Weathering the Storm: Seeding the Future

Funding Partners' Gungano Concept Note

22 November: Arrival in Nairobi, Kenya
23 November: Day visit to the Feminist Republik Healing Farm in Kitui
24 November: Funding Partners and UAF-Africa staff fly out to Mombasa
25-26 November: Funding Partners' Gungano (Convening) at Serena Beach Resort
27-29 November: 3rd Feminist Republik Festival at Sarova White Sands

The 3rd Feminist Republik Festival

The 3rd Feminist Republik Festival, themed, ***Regenerating in the Storm: Grounding Healing & Collective Care in Conflict Settings***, reaffirms Urgent Action Fund Africa's (UAF-Africa) commitment to the survival and well-being of women's human rights defenders (WHRDs), especially those living in conflict and crisis. The 3rd iteration of the Feminist Republik Festival will take place on the shores of the Indian Ocean in Mombasa, Kenya, from 27 to 29 November 2025.

At the 3rd Feminist Republik Festival, funders will engage in a vibrant convergence of dialogue in a co-designed space. The Festival highlights the knowledge of WHRDs, focusing on 13 active conflict and crisis settings across the continent. Throughout the three-day Festival, participants will hear directly from African women human rights leaders working in conflict areas, unpack locally-led feminist and women's rights approaches to crisis, and explore funding practices and financing models grounded in justice, healing, and transformation. The presence of funding partners in the space demonstrates a public commitment to listen to African women's rights leaders and support them in the ways they have demanded for years.

Reflecting on the Journey of the Feminist Republik Festivals

The Feminist Republik Festivals promote and advance collective care and healing as integral to women's human rights and feminist organising. The Festival provides bold models and reimaginations of how WHRDs can convene in ways that centre healing as a cornerstone of our dreams for transformation and social justice. The 1st Feminist Republik Festival (December 2019, Naivasha, Kenya) launched a bold political intervention, bringing together more than 300 African WHRDs in the face of structural violence, surveillance, and burnout. The Festival created space for radical imagination, soul restoration, and movement building rooted in healing justice. The gathering culminated in launching the Feminist Republik Platform, a transformative effort to embed collective care, healing, and sustainability into women's human rights organising.

Building on this iteration and emerging from the COVID-19 crisis, the 2nd Feminist Republik Festival (November 2022, Naivasha, Kenya) gathered over 600 WHRDs, and funders to reclaim healing justice as a radical feminist practice in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the theme, From Dreams to Reality: Healing Justice as Feminist Practice, the Festival launched The Healing Justice Framework, creating a collaborative space to unpack structural violence, intergenerational trauma, and the systems that continue to harm women. While the Festival celebrated rich knowledge and healing practices, it also highlighted a critical gap: the lack of adequate physical spaces, support, and future-proof resources for women's rights organisations and collectives amid multiple socio-political, climate, and humanitarian crises.

Why We Gather: The Political Moment

Globally, we are experiencing multiple, complex, and protracted crises. This has been particularly felt across the African continent, where we are witnessing the impacts of multifaceted democratic crises, compounded by climate crises, and armed conflict, including one of the worst humanitarian crises the world has ever seen in Sudan, where more than half the population (24 million people) are facing food insecurity. Over 12.1 million people are at risk of gender-based violence and sexual abuse[1]. Alongside the increasingly intense and complicated demands of polycrises, the global philanthropic sector is simultaneously undergoing significant shifts, including deep cuts in bilateral development funding and abrupt closures of private philanthropies that have long supported women's rights and social justice movements. This moment of profound transition requires adaptability, creativity, and swift responsiveness from philanthropic actors and ecosystem allies.

The work of African women's human rights leaders offers lessons for funders on how to swiftly regroup, rethink and re-strategise in the face of sudden shifts to respond to polycrisis efficiently and effectively. The ongoing conflicts in Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Sahel and other regions of the continent highlight the urgency to unite in solidarity and challenge the global silence surrounding African crises, not with blame, but with a shared purpose in meeting and matching the resilience of African women's human rights leaders.

[1] The Impact of Sudan's War on Women, Two Years On, UN Women, 15 April 2025.

The Funding Partners' Gungano Invitation

The Gungano aims:

- To deepen participants' appreciation of renewed discourses of co-designing innovative and regenerative movements and community resourcing strategies that transcend emergency responses and focus on long-term, broad-based impact and people-centred solutions.
- To radically reposition philanthropy in humanitarian and crisis contexts by sparking collaborative strategies, inviting funders to take the lead in dismantling outdated funding models, and co-investing in bold, feminist, community-led solutions that create deeper, more sustainable impact where conventional approaches have fallen short.
- To reframe humanitarian responses through the lens of feminist and women's rights organising; we offer funders a unique opportunity to align with movement-rooted strategies centered on collective care, healing justice, and locally driven systems.

Gungano Purpose and Process

Scheduled for 23-26 November 2025, in Kitui and Mombasa, Kenya, is the Funding Partners' Gungano, themed, Weathering the Storm: Seeding the Future. The Gungano is a thoughtfully curated, intergenerational, transnational assembly of mostly philanthropic actors committed to transforming how power and resources flow, particularly in humanitarian contexts. Allied pan-African philanthropic networks advancing reimaginations of a pan-African and Feminist Philanthropic vision, including those focused on climate justice, peacebuilding, migration, digital security, and feminist crisis responses, will participate in the Gungano. A select group of WHRDs from 13 conflict-affected contexts will provide grounded resourcing analysis, movement experience, and political clarity on survival, care, and liberation. Corporate social investors will be among the invited participants, advancing justice-driven approaches to high-impact, seeking alignment with locally-led resourcing and community-rooted responses. The Gungano provides participants with a vital space to collectively reflect, learn, and build concrete agendas that respond to the turmoil that has disrupted and reorganised the philanthropic architecture.

The Gungano journey begins on 23 November with an immersive visit to the Feminist Republik Healing Farm in Kitui, followed by travel to Mombasa on 24 November. The core Gungano meeting will be held from 25 to 26 November at the Serena Beach Resort. It will bring together a diverse ecosystem of actors, including bilateral entities, humanitarian funders, women and feminist funds, private and public philanthropy, academia, and select WHRDs.

In the face of global order shifts, long-held assumptions are challenged, and we are urged to (re)envision ways of bringing calm, justice, and abundance to women's rights and social justice movements. This convergence aims to foster cross-sector dialogue, deepen shared understanding, and collectively explore transformative strategies for resourcing women's human rights and feminist movements, and strengthening the sustainability of grassroots organising across the continent and beyond. Collectively, and steeped in a Pan African and Feminist Philanthropies vision, the curated Gungano engagements offer an opportunity to workshop transformative praxis and strategies for innovative sustainable financing models in partnership with regional and global experts.

This Gungano moves beyond reflection towards bold strategising: utilising insights from UAF-Africa's grant-making praxis and data, peer feminist and women's funds case studies. From women's human rights leaders and peer human rights and humanitarian funders, we will interrogate how philanthropies must evolve to remain relevant, responsive, and rooted in African women's rights and community realities.
We will examine the role of women's human rights leaders in conflict-affected and humanitarian contexts, including in underrepresented, ongoing crises like Sudan and the DRC, and explore how Funders can work together across sectors to resource this work. We will seek allyship in co-creating a funding ecosystem aligned with current emergent needs.

We invite you to share this future-facing moment with us!

Contact:

To learn more and prepare to participate in the activities mentioned above, please contact Tsitsi Midzi, Director: Transformative Partnerships & Philanthropy, at tsitsi@uaf-africa.org.

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