



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

POWER. MOVEMENTS. CHANGE.





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OUR VISION

JASS dreams of a just, liberated and sustainable world, where all people are free, safe and fully resourced – and where the planet and all living beings are well cared for. The social transformation we want to see requires deep shifts in the structures and dynamics of power that drive and sustain inequity, violence and the destruction of the planet.

* For JASS, “women” is inclusive of queer, non-binary, and trans women because they, like women, face gender-based discrimination and oppression by the patriarchal system.

OUR MISSION

We strengthen women’s* leadership, organising capacity and the long-term collective power of movements. We call this building “Just Power”.

OUR HEART

Feminist Popular Education is our core approach to feminist movement building. It is at the heart of our work, pulsing through everything we do to build power.



A NOTE FROM SHEREEN

If I had to name just one characteristic that binds JASS' movement strengthening work across such diverse countries and regions, it would be the act of walking with, among and alongside women leaders and their communities as they organise for transformative change – drawing on valuable lessons from their activism and sharing resources to build the power of our interconnected struggle and visions.

To drive impact and affect change one must be on a continual path toward self-knowledge – understanding who you are, what you value, and how you need to show up. This journey is not one taken in isolation. What good would change work be if it is self-serving, disconnected from the lived realities and experiences of others?

In 2023, we emerged with a new strategic frame for the next ten years. The process of development

When you realise that as a woman you matter, this consciousness and self knowledge is key for transformation but not sufficient. An individual cannot transform oppression; we must come together in collective struggle and communities of resistance that have the power to sustain action and make change together, out there, then we are in the business of transforming our world. – Ruth Ochieng

demanded a pause – to remember and centre what fuels and sustains our work from the self to the organisation, to the collective power and action of the groups, networks and movements we work with. We shaped our future direction and made critical choices. Choices that will keep us agile to movement needs, proactive yet responsive; that provide us with anchors in moments of precarity and invite boldness and clarity in periods of contestation.

Just as the movement and feminist popular education traditions of JASS kept us radical and relevant for over two decades, in 2023 we reaffirmed our unshakable commitment to building the power of transformative movements – the true drivers of change.



WHAT TIME IS IT ON THE CLOCK OF THE WORLD?

Our world is not the same as it was ten, five, or even two years ago. As the clock of the world ticks, the political, economic and social contexts continue to shift. In order to more deeply understand the meaning of this moment, to be able to better respond to it, we at JASS asked ourselves “What time is it on the clock of the world?” – and by extension what should our offer to the world be in these times?

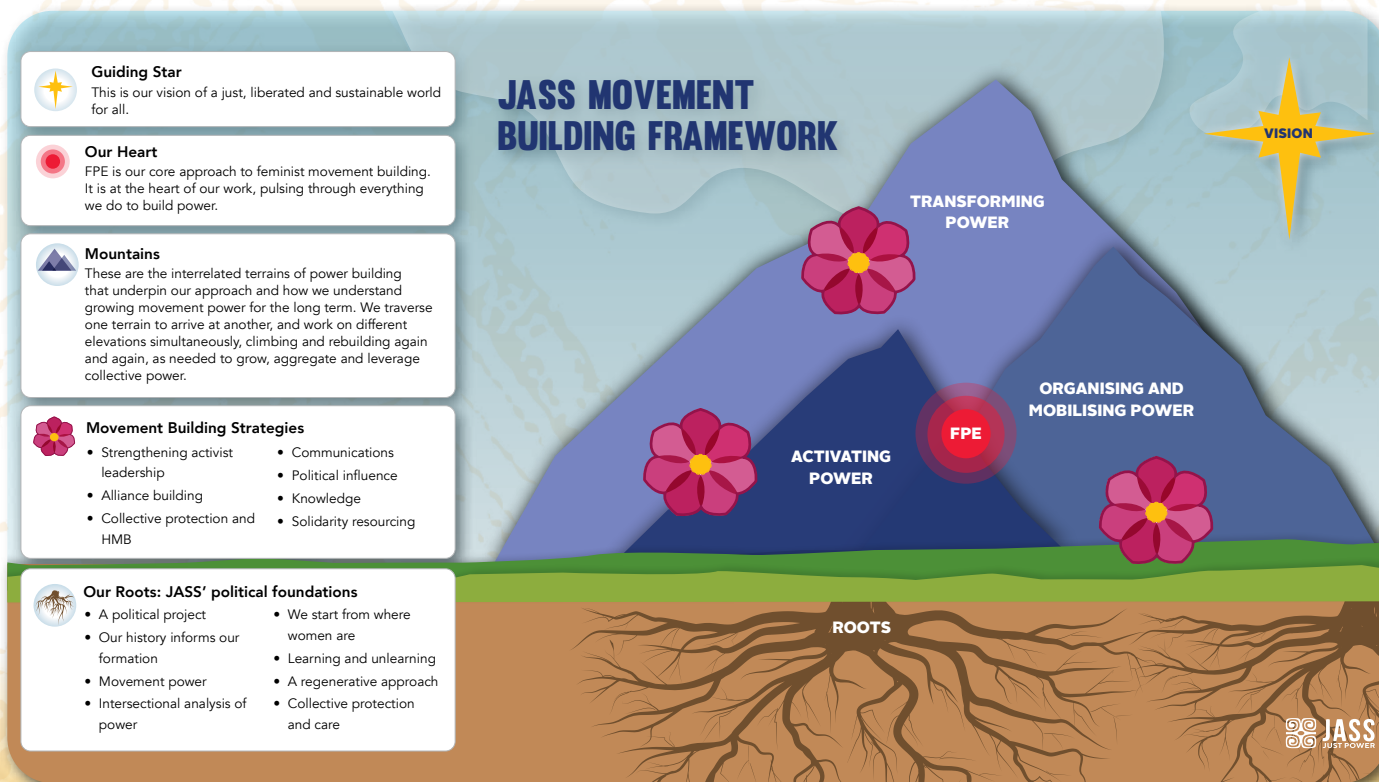
Globally, right wing governments and conservative forces continue to build and mobilise support based on resentments, fear and scarcity. Extractive industries intensify their plunder of resources, leaving environmental devastation and displacement in communities’ already facing social, economic and political precarity. Conservative narratives are used to ignite negative emotions that drive violence and division. Land, bodies, and life itself are under attack everywhere.

Increasing attacks on ‘others’ – other races, other nationalities, other genders, other ideologies – and the horrors of an unfolding genocide of the Palestinian people, wars and ongoing armed conflicts across the world, require that we rethink our strategies. And at the same time, find inspiration in the many forms of resistance, organising, and mobilising - some spontaneous, some built on years of careful building.

Black power organisers and philosophers, Grace Lee Boggs and Jimmy Boggs, visualised “3,000 years of human history on a 12-hour clock where every minute represents 50 years”. They advocated for ‘visionary organising’ rooted in re-imagining not only structures and institutions but also ourselves and our relationships. This inspired the title of our dialogue.

The reflections from our [two-part global dialogue](#) [What Time Is It on the Clock of the World](#) shaped our staff and Board retreat in June at which we began the development of a new strategic frame. Drawing on an extensive organisational assessment including interviews with over 140 allies, as well as reflections on our on-going leadership strengthening and movement building processes in which more than 2500 activists took part in 2023, this process clarified our political project and contribution to social transformations that work for people and the planet.

The resulting Strategic Framework: Power. Movements. Change (2023–33) affirms our dedication to strengthening feminist leadership, building collective power and the movement infrastructure essential for sustainable solutions and transformative change. The framework details our understanding of what it takes to build the power of movements across three ‘terrains’ of power – activating, organising/mobilising, and transforming power. It lays out pathways of change and points to 7 core strategies for the transformation of the structures and dynamics of power that drive and sustain inequity and violence. **We call this building Just Power.**





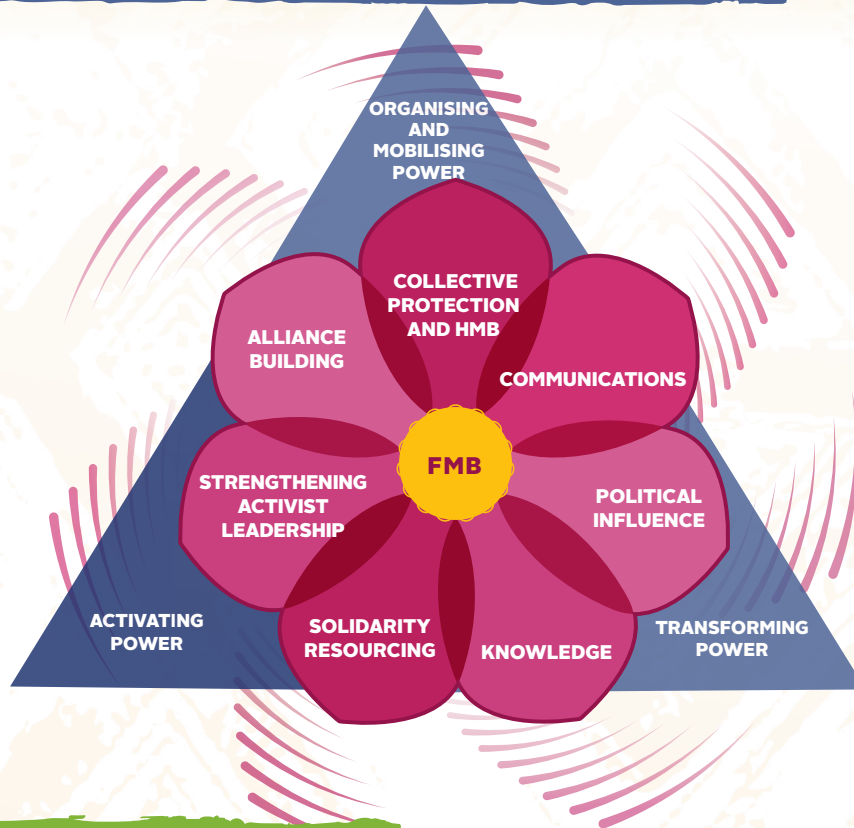
WHAT'S THE OFFER?

Our strategic frame stands firmly on our historical and political foundations and on the perspectives, demands, and knowledge of women as they continue to respond to precariousness and lead change with creativity and innovation.

Over the coming ten years, JASS commits to:

- **Feminist Popular Education** as our core approach, reinvigorating and expanding our practice of liberatory education and political facilitation for social change.
- Movements of joy and care integrating collective protection to respond to threat, risk, exclusion and isolation.
- Transnational, cross-sector organising and alliances for numbers, influence, narrative power and impact.
- Claim and create political space for women's demands and influence the thinking and decisions of power holders to advance our global agendas.
- An overt racial justice lens in our feminist analysis that meaningfully considers power, race, and specifically anti-blackness, and how they intersect.
- Building and strengthening movement infrastructure, tools and resources (financial and political) for women organising at the intersections of bodies, rights, voice, and safety.
- A bold vision of **Power For**, offering pathways for movements to dream the world we want and move towards it.

JASS FEMINIST MOVEMENT BUILDING STRATEGIES



FOUR GLOBAL AGENDAS

The entry points into our movement strengthening work:

1. Collective Protection and Shaping Civic Space
2. Bodies, Rights, Freedoms
3. Feminist Economic and Climate Justice
4. Feminist Popular Education to Strengthen Movements



NO MOVEMENTS, NO POWER

2023 saw major elections in all of the regions JASS works in. Rather than demonstrating a robust commitment to democracy, however, the year revealed that democracy is under threat in the face of authoritarian states and that right-wing movements are seeking to curtail civic participation in all spheres. The critical task of forging stronger feminist and progressive social movements to defend the principle and practice of democracy, as well as the space for civic participation has never been more strategic.

For years, JASS has engaged in dialogues with partners and allies about the role and place of elections from a movement building perspective. Are elections a mobilising moment? Do they serve as a useful opportunity to get concerns on the agenda? Or does participation in fraught electoral processes deplete, incur risk, and weaken our

organisations? While there is no single answer, we found consensus among women leaders on one point: whether you engage in elections or not, the accompanying on the ground organising is essential to strengthen the voice, power and safety of otherwise excluded communities. In 2023, it was evident through a series of movement building schools, that women leaders and their organisations held more nuanced thinking on elections, rejecting the false dilemma of whether to participate or not, and exploring the potentials and pitfalls of engaging with the state in general without losing autonomy and direction.

Three electoral processes in 2023 illustrate three contextually relevant approaches used by women in thinking about elections and their implications, while committing to doing the work of centering democratic practice.

GUATEMALA: HOW A PEOPLE'S RESISTANCE CHANGED THE COURSE OF HISTORY

Our partners in women's and mixed organisations joined a [popular uprising to defend Guatemala's elections](#) after a progressive candidate, Bernardo Arevalo, ousted the ruling elite in an upset victory. When powerful members of the corrupt elite attempted to retain power by overturning the popular vote, Guatemalans, led by Indigenous organisations, mobilised nationwide to prevent them from subverting the country's democracy.

Debora Quiacain, an Indigenous activist from the Tz'utujil town San Pedro La Laguna and a graduate of JASS Mesoamerica's [Alquimia: Feminist Leadership Schools](#), explained the decision to mobilise:

“This was the catalyst—when they had the nerve to go so far as to eliminate the election. That's a dictatorship, imposed from within state institutions... so the Indigenous authorities stood up and said 'Ok, we've got to pull together; it's now or never'.”



Their triumph shows how effective—and necessary—a people's defence of democracy can be. But the Indigenous women who helped save democracy over 5 months in the streets, have no illusions that the fight is over. As Abigail Monroy, Maya Kaqchikel and ancestral authority of Chuarrancho, put it:

“The Guatemalan people initiated this resistance to defend democracy in the country. But we women say we still have a lot of work to do... We want a free democracy for our peoples, with us—the women who have been part of this fight for national justice, for local justice, who seek the right to the common good.”

ZIMBABWE: USING ELECTIONS TO ORGANISE FOR CHANGE

Elections in Zimbabwe historically mark an intensification of violence and repression and in the run up to August 2023 our partners were bracing themselves for the inevitable results of a stolen election. One activist described it as “business as usual” while another called it the continuation of “extractivism, oppression, and lawfare.”

In a context where elections are performative and used to legitimise an authoritarian state, JASS and our partners responded to the elections with a diverse and complex set of strategies. In regions where activists could make local gains, we supported their organising during the pre-election period. For example, in Hopely, a feminist activist circle organising sex workers, accompanied by JASS, supported the campaign of one woman candidate in local government elections. The backing of the organised sex workers contributed to her winning the election resulting in improved access to the councillor to request solutions and services towards their needs and demands.

However, in areas where electoral fraud and repression were heightened, the context demanded a focus on safety and protection. In these areas, we created space to engage in critical conversations

* Activists' names have been reserved for security reasons.



about our visions of the future while bolstering community efforts for basic needs that should be provided for by a citizen oriented government. As one activist noted:

“Elections aren't going to bring the political change and justice that Zimbabwe needs. It's that grounded, women-led organising for needs and rights which will bring lasting change.”

Post the election plagued with reports of irregularities and coercion, JASS partner organisations convened a series of dialogues to reflect, analyse and continue the work of ongoing and long term political consciousness-raising to rebuild active and engaged communities, thereby reweaving the social fabric and supporting organising around basic needs in a country that has been decimated by structural violence and militarism.



INDONESIA: A UNIFIED POLITICAL AGENDA FOR WOMEN

Ahead of national elections in 2024, JASS partners decided to use the pre-electoral period to articulate their call for women's rights in Indonesia, where women face severe restrictions of freedom of expression and discrimination in a rigidly patriarchal society in which fundamentalist groups have a strong influence. [According to JASS organiser Desti Murdijana](#) their analysis revealed the upcoming elections to be “a power struggle among a privileged few, where votes are only used to legitimise and consolidate power”.

JASS joined with 100 women community leaders in May 2023 to build a unified political agenda for women as a tool to both promote women's

demands and hold elected leaders accountable. The resulting [10-point women's political agenda](#) included protection from violence against women, children and women human rights defenders (WHRDs); ending the exploitation and extraction of natural resources, reforestation, recognition of local land ownership and reclaiming of ancestral lands; the provision of accessible services and infrastructure; and economic justice. As they took the platform from community to community, the community leaders experienced the power of creating safe spaces in which women can talk about issues that affect their lives and that have traditionally marginalised them. In the process, women grew more aware and more united.



SPOTLIGHT: STRENGTHENING THE VOICE AND LEADERSHIP OF WOMEN IN INDONESIA

JASS' long-term support to *We Lead*, a powerful alliance of over 200 community-based women's groups through five women's rights organisations (FAMM Indonesia, Fahmina, Perempuan Mahardhika, Rahima, and Rumah KitaB) culminated in a series of impactful results for women's lives and leadership in Indonesia.

JASS has walked alongside the women activists, women ulema (clerics or Muslim scholars with specialist knowledge of Islamic sacred law and theology), and women academics who are part of *We Lead*, providing sustained political accompaniment and feminist popular education (FPE) that built mutual trust, solidarity, care, and the foundation

for respectful collaboration. Acknowledging the challenges of building an alliance across diverse women and issues, we created cross-movement spaces to forge connections and define collective agendas.

After the ratification of the Sexual Violence Law in May 2022, for which the alliance had mobilised, *We Lead* used the momentum for further advances. Through a JASS-led process on strategy and agenda setting, lecturers from eight universities created a network that quickly became the driver for universities to implement the law. As a result of the courageous and unyielding leadership of the women lecturers and students, in 2023

34 universities established a system for preventing and handling cases of sexual violence. At the community level, JASS accompanied women's collectives, using sustained FPE processes, as they pushed decision-makers to adopt local policies and programs that considered women's demands. For example, a women's collective in West Java successfully influenced the district government to establish a coordination forum for handling cases of violence against women.

Women ulema who participated in schools that integrated FPE as methodology, experienced increased ability to lead work that shifted attitudes to Islam and gender, as evidenced by religious lectures and writings using a progressive

interpretation of the Koran. Their stronger leadership resulted in the adoption of progressive recommendations on issues that are considered sensitive, such as women ulemas' leadership, sexual violence, abortion, female genital mutilation, and forced and child marriage during the 2nd Women Ulema Congress.

The successes of the We Lead alliance demonstrate how a movement strengthening approach can have a far-reaching ripple effect—enabling members to better respond to the challenges of political polarisation, rising religious extremism, the intensifying impact of extractivism and the climate crisis, and the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.





THE MOMENT CALLS FOR TRANSNATIONAL SOLUTIONS

When we zero in on the experiences of Indigenous, Black, poor, and queer women, both rural and urban, in the Majority World, it can seem that each context, while unique, is similarly dire. This can lead to hopelessness, those with power are just too powerful, that change is not possible. The internalised oppression of patriarchy, coloniality and structural racism can convince us that we are the problem. But women are pushing back and organising, compelled to survive.

However, to truly shift the structure and dynamics of power that sustain and drive violence and inequity, we need to do more than survive: we need to address the roots of the problems that are strangling us and our planet. To do so, we need to see the connections between seemingly disconnected realities and see clearly what is happening, who is benefiting, and why – a systematic analysis of power across borders and issues that can give rise to solidarity and strategic collaboration.

“
The need for transnational, cross-sector organising has never been greater. Given multi-issue, international consolidation of the right and an increasingly centralised and concentrated globalised economic system, we must organise across borders, issues, identities and sectors - simultaneously. – **What time is it on the Clock of the World** JASS Global Dialogue summary
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FEMINIST MOVEMENT BUILDERS SCHOOL FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

Unless we are clear and committed to what it really means to build movements that actively seek to disrupt racism, anti blackness and anti indigeneity that produce specific forms of exclusion and violence, we risk embracing movement strategies that reinforce the very oppressions we are trying to overturn.

In September 2023, JASS teamed up with the [Feminist Centre for Racial Justice \(FCRJ\)](#) at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, to host a pilot Feminist Movement Builders' School focused on racial and gender justice, with the recognition that decolonial struggles are integral to feminist movement organising. The school, which took place in Mexico, created a much-needed political space for critical conversation on anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity in the Latin American and Mesoamerican region. This institutional collaboration will continue in the years to come, developing and offering different curricula to deepen our learning and meet the needs of movements in specific contexts.

“Racism is essential to the advance of colonialism, and understanding this is key to thinking through strategies that cut anti-blackness at its very root, opening up space to cultivate coalitions and networks liberated from racist oppression. – [Daniela Cortes Vargas](#), participant to JASS-FCRJ Racial Justice FMBS

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BUILDING BRIDGES FOR COLLECTIVE POWER

In our work with land and territory defenders, we have built a collective understanding of interconnected struggles informed by shared colonial histories. After several years of virtual engagements and preparation, JASS held an in-person [South to South Exchange](#) in October 2023 in Johannesburg, bringing together 30 frontline land defenders from movements in Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, the Philippines, Indonesia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and South Africa.

This powerful gathering of community leaders, some from very remote areas of the world, exchanged strategies, forged connections and common ground in ways that deepened transnational solidarity, fostered care and nourished collective visions of change. For some, the space of reprieve from ongoing risks and threats as a result of their work allowed for rest and retooling. Ultimately, the exchange enabled crucial strategy development and agenda setting.



There is too much oppression, but there is also a lot of resistance to it. We have come a long way, but there is still a long path to walk. The world map shows us the path of extraction. But it also shows us the spread of solidarity. – **land defender, participant in South to South exchange**



These are women on the frontline of resistance, of defending the land, defending the territories. It is important to acknowledge and honour what they actually represent for the struggles. – **Patricia Ardón, JASS Mesoamerica Regional Director**





RISING FUNDAMENTALISM: LGBTQ ORGANISING ACROSS EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

Anti-rights groups use messaging rooted in conservative narratives to spread fear and hatred of anyone who defies socially constructed norms about gender, sexuality and *whose bodies count*. Often backed by interests and funding from the Global North, these narratives carry across borders and their impact is far-reaching, with dire consequences including exclusion, violence and at worst death for those gendered, classed, and racialised as “other”.

Across Africa, these narratives tap into existing socially conservative beliefs about families and gender, to reverse gains and embolden governments to pass laws to regulate and penalise queer bodies. Given this, JASS deepened and widened its support for LGBTQ organising in East and Southern Africa in 2023, making the connections between what communities are experiencing and the global nature of anti-rights narratives and mobilisations.

The launch of the publication [Understanding Structural Violence for Feminist Action](#) is an outcome of five years of JASS’ work in South Africa, Malawi and Zimbabwe creating space for regional dialogues across movements, issues and borders. It unpacks why, despite years of work against gendered injustices, gendered violence persists. The publication locates fundamentalisms within the legacies of colonisation, apartheid, racism (anti-blackness), and the accompanying structural violence and inequality exercised to keep these systems of power and control alive.

Simultaneously, our solidarity resourcing strategy ensured that queer activists organised across 12 LGBTQI+ organisations in East and Southern Africa had the resources (including money) to navigate context, take action based on their agendas, and address the violent backlash and urgent need for safety.

YOU ADD, WE MULTIPLY

Strengthened leadership, analysis and capacities of **2974 women activists** through **52 FPE workshops and schools** globally.

Strengthened the capacities of **112 political facilitators** to grow our circle of practice to meet the demands for FPE from partners, expand our reach and impact.

Direct engagement with **2246 power holders** through **27 influence activities** local to global.

Built alliances by participation in and/or facilitation of over **27 cross-movement, cross-issue spaces** for joint agenda setting, solidarity and collective protection with over 143 social justice organisations, activist collectives, movements, media houses and decision makers beyond our long time partners.

Amplified the voices of women, their demands, influenced agendas and created community through 3 radio programmes (100+ episodes) and **4 communications campaigns**, social media posting, 8 external articles for influence and 6 solidarity actions.

As an integrated part of our FMB work, provided solidarity resourcing channelling **\$830,743.40** to 72 partners in 12 countries, to strengthen collective power in the face of opportunity or crisis.

FINANCIALS 2023

ANNUAL BUDGET

US \$9,637,876

TOTAL RECOGNISED INCOME*

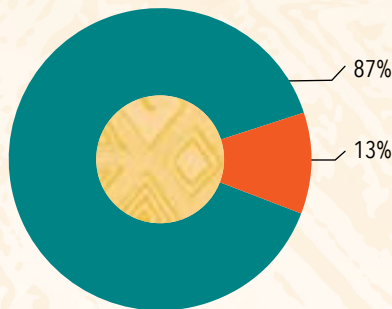
US \$4,866,626

INCOME ALLOCATED TO 2023**

US \$3,098,805

TOTAL EXPENSES

US \$7,965,431



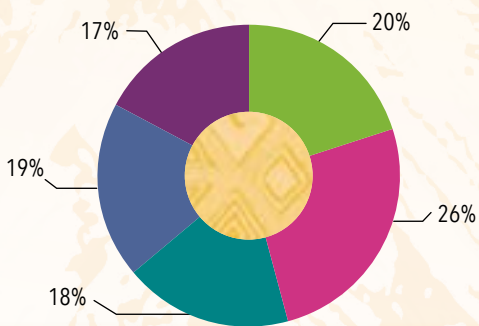
TOTAL EXPENSES PER AREA

USD \$7,965,431

- Programme costs 87%
- Core costs 13%

USD \$6,951,350

USD \$1,014,081



TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENSES

USD \$6,951,350

- Southern Africa 20%
- Mesoamerica 26%
- Southeast Asia 18%
- Global 19%
- Partnerships 17%

USD \$1,405,618

USD \$1,780,770

USD \$1,278,397

USD \$1,302,299

USD \$1,184,265

* Income recognised in 2023 as per audited financials

** Income from multi-year grants recognised in previous years and allocated to 2023



2023: OUR SUPPORTERS

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- ♦ Afrikagrupperna, Africa Groups of Sweden
- ♦ Blackbird
- ♦ Channel Foundation
- ♦ Collective Future Fund
- ♦ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- ♦ Ford Foundation
- ♦ Foundation for a Just Society
- ♦ Fund for Global Human Rights
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- ♦ NoVo Foundation
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- ♦ Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
- ♦ Wellspring Philanthropic Fund

THANK YOU TO OUR DONOR COMMUNITY

It takes many different kinds of resources to sustain and advance feminist movements, funding for movement building work being one critical component. We honour and appreciate all of our supporters – individuals, foundations, government institutions and collaborators – who make up this essential part of JASS' ecosystem.



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