



ANNUAL REPORT 2015

GENDER AT WORK

GENDER AT WORK IS A TRANSNATIONAL NETWORK OF INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS WHICH WORK TO END DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN AND ADVANCE CULTURES OF EQUALITY



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FOREWORD

Dear Friends,

Ideas and stories, stories and ideas—this was the creative swirl, the virtuous circle, that animated our approach to ending gender discrimination in 2014.

For a few decades, we have explored and worked with the ‘deep structure’ of organizations and communities—the collection of values, history, culture and practices that form the “normal” unquestioned ways of working in organizations. Our network of 28 Associates and staff in 10 countries has worked with over 100 organizations ranging from government agencies, multilaterals and donor agencies, to trade unions and community-based organizations around the world.

We are seeing a greater focus now on the impact of social norms on women’s access to resources, voice and influence in decisions affecting their lives. At an organizational level, we hear calls to “lean in” but feminists are asking: lean into to what? Organizational policies that call for greater women’s leadership, the need to address sexual harassment in the workplace, and which highlight the benefits of a “diverse” workforce, as much more in the public eye, and ‘unconscious bias’ is a hot topic. Gender at Work enriches these discussions by bringing both conceptual approaches and tools to understand and address gender biased norms and structures that are hot wired into the DNA of organizational systems and kept in place by both visible and invisible power dynamics.

Feminists all over the world are building spaces for innovation, safe spaces to collectively take action and reflect on gains and losses. These are so important and necessary; they chip away at systems of discrimination and exclusion. But we need to go further. We are asking ourselves; how do we move from islands of change to transformation of systems?

The year began with us re-imagining our future as an organization. We identified new ways of approaching gender discrimination, achieved greater clarity on the question of how we can tackle old problems in a fresh way. One of our priorities included creating more “change agents” who will drive transformation and equipping them with better knowledge products, skills and strategies. In 2014, we worked with a range of organizations to build the capacity of change agents in local, organizational and regional contexts.

We began work in Palestine, expanded our work in India, deepened our engagement with communities in South Africa and Mozambique, revisited old thinking grounds like Bangladesh, and worked with the Gates Foundation and the Levi-Strauss Foundation to support and sharpen their strategies. We collaborated with the TMI Project in New York to bring together feminists to share powerful personal narratives of gender change.

We created and provided the necessary tools to tackle deep structure but it is our partners and allies around the world—the people in the communities and organizations we work with—that are the heroes, the true gender warriors. The LGBTI communities in the Vaal region of South Africa, Dalit women in the rural heartland of India, men and women in places like South Sudan and Palestine who even in their war- ravaged surroundings fought to salvage agency, dignity and love.

They use the widely tested Gender at Work Analytical Framework and our Gender Action Learning (GAL) processes to look around and within. By looking deeply at themselves and at each other, they’re constantly redefining “normal” way of doing things. They’re reclaiming their voices. They’re unleashing their power. These are some of the stories in this annual report. We hope you will find them as inspiring as we do. Thank you for being part of our community and for continuing to work for and support gender equality.

In solidarity,

Aruna Rao

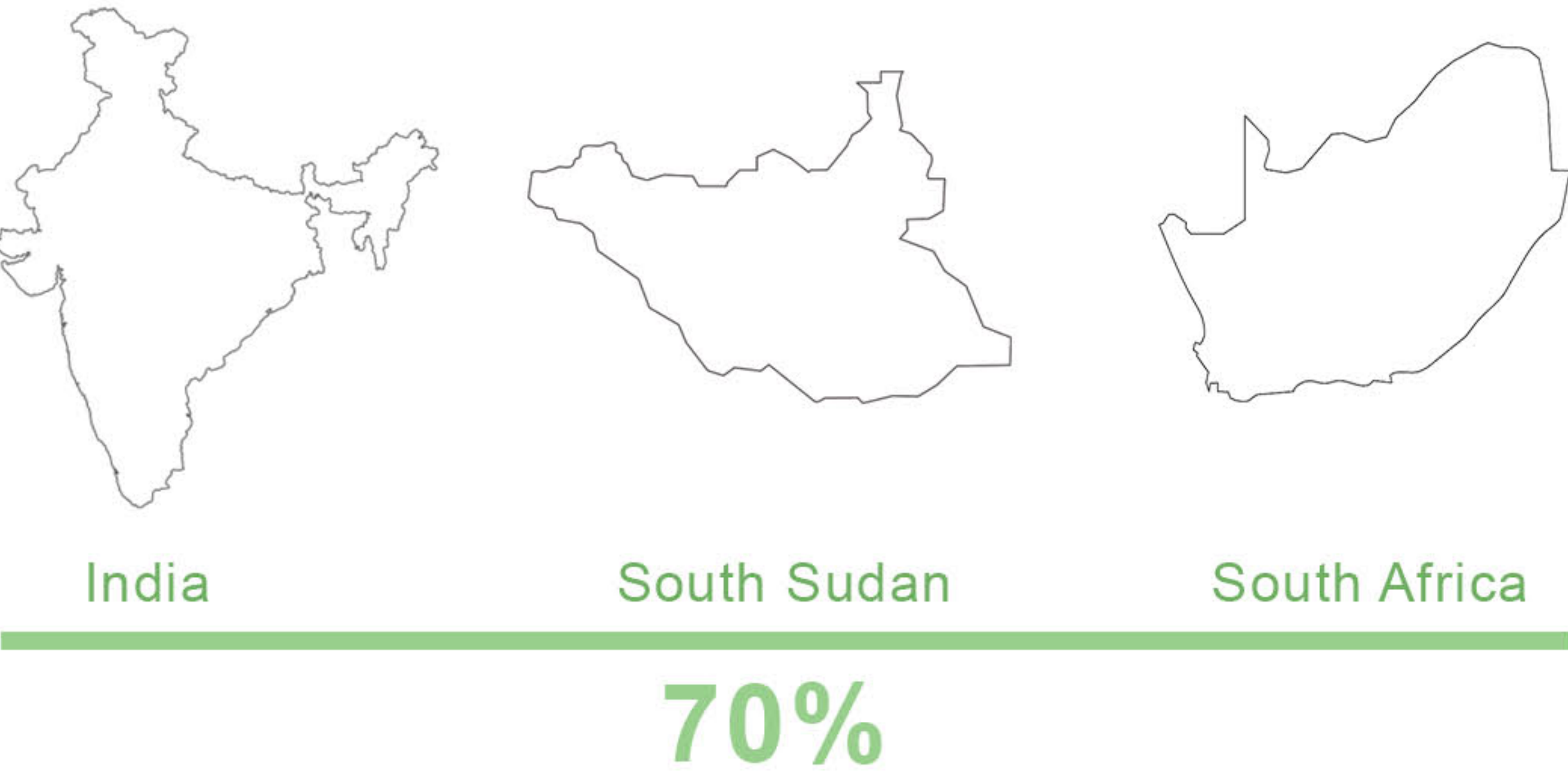
Co-founder; Executive Director
Gender at Work

FLOW FEMINIST LEADERSHIP

We worked with key civil society organizations, public decision-making structures, global CSO networks, trade unions and community based groups in South Africa, peace building organizations in South Sudan and Palestine, and marginalized women’s groups in India to increase and enhance feminist leadership capacity.

Men and women in these regions challenged cultural norms and practices, in their workplaces, in their homes and within themselves. For example, the leader of the second organization sponsored a week to end violence against women- and the week was successful.

But his wife called him on his violence at home. “And when you’re not happy you talk roughly to all of us.” He realized this was true and he has changed his behavior.



70% of women and men GAL participants in India, South Africa and South Sudan report changed attitudes and behaviours in their personal lives, their organizations and their communities over four years. In India, 30 women are committing to developing their skills as G@W facilitators so that they may lead similar transformations in their own communities.



BATTLING GENDER VIOLENCE IN LETSEMA

What would it take to create a community that has ZERO violence against women and girls and ZERO gender-based violence (VAWG/GBV)? In the Vaal region in Gauteng Province in South Africa, a semi-rural area near Johannesburg, Gender at Work Associates together with hundreds of community stakeholders have spent the past year working to transform the social norms that underpin VAWG/GBV and creating a culture of inclusivity and equality.

The program, called "Letsema", uses an open-space, multi-stakeholder methodology to engage the entire community - women and men, church leaders, members of athletic associations and unions, and LGBTI groups - to identify and implement the collective actions necessary to create gender equal cultural norms.

The results of the Letsema initiative are very promising. For example, men and traditional church elders are talking with youth about sex and sexuality, and diverse communities are actively discussing VAWG/GBV including with family, grandchildren, friends, and in public spaces such as at sports events, in shebeens and taxis. Women participants have gained skills, confidence and courage through Letsema to face personal difficulties, including challenging abusive relationships, and learning to assert oneself.

Community gender action learning for collective impact has tremendous potential to transform deeply rooted social norms. Community based organizations, trade unions, church groups, taxi drivers, local leaders, government officials, and sports associations are some of the groups that have come together through holistic dialogue to tackle the hardest part of power inequality, the social norms that underpin gender inequality. Tackling these norms allows communities to thrive and transform.



At the personal level, Letsema participants stated that they gained a sense of personal empowerment, where they were able to tackle GBV issues head on, gained new knowledge on the issues, became more patient and willing to listen to other people's views, and were more willing to take responsibility and ownership of GBV in their communities. Participants are able to advocate and speak out about issues of GBV- including with families, children, friends, institutions such as the church, and in public spaces such as sheebens and taxis.

As reflected by one participant, "As a young woman, I learned that I have got the right to say no and to fight for myself" Other participants reflected this newfound ability to break the silence, stating that "Letsema let us have the courage to talk to other people. I am very proud to be a woman" and that "Before, if people saw that things were not well, they did not know who to talk to. Now people participate at different levels." The ability to speak out, in addition to new-found knowledge, allowed participants to develop and strengthen the skills they needed to address abuse in their personal lives.

At the interpersonal level, family members were more willing and open to discuss issues of GBV, adolescents and adults had more open communication about sex and sexuality, and women reported an increase in the ability to talk about abuse in the home. Male participants have also demonstrated changing attitudes in relation to understanding culturally biased norms of GBV. As one male participant stated, "Respect and seeing respect being given in these spaces also changed my attitudes." Male participants demonstrated a willingness to engage in discussions on GBV, and engage in non-violent behaviour. These attitude shifts have not only led to an openness to talk, but also to address violent practices. For example, after engaging in informal talks on sex, sexuality and GBV, one male community member stopped physically abusing his girlfriend.

The Letsema process has also influenced participants to address culturally biased norms and address women's leadership in a number of other spaces, influencing the wider community. The dialogue process has increased stakeholder participation and the ability to work together across different projects. For example, soccer committees are being used as spaces to discuss GBV and have increased women presence in decision-making roles.

Other key institutions, such as the Church or schools, have increased their knowledge base on GBV. Community dialogues and outreach have shifted mindsets from seeing GBV as a personal issue, to one that was a community one. As one participant put it, "Before, gender-based violence was seen as a personal issue. But now we are trying to see what we can do as a community to address it."



CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

Through its Capacity Development program in India, Gender At Work supported a group of women and men leaders of grassroots NGOs to explore the gender and power dynamics within their organizations and evolve strategies for gender transformation. After an initial workshop to arrive at a common framework for understanding gender issues in organizational settings, participants designed and implemented change projects in their own organizations, then met again to share their lessons and learn from each others' experiences.

In India, as in most other cultures, story-telling is a familiar method of teaching and learning. In many Indian folk- tales, the preceptor begins a story that poses a philosophical or ethical dilemma, challenging the student to take the narrative forward and resolve the conundrum in a way that upholds the moral, ethical or legal principle in question.



Stories and story-telling continue to be widely used to encourage deep reflection on complicated concepts and abstract ideas, or to validate precepts and principles by grounding them in everyday reality.

The G@W program was structured around peer-learning. Story-telling became the method of choice for the group to delve deeper into change processes. Change stories were fleshed out collectively through a process of critical questioning. Questions from the listeners helped story-tellers to re-examine elements of the change process that had been edited out from the first telling, endowing them with new significance. Often, a question rooted in the experience of one organization became an "a-ha moment" for another, resulting in an entirely new angle to on the change process. Telling and re-telling these stories added rich layers of detail and complexity to the understanding of change, throwing into sharp relief the ways in which personal histories, values, beliefs and ways of being and doing contributed to building the organizational culture and shaped its trajectory.

To close the program, we invited participants to create digital stories of each others' personal journeys. Along with giving participants a chance to learn a useful skill and honing the craft of building stories through asking questions, this process also resulted in a bouquet of engaging and inspiring life stories that we are happy and proud to share with a wider audience.

As one participant put it, "I felt so proud when I saw t he film that my partner made about my life - in telling my story, I realized how strong I am, how many battles I have fought and won...."

In India, participants opted to create video vignettes instead of case studies. Participants produced four video vignettes, two of which were shared on G@W's blog. Please see two of the videos and the blog here:

<http://genderatwork.org/OurBlog/TabId/174/PostId/41/telling-the-story-brings-out-the-colour-and-fragrance-of-the-process.aspx>

PATHWAYS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Senior Associate Joanne Sandler also facilitated a panel on “Creating Critical Consciousness”, which showcased example of creative media produced by Pathways as a key route for building understanding of gender norms and stereotypes. Films on women in politics in Sierra Leone and on sex workers in India, and an overview of the innovative Pathways learning platform were presented and discussed.



LEVI STRAUSS FOUNDATION

Gender at Work was contracted by Levi Strauss Foundation to assist in developing a strategy to bring LSF values to efforts to advance gender equality and women’s rights in communities worldwide where Levi’s works. Currently Levi’s has initiatives that engage women garment workers around the world, and has supported feminist and LGBTI organizations. Gender at Work’s efforts built upon this history. We worked with the foundation staff to engage in an internal, analytical, reflective strategy- building process. As a follow up to the consultancy, LSF established a Gender Advisory Council to ensure ongoing guidance and feedback on grant- making strategies from women’s human rights advocates.

TELLING STORIES WITH TMI

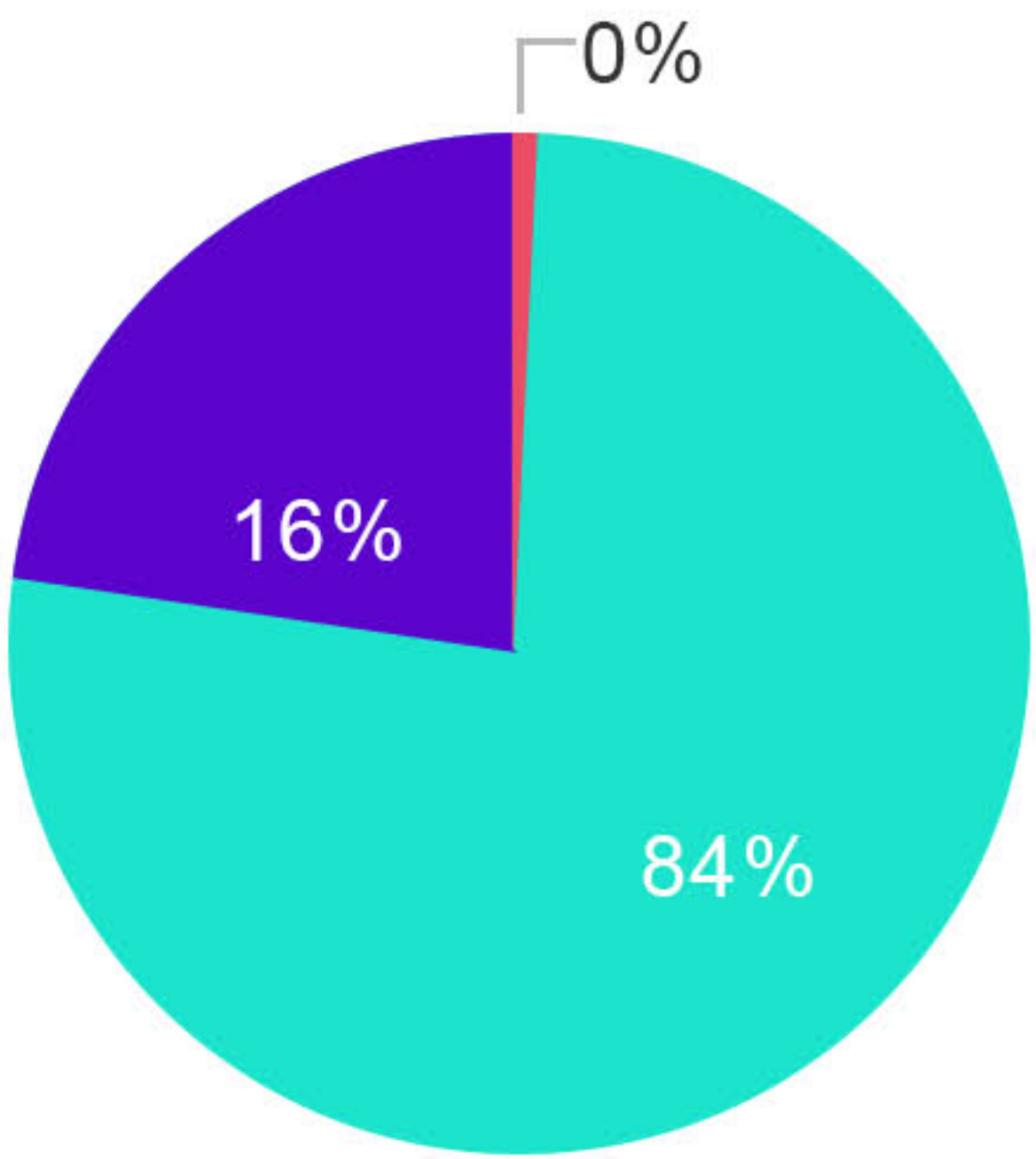
Twelve feminists from all over the world met in upstate New York in September, 2014. They met to pilot the methodology of The TMI Project for Gender at Work and to unearth and tell their own stories.

This video is a testimony to the power of the personal story. Watch the video here

<http://www.genderatwork.org/LinkClick.aspx?link=172&tabid=55&mid=640>

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

INCOME



GRANTS
\$806,865



CONTRIBUTIONS
\$155,048



INTEREST
\$60

TOTAL \$9,61,973



FUNDRAISING
\$3,938



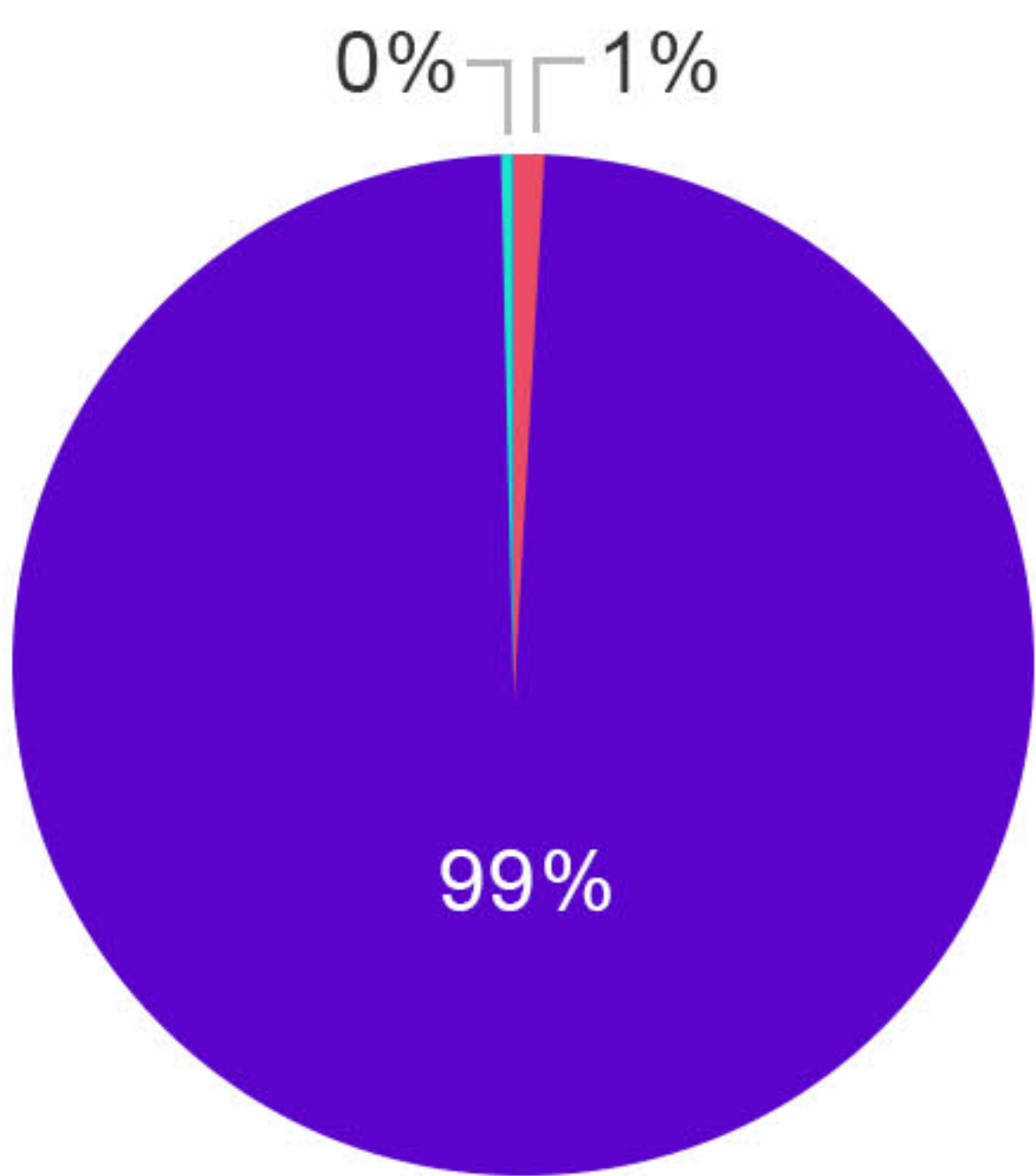
ADMINISTRATION
\$11,590



PROGRAM
\$1,114,258

TOTAL \$1,129,786

EXPENSES



OUR PEOPLE

Welcoming....

Sudarsana Kundu joined us as Country Director for Gender at Work, India. "It is a great opportunity to work on organizational/institutional issues that are often ignored but are an absolute must if we have to address gender equality in India in a meaningful manner", she says.

Sudarsana has worked in both the private and public sector in various capacities. Most recently, she headed the government relations arm of the Centre for Executive Education at the Indian School of Business, designing and delivering customized learning solutions for the senior officials in the government and the non- profit sector. She has also worked with UN WOMEN where she managed the organization's work on gender responsive governance in post conflict countries with a particular focus on increasing government accountability for improved service delivery to women. She has also worked with Unilever for several years as a manager with a focus on organizational change and development. She is busy setting up a non- profit for families with special needs children. She also undertakes research and evaluation for non-profit organizations working on gender equality and women's leadership. In her free time, she likes traveling, reading, and solving crossword puzzles.

Carol Miller joined us as Knowledge Strategist. She works to catalyze and coordinate knowledge building and knowledge outreach across G@W's change interventions and network. She has been an advocate of G@W's approach for many years and the opportunity to be involved in this game-changing work to challenge gender inequalities was not to be missed, she says.

Inspired by her doctoral research on the efforts of inter-war transnational women's organizations to have women's rights addressed by international organizations, Carol became a Research Associate at the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development where she wrote on mainstreaming gender into bi- and multilateral organizations and their programs. After working with the UN, she continued promoting gender equality and women's rights issues as staff member or consultant, mainly with UK-based INGOs.

She worked as Gender Policy Analyst at Action Aid UK and in 2007 joined Oxfam Canada, first as Learning and Accountability Specialist, then as a Manager, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Unit, and most recently as Advisor to the Knowledge Hub on VAWG / GBV.





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- Action Aid International
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