

Migrant Power

Lessons learned accompanying the migrant and racialised women's movement in the Spanish State



TITLE:

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women's movement in
the Spanish State

PUBLISHED:

2020

COORDINATION:

Calala Women's Fund

AUTHOR:

Fiona Montagud O'Curry
Director of Programmes,
Calala Women's Fund

TRANSLATOR:

Maggie Schmitt,
Zenobia Traducciones

We are grateful to Kalidadea, the consulting group that conducted an independent evaluation of our Migrant Power Programme, and to Adriana Zumarán Jibaja, the consultant who wrote a study on the capacities of the migrant and racialised women's movement, as well as all the collectives and networks of this movement with whom we collaborate. Their contributions have helped us reflect and to gather the lessons we share in this document.

COVER AND BACK COVER IMAGE:

Work carried out in the Feminist Engraving Workshop organized by *Producciones y Milagros Agrupación Feminista* (October 2020), coordinated by Calala and *Mujeres con Voz*.

Calala Women's Fund Foundation

C/Aragón 424, 08013, Barcelona

Tel. +34 931 39 74 20

Email: calala@calala.org

www.calala.org

Since 2010 Calala Women's Fund has contributed to strengthening women's movements by providing grants to women's groups and networks in Central America and the Spanish State. It gives power to women who are changing the world.

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INTRODUCTION

Calala is the only women's fund in the Spanish State. It was founded in 2009 to strengthen the feminist and women's movements. We believe that the existence of a strong and independent movement is the principle factor in ending structural inequality and discrimination in our societies.

For this reason we support the movement by providing economic grants to women's collectives and networks that help them work towards their own objectives. Additionally we offer training and accompaniment to these organizations to help them build their capacities. We also work to create occasions for meeting and networking among the movements we support.

In its origins, Calala was exclusively focused on Latin America. Since 2012 we also support women's and feminist movements within the Spanish State, with a focus on strengthening the migrant and racialised women's movement. Between 2016 and 2019, 74% of Calala's grants in the Spanish State went specifically to organizations within this movement.

In the present context we believe it is more important than ever that there be a strong migrant and racialised women's movement in the Spanish State. At a global level —and here as well— the xenophobic, racist and misogynist discourses of fundamentalist anti-rights groups and extreme right-wing parties occupy ever more space, encouraging behaviours driven by hate against women and especially migrant and racialised women.

While COVID-19 has affected the entire population, the consequences of its impact have not been the same for all. Migrant and racialised women are among the most severely affected, especially if their administrative status is irregular or they are unemployed, precariously employed, or working in the informal sector. Before the pandemic these women already faced racist and sexist discrimination, gender violence, impediments to accessing health care

and decent housing, among other things. The health crisis and its social and economic consequences have only deepened these inequalities.

The social fabric woven by the informal collectives as well as the organizations and networks in which these women participate plays a crucial role in providing immediate responses to these inequalities and, especially, in bringing about structural changes that might guarantee a decent life for all persons.

With this publication we hope to bring together the lessons learned and the challenges faced in our experience accompanying the movement of migrant and racialised women in the Spanish State. This has two objectives:

- To encourage other organizations and donors that work with this movement to reflect and learn from our experience and
- To generate new alliances that might strengthen this field of work.

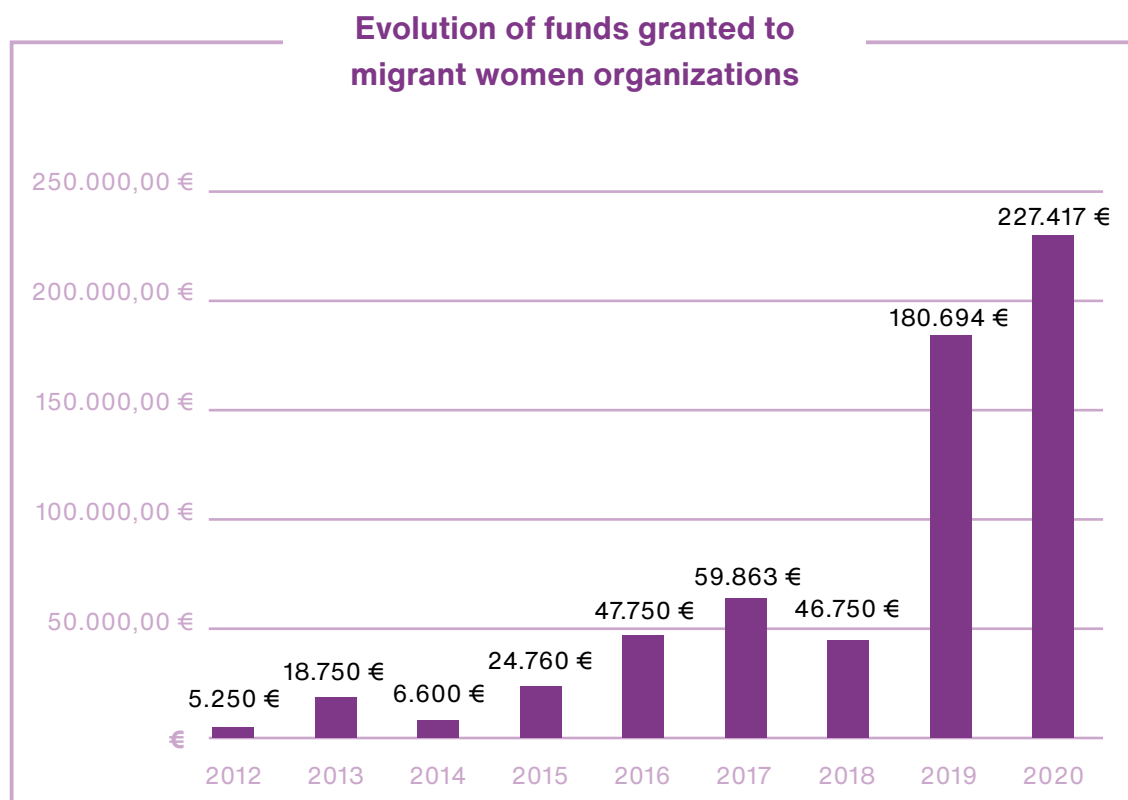
The lessons recounted here are drawn from our own experience over the last nine years, as well as the observations and recommendations of a group of consultants that conducted an independent evaluation in 2020 of our work in this field¹.

1 The external consultant responsible for this evaluation was Kalidadea:
<http://www.kalidadea.org>

1. CALALA WOMEN'S FUND'S WORK IN THE FIELD OF MIGRANT WOMEN'S RIGHTS

We made our first grants to migrant women's collectives in 2012. These donations were granted to *Mujeres con Voz* in the Basque Country, *Mujeres Pa'lante* in Catalonia and the *Red de Mujeres Latinoamericanas y de El Caribe*, a countrywide network.

Since then we have provided support for a total of 53 organizations of migrant and racialised women, adding up to a total of 562.475 euros in grants. Some of the grantees received one-time grants, others have received on-going support over several years. Some of them have used the funds for specific projects, others have received general support not oriented to specific outcomes.



These organizations bring together very diverse women who organize in different ways in order to defend their rights. These include domestic and care workers, but also young women using art as a form of protest. They include collectives developing analyses from a decolonial perspective as well as women providing accompaniment to other women who are experiencing gender violence or who have recently arrived in our country and lack networks of support. They include sex workers, activists fighting to shut down migrant internment centres, feminists who have established mutual support funds to assist those who are bearing the brunt of the COVID-19 crisis and many others.

We have principally provided support to organizations working in Catalonia, the Basque Country and Madrid, although in 2019 we began to broaden our territorial radius.

NUMBER OF GRANTEES BY TERRITORY



1	ASTURIAS
19	BARCELONA
4	BIZKAIA
17	MADRID
2	SEVILLE

2	GRANADA
3	SARAGOSSA
1	MÁLAGA
1	HUELVA
2	VALENCIA
1	GIPUZKOA

Since 2019 we have had the opportunity to reinforce the programme we call MigrantPower thanks to the support of a private European foundation committed to advancing women's rights. In so doing we have undertaken various actions. First, we wanted a better understanding of how we might contribute to strengthening the movement, so we commissioned an analysis of the migrant and racialised women's movement's present situation, making use of a tool developed by the Global Fund for Women for assessing social movements' capacities².

Second, we opened a call for proposals specifically oriented to migrant women's organizations in the Spanish State. Grants were made to a total of 24 groups for a period of two years (2019-2020). Grantees ranged from established and legalized organizations to new informal collectives of activists in various regions. The context of COVID-19 led us to mobilize additional resources so we could contribute to the mutual support funds many migrant and racialised women's groups have created as a response to the urgent needs of their communities in this difficult moment.

Third, we made a series of resources available to interested collectives. These included training and exchange workshops in three fields: leadership; collective care and self-care; and resource access and management. These workshops were carried out via digital platform between May and June of 2020 in the midst of the health crisis.

Finally, in late 2020, several regional encounters and one State-wide encounter were held under the title "Strengthening Collective Strategies: Alliances for a Crisis that is not New." These gatherings aimed to help build connections within the movement.

In the next sections of this document we will explore these different strategies in greater detail, highlighting their achievements and the challenges faced, all of which offer us lessons in how to continue backing this movement.

2 More information at: <https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/mcat/>

2. A LOOK AT THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN THE SPANISH STATE

We recently conducted a study to get greater insight into the present situation of the migrant and racialised women's movement. We wanted to take a snapshot of the movement right now; when it is more active than ever before, in order to understand it better and seek clues as to how we might better contribute to its growth and flourishing.

To do this we hired the decolonial feminist Adriana Zumarán Jibaja³ to lead a research process culminating in the publication of “Acercamiento al movimiento de mujeres migrantes en el Estado español”⁴ (“A Look at the Migrant Women's Movement in the Spanish State”) a report in which nearly 50 organizations and networks participated.

The research framework was developed in 2019, in various stages:

- An **initial consultation** to present the idea of conducting this analysis and discuss how to undertake it. Participants in four organizations were interviewed.
- A **mapping** phase in which persons and organizations that make up the movement and their allies were identified.
- Application of the **movement capacity assessment tool (MCAT)** a tool developed by the Global Fund for Women based on the feminist scholar and activist Srilatha Batliwala's definition of what she calls “strong movements.” The tool consists of a questionnaire that we adapted and sent to the organizations and persons on the map.

³ Decolonial feminist activist born in Peru and resident in Madrid, with a background in social psychology and participatory research and experience in research processes and autonomous organizing for social transformation and political impact.

⁴ Available at: <https://calala.org/informe-movimiento-mujeres-migrantes-estado-espanol/>

- Three preliminary **meetings** in order to discuss and complete the information gathered throughout the process, share preliminary results, request suggestions regarding the conclusions and inform participants of the next steps.

Principal findings

The first conclusion that the report draws is that migrant and racialised women in the Spanish State experience and understand their own migratory experiences and experiences of racialization in very different ways. Their agendas, forms of organising and types of action are dynamic and in some cases even divergent, so we cannot speak of a homogenous movement.

The participants in the movement consider that **having a shared political agenda is a priority** in three areas:

1. Repealing the 'foreigner law', shutting down the Migrant Internment Centres (CIEs), dissociating work contracts from residency permits, and eradicating racist mass police stops.
2. Putting an end to structural discrimination and violence by institutions and administrations on the basis of skin colour and social class, and achieving rights for domestic workers and caregivers: the ratification of the ILO Convention 189 and the inclusion of domestic workers into the Social Security system on equal terms with other workers.
3. Instating quotas for the representation of migrant and racialised women in political participation, visibilising the over-representation of migrant and racialised women in indicators of various forms of gender violence, and demanding specific measures to address this.

The study identified the **principle strengths and challenges to the migrant and racialised women's movement:**

- The movement has an increasingly broad and sustained base. Collectives, organizations and networks made up of and led by migrant and racialised women are energetically interconnected.
- These organizations implement a broad range of strategies to achieve their goals and promote their agendas, at various different levels of intervention.
- The majority of the actions undertaken arise from self-organized collectives with occasional economic support. Economic precariousness is a transversal characteristic.
- Generating a shared vision and agenda is still a challenge, as there are different ways of seeing and experiencing that in certain moments can lead to divergent positions.
- Data and evidence is needed to guide strategic decision making, for example through a systematisation of experiences.
- It would be helpful to work towards establishing criteria for determining whether a person or organization is an ally from the perspective of migrant and racialised women, and to define what is needed from strategic alliances.
- It would be useful to establish spaces in which to reflect on how to manage power relations and how to stimulate the kind of synergetic and horizontal leadership the movement requires.
- More meeting spaces are needed to deepen awareness, coordination and mutual support between the different organizations and networks.
- Self-care, collective care and mutual support are strategies some of the organizations and networks within the movement prioritise.

Lessons learned along the way

The process of analysis was a great learning opportunity for us. On the one hand, the results of the report themselves provided us with elements that helped us — and continue to help us —orient our work better. For example, as we explain in more detail further along, the training and exchange sessions that we organized arose as a direct response to needs identified through this process.

But there were also other very valuable lessons in relation to the process of analysis itself. These reflections are very useful for us, but we feel they may also prove useful for other entities and donors that wish to contribute to strengthening this movement, or who do research on migrant women.

First, the move to analyse the movement did not arise from the migrant organizations themselves. **We should have done a prior consultation with migrant women's organizations to gauge interest in doing a study of the movement's capacities.** Likewise it would have been helpful to involve organizations from within the movement in the design of the tool itself.

These recommendations were made by some of the organizations in the sessions held to discuss the early results of the study. In an effort to make up for the lack of participation in earlier phases of the study —and with the fieldwork already complete— an Advisory Group was created, comprised of 15 women linked to 17 different migrant women's organizations. We now understand that this Advisory Group should have been established at the beginning of the study. The Advisory Group was able to have a relevant role in the later stages of the Migrant Power Programme and in the approval of final versions of the report and publication.

The independent evaluation recommends strengthening the Advisory Group as a space of strategic participation, although this requires time and effort from its members, a major demand upon activists with very little time available. For this reason the members proposed that we revise the functions of the group, limit the time commitment required, and establish a calendar of meetings. They also suggested that each participant assess her own availability in terms of the time and energy she is willing to dedicate to this space in order to evaluate the situation of the group and seek out alternative ways it might operate, or else open the group to other collectives interested in participating.

As a result of grantees not having participated in the design phase of the study, there were some doubts about whether the organizations would adopt the

study as their own. The document was well regarded by most of the groups that participated in the independent evaluation. They considered that the process of the study made room for reflection and analysis within the migrant and racialised women's movement. On the other hand, they did not see clearly what use the study would serve for the movement or how the report might strengthen it.

It remains to be seen how useful this exercise has been for the movement itself. In either case, after the external evaluation a session to discuss the results was held with movement participants. The session was widely attended, with over a hundred migrant activists signed up. The discussion reflected a generally positive view of the process and especially of how it became more open to participation. In the words of one of the collectives,

“As an association we now feel more identified with the results than when it was initially proposed.”

Lastly, one of the principle critiques of the study made by some of the organizations was that there was an **overrepresentation of Latin American migrant women**, when in fact the movement is more diverse. This emphasis was not accidental; Calala, due to its origins and its close links to Latin American feminisms, has always focussed its work within the Spanish State on supporting collectives led by women from the Americas.

Nevertheless, the observation has made us wonder whether this emphasis is pertinent at this point, because —as some of the groups suggested— it is important to overcome the borders between the territories of the Global South, recognize the colonial character of those borders, and work to establish bonds between migrant and racialised women irrespective of their region and territory of origin. This debate arose again at the final presentation of the report to the movement itself, highlighting the challenge of deepening connections with fellow activists of African and Asian origins.

3. GRANTMAKING

Since 2012 we have given 562.475 euros in grants to 53 migrant and racialised women's organizations. In 2019 we made the first call for applicants specifically oriented to collectives and networks of migrant women in the Spanish State under the title Migrant Power. Grants were made to a total of 24 migrant women's organizations in 2019 and 2020 within the framework of this programme.

Some of these are established organizations with legal recognition, while others are newly created informal collectives of activists in different territories such as Andalusia, Aragon, Asturias, Catalonia, the Basque Country and Madrid, as well as some Statewide initiatives.

All of the grantee collectives are led by migrant women and have broad agendas, addressing (among others) questions such as domestic and care workers' rights, LGTBIQ+ rights, the repeal of the foreigners law, outcry against racism, the elimination of sexist violence and decolonial feminism.

Additionally, during the economic, social and health crisis arising from the pandemic, we redirected resources to support 22 different mutual-support funds created by organized migrant and racialised women⁵. These resources were channelled to women in situations of particular vulnerability, including care and domestic workers, hotel cleaning staff, sex workers and trans women. The funds were used to cover rent costs, food purchase, protection materials and other essential needs. In this context of increased risk for women experiencing gender violence, we have also funded seven organizations that support these women, three of which are migrant women's collectives.

⁵ Some of these experiences are documented in the webinar we organized in May 2020: <https://calala.org/conversatorio-cajas-resistencia-migrantes-feministas-covid19/>

The women's fund model

Women's funds provide flexible, long term general support funding with minimal procedural requirements to women and feminists who have difficulty accessing more traditional forms of funding. The external evaluation of our work with collectives of migrant and racialised women makes the strengths of this model clear.

- **Knowledge of the context.** The grantees consider that we know a lot about the context and the needs of migrant and racialised women's organizations.
- **Support for grassroots groups that do not have access to other resources.** The structures, experiences and dynamics of these groups vary widely, but the majority of them are small groups without prior experience in project management. For 52% of groups we were their first donor; 30% of the organizations are not legally formalised and their members' time and effort is contributed on a completely voluntary basis. The organizations view our granting criteria positively as they make it possible for non-formalized organizations with little infrastructure to access resources.
- **Respect for autonomy.** Grants are made to the groups for their own needs and priorities. The groups draw up their own proposals; we do not influence their development nor are our grants conditional upon specific actions. Groups think highly of our respect for their autonomy, in contrast with the opportunistic or paternalistic perspectives of some other organizations working with refugee and migrant persons.
- **General support, without conditions.** All the groups had the option to request general support or support for specific projects. The funds are not conditioned upon the results of any specific actions, which the groups value.
- **Flexibility.** The collectives have the flexibility to devote these funds to processes that are already underway, to their own

internal growth, or to supplement other projects. They can use these funds to cover expenses that they would not be able to cover through other funds and would therefore have to rely on contributions by their members.

- **Simple formats.** The forms used are accessible for migrant and racialised women's organizations. All the groups agree that the questions on the forms are specific and simple to fill out except one group that said that it was difficult to prepare the required reports (although the group attributed this difficulty to their lack of familiarity with project processes).
- **Reduced bureaucracy.** Relative to the economic value of the grants, the collectives appreciate the simplicity of expense reporting, which does not require a detailed report but rather a simple list of expenses, within the capacities of most of the groups. This reduces the amount of time and work required to prepare this information. Those organizations that are legally formalized are required to present economic information to the public administration, and many of the groups already have internal accountability systems.
- **Fluid communication.** All the grantee organizations rate the communication with Calala highly and affirm that they have a constant and respectful relationship. They highlight that communications are friendly, fluid and based on trust. This opinion is expressed both by collectives that have been working with us for some time and by collectives that have recently initiated this relationship.
- **Close accompaniment.** Most of the grantees express appreciation for our close accompaniment of their management in a supportive —rather than a controlling— way. The members of the collectives affirm that we facilitate processes, respond to doubts and provide counsel. They highlight that this close relationship does not depend on the individual Calala staff-member, and that there is a sense of trust that allows grantees to discuss difficulties, pose critiques and propose alternatives.
- **Response capacity.** The grantees express appreciation for our concern for their wellbeing in the midst of the coronavirus crisis.

They all mention having received a mail from us asking them about their needs. We increased the flexibility of funds that had already been granted and provided economic support for the mutual support funds created by various collectives during the confinement. This money was used to support migrant women in precarious circumstances.

- **Trust in Calala.** The groups express a positive view of us. Many see us as political allies, others as a flexible and reliable donor.

Money for what?

The collectives that were consulted affirm that the funds they received allowed them to carry out a lot of activities and achieve greater visibility than in previous years. This is much more evident in the case of those organizations that are receiving funding for the first time. In the case of collectives that have other donors, **our funds allow them to cover expenses that other less flexible funders' policies would not accept.** For these collectives, having funding also serves as an acknowledgement of their work and a sign of political support for their strategies.

All the organizations consider that our support has been important in advancing their work, although of course we are aware that these advances are principally attributable to the experience, background and voluntary labour of the group members, the alliances they cultivate and the shared initiatives they undertake with other collectives. During the grant period, the organizations carried out various parallel strategies. Among the main actions undertaken with the funds received we should mention:

- **Awareness-raising campaigns.** All the collectives carried out activities to encourage reflection and debate like talks, conferences, film screenings, theatre performances and meetings.
- **Public mobilization.** Some 74% of groups participated in rallies or demonstrations. For example, those held for March 8th (International Women's Day) and November 25th (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women). Many of the groups organized and/or participated in public actions against racism and discrimination against migrant and racialised persons. They also organized performances and set up information tables in public places.
- **Political advocacy.** 52% of the organizations did advocacy work with local, regional or national government actors. For example, in 2019 organizations won the cession of an office space for four years from the City of Madrid in order to create Spain's first Centre for the Empowerment of Domestic and Care Workers (CETHYC).
- **Training.** Over 60% of the groups carried out training sessions or conferences on issues important to their members. These included labour rights, sexual and reproductive rights, gender violence, decolonial feminism, migration laws and more.
- **Assistance for migrant and racialised women.** The majority of the organizations (65%) provide accompaniment and legal and/or psychological counselling for migrant women about, for example, their labour rights and migration-related paperwork. They also provide assistance to women experiencing gender violence and help with applying for social aid.
- **Knowledge building.** 22% of the organizations include among their activities the creation of knowledge through research, studies, articles or reports in relation to the situation of migrant women, aggressions to women human rights defenders, and the repercussions of the racist and patriarchal system for migrant and racialised women in the Spanish State. Additionally, some activists participated in university studies, contributing their experiences and reflections through interviews and other means.

- **Communication.** 17% of the collectives launched campaigns via social networks, for example in relation to labour rights and the citizenship of migrant women.
- **Internal growth.** Many collectives mentioned that having access to resources allowed them to improve their internal organization, plan their activities, and review their decision-making mechanisms. Specifically, 40% of the organizations dedicated part of the funds received to strengthening their internal operations.
- **Self-care and collective care.** 30% used part of their resources to facilitate processes of self-care for their members. Despite this, the majority said they had become more aware of the self-care needs of their members, and were adopting measures like spaces for sharing, checking in on everyone's emotional states during meetings, reviewing internal dynamics and trying to distribute responsibilities among their members more effectively.
- **Working in networks.** All of the organizations strengthened their alliances with other collectives and spaces for migrant women at a local and statewide level. They participated in meetings oriented to connect different groups, attended events organized by allies and participated in spaces for shared reflection. For example, the creation of the State-wide Network of Domestic and Care Workers (RETHOC) at the Encounter of Domestic Workers in Zaragoza in March 2019 was mentioned. The hosts of this encounter were the members of the Collective of Domestic and Care Workers of Zaragoza, one of the organizations we support. Some groups had the opportunity to connect with other organizations at a European level, as did the Network of Latin American and Caribbean Women and the group *Mujeres con Voz*, through a joint project with the network WIDE+.

MONEY FOR WHAT?

Percentage of groups that have used their grants for each type of action



We also want to highlight **these groups' capacity to respond to COVID-19** and its social and economic consequences. Many of the groups created networks of assistance and mutual support funds in order to help migrant women in vulnerable situations, such as those who found themselves in irregular administrative situations without access to any form of public subsidy, those who were without work, who lost their housing because they could not pay rent, or who didn't have access even to food. The precarious conditions in which many migrant women live means that they do not have savings with which to weather this kind of crisis. We must not underestimate the burden of stress and emotional duress to which the members of these groups have been subjected throughout the last months due to the intense demands upon them for support.

In the context of the pandemic, collectives organized to provide counseling on labour rights and to help women do the paperwork required to request a basic income or other social benefits. Housing support networks were formed for women who could not continue to pay rent. Moreover, important advocacy work was done to denounce these situations. For example, domestic and care workers came together to draw attention to the importance of their work and to decry their working conditions and lack of access to the emergency measures taken by the Government. Thanks to these efforts an extra subsidy for this sector was established.

Some challenges ahead

Through the independent evaluation we have identified various challenges in relation to grant-making that we must confront as an organization.

- **Find a balance between being accessible and needing to disconnect**

The first challenge has to do with communication tools. Some organizations observed that their members do not always use email and that the best way to communicate with them is through instant messaging by mobile phone. While we generally use email for formal communications, there are instant messaging groups for the Advisory Group and the three training subgroups. These have made communication more agile and accessible for the participating migrant women.

In this regard, while we seek ways to promote fluid communication with the groups we support, as a feminist organization we must also pay attention to care issues within Calala. This means making time us to rest and to ensure the well being of the team.

- **Fewer groups in order to provide better accompaniment**

The second challenge has to do with the increase in the number of groups Calala accompanies. Just in 2020 we have given grants to 35 collectives of migrant and racialised women. Activating a participatory emphasis within the Program has involved more staff than initially expected, making processes slower and requiring a greater investment of time.

Many of the grantees are grassroots organizations that require a degree of technical accompaniment we cannot always provide. By reducing the number of grantees we would be able to help them conduct self-assessments to identify their capacity-building needs. This would also allow us to revise proposals and reports together with the groups, helping them improve the quality of their reporting and the depth of their analysis. Supporting fewer groups would also mean providing slightly larger grants to each, which —as we will see below— is something the majority of grantees demand.

- **Gather less information, but of better quality**

The third challenge has to do with the reports we receive from the groups. At present, we receive a large amount of information that we cannot analyse fully due to our team's workload and the amount of time this would require. There are also great differences in the quality of the reports: some offer a lot of detail, others are very brief and leave questions unanswered. For this reason, the reports do not always allow us to fully understand the impact of our support or the work being done by the grantees.

As a result, we have decided to make the reporting format even simpler for grantees, focusing on quantitative questions that are easy and quick to analyse. At the same time, a representative sample of organizations will be selected and interviewed in depth in order to better comprehend the impact of our support. In this way we will generate less qualitative information but this information will be of greater quality.

- **Define our role in relation to the agenda of the movements we support**

The last challenge, but certainly the most important one, has to do with our role as Calala. Two of the collectives consulted in the external evaluation mentioned that they would like to have a closer relationship with Calala, but that this would depend upon Calala becoming more involved in migrant women's demands.

Within Calala we need to discuss our own role as an organization in relation to the agendas of the movements we support. In principle, our role as a women's fund is to strengthen organizations so that they can do this advocacy work, while our own advocacy work should be centred on procuring more and better funds for feminist and women's organizations, including migrant women's organizations. However this line in the sand is not always clear for us or for our grantees.

The need for more and better resources

This is the greatest challenge, both for the groups we support and for us, so we want to dedicate a bit more space to it. For 52% of our grantees we are their first donor, and 30% of the organizations are not legally registered.

The resources we provided in this cycle came as a relief to the members of the groups, as **most of them had never had a donor before and were paying expenses for their activities from their own pockets.** Having money available for their actions meant that they could cover essential expenses. Some women could not pay for transportation or food in order to participate in meetings and activities, so the funds they received allowed the groups pay these expenses, as well as expenses related to the purchase of materials and equipment. This allowed them to dedicate less time and energy to fundraising activities like selling handicrafts, t-shirts and food.

Despite our efforts at Calala to mobilize resources for migrant and racialised women's organizations, 90% of the groups consulted in the independent evaluation consider that they need more resources to cover the expenses of their activities. The majority of the grantees acknowledge that one of their principle difficulties in mobilizing resources is the lack of skills in fundraising

and resource management within their groups, as well as the paucity of flexible funders.

Some collectives commented that the funds they received were adequate to their management capacities, but the majority of grantees consider that they would be capable of managing more resources than the amounts they were granted. For some organizations, having flexible funds from Calala allowed them to confront specific one-time needs, even so, this money and the money collected in the mutual support funds is still insufficient to the pressing needs of migrant women, which have become even greater in the present context of economic crisis brought on by COVID-19.

The lack of sufficient funding makes it impossible for organizations to pay for management and coordination work within the collective. Many operate solely through voluntary labour, which can lead to burnout among activists. The tension between voluntary work, the number of activities undertaken and the lack of economic resources is a challenge for all the groups.

Some of the grantees decided only to access flexible funds, as they preferred not to legally register their organizations (for political reasons) and they did not want to enter into the dynamic of project cycles, due to the time and energy that these demand. Some were also concerned that they might run the risk of yielding to donors' agendas, thereby losing their autonomy.

Of the ten collectives consulted in the evaluation process, 30% had received grants from public administrations and described how this had required a lot of time and energy. **The procedures required by public institutions are an obstacle for migrant women's organizations.** The majority of these groups do not have the structure necessary to process the required paperwork, nor do they fulfil other requisites.

Two collectives mentioned that they had requested subsidies from local and regional governments and that these had been granted, but then the collectives could not access the money because they were expected to advance part of the budget out of pocket, which they were unable to do. In one of the cases, the grant was to be paid after the fact, that is, the organization was expected to cover expenses for their activities out of their own funds, to be reimbursed upon approval of their financial report. This kind of requirements on the part of public administrations and some donor NGOs make it difficult for migrant and racialised women's organizations —especially the smaller ones— to access resources.

One of the principle difficulties that Calala faces in regranting to migrant and racialised women's groups has to do with the restrictions placed by our donors, many of which do not permit this type of grant-making. For us it is a challenge to find funds from private foundations to support the Migrant Power Programme and have a budget that allows us to provide sustained and flexible support for groups. **We hope the impact of Black Lives Matter helps push foundations and other private donors to make support for migrant and racialised women's groups a priority** in the Spanish State.

For the smaller grantee organizations, managing the funds they received required learning money management skills. This experience may allow them to manage more money in the future, although what they have learned has been in the context of our flexible and simplified formats. While grantees managed the resources efficiently, they still need to improve their management and fundraising skills, especially if they intend to apply for grants from other donors.

The grantees are aware of this. They stated that capacity-building workshops on fundraising and resource management were a priority for them, and expressed the need for an accompaniment centred on their fundraising abilities, for example, to improve their skills in grant-writing, technical and economic reporting, and in seeking other donors.

Some grantees with more developed structures considered that in future interventions we should include them in a more horizontal role, looking to them as partners and involving them in project development. This is a strategy we have explored with organizations like *Mujeres con Voz* and *Mujeres Pa'lante*, and that we could continue to develop. This also requires that our funders give us more time to prepare project proposals, as the short turn-around time for many grant applications makes it very difficult to undertake more participatory processes.



*Refugee, Exiled and Migrant Women's Collective
Strategic Planning Workshop, 2019*



*Seville's Association of Domestic and Care Workers
March 30th 2020*

4. CAPACITY BUILDING

As a women's fund, we do not simply make grants to feminist and women's groups. An important part of our work is building skills so that activists and their organizations can be more sustainable and have a greater impact.

Managing money and implementing projects helps organizations to build skills. The collectives that received grants claim to have improved their collective skills an average of 7.5 (on a scale of 0 to 10, 10 being the most).

We want to highlight that these are **achievements to which Calala contributes**. We cannot claim responsibility for the growth and strengthening of the groups that we support, which is the result of their own efforts and is in many cases based on the unpaid voluntary work of their members. Each grantee collective pointed to different aspects of their work that have improved during the grant period, among them:

- New spaces for internal decision-making on how to invest the resources;
- Better internal distribution of tasks and responsibilities, including a greater number of women playing spokesperson roles;
- Better internal communication and coordination, more dynamic and constant;
- Greater degree of member involvement: greater enthusiasm and more active and constant participation;
- Inclusion of new members including young women;
- Strengthened bonds between members and a sense of belonging;
- Construction of a safe space of mutual support in which the internal relations of the group are founded on care;

- Awareness of the need for self-care and collective care, balancing activism and voluntary work in the organization with necessary rest and leisure. Groups have instated practices of listening, sharing different emotional registers, and reviewing internal dynamics in order to avoid burn-out;
- Members' empowerment. For example, after internal training sessions on rights. The fact of writing a grant request and coordinating and managing the grant has generated recognition which in turn has led to greater self-esteem and confidence for those responsible for these tasks;
- New spaces in which to meet and carry out activities, and technical equipment to do the group's work;
- Impact of communication work in terms of increased presence in networks and more followers in social networks;
- Recognition from other actors, invitations to debates and conferences by other groups, increase in number of consultations, and the sense of becoming a point of reference in their field;
- New opportunities for dialogue and collaboration with public institutions.

Protagonists at the centre of the process

Within the framework of our Migrant Power Programme we conducted a process of training and exchange between the different grantee organizations. Migrant women from 19 different organizations participated. Of these, 13 received grants from Calala and the others were participants in the assessment process of the migrant and racialised women's movement.

The workshops addressed three themes:

- Self-care and collective care;
- Synergetic, inclusive and diverse leadership;
- Fundraising and resource management.

The process of training and exchange was designed and carried out in a participatory manner; migrant and racialised women were the protagonists. Here we share some of the most valuable elements of this process:

- **Evidence-based priorities.** Based on the results of the migrant and racialised women's movement analysis (MCAT), we identified five fields in which movement participants were interested in building skills. In addition to the three listed above, these included internal and external communication and digital security.
- **Consultation with movement organizations.** We conducted a consultation in which 20 collectives participated. They were asked about their degree of interest in the five themes listed above. They were also asked if they were interested in participating in the definition of content and methodology for these workshops, or in facilitating the workshops.
- **Direct participation in decision-making.** The Advisory Group (established through the MCAT process and made up of 15 activists linked to 17 migrant women's organizations) was called to meet. The results of the consultation were shared with the Advisory Group, as well as information about available resources. The Advisory Group made all the decisions about which themes would be addressed in the workshops and what resources would be allotted to each theme.
- **Definition of content and methodology by protagonists.** Three working subgroups were created, one for each theme. The 'Self-care and collective care' subgroup and the 'Leadership' subgroup were each made up of members of five organizations, while the 'Fundraising and resource management' was made up of members of two organizations. Each subgroup had a budget and could make its own decisions about how to distribute the resources. One Calala staff-member participated in each subgroup to facilitate the process. The migrant and racialised women's organizations discussed and defined the contents and the methodology for the different workshops.
- **Facilitators from the movement.** The training and exchange sessions were moderated by women from the movement with experience and training in the relevant themes. They were paid for this work.

According to the independent evaluation, some of the elements of this process that were most valued by the participants were:

- The subgroup participants considered that the subgroups were **genuine spaces of consultation** in which they had the prerogative to choose the focus, methodology and facilitation for the workshops.
- During the facilitation of both the Advisory Group and the subgroups, migrant women's conditions were taken into account, and **mechanisms were adopted to encourage participation**. Before each meeting the participants were consulted about the dates and times of meetings. Groups were created using an instant messaging application, which is more frequently used by migrant women than email. This helped facilitate conversation.
- The spaces for participation created in this process, like subgroup meetings to organize training workshops, allowed participants **to get to know other organizations and learn from their experiences**.

Workshop participants appreciated that **the workshops allowed them to improve their individual skills** in:

1) Self-care and collective care. They learned self-care methodologies and tools, the value of personal and collective care, the importance of taking care of oneself, of enjoying one's own body and sexuality, of eating healthy foods for emotional wellbeing, as well as the power of listening and identifying emotions in relation to the group.

2) Synergetic, inclusive and diverse leadership. Participants learned new resources in relation to leadership, action, the value of dissent, the different types of leadership, how to create horizontal leadership, how to value and highlight the skills of each member of a group in order to promote personal and collective growth, and the importance of collective learning processes in the construction of new forms of leadership.

3) Fundraising and resource management. Participants were introduced to critical perspectives on resource management. They acquired basic knowledge of how to seek out resources and manage funds and learned about different forms of self-management. They learned to acknowledge and assign economic value to their own work as activists, and to recognize the power of networking with other collectives.

The process was not without challenges. Without a doubt the most important of these was that some of the activists consulted (who had not participated in the working subgroups or the Advisory Group) commented that they **had not joined these spaces due to a lack of time**. This comment coincides exactly with the opinion of some subgroup members who, while recognizing the importance of this kind of work, did indicate that the preparatory meetings required a substantial time commitment.

Inasmuch as meetings and processes of deliberation require a lot of time, which can lead to burn-out for the activists and a greater work-load for those of us who work for Calala, the independent evaluation recommended that when we facilitate spaces for participation during the intervention we should clearly define the role of the members and their decision-making capacities, and together with participants determine the required time commitment and the mechanisms of participation. We feel it is important to consider the possibility of remunerating time dedicated to participatory processes.

These workshops were intended to be held in-person, but due to COVID-19 restrictions, they were held via digital platform between May and September 2020. While the participants appreciated the efforts of the facilitators and the methodologies employed, they also pointed out that **virtual spaces do not have the same character as in-person encounters**, lacking especially those spaces for interpersonal and group sharing like coffee-breaks and pauses.

5. CONNECTING AND GENERATING ALLIANCES

For us, a strong movement is an inter-connected movement. For this reason we support collectives and organizations that operate in a network with other organizations and that have a sense of belonging to a broader movement. We also devote resources to support network building and spaces for making these connections, and we organize activities with different organizations in order to put them in contact with each other and allow them to exchange experiences.

In quantitative terms, **grantees affirmed that their participation in connective movement-building spaces increased 7.6** on a scale of 10 (10 being the most).

According to the independent evaluation, the grants received have helped grantee organizations to strengthen existing alliances and cultivate new ones at local and national levels. Having resources permitted them to participate in the movement-building spaces that they deemed relevant, to attend encounters and meetings of platforms in which they participate, and to establish alliances with like-minded groups at a local and national level. They highlight:

- **Connection with other migrant women's groups.** Various groups noted specifically the encounters and meetings of domestic and care workers. For example, they referred to the creation of the National Network of Domestic and Care Workers (RETHOC) at the National Gathering of Domestic Workers in Zaragoza in 2019.
- **Alliances with the anti-racist movement.** Grantees made reference to the first National Anti-Racist Gathering held in Cluà de Meia, Catalonia, in 2019. A majority of groups also joined the Platform #RegularizaciónYa, created in the context of the COVID-19 crisis to demand the regularization of all migrant persons with irregular administrative status.
- **Influence within the feminist movement.** To a lesser extent, some groups did connect with the broader feminist movement.

For example, the Migration and Anti-racism 8M Committee made a great effort to transmit its anti-racist perspectives and reflections and to express its demands within the assemblies held to organize March 8th activities.

While our support helped facilitate grantees' participation in these spaces, the efforts to connect of course fell principally upon the activists of the organizations themselves.

In addition to the spaces the different grantee organizations prioritized, they also considered that the participatory spaces generated by the Migrant Power Programme —like the three subgroups for planning the training and exchange workshops and the Advisory Group—allowed them to connect with collectives with which they had not previously been in contact. These relationships are important for cultivating future collaborations. One example of this is the relationship that arose between the Collective Sirirí, the Association Nosotras por los Cuidados (Granada) and the Association of Domestic Workers of Seville, who are now working to generate a more solid alliance.

Various groups commented that they had learned a lot about other groups' strategies through their participation in the webinars we organized. For example, we organized one webinar about mutual-support funds in which nine different migrant and racialised women's groups and one group of Roma women participated. This allowed the participants to learn about other initiatives and the challenges they face, and to tell their own collectives' experiences. Other grantees mentioned the various webinars we conducted with rights defenders in Mesoamerica who spoke about their responses and care strategies for confronting the COVID-19 situation. In fact, **many groups mentioned the potential Calala has to bring women's and feminist groups in Latin America into contact with Latin American women migrants in Spain.**

In the framework of this Programme we planned to organize an in-person gathering of migrant and racialised women's groups, but due to the pandemic this had to be conducted online. It was titled "Strengthening Collective Strategies: Alliances for a Crisis that is not New." Four regional online encounters were held in Andalusia, Catalonia, the Basque Country and Madrid, with 87 participants, some representing organizations and others as individuals. There was also a Nation-wide gathering with 65 women representing 61 organizations (and 4 individuals) from different regions around the Spanish State. The encounter focussed on the situations of oppression these women face and the strategies they employ in order to progress.

Some of the issues we would like to highlight from this process are:

- **A nation-wide gathering with regional spaces.** While migrant and racialised women in the various different territories of the Spanish State experience similar situations, there are also important differences between the regions. These differences have to do with the contexts, priorities and ways of working, the composition of the movement, and the size and access to resources of the collectives present in each territory. For this reason a shared framework was established with the support of a liaison facilitator, and four regional encounters were held, followed by one nation-wide encounter.
- **A self-managed process.** In each territory there were one or two organizations of migrant and racialised women that were responsible for organizing the encounters: setting dates, defining contents and establishing methodologies within a shared framework decided upon by all. These organizations were paid for this work.
- **A necessary space.** The participants valued the importance of being able to meet each other and exchange experiences at 9.85 out of 10. Specifically, they noted that this space helped them see that they were not alone, identify shared problems, exchange experiences, learn from others and feel that all voices mattered.
- **An incipient network.** There was interest in continuing this interconnection, starting with sharing the contacts of the different participating organizations. Participants requested that occasions for meeting be more frequent, in order to share information, knowledge and good practices. Some even imagined this network becoming a tool for seeking synergies, reaching agreements, doing advocacy work and running joint campaigns.
- **A common agenda on the horizon.** While the different groups are all in different 'moments' and not all share the same objectives, there is interest in creating a common agenda.

- **Values at the centre.** The organizations identified sorority and horizontality as essential in establishing connections so that no one be left behind while avoiding maternalist practices that might undermine the autonomy and the voice of others. They considered active listening and collective care essential in these processes. Lastly, they highlighted diversity, understood as recognition of the importance of listening to and valuing all the demands present. They mentioned the importance of making a joint effort to find spaces and moments to share with women of other origins, like Africans, as this was once again largely a Latin American space.

In building these connections we again confront some of the challenges already mentioned in relation to the training and exchange process. First, while the gathering was planned as an in-person one, it was forced to move online, which makes it difficult to generate the same closeness or ease of communication as in-person meetings. Second, while the collectives valued highly the spaces for meeting created by Calala, these meetings also demand time and work for which participants must find time in negotiation with their paid work, their care work, and their activism in their own collectives. This means that participating often means drawing on their time for rest.

As a consequence of the health crisis and the limits upon travel and in-person meetings we also had to cancel a series of travel grants that we had projected precisely for the purpose of strengthening the connections between groups and movements.

6. IN CLOSING: A LOOK INSIDE

This process has been one of much reflection and learning, in which we are still immersed. All the lessons and challenges we have encountered have made us think. Think about what our role as a women's fund should be, about how to address the power dynamics in our relationships with the groups we support, about how to make the decisions about the resources we manage more participatory, about our own identities and those of our members, about how to deconstruct ourselves without plundering knowledge generated by anti-racist and decolonial feminisms, about what role we should play as an entity with origins and alliances in white feminism that at the same time is committed to the movement of migrant and racialised women.

This is so important to us that we decided antiracism must not be left as a matter of individual choice for our staff. Instead we have decided to initiate a process that will integrate decolonial perspectives into how Calala works. This has just begun.

Since 2016 our President is a migrant domestic and care worker. We consider that we are not starting at zero. This can be noted in some elements identified by our grantees: respect for their autonomy, care in the relationships we establish with them, their involvement in decision making processes, making sure that the role of "experts" throughout the Programme be occupied entirely by migrant and racialised women.

The grantees valued the fact that within Calala's staff there are Latin American migrant women who participate in the migrant antiracist movement; they consider this a reflection of our coherence that brings us closer to the reality of migrant and racialised women. Moreover, our experience in this programme shows us that the presence of this diversity within our team generates greater openness among the participants in the processes, and a greater probability of implementing methodologies appropriate to the realities of migrant women. According to the independent evaluation, one key positive result in the strengthening of Calala itself has been the process of internal reflection, still in progress, around decolonial perspectives, our relationships to the grantee groups, and our internal organizational dynamics.

We still have a long way to go. As we stated in our manifesto *Towards a feminist and antiracist philanthropy*⁶ : “We know that by virtue of being located in the global North and funding groups in Latin America there are logics of power that we reproduce and from which we are not exempt. We still have a long way to go. Aware of our European, white and class privileges and everything that we still have to work on within our foundation, we are convinced that we must eradicate racism from our ways of being.”

In 2020 we have begun to take some steps. First, we are training ourselves as a team in decolonial perspectives and antiracist feminisms. We have also begun a diagnostic process to analyse five institutional areas within Calala from a decolonial perspective: political will, organizational composition and structure, technical competencies, organizational culture and monitoring. In 2021 we plan to conduct a pilot experience with the Migrant Power Programme, integrating participatory processes in the grant-making decisions.

We are just beginning. We hope to be able to shift our structures enough to move towards a greater coherence with our principles. But we also hope to share our own process with other organizations and foundations willing to undertake this work and build a philanthropy that is truly feminist and antiracist. In the meantime, Calala commits itself to continue working to channel ever more resources to organized persons who are constructing non-racist realities every day.

6 Available at: <https://calala.org/hacia-una-filantropia-feminista-y-antirracista/>

“ The two years we have been connected with Calala through the Migrant Power Programme have allowed us to mature as an association, improve our leadership and connect with other organizations. Calala was the only entity that offered us resources and moreover accompanied us ”.

“ Calala’s support allowed us to keep our physical space, without which we could never have provided basic assistance services or psychological and legal counselling. Without a doubt, this is what permitted us to suddenly change our plans to provide an effective response to the Covid-19 crisis ”.

“ We consider that the mobilization and outcry about the exclusion of domestic and care workers from the initial social protection measures passed during the State of Alarm and supported by a multitude of organizations were essential in the approval of a extraordinary subsidy for domestic and care workers ”.

“ Calala’s support has been key for organizations like ours that did not have any other kind of support or accompaniment throughout this year. Key because it allowed us to acquire skills that were essential given the situation we found ourselves in. Additionally, we got to know other collectives from other regions. Also, the resources we received served as an acknowledgement of our ceaseless dedication, and they helped offset our growing precariousness ”.

calala
Fondo de Mujeres

www.calala.org

calala@calala.org

 [@FondoCalala](https://twitter.com/FondoCalala)

 [@calalafondodemujeres](https://www.instagram.com/calalafondodemujeres)

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