ‘Facebook revolutions’ in the Arab Spring and ‘leaderless movements’ in Occupy-Wall-Street protests across the world, the media is abuzz with commentary on the changing nature of citizen action. But – aside from new gadgets and unexpected locations – are people really organizing against injustice in ways that differ fundamentally from those of recent decades? ... And then, setting aside old vs. new, can we say that present-day strategies are in fact advancing the cause of justice?”

... How is it that the whole world is seemingly mobilizing against inequality and injustice at the same time that the global consensus about women’s equality is cracking and a steady rollback of women’s rights is underway? Behold the Arab Spring: despite their role as organizers and activists on the frontlines, women are now struggling for basic legal rights let alone a voice in the transition. Beyond the excitement of digital activism, one can’t fail to notice the scarcity of women and dominance of dudes among the techies, or the alarming statistics that demonstrate how women are the losers in the digital divide. What are the implications of this gender breakdown for the future of citizen mobilization? It’s not as if women and feminists aren’t organizing and mobilizing – they’re lending their support to all justice issues while fighting women’s rights issues all by themselves, and often against extraordinary levels of normalized and sexual violence.

Being left for last on the lists of the revolutionary agendas, invisible on the inequality headlines, and still unprotected: this is definitely not a new scenario for women. But in the wake of two decades of advances on women’s rights internationally, it reminds us of how power operates and of the certainty of backlash. That’s an old lesson that women’s movements can offer new mobilizations: it takes deep levels of organization, shared visions, strong alliances, and staying power to survive inevitable backlash. The other old lesson is that there is no revolution without the other 51%.”



WHAT WOMEN ARE UP AGAINST



MESOAMERICA: VIOLENCE, MILITARISM AND BACKLASH

The growth and influence of organized crime, drug cartels, gangs, and paramilitary forces have led to the escalation and normalization of femicide and violence against women. Fueled by a steady flow of illegal weapons across the border, the US-financed 'War on Drugs' has further militarized the conflict and contributed to a spike in violence since 2006. Governments, reduced by downsizing, corruption, and shifting priorities, are unable and/or unwilling to protect and uphold rights. There is rising impunity and tolerance for widespread violence against women – including femicide – and repression against women activists and advocates. As governments attempt to assert control, they increasingly treat activism and protests as criminal activities. Trade agreements have unraveled workers' rights, while the privatization of natural resources has destroyed livelihoods and displaced communities. At the same time, well-financed fundamentalist and conservative religious forces, particularly the Catholic hierarchy and evangelical institutions, have a grip on policy and are successfully stalling or reversing women's sexual and reproductive rights gains.



SOUTHEAST ASIA: UNCHECKED CAPITALISM AND FUNDAMENTALISM

Unchecked corporate-led globalization has up-ended traditional communal social systems in Southeast Asia, replacing them with more individualistic consumer-oriented economies. This has sparked a dramatic increase in the number of migrant workers and of women in low-paying jobs, who often end up being the sole support for their families. The resulting economic instability has increased the mobility and scale of labor migration, generating new cross-border forms of exploitation, such as sex trafficking, and further weakening the social fabric and resilience of communities. Meanwhile, powerful religious fundamentalist actors, particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia, have gained considerable political and policy influence, which they have used to reverse and limit women's basic freedoms and rights.

Between the intimidation and harassment of LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) activists and legislative attempts to limit women's freedoms in Indonesia; the Catholic Church's powerful campaign against expanding access to reproductive health care in the Philippines; and the detention of human rights activists in Malaysia, women human rights defenders in Southeast Asia find themselves risking their safety to protect their rights and challenge religious political fundamentalisms.

In Southeast Asia, as elsewhere, the proliferation of well-resourced non-governmental organizations (NGOs) over the last decade has generated a troublesome disconnect between urban-based elite NGOs and the many thriving grassroots networks dealing more directly with development. This has weakened the influence of social movements in broader political processes and of the women's movement in particular. In addition, there has been little effort to prepare the younger generation for leadership, thus forcing young people to self-organize with few of the resources, skills, and connections needed to make an impact.



SOUTHERN AFRICA: HARDSHIP AND STIGMA

Sub-Saharan Africa has witnessed large influxes of official development assistance and is home to a vast array of development actors, including NGOs, public-private partnerships, multilateral agencies, bilateral donors, and international financial institutions. Despite this attention and focus, the feminization of poverty, HIV and AIDS, and violence continue to weaken communities while governments fail to provide for the basic welfare of citizens; religious conservatism fuels stigma and discrimination against sexual minorities and people living with HIV and AIDS; and civil and political unrest serve as justification for government censorship and repression.

Stigma, taboos, violations, and denial in relation to sex, sexuality, and reproductive rights are pervasive, fueled by fundamentalist religious actors' increasing grip on policy, politics, and social discourse. Women's experience with HIV and AIDS offers a clear lens into the complex nature of gender inequality: economic insecurity and poverty; stigma, discrimination, and violence; and political marginalization. Positive women's experiences demonstrate the inadequacy of single-issue interventions (from medicines to income-generation) and the untapped potential of women's leadership of organizations of people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS, and other grassroots groups, as well as the vibrancy of women's organizing on the margins of NGO structures and formal women's rights agendas.





ORGANIZING AGAINST VIOLENCE

Despite and because of these challenges in the world, citizens – and women citizens in particular – are finding innovative ways to build just, sustainable communities and a better world. For JASS' organizing work with women, the threat of violence shadows poverty in Southern Africa, labor exploitation in Southeast Asia, organized crime and impunity in Mesoamerica, and fundamentalist religious and political forces everywhere. To address the violence manifest at every level – from the intimate to the national – effective activism for gender justice and women's rights begins with women's bodies and extends to mass action.



Social and political change for women must be built collectively. This involves breaking barriers in their homes and communities where women's participation is seen as a threat to the power of men."

PATRICIA ARDÓN, GUATEMALA

JASS' experience in all three regions has confirmed the vital importance and power of *women-only* safe spaces. Here, activists can share personal stories and histories and to connect on an emotional level. This has become a primary strategy within JASS for overcoming the effects of trauma, discrimination, and internalized shame that keep women from



When we say that the personal is political, we are affirming that the discrimination, exclusion and violence women suffer is not an individual problem that only concerns the assaulted, the discriminated and the excluded, but the individual experience of inequality as part of a system that dehumanizes all women. This is therefore a political problem that requires political solutions."

ALDA FACIO, COSTA RICA

asserting themselves to demand their rights and stand against violence. By acknowledging their personal histories, diverse activists – including unionists, indigenous women, feminists, LGBTI, land and environmental activists and mothers seeking justice for family members – have found common ground and built solidarity for their struggles.

In one of her powerful entries on the JASS blog, Hope Chigudu writes: "Safe spaces for conversation, story telling and reflection: JASS provided safe spaces for brutal honesty from each of the women that we worked with. They were not just saying the nice things. They shared a sense of humanity, of not being alone with fear, stigma and exclusion. For some who had sat on heavy emotional stuff, this cathartic quality was so important. They could not wait for the evening sessions, committed to sharing, to conversation, to plotting, to love ... to being young again. For some, this was the point at which healing and direction returned. They learnt new ways of organizing and communicating so as to support one another. The space gave them an opportunity to dare to imagine a better way and then to work to create it."

SOUTHERN AFRICA: HEART-MIND-BODY

Across the region, women and women's movements suffer from economic violence, physical violence within and beyond the home, political violence (particularly in Zimbabwe), and institutional violence. A creative approach to counter this barrage is being shaped by Zimbabwean women. Facing burn-out after many difficult years, as well as political divisions and suspicions, they have created a wellbeing circle as a space for de-stressing, reflection, and dialogue.

In April 2011, JASS Southern Africa and Musasa Project launched the Heart—Mind—Body Initiative in Zimbabwe with the first wellbeing circle. Here, 26 women activists gathered, from grassroots LGBTI activists, and HIV/AIDS organizers to sex-workers, well-known politicians, activists on the frontlines of organizing in Zimbabwe, and young women – all united by a common anxiety: how to sustain themselves and their work in challenging and violent environments. Women shared experiences of insecurity, trauma and violence, and exchanged survival strategies. The success of the wellbeing circle only confirms the urgent need for safe spaces for activists to re-energize themselves and their organizing efforts.

Heart—Mind—Body seeks to address all sides of a woman activist's life – from personal self-care to political analysis to movement-building skills and strategies – this holistic initiative re-energizes African women activists and rebuilds their organizations, preparing them to re-engage and push back while protecting themselves.



After two days, we extricated ourselves from this nourishing oasis, rightly named *Chengeta* (take care), inspired, energized and excited by the shared ideas. We left convinced that we have the wisdom and creativity to confront even the most difficult challenges and determined to make the path that we started at *Chengeta* by continuing to walk on it. While savoring the invaluable collective experience, we each gained tools to re-conceptualize our lives, our work places, institutional strategies and operations.”

HOPE CHIGUDU, UGANDA/ZIMBABWE



MESOAMERICA: WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

In 2011, violence continued to escalate throughout the region, fed by organized crime, the militarization of security, the illegal flow of weapons across the US border, and weak state institutions among other factors. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders concluded that “explicit death threats” against women human rights defenders (WHRDs) were the principal form of violence in the region, with the highest rates in Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras. Rather than protecting citizens and guaranteeing activists’ safety, the police and army were often the perpetrators of violence. Research in Mexico revealed that 70% of attacks on women activists were carried out by police. In Guatemala, sexual violence against grassroots women leaders accompanied the violent eviction of indigenous communities actively opposing the illegal sale of their lands for mining and hydroelectric dam projects.

“Women human rights defenders and those working on women’s rights or gender issues in the Americas appear to be most at risk of being killed or having an attempt made on their lives.”
UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS, 2011

Formed in 2009 in collaboration with five other women’s and human rights organizations, and coordinated by JASS Mesoamerica, the Mesoamerican Women Human Rights Defenders (IM-WHRD) Initiative* organizes a broad range of defenders, movements and organizations to tackle the violence they face. Specifically, the Initiative:

- builds the skills and confidence of women defenders through human rights and political training and by creating safe spaces to deal with isolation, trauma and burnout;
- informs and pressures governments, the media and influential human rights groups about the unique risks and violence that women defenders face;
- strengthens collective mechanisms for coordinated responses to violations, by building and sustaining local-to-global alliances and links to key officials; and
- raises public awareness about the vital contributions that women defenders make to their communities, and push to end tolerance of violence against women.

“The increasingly dangerous, violent reality that is plaguing our countries’ demands, more than ever, new resources, strategies, and alliances to guarantee the security and self-care of women defenders and their activism.”

ORFE CASTILLO OSORIO, MEXICO

By 2011, this dynamic regional initiative involved more than 350 diverse women defenders from seven countries and many different social movements and organizations. The Initiative had many important achievements throughout the year where JASS Mesoamerica played a vital role, including:

- Sustained political engagement with high-level human rights actors to amplify the visibility and perspectives of women activists throughout the region, including: meetings with the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Human Rights Defenders in Geneva, Mexican State Department officials and U.S. State Department officials; presentations to the UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights in Mexico and the Mexican Human Rights Commission; and an audience with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in Washington, DC on the situation of violence against women defenders in Mesoamerica.
- Extensive media coverage for the release of the influential and cutting edge regional analysis, *Violence against Women Human Rights Defenders in Mesoamerica, 2010/2011*.
- Mobilization of international support, solidarity and media attention for 10 urgent action cases of violence against women activists in Mexico, Honduras, and El Salvador contributing to the release, relocation and/or protection of journalists and activists.
- Consolidation and growth of national networks of women human rights defenders in Mexico and Honduras, national-level training and strategy workshops with more than 100 activists, and the production of national-level analysis about the situation of women defenders.
- Launch of a pilot regional training curriculum on protection, security and self-care of women human rights defenders, training more than 45 women from six countries to replicate and adapt the training at country-level starting in Mexico and Honduras; in Honduras, the national network convened 22 activists, including indigenous women leaders fighting displacement by illegal land grabs by corrupt elites.

* AWID (Association for Women’s Rights in Development), UDEFEGUA (Unidad de Protección a Defensor@s de DH, Guatemala), FCAM (Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres), Consorcio para el Diálogo Parlamentario y la Equidad Oaxaca (Mexico), la Colectiva Feminista para el Desarrollo Local (El Salvador), and JASS (Just Associates).



MEXICO

With more than 50,000 people dead and thousands more displaced since 2007, Mexico faces a human rights and humanitarian crisis whose gendered nature has been largely invisible.

A national network of women human rights defenders was formed in 2010 and continues to grow. Ninety-six women activists from 18 states working across 58 social movements and organizations including indigenous women, mothers seeking justice for murdered children, journalists, LGBTI activists, youth and women defending sexual and reproductive rights have come together to mobilize their voice and use their collective power for their own safety. Together with Consorcio para el Dialogo Parlamentario y la Equidad Oaxaca and Red Mesa de Mujeres Ciudad Juárez, JASS Mesoamerica provides support and coordination. In 2011, the network produced an in-depth report on the violence Mexican women defenders face and their strategies for survival.

SOUTHEAST ASIA: ONE DAY, ONE VOICE

In December 2011, JASS Southeast Asia kicked off a regional campaign as part of the worldwide 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women. One Day, One Voice drew on five years of training and support by JASS for hundreds of young, grassroots, LGBTI, poor and indigenous women organizers in six countries. Leading up to the regional action, young JASS activists gathered hundreds of other women in dialogues, demonstrations and marches across the region, a vibrant testament to the power of sustained grassroots and local-to-regional organizing.

The 33 women and their organizations involved in JASS-Philippines put on a photo exhibition, "The Seven Deadly Sins", to draw attention to various types of violence against women. Displayed in the lobby of National Congress and circulated to universities and city halls in Manila, the exhibition reached thousands of people. In Cambodia, a day of dialogue and drama drew 300 young men and women and one monk, and generated radio and television coverage featuring young women's voices, while in Thailand, JASS-produced short stories about violence against women aired on 25 community radio stations. JASS-trained women worked with the Malaysia AIDS Council and the Women's Equality Association to bring together 60 indigenous and rural women for a dialogue and workshop in that country, while 380 young grassroots women from JASS' processes in Indonesia carried out marches and dialogues across the country. These collective activities served to strengthen relationships while providing valuable insights for leveraging the collective strength of JASS focal points and activists in six countries.

“We want to break the culture of silence in Cambodia, where young people are afraid to speak up. Memories of the time of Khmer Rouge are still with us so it is difficult for us to voice our needs and demand rights. Young women in particular lack the confidence to engage in politics or even to speak up at home. We want to change this.”

KUNTHEA CHAN, CAMBODIA



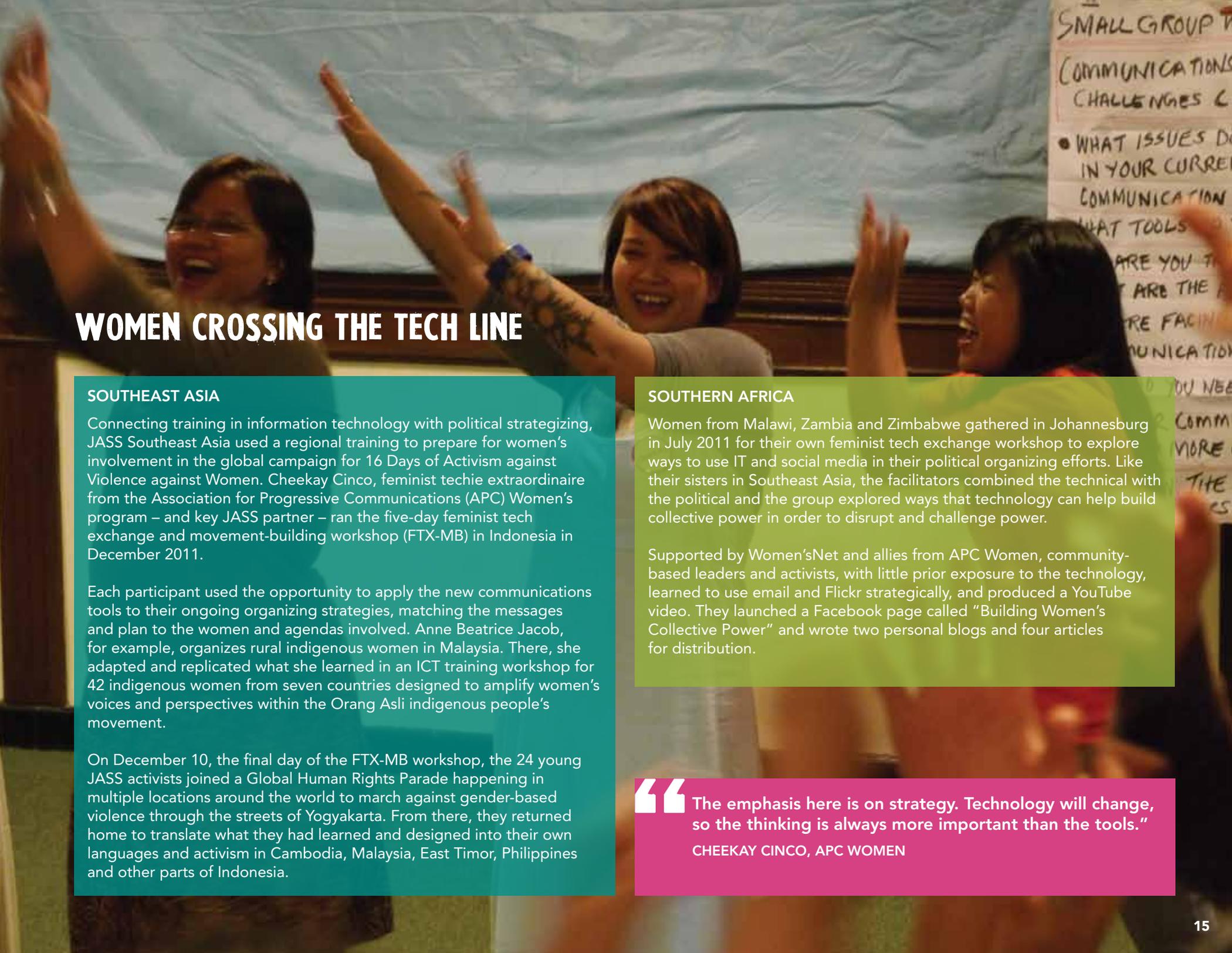
AMPLIFYING VOICES

Power resides with those who shape the narrative. Told what they can and can't do, women need to make their voices heard, first to share experiences and strategies with each other and then, collectively, to make demands. One of JASS' core program areas since the beginning has been *Voice and Visibility*: strengthening women's access to and effective use of media tools.

- JASS uses the power of new media to amplify women's voices, challenging the gender-based digital divide and linking training to organizing and action, and combining virtual with face-to-face organizing.
- JASS activists learn and use radio broadcast skills. Too often forgotten in the age of social media, radio is still the primary source of information in Africa and Latin America.
- JASS engages mainstream media to cover women's actions, agendas and events, often using social media to generate interest and outreach.
- All JASS communications begin with strategy. The thinking, the vision are always more important than the tools.

The following stories show how JASS connects training with strategy, access and action in a seamless movement-building process. Reading Judith's blog, for instance, shows what everyone gains when grassroots women on the frontlines speak for themselves about what they care about and why.



A photograph of three women in a workshop setting, smiling and raising their hands. They are positioned in front of a white backdrop. To the right, a whiteboard with handwritten text is partially visible. The text on the whiteboard includes: 'SMALL GROUP T...', 'COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGES C...', '• WHAT ISSUES DO IN YOUR CURRE COMMUNICATION WHAT TOOLS ARE YOU T ARE THE ARE FACIN COMMUNICATION', 'YOU NEE', 'COMM', 'VIORE', 'THE', 'CS'.

WOMEN CROSSING THE TECH LINE

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Connecting training in information technology with political strategizing, JASS Southeast Asia used a regional training to prepare for women's involvement in the global campaign for 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women. Cheekay Cinco, feminist techie extraordinaire from the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) Women's program – and key JASS partner – ran the five-day feminist tech exchange and movement-building workshop (FTX-MB) in Indonesia in December 2011.

Each participant used the opportunity to apply the new communications tools to their ongoing organizing strategies, matching the messages and plan to the women and agendas involved. Anne Beatrice Jacob, for example, organizes rural indigenous women in Malaysia. There, she adapted and replicated what she learned in an ICT training workshop for 42 indigenous women from seven countries designed to amplify women's voices and perspectives within the Orang Asli indigenous people's movement.

On December 10, the final day of the FTX-MB workshop, the 24 young JASS activists joined a Global Human Rights Parade happening in multiple locations around the world to march against gender-based violence through the streets of Yogyakarta. From there, they returned home to translate what they had learned and designed into their own languages and activism in Cambodia, Malaysia, East Timor, Philippines and other parts of Indonesia.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Women from Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe gathered in Johannesburg in July 2011 for their own feminist tech exchange workshop to explore ways to use IT and social media in their political organizing efforts. Like their sisters in Southeast Asia, the facilitators combined the technical with the political and the group explored ways that technology can help build collective power in order to disrupt and challenge power.

Supported by Women'sNet and allies from APC Women, community-based leaders and activists, with little prior exposure to the technology, learned to use email and Flickr strategically, and produced a YouTube video. They launched a Facebook page called "Building Women's Collective Power" and wrote two personal blogs and four articles for distribution.

“The emphasis here is on strategy. Technology will change, so the thinking is always more important than the tools.”

CHEEKAY CINCO, APC WOMEN

MALAWI CAMPAIGNS

At the Southern Africa Feminist Tech Exchange for Movement-Building, Judith Mkandawire wrote her first blog to spotlight the disfiguring effects of HIV medication, antiretrovirals (ARVs), on women's bodies in Malawi. Judith is one of a number of grassroots organizers involved with JASS since 2007. In that country, one of the poorest in the world, approximately one in ten people live with HIV. Governments and NGOs have invested large sums in a quest to achieve universal access to HIV treatment, yet many women living with HIV have not benefitted. Violence, poverty, stigma, conservative cultural and religious beliefs, discriminatory laws and policies, and limited access to basic services all combine to keep women from getting and staying on appropriate antiretroviral treatment (ART).

JASS' movement-building strategies in Malawi are designed to surface and overcome these very shame-ridden issues – ones that service-based programs and advocacy do not address. JASS draws on women's personal experiences to build solidarity and networks among groups of women and apply their collective strength to organizing for change. Working with networks such as the Coalition of Women Farmers and MANERELA+ (the Malawi Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Affected by AIDS), JASS brings grassroots women together from all walks of life – such as rural farmers, sex workers, home-based care providers – to tell their stories and mobilize to challenge discrimination and violence against women.

By sharing stories, women are able to break out of their isolation and build the kind of trust and solidarity essential for effective organizing. They gain the confidence to confront the prejudices they face in day-to-day life.

JASS' movement-building strategies have a ripple effect, as activists become organizers and their collective successes fuel momentum. Looking ahead to 2013, these activists in Malawi are building a nation-wide grassroots constituency and seeking allies among prominent NGOs, and new government reforms to launch their campaign for quality treatment and the right to health.

“Today many of us who have been associated with JASS are able to communicate on a regular basis and support each other. We have built firm relationships and we share symbols, jokes, songs and survival strategies.”
JESSICA (NOT HER REAL NAME), MALAWI

“In Malawi, women contribute a great deal of the workforce to have sufficient and secure food. However, the majority have been infected with HIV. Women living with HIV have been experiencing enormous body disfiguring because of the medication and feel stigmatized. As COWLHA members (the Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS), together with women in the rural areas, we collectively want to fight against this deforming. It has cosmetic and psychological consequences, which also may decrease adherence to therapy. We want quality ARVs as well as a good practical relation with ART doctors to review the appearance-related side effects.”
JUDITH MKANDAWIRE, MALAWI





After attending the first JASS meeting where we all shared stories about our lives, I realized that I was not getting out of the poverty trap because I was taking care of a man at the expense of saving my money. I was hit with the shattering knowledge that the ideas I had lived by were wrong, oppressive, and mindless. I made a vow that I would move out of his home and within two months, using the 'power within', one day I left him."

SARAH (NOT HER REAL NAME), MALAWI



I went to see our Member of Parliament (MP) to discuss the issue of land allocation. I apologized for coming without any appointment, explaining that I had been waiting for almost five hours, that I represented a big constituency of people living with HIV and that I needed to present their views. An angry secretary came storming in, saying that I did not have an appointment. The MP told her she should give me a few minutes since I had come from far and was representing many people. I laid out my case, and at the end I reminded him that we voted for him. Today, each member of our group has been allocated a little piece of land. It's not enough but fighting for it has given us more courage to fight for more."

MAVIS (NOT HER REAL NAME), MALAWI

MESOAMERICA: COMMUNITY RADIO WITH INDIGENOUS AND RURAL WOMEN

The right to communicate means a lot to indigenous and rural women and women of Afro-descent – their voices are often silenced or ignored. Since 2010, JASS Mesoamerica and Sinergia No'j in Guatemala have collaborated in an ongoing communications for movement-building training program, with women activists from Mexico to Panama. As part of this process, in late 2011, more than 30 women activists from all seven countries participated in a four-day workshop on the use of community radio to mobilize against violence. In addition to learning about radio and developing a political communications strategy, the group analyzed the ways that the media reinforce stereotypes of gender, class and race.

With the support of Feminist International Radio (RIF) and *Canal TV Maya* (a multicultural Guatemalan TV station), the women recorded and produced a range of radio and video pieces including a talk show on *Mujeres Convocando* and a radio segment, *Uniting Our Voices* (Uniendo Nuestras Voces).

“Violence against women is being made invisible even within our own indigenous communities. And yet women are always present, standing with the entire community for land, against mining, against forced displacement.”

SONIA ENRÍQUEZ, KUNA, PRESIDENT OF THE PANAMANIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN (CONAMUIP)



FEMINIST POPULAR EDUCATION

The JASS community is steeped in a particularly political way of learning, analyzing, and taking action. From the beginning, this approach – feminist popular education – has shaped JASS' vision and strategies. In 2011, JASS undertook a series of activities that highlighted what this approach has meant to the work. Drawing on the thinking and experience of many pioneering popular educators within the network, JASS set out to better understand and define how feminist popular education shapes our movement-building in different contexts.

“Popular education” comes from Latin America where “popular” means “of, for and by people.” It is a learning approach where people teach and learn from each other by critically examining their lives and contexts, and the issues that matter most to them. By questioning the structural and ideological causes of these issues, the learning process raises awareness, helps empower people, and defines a shared agenda for their organizing and joint actions. Attributed to the ground-breaking political work of Brazilian scholar and activist Paulo Freire, popular education was forged within peasant land struggles, influenced revolutionary movements against dictatorships in Latin America, and shaped grassroots struggles for justice in the USA and around the world for decades.

Where initial approaches identified class as the major force creating social hierarchies, feminists and racial justice activists from the 1970s onwards have added gender, race, and other dimensions shaping inequality. Recognizing how the private sphere is often the primary force shaping women's internalized oppression, feminists identify multiple, intersecting markers of oppression, including gender, class, sexuality, age, ability, nationality, location, and ethnicity. JASS is contributing to these important advances in philosophy and pedagogy today with strategies that combine individual and collective empowerment aimed at problem-solving while building more dynamic movements for greater influence and social change.



FEMINIST POPULAR EDUCATION IN PRACTICE

JASS political facilitators apply the same core principles in every region:

- Create a safe space of trust and solidarity
- Start with the concrete experiences of women's daily lives
- Use stories, art, theater and other ways to generate open-ended questions that promote critical and creative thinking and deepen understanding about power
- Promote learning by doing, connected to concrete problems and practical solutions
- Prioritize reflection, dialogue and action as the primary way to learn
- Acknowledge and address diversity, power dynamics and conflict
- Recognize the need to challenge assumptions and probe alternatives
- Share new information and terms that enable participants to name what they are experiencing and see the global forces behind the local and personal
- Tap women's sense of hope, inspiration, and joy
- Provide time for self-care and personal renewal

PATRIARCHY

Women from anywhere in the world recognize the concept of patriarchy even if they don't use the word: systemic and institutionalized male domination and the privileging of masculinities over femininities. Patriarchy operates through power and control over resources, including over women's bodies and sexuality. Internalized through norms, values, and beliefs, patriarchy is reproduced through social institutions such as schools, the media, religion, and the family.

PATRIARCHY IS:

- **a way of seeing and understanding the world through male eyes.**
Lori Heise
- **inextricable from racism and imperialism.**
Azola Goqwana
- **in your bedroom, telling you how to have sex and with whom, what you must wear and look like, what you must and must not eat.**
Maggie Mapondera
- **not about women and men but about masculinities and femininities.**
JoJo Guan
- **the force that, in the name of culture, has an elderly woman ask a young man for permission.**
Thoko Phiri
- **so insidious that we uphold it ourselves as women, as patriarchy's footsoldiers and gatekeepers.**
Hope Chigudu
- **always shifting, playing out in new ways.**
Shereen Essof
- **a system privileging the male in terms of resources, decision making power, and opportunities.**
Srilatha Batliwala

MESOAMERICA: FEMINIST VIRTUAL DEBATE

JASS Mesoamerica hosts a series of feminist virtual debates as part of a feminist popular education initiative called Alquimia (Alchemy). JASS strategic advisor, Alda Facio, a renowned women's rights expert, facilitates these virtual debates in Spanish using a range of social media including Facebook. Women activists from different movements, nationalities, and generations debate ideas across cyberspace to deepen their analysis and energize visions.

In 2011, activists debated the question, "Why is the personal political?" More than 30 voices from across Central America, Mexico, and Spain chimed in with discussions about the body, power, fear, relationships, violence, pain, and transformation.



When I state that my body and everything that is personal is political, I am saying that my body carries signs of abuses and that other women have suffered abuses just like I have. The experience has been personal but the violence is generalized, affects all of society, and requires political solutions."

MARLI CAROLINA



SOUTH EAST ASIA: SEX AND SEXUALITY

Women's reproductive rights are being rolled back as a result of the growing political influence of religious fundamentalists in Southeast Asia. At the same time, the media bombard people with highly sexualized messages. Together with taboos around sex and sexuality, these contradictions confuse people and prevent open and honest dialogue. The safe spaces that JASS creates are therefore rare and much valued. A key element of training for young political facilitators, these opportunities spark vibrant conversations. As a result, sexuality and reproductive rights have risen to the top of JASS Southeast Asia's advocacy agenda.

In East Timor, for instance, where the Catholic Church uses Sunday mass to talk about the "immorality" of homosexual behavior, JASS facilitated a dialogue on stigma and LGBTI. Here, facilitators helped 20 young women and two young men work out how to respond to the awkward questions they get as they carry out their organizing and education efforts in communities.

In Indonesia, those advocating for women's and LGBTI rights meet push-back from all sides: families, communities, government, and conservative Muslim leaders. At JASS workshops, women have the chance to discuss these challenges and to strategize on ways to confront backlash and violence.



SOUTHERN AFRICA: SELF-CARE AND MOVEMENT-BUILDING

A central insight of feminism is that what happens in homes, families and relationships is not "merely" domestic and private, but rather involves power dynamics, hierarchies and injustice. In other words, as the slogan says: the personal is political.

Launched in Zimbabwe, the Heart—Mind—Body Initiative builds on this principle and on feminist popular education. Early on, each woman drew the map of her own body, the canvas for the story of her suffering and her victories. Shared around the circle, such stories generated a collective sense of the wrongs that women have been experiencing. What emerged was an understanding of the layers of injustice, beginning literally on a woman's skin. With skilled facilitation, these conversations go beyond the therapeutic level (important though that is) to reach a common sense of the social forces at work. Because it starts with women's most immediate concerns, the process leads to real problems and concrete action, rather than general and abstract analyses.

Before long, word spread about the value of the Heart—Mind—Body approach. The methodology was soon taken up by Zimbabwean groups such as Women in Politics Support Unit and Katswe Sistahood, a young feminist group. Through JASS' cross-regional exchange, Heart—Mind—Body has also become an important approach for the JASS Women Human Rights Defenders Initiative in Mesoamerica.





FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

DEBATES ABOUT ORGANIZATION

Worldwide, critique of the dominant role of NGOs in civil society can be fierce. NGOs are often blamed for the demobilization of social movements, and the de-politicization of change agendas. NGOs are accused of being the slaves of “donor agendas” rather than an enabling vehicle for citizen action. Those critiques are no less scathing among women’s movements and feminists. Yet, many NGOs have played vital roles in sustaining and supporting vibrant social change agendas throughout history and today. Into this very contentious discussion steps JASS. As an NGO involved in supporting and building movements, JASS is placed squarely in the middle of this debate, together with its many allies. Facing inwards to define JASS’ own institutional path, the discussion gets very lively. Eavesdrop on these excerpts from the JASS blog and from a JASS meeting about NGO-ization and institutions.

“ NGOs – as one professionalized form of civil society organizing – aren’t inherently bad and it’s hard to generalize. We are an NGO. It’s the one-size-fits-all, technical and institutionalized approach to social justice that’s deadening to civil society. Having one institutional format considered the only choice in all contexts just kills the creative energy, which drives human uprising and new ways of working together against injustice. And in Southern Africa especially, because of the extraordinary power of the aid industry relative to other regions, NGOism is like a worldview that has co-opted language and limited potential. In many places, a strict organizational model has turned activists into bureaucrats who only respond to *Madame Chairwoman*.”

LISA VENEKLASSEN, USA

“ Living among tensions means permanently juggling possibility and uncertainty. How to achieve a balance between nurturing love and respect, while also working efficiently? Resist dichotomies. It’s always a bit of this now and some of that later.”

MARIELA ARCE, PANAMA

“ It’s a problem for women everywhere, but particularly in post-colonial contexts or situations of political oppression where people – women especially – have not always had the opportunity to view themselves as subjects. Their bodies are objects, their experiences and even their lives are ‘not worth much’. And this mentality seems to bleed into the way that NGO programs are built, that don’t always allow people to be subjects and to have authorship and ownership over the solutions to the very real problems they face. It’s striking to see how the narratives women build of themselves can be so defined (and confined) by what’s coming from the outside.”

MAGGIE MAPONDERA, ZIMBABWE

“ There is a way in which we do things as NGOs that makes people believe that that is the only way things should be done. Here is an example. We asked the women [in a group in Malawi] to work in groups of three to identify a campaign issue (compelling, and close to their hearts) to focus on during the next few months. Many came up with topics such as women in decision making, girl child network and violence against women. These are common and broad topics for NGOs but are they the ones that keep the women awake at night, the ones that follow them like a shadow?”

HOPE CHIGUDU, UGANDA/ZIMBABWE

“ The latest thinking on forms of global organizing focuses on the tension between culture and structure. To go overboard in either direction leads to bureaucracy or chaos. Many of the models out there are inspired by the military or the church. To be confused is a sign of innovation and change work. If we stay with the same logic we’ll stay in same place – so congratulations on confusion as well as clarity.”

ELLEN SPRENGER, NETHERLANDS/SOUTH AFRICA

“ People find ways of sabotaging a top-down structure in which money is wielded like a stick. Then we have sweet ‘flat’ networks, whose problem is the lack of accountability. All of which leaves us with the task of consciously building a culture of mutual accountability. We have all spent a lot of time trying to find a magic architecture – that does not really exist.”

SRILATHA BATLIWALA, INDIA

AN ORGANIZATION WHOSE TIME HAS COME

BY EVERJOICE WIN, ZIMBABWE



I have known JASS from its inception, its incubation, to where it is now. None of us could have anticipated in the beginning what space there was for JASS to grow, the opportunities that now exist and the needs that it is now meeting.

I came into the feminist movement at the end of the 1980s. At that time, the buzz words were: women's rights as human rights; participation and participatory programming; women's empowerment; legal literacy; and economic literacy. We had institutions to support these processes and

transform these buzz words into practice. I had the privilege of working with Lisa Veneklasen in the early 1990s. She was leading a process that resulted in the formation of Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF), which became a pan-African women's network. One of the key things we did was building network members' capacities to do participatory legal literacy programming. We also helped to build movements across the continent fostering women's human rights.

Fast forward to 2011. Most of the legacy built by WILDAF and others has gone! The very basics of how you work with women "sitting under a tree" seem unknown by younger feminists and other development practitioners. In the international NGO where I worked for nine years as head of women's rights, rare is the program officer who knows how you enter a community, talk to women, build a political agenda, and stay the course of a campaign or a program for five to ten years. It sounds weird but it is true. I come across 40-year-olds who have never been to a village, have never heard of Paulo Freire, let alone read Training for Transformation.

Enter JASS: This is the space that JASS now seeks to occupy. It has slowly built an organization, a movement, a process for what we keep calling "back to basics." Together with JASS, we are building a movement of women working on HIV and AIDS in Southern Africa – an issue that some of us live and breathe each day. JASS has managed to come into what on the surface would look like an over-saturated space – HIV and AIDS work – yet in fact there was no feminist organizing or participatory process that involves women across generations.



It is early days yet. The ways in which JASS works and the kind of organizing they try to do are slow, painstaking, and very participatory. They require a strong institutional framework, capacity and presence. Hence JASS needs support to grow this institutional presence so that they don't rely on those of us who already have six other jobs!

We are now in a world in which so called "advocacy" (read that as lobbying and taking members of parliament to a nice workshop!) is the strategy of choice. Getting more women at the table is the other. But unless these women and these lobbying activities are backed up by the power of numbers, the power of women who speak for themselves and have strong movements, then change is never going to be sustainable, and in some cases, it won't even come! Worst case, changes in policy or new legislation will be rejected by the very women it might claim to benefit. We have seen this happen in this part of the world.

I believe that this region and indeed the women's movement globally needs a JASS, which has a very unique approach to the way they work with and empower women. I believe that JASS is an important organization whose time has come.

PROFILE

MESOAMERICA: CRISTINA HARDAGA FERNÁNDEZ

BY NATALIA ESCRUCERIA REYES

These days, Cristina Hardaga Fernández lives in Guerrero, one of the most impoverished and militarized municipalities in Mexico. But her journey as a human rights activist began in Mexico City as a university student protesting alongside the women of Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez about the rise in femicides and the disappearances of women on the border. After university, Cristina worked for Congress as an advisor to the human rights legislative division.

Three years ago, Cristina chose to leave Mexico City and join Tlachinollan, a pioneering human rights group working with the mostly indigenous people of Guerrero.



“Working with Congress, I witnessed first-hand how gender inequality is entrenched in the structure of the state. From this experience I came to understand both the possibilities and the obstacles for making change through government structures.”

CRISTINA HARDAGA FERNÁNDEZ



Since I joined Tlachinollan, a turning point for me came when I accompanied an indigenous woman from the Me'phaa community, Valentina Rosenda Cantú, to the Inter-American Court for Human Rights in Washington, DC in 2010. In 2002, Vale was raped and tortured by soldiers. Despite great risk and threats to her life, she continued to demand justice for all those years. Working closely with Vale has led me to profound insights. I cherish my friendship with Vale and her family.”

CRISTINA HARDAGA FERNÁNDEZ



Through her experiences, Cristina has learned to navigate a context in which those who raise their voices are threatened and attacked, as civil controls have been replaced by the armed forces. She has witnessed how important it is in risky situations like Guerrero for people like her to accompany women and men on the frontline in order to speak out.

Cristina first encountered JASS during the Mesoamerican Gathering of Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRD) in 2010. “Even though I came representing a mixed organization, they invited me to participate. I had considered myself a feminist, but getting to know JASS, its work and staff was a defining moment for me on a personal level and for my work in defending human rights.”

This regional gathering, which took place in April 2010, had a profound effect on many of those who attended it. It was organized by JASS together with the five other organizations that make up the Mesoamerican Women Human Rights Defenders Initiative (IM-Defensoras): Consorcio Oaxaca, la Colectiva Feminista; Central American Women’s Fund; AWID; and UDEFEGUA. At the gathering, Cristina forged links for future collaborations. In particular, she sought JASS’ involvement in the case involving Valentina and another indigenous woman from Guerrero, Inés Fernández. “JASS’ support was vital, unconditional and generous,” says Cristina. “JASS also got the Nobel Women’s Initiative involved and together we brought visibility to the issue of military jurisdiction, which the authorities had used to prevent Inés and Vale from accessing justice, and appeal their decision to try the perpetrators in a military court instead of a civilian criminal court.”

Later, Cristina joined the National WHRD Network in Mexico. As fellow members, Cristina’s organization Tlachinollan worked with JASS to prepare for the JASS-Nobel Women’s Initiative delegation and mission to Mexico in early 2012. Cristina appreciates the space that JASS creates for activists and their organizations to be self-critical as well as develop better strategies to pursue a common vision. She says, “I’ve seen how women-only spaces are one crucial element that makes JASS different,” noting her amazement at the sisterhood that is generated and the sincere desire that exists, across marked differences, to act together.

“We are told that the ideal way of working in the defense of human rights is to not personally involve yourself, but how is this possible, given that our work is about trust, mutual interests, shared concerns? With Valentina, through Tlachinollan, I learned that this is exactly what accompanying means – defending people, not cases.”

CRISTINA HARDAGA FERNÁNDEZ

TLACHINOLLAN

Based in Tlapa de Comonfort, the *Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña Tlachinollan* has fought poverty, discrimination, and abandonment of indigenous communities in one of the poorest regions in Mexico for over 18 years. During its first ten years (1994–2004), Tlachinollan documented 68 cases of human rights violations by the Mexican military involving torture, forced disappearance, and the rape of indigenous women. Numbers have escalated since then: in 2009 alone, Tlachinollan dealt with 14 cases of military abuses. As well as speaking out against militarization in Guerrero, Tlachinollan has promoted access for indigenous communities to education, health services, and justice. In 2007, with two other Mexican organizations, the Center co-founded an innovative Civilian Monitor to document abuses by security forces operating in the region and seek resolution for the victims, including defending members of the police whose rights have been violated.

For more information visit: www.tlachinollan.org



PROFILE

SOUTHEAST ASIA: SITI HARSUN

BY MARIA MUSTIKA

When I first met Siti Harsun, my impression was of a quiet girl and a warm smile. But I soon learned not to be fooled by her appearance. Beneath her gentle manner, Harsun is a fierce organizer. Once our discussion turned to food security, her soft voice became fiery and filled with indignation.

As food prices rise, Harsun explained, the quality deteriorates. Women struggle to feed their families, buying cheaper but much less nutritious items mass-produced by corporations, artificially flavored and colored. This is the face of neo-liberalism, changing the way people eat. Instead of protecting citizens, the state is silent. But food is important at every level, Harsun argues, from the home to the country's security. Instead of waiting for the state to lead the way, she started a campaign for food independence with the slogan "ora utang, ora tuku, gawe dhewe" (no debt, don't buy, make your own). This growing movement rejects the trans-fat snacks and instant factory-made noodles available everywhere, and encourages people to go back to producing and preparing their own food. In the organization, Serikat Petani Qaryah Tayyibah (SPPQT), a federation of local farmers from ten districts in Central Java, members buy raw materials and prepared food from each other.

Who is this fierce activist? What is her story? It turns out that Harsun's journey to this point has taken many turns. In the late 1990s, she earned a diploma in computer studies, at the same time working to support herself in a factory, as a waiter in a restaurant, and as a soy sauce salesperson at malls in a number of cities and towns in Central Java and Yogyakarta provinces. She considers herself a survivor of trafficking after a friend lured her into traveling to Papua ostensibly to work in a restaurant there in 1999. On the journey, others informed her that they would actually be employed as sex workers rather

than waitresses, so Harsun fled from the troupe. Her experiences drove Harsun to form SEKAR (Youth Creation and Creativity Studio) in Salatiga, Central Java with women friends. Around 24 unmarried teenagers, men and women, held regular discussions, with topics ranging from job-seeking, human trafficking, adolescent sex education to establishing and managing a library.

Then, in 2003, SEKAR joined a village community organization and became part of SPPQT, the umbrella group of farmers. Within SPPQT, Harsun's potential was recognized and she was selected for training of trainers by groups such as Solidaritas Perempuan (Women's Solidarity) and the International Labor Organization (ILO). By 2011, Harsun had become a member of SPPQT's governing council where she leads the work on women and children.

In 2009, Harsun joined JASS Southeast Asia's movement-building initiative, first in a capacity-building workshop for young women activists, and later in a writeshop to document experiences and learning in the women's movement, published as *PRISMA: Women's Stories*. JASS processes struck Harsun as unique in many ways. She valued the creative and participatory methods that JASS facilitators use, such as a poster café, night-time discussion sessions, and the use of multimedia for analyzing power relations.

The communications skills that Harsun learned with JASS continue to enrich her organizing efforts. She feels she has gained a clear understanding of the history of the women's movement and how it can work to meet women's needs. With the tools to analyze power and the solidarity of JASS women activists, Harsun is better equipped, she says, to assert herself and take the lead as an organizer. Together with another JASS activist, Fika Mudia Rahman, Harsun is now building a radio community to share experiences between villagers.



Harsun started a campaign for food independence with the slogan "ora utang, ora tuku, gawe dhewe" (no debt, don't buy, make your own). This growing movement rejects the trans-fat snacks and instant factory-made noodles available everywhere, and encourages people to go back to producing and preparing their own food.



PROFILE

SOUTHERN AFRICA: NANA ZULU

BY MAGGIE MAPONDERA AND ANNA DAVIES-VAN ES

It's not easy to identify yourself as a feminist in Zambia. You risk violent backlash or isolation in your community, workplace, and relationships. For Nana Zulu, her first contact with JASS in 2009 raised the question: What does it mean to be a feminist in Zambia today?

“The discussion made me think about my own personal life and how decisions were made for me, like the pressure to get married and have babies. And in the workplace, even though I was running a program for women, all of my superiors were men! The JASS power analysis helped me to understand ‘power over’ as something structural, not just this or that individual being difficult.”

NANA ZULU

Looking back, Nana recalls this civil-society gathering in Lusaka in 2009 as a key moment on her journey. She was struck by the radicalism of Central American feminists in a video that JASS showed, and began to make connections with her own situation. When she went on to attend JASS training institutes in 2010, Nana noticed how learning about practical methodologies shifted things. In this welcoming environment of the workshop, the young women began to talk about sexual pleasure alongside the reproductive health topics that Nana had worked on for some time. The censoring effect of patriarchy, Nana realized, reaches across every level of a woman's life. She brought these new insights and ways of thinking into her

“

When we got there, the room was laid out very formally with conference tables. Shamillah, the facilitator, immediately said, ‘We have to move the tables.’ I thought, this woman is crazy but then I realized that just changing the set-up made people feel safer and the space more interactive. If we felt tired, we could lie on the floor or take off our shoes. It was the first time a workshop invited me to open up.”

NANA ZULU

work context, beginning at Youth Vision Zambia (YVZ) and later at Women and Law in Southern Africa. The Young Women's Leadership Academy (YWLA), a collaboration between YVZ and JASS, involved a hard-won battle for women-only spaces.

The questions tackled by the YWLA are valuable ones for all young feminists:

- What does it mean to be a feminist within a culture or religion at odds with women's freedoms?
- How has NGO-ization sculpted the way we think of feminist work?
- What does it mean to be a “good, young Zambian woman”?
- How can young women mobilize as feminists for positive change?

Post-colonial Zambia is a complex mix of forces. Globalization and neoliberal policies sit side by side with nationalism, religious fundamentalism, and a conservative culture that reinforces traditional gender norms. The rich history of women's rights work in the country has been diluted by “gender mainstreaming” and NGO-ization. For younger women of Nana's age, the older generation of activists and thinkers seem to have been muted. The most contentious issues continue to be abortion and the identity and rights of LGBTI people: complicated for some young women who identify as feminist and Christian. There are no simple answers. What provides Nana with a foundation is the sense of her own “power within”. “Even what we feel is our weakness,” she says, “can actually prove to be a strength.”



Even what we feel is our weakness, can actually prove to be a strength.”

NANA ZULU



GENERATION ALIVE

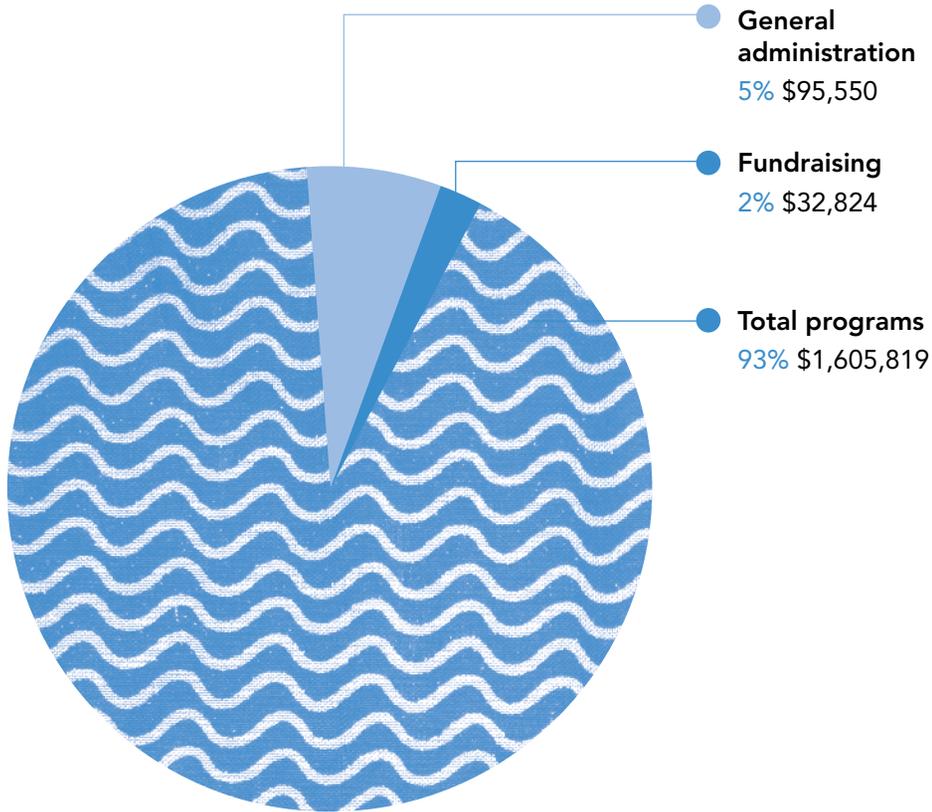
Nana and others involved in the YWLA wanted to move beyond workshops and towards collective action, creating new spaces where a new generation can find their own voice. They formed Generation Alive – a group of passionate young feminists asserting a feminist agenda

for change in Zambia – as a step towards feminist movement-building. The group’s first concrete objectives are to:

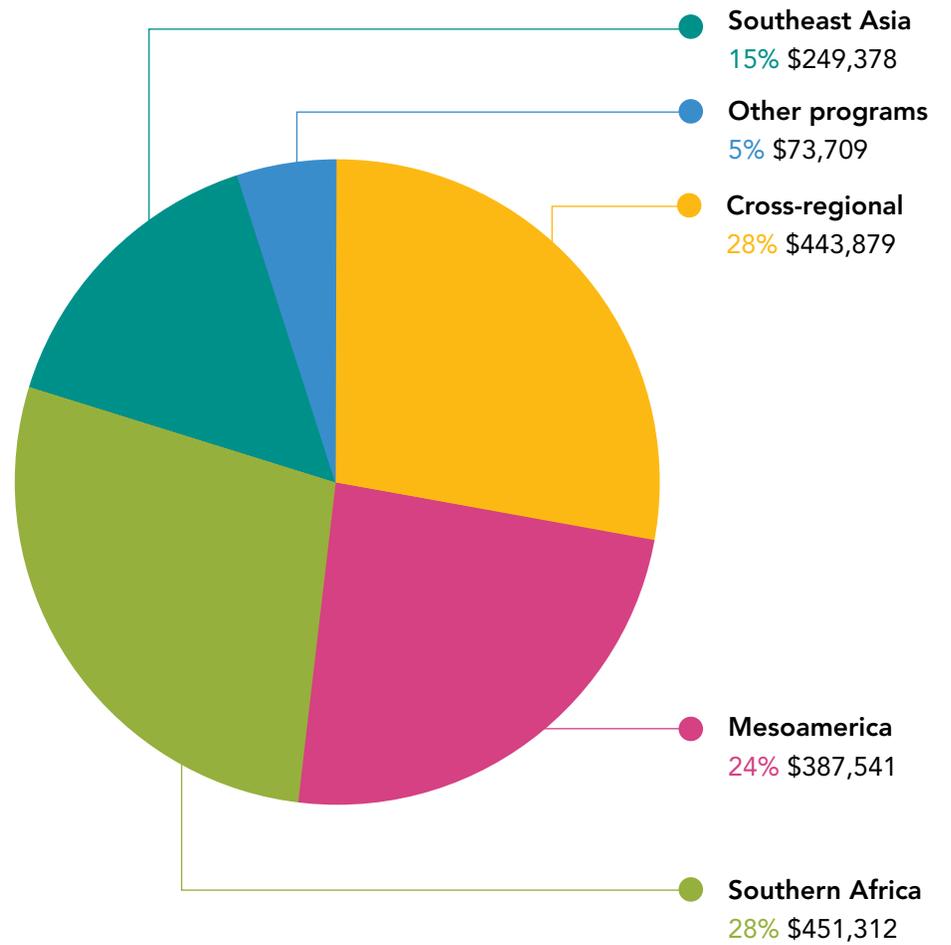
- ascertain the number of women in leadership positions in NGOs, political institutions, faith-based groups and the private sector;
- organize to ensure women’s participation in the 2016 elections; and
- create a safe space for women to take discussions further on sexual health and rights, economic independence, work culture and more.

FINANCIALS

JASS 2011 TOTAL EXPENSES



JASS 2011 EXPENSES BY REGION



PEOPLE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Srilatha Batliwala, *Co-Chair*
Lori Heise, *Co-Chair*
Malena de Montis
Valerie Miller
Marivic Raquiza
Atila Roque
Barbara Schriefer
Revai Makanje Aalbaek

JASS CROSS-REGIONAL

Lisa VeneKlasen, *Executive Director*
Carrie Wilson
Carmen Sahonero
Annie Holmes
Maggie Mapondera
Natalia Escruceria
Brittany Alexander
Charlotta Beavers

JASS MESOAMERICA

Marusia López Cruz, *Regional Coordinator*
Daysi Flores
Patricia Ardon
Alda Facio
Mariela Arce
Laura Velázquez de León
Orfe Castillo Osorio

JASS SOUTHERN AFRICA

Shereen Essof, *Regional Coordinator*
Hope Chigudu
Shamillah Wilson
Azola Goqwana
Mireille Hendricks
Dudziro Nhengu
Rudo Chitiga
Sally-Jean Shackleton

SPECIAL PROJECT: AFRICA CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Hope Chigudu
Ellen Sprenger
Jessica Horne

JASS SOUTHEAST ASIA

Nani Zulminarni, *Regional Coordinator*
Niken Lestari
Dina Lumbantobing
Dyah Fitriyani
Kunthea Chan
Chey Cheysovanna
Amporn Boontan
Jojo Guan
Jelen Paclarin
Maria Barreto
Maria Mustika
Yasinta Lujina
Tijah Yok Chopil
Mano Subramaniam

DONORS

Anonymous, USA
Channel Foundation, USA
Comic Relief, United Kingdom
Fund for Global Human Rights, USA (through our Mesoamerica partners)
General Service Foundation, USA
Global Fund for Women, USA
MacArthur Foundation/Semillas Mexican Women's Fund
MDG3 Fund, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands
Oak Foundation, Switzerland
Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa, South Africa
Samuel Rubin Foundation, USA
Seattle International Foundation, USA
Shimkin Foundation, USA
Sigrid Rausing Trust, United Kingdom
Stephen Lewis Foundation, Canada

Many individuals and friends who generously share their time and connections
Special thanks to Free Range Studios



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report was designed by Jane Shepherd and edited by Annie Holmes from stories by JASS contributors including Lisa Veneklasen, Carrie Wilson, Maggie Mapondera, Valerie Miller, Natalia Escruceria, Anna Davies-van Es and Maria Mustika.

The cover photograph shows women from JASS in Indonesia taking part in a regional Human Rights Day campaign in Yogyakarta. Translated, the stickers say "Rights for all."



info@justassociates.org
www.justassociates.org

JASS GLOBAL OFFICES

JASS Southeast Asia

@ PEKKA
Jl. Lapangan 1, Komplek Duren Sawit Asri
Kav. 1 No. 2A, Rawa Domba, Duren Sawit,
Jakarta Timur, Indonesia
Tel: (62) 21 860 9325/860 3787
Fax: (62) 21 860 3787
Email: jass.sea@gmail.com

JASS Mesoamerica

Calle 5 de Mayo, #7 Despacho 211
2do. piso
Col. Centro
Delegación Cuauhtemoc
C.P. 06000 México, D.F.
Tel: (52) 55 5512 45 21
Email: natalia@justassociates.org

JASS Southern Africa

49 Roodebloem Road,
Woodstock 7925
Cape Town, South Africa
Tel: (27) 21 447 6740
Email: maggie@justassociates.org

JASS Cross-Regional

2040 S Street, NW, #300
Washington, DC 20009, USA
Tele: (1) 202 232 1211
Fax: (1) 202 232 4715
Email: info@justassociates.org