



Building narrative power for gender justice in Latin America

La Alianza Latinoamericana de Fondos de Mujeres y Feministas

Alliance of Women's and Feminist Funds in Latin America and the Caribbean ('Alianza')

- › **Case study focus:** Collaboration Grant
- › **Number of participating women's funds:** Eight
- › **Participating women's funds:** Fondo Acción Urgente de América Latina y el Caribe Hispanohablante (FAU-LAC), Fondo de Mujeres Bolivia Apthapi Jopueti (FMB), Fondo Alquimia (Chile), Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres (FCAM), Fondo Elas+ (Brazil), Fondo Lunaria (Colombia), Fondo de Mujeres del Sur (FMS) (Argentina, Ecuador, Paraguay, Perú, Uruguay, and Venezuela), Fondo Semillas (México)
- › **Geographical focus:** Global
- › **Focus of the collaboration group:** To make visible the historic impacts of the feminist actions taken by the group's funds, and to strengthen their collective identity through the articulation of narratives, countering the messages and disinformation of anti-rights groups in the region

Executive summary

This is a case study of the collaboration group Alliance of Women's and Feminist Funds of Latin America and the Caribbean ('Alianza'), whose members—unlike in many other collaboration groups—had been working together for more than 17 years before partnering with Fenomenal Funds. The group's collective initiatives, led by eight funds, all of whom are members of the Prospera International Network of Women's Funds (INWF), have spearheaded regional campaigns with links to climate justice and resilience, labour rights, and economic justice, among others. However, engaging with the Fenomenal Funds initiative through the Collaboration Grant provided a significant boost to Alianza's collective resilience and advocacy capacity.

Working collaboratively across so many contexts is a complex task. As a result of the Collaboration Grant, Alianza had the opportunity to strengthen and make visible its collaborative and historical work, with a focus on creating common narratives. Capturing and documenting the collective memory of close to **two decades of feminist action** has been key to Alianza's continued strengthening and development, as well as visibilizing the impact of its work in the philanthropic ecosystem.

Through the grant, Alianza has been able to focus on previously neglected areas, such as communication. The design of joint communication strategies allowed the group to create **coherent feminist narratives that counter the messages of anti-rights movements**, promoting a vision of hope and mobilization. Funding also supported the group's funds in collectively participating in international conferences, where they shared a political analysis of Latin American events and networked with counterparts from other parts of the world.

In addition, the resources allocated through the grant helped facilitate the introduction of new spaces for collaboration and learning, where the group's members can co-create strategies, share knowledge, and build alliances that transcend national borders. As a result, the capacities of each fund have been enhanced, and the group's collective actions crucially strengthened in the face of complex regional socio-political challenges.

Together, these actions strengthened the group's collective identity and its capacity to articulate narratives that challenge hate speech and the rise of fundamentalisms in the region, and bring visibility to the importance of feminist movements in the fight for gender justice and human rights.

An overview of Alianza

Since 2008, eight women's and feminist funds have come together within the Alianza Latinoamericana de Fondos de Mujeres y Feministas ('Alianza') collaboration group to strengthen regional collective action and support feminist, women's, and diversity movements in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Alianza is a key political actor in the mobilization of resources and political advocacy, as well as in the promotion of feminist philanthropic culture. From the start, Alianza was established to enhance and strengthen regional collaboration among its member funds from political, strategic, feminist, intersectional, and anti-racist perspectives. In addition, its aim was to implement various joint initiatives to mobilize resources and enhance capacity building among feminist organizations and movements which have contributed to achieving important achievements in the field of human rights of women and the LGBTQI+ community.

Introduction

This case study explores the transformative journey of the Alliance of Women's and Feminist Funds of Latin America and the Caribbean ('Alianza') group as a result of its collaboration with the Fenomenal Funds initiative over the past five years. Comprising eight feminist funds from different parts Latin America, the Alianza collaboration group creates a unique space for collective work focused on designing and strengthening feminist narratives that **respond to growing challenges in the region**. Such challenges include **the consolidation of authoritarian governments**, some of them far-right; an increase in hate speech; and the expansion of fundamentalist groups that **threaten advances in human and feminist rights**.

Recognizing the importance of communication as a political tool, the Collaboration Grant afforded Alianza a vital opportunity to develop joint narrative strategies that address these threats.

Here, we explore four key elements of Alianza's activities:

1. **Emphasizing and politicizing the group's historical impacts:** Documenting the trajectory of Alianza and participating in strategic spaces,

to strengthen its collective identity and make its impacts in the region more visible;

2. **Building narratives against fundamentalisms:** Designing messages that challenge hate speech and promote a hopeful and unifying feminist future;
3. **Devising a joint communications strategy:** Integrating programme and communications perspectives to ensure political and feminist coherence in its messaging, laying the foundations for tackling new challenges;
4. **Fostering collective learning and coordination with partners:** Creating collaborative spaces in which to share experiences, strengthen capacities, and build solid political links.

We conclude by analyzing how utilizing a holistic approach to financial resilience can enhance confidence among women's funds in their stability and resilience, and strengthen their abilities to share learnings with and support their partners. Finally, we reflect on Alianza's next steps and the broader changes required with the feminist funding ecosystem.

Uses and effects of the Collaboration Grant

Recovering history and giving visibility to the progress made

With the support of the Fenomenal Funds Collaboration Grant, Alianza was afforded the space and time to document its history and generate a narrative demonstrating its impacts in the region. This process strengthened the group's identity and, through this reflection, its members recognized the importance of its trajectory, which also helped

strengthen their understanding of present activities and guide future plans. Additionally, documenting Alianza's history made it possible for its members to recognize the roots of the group's feminist actions, and also visibilize problems within the region and highlight the impacts of other regional women's and feminist funds.

Alongside documenting its history, the grant also supported Alianza's participation in conferences, meetings, and activism spaces. For example, the

group used part of the funding to better prepare and present its collective work at the Human Rights Funders Network (HRFN) conference, as well as at the AWID 2024 Conference. In these spaces, it shared a joint analysis of the political reality of the region, supported by a collective design and presentation. Several of the group's members commented that, **although they previously participated in international conferences as Alianza, having greater resources to prepare collective messages and narratives generated a deeper impact and strengthened collective action.**

Finally, being together in international spaces has allowed Alianza to engage in global feminist resistance strategies, share the current fragility of their respective democracies and the risks this fragility entails, and strengthen its relationships with women's funds around the world. This work has not least been done together with another of Fenomenal Funds' collaboration groups, 'On the Right Track: Building Networks in Latin America and Europe for Democracy and Human Rights'.

Constructing collective narratives in the face of fundamentalism

Given the context of weakened democracies and expanding anti-gender movements supported by both left- and right-wing regimes in Latin America, Alianza has prioritized the use of **collective narratives** as a **political tool** to confront these discourses. Beyond creating a traditional communications strategy, support from the

Collaboration Grant led the group to engage in exchanges and analyses regarding the diverse realities in which its participating funds develop their work, so it can construct narratives capable of effectively transforming said realities.

The emphasis on narrative construction stems from the group's realization that anti-rights movements have managed to articulate and mobilize discourses with which large sectors of the population identify. As one member said,

"It is clear that the entities working to dismantle the achievements of feminism and human rights seem to have almost unlimited resources. But, for us, the women's movement, the process of mobilizing resources is a constant concern."

It recognizes that those working in the women's movement find it difficult to access the resources that allow them to create spaces for reflection and to build narratives that counterbalance this phenomenon.

Another challenge facing the movement is not only ensuring groups have the resources to communicate their messaging, but that they do so in a way that best resonates with the audience. "The challenge is not only to communicate, but to clearly define *what* we are going to say and *why* we are saying it," stated one Alianza member.

Narratives as spaces of power

Narratives play a key role in the construction of social reality, as they not only reflect existing power relations, but can also reinforce or transform them. From a critical discourse analysis, authors such as Norman Fairclough and Teun A. van Dijk emphasize that language is not neutral, but a tool to exercise or challenge power. Fairclough shows how dominant narratives tend to normalize inequalities, while alternatives can challenge them and open up paths to change. Meanwhile, van Dijk emphasizes that those who control narratives, such as elites through the media, influence how we understand the world; but he also recognizes the potential of counter-hegemonic discourses to strengthen marginalized groups. Thus, narratives not only describe reality, they have the power to change it.

“This means making the contribution of feminist movements visible from a perspective of hope, calling for action and support, rather than focusing solely on adversity.”

A strategic communications policy

The design of a joint communications strategy was a collective effort among Alianza’s members that seeks to guarantee the political and feminist coherence of the group’s messaging. This process required the involvement of various individuals from each fund (such as communications officers) who had previously not worked together or taken such a proactive role in the group.

The Collaboration Grant provided crucial resources for engagement and collaboration, and the opportunity to integrate more perspectives and knowledge from each fund and their contexts has been enriching—allowing the group to better focus on delivering messages that strategically influence the realities it wants to transform. This has served to strengthen both Alianza as a group and the internal capacities of the individual funds.

The group’s communications strategy has a clear political component. “It’s not just about raising the profile of Alianza or the issues we face in different countries in the region, but also about crafting messages that challenge the structures of oppression, call for solidarity, and show hope for a feminist future,” asserted one member. The group’s efforts to enhance communication have also aided its members in collectively facing political and social challenges, and laid the foundations for a

second stage of mass dissemination of messaging. These upcoming messages will seek to position the achievements of Alianza and generate support from partners in a context where **flexible resources and coordinated action are more necessary than ever.**

Collective learning and coordination with partners

Opportunities for collaboration between the group’s participating funds have been key to building collective learning, fostering the exchange of experiences and good practices, and building solid political links that reinforce the feminist coherence of the funds’ work. As one Alianza member said:

“Our collective action guides us, enlightens us, and gives us a vision for our region.”

However, in addition to impacting its member funds, Alianza’s work has effects across the wider feminist ecosystem. For instance, beyond financing projects, Alianza facilitates coordination between the organizations it supports, with the aim of deepening links and dialogues among regional feminists and LGBTQI+ movements. This is achieved through training workshops and by providing spaces for joint reflection—which not only helps to strengthen partners’ capacities, but also enhances their ability to mobilize resources and respond to local contexts. Partaking in joint activities helps establish a sense of belonging and collective satisfaction, demonstrating that collaboration has a much greater impact than working individually.

Conclusions

Alianza’s experiences and actions highlight the contribution the Fenomenal Funds Collaboration Grant made in its building collective narratives,

political articulation, and taking strategic action. These initiatives lay the foundations for a resilient feminist future, capable of facing present challenges

and moving towards a more just and equitable society in Latin America. Some of the key outcomes for Alianza following the support of the Collaborative Grant include:

- **Strengthened internal capacities**, through the recovery and politicization of collective history and the development of key communication strategies;
- **The elevation long-neglected areas of work**, such as building feminist narratives to confront hate speech and growing fundamentalisms in the region;
- **Enhanced resources for collaboration** that provide horizontal spaces for co-creation and collective learning between funds;

➤ **Fostered relationships and mutual learning**, allowing the group's funds to share knowledge and develop joint strategies adapted to diverse contexts;

➤ **Better support and responsiveness to partners**, making Alianza's collective impact visible and strategically positioning the group as a key leader in the feminist ecosystem.

These elements not only strengthened Alianza's member funds as individual actors, but also contributed to consolidating the group's collective and strategic actions in an increasingly challenging regional context.

What are the next steps for Alianza?

Looking ahead, the Alianza collaboration group is focused on the continued **implementation of its collectively designed communication strategy**. Through this, the group aims to raise the profile of the narratives it has constructed and mobilize strategic messages to confront hate speech and anti-gender rhetoric in Latin America.

In reflecting on its collaboration with Fenomenal Funds, Alianza highlights that:

- **Five years of general support has been enough time for the group enough to build analyses and metrics**, but not to observe the full impact of these actions or to fully understand how structural changes are produced. A long-term vision, ideally of at least 10 years, is essential to sustain and evaluate the impact of these initiatives on the philanthropic ecosystem;
- **The political context requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach**. Alianza's members face critical challenges, such as the emergence of anti-feminist narratives and even right-wing 'feminisms' that complicate the struggle for

gender justice. As such, the group recognizes that its work must transcend feminism, connecting with climate, indigenous rights, and other human rights movements. Protecting democracy and social justice is consolidated as a global and collective objective;

➤ **Collaboration is a political commitment**.

Beyond being funders, Alianza positions itself as a collective body that accompanies, responds to, and co-creates solutions with grassroots movements. It sees money as a political act, both in the way it is received and given, and emphasizes the importance of maintaining horizontal and respectful partnerships.

In its next phase, Alianza invites donors and allies to commit to a transformative approach that both finances the initiatives of grassroots movements and amplifies the solutions they are putting in place in response to regional crises and challenges. Such support is key to consolidating feminist narratives that defend hard-won rights and generate long-lasting outcomes in Latin America's feminist and philanthropic ecosystem.

Building narrative power for gender justice in Latin America

La Alianza Latinoamericana de Fondos de Mujeres y Feministas

KIT Institute

P.O. Box 95001
1090 HA Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Visiting address

Mauritskade 64
1092 AD Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Telephone

+31 205688711

E-mail

assist@kit.nl

Website

www.kit.nl

Visual summary by

Carlotta Cataldi

Designed by

www.wrenmedia.co.uk

