

Cultivating Care to Find Balance in Life

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



**URGENT
ACTION
FUND**
Latin America &
the Caribbean

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1 INTRODUCTION





Our Commitment to Building Collective Feminist Leadership From the South


This year brought with it deep reflections that rooted us in our political commitment to center care through a transformative, contextualized feminist approach – one that recognizes that there are no absolutes, but rather paths built by many experiences throughout time, which allow us to remember and honor our ancestors. We recognize multiple feminisms, born from our experiences as women, trans and non-binary people from the Global South.

Latin America and the Caribbean has lived and is currently experiencing structural inequalities that affect us all. Such inequalities, the countless difficulties that we overcome daily, have deepened as

a result of the pandemic and are what remind us of our goals when we started our collective path to center care in our work with the team, Board of Directors, allies, and organizations, and to dream of other possible worlds.

2021 also made us confront unimaginable situations. The departure of our Executive Director, Tatiana Cordero, a seed and guide of change, was a great challenge for us and brought us great learnings about care, pause and accepting the uncertainty in life. Amid all our emotions, we are committed to keeping the flame of Tatiana's legacy alive, strengthening ourselves collectively.






Starting with the process initiated by Tatiana, we decided to continue building collective leadership within the UAF-LAC, which began with a Colectivo de Dirección and in 2022 will be completed with the creation of a three-person Executive Leadership. This is part of the Fund's political commitment to the construction of collective forms of leadership based on feminist principles, which generate greater strength and sustainability for our organizational fabric, and to respond in the best way possible to the enormous and diverse challenges faced by activists and the defenders of our region, their organizations, and movements.

We know that this type of leadership deserves communication, transparency, camaraderie, listening, empathy, will, and the ability to transform traditional ways of relating to each other and of working that have been sustained by oppressive power relations. For this reason, all of us who are part of UAF-LAC are constantly learning and transforming.

We also understand that the various transitions that we have gone through are part of this process, and we, therefore, want to express our immense gratitude to all those who have worked with the Fund. Their time with us has enriched our collective work. To all of you we say, thank you! We are what we are because of what we have built together.



We, as the Urgent Action Fund for Latin America and the Caribbean, are glad for all that this process will signify. We are sure that collectively we will continue dreaming and working towards a region with equity, equality, and freedom.

We invite you to read this report, honored that our work contributes to the sustainability of activism in the region.

María del Rosario Mina Rojas
President - Board of Directors

Lorena Medina y Terry de Vries
Colectivo de Dirección



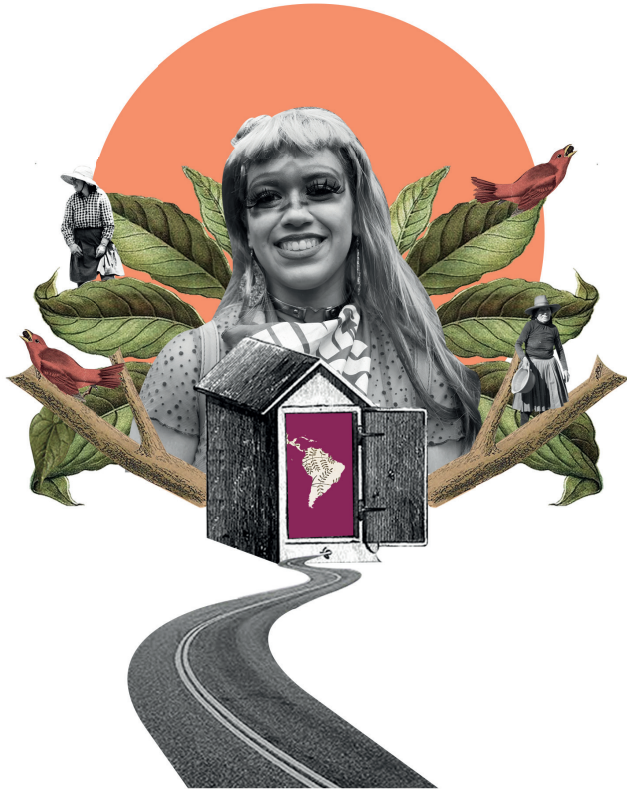
Two Years After the Beginning of the Covid-19 Crisis

2021, the second year of the global COVID-19 crisis, was a year that forced us to rethink structures, to assimilate the ever-changing context, and to adapt to the changes in the region. It was a year of trying to understand losses and of learning how to navigate uncertainty to cultivate balance. Relying on the certainties that guided us, we continued to accompany the movements of the region, and called for all to remember that, in the defense of territory and care, we are defending life itself. In this report we share the ways in which we resisted in the face of the crisis and the commitment of organizations, networks, and collectives who continue to build other possible worlds.



2 OUR PROGRAMS





Rapid Response Grants

We delivered a **total of 251 Rapid Response Grants** (ARRs for its Spanish acronym), illustrating that while the region has been experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic, it also continues to experience various economic, political, and social crises. In this context, women, trans and non-binary people's movements continue to face situations of risk while defending their rights. They also find windows of opportunity to stop the regression of their rights and to advance their struggles.

In its second year, the effects derived from the COVID-19 pandemic are visible in the grants we supported. For example, in the face of the worsening economic, political, and social crises already present in the region, defense of territory, nature, and common goods became a resistance that makes



visible the dynamics of precariousness and dispossession in territories. At the same time, the long-term effects of the pandemic are visible in the social fabric as well as in the physical and mental health of activists, who confront the aggravation of structural inequalities that generate significant economic and social vulnerability.

Through the applications we received we saw that the Marea Verde movement, continues to grow through the region. However, as a result of the achievements and relevant discussions related to abortion that took place in countries such as Colombia driven by the **Causa Justa** movement, fundamentalist and

conservative groups, in alliance with governments, have sought to advance their regressive agendas in an increasingly relentless manner.

We also witnessed this year migration crises, a result of systems of inequality and precariousness. While migratory flows have prevailed from south to north, we also saw south to south routes. The food, political, and social crises that Haiti is experiencing have impacted countries such as the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and other countries in Central America, where hundreds of Afro-descendant women, Haitian migrants, and Dominican women of Haitian descent are being deported without clear legal processes.




Women and Territories



This year, the continuity of the COVID-19 health crisis and its direct impacts on women and their communities landed at different levels. We witnessed the increase in inequalities and the precariousness of life, especially in rural areas and informal economies. Women, trans, and non-binary people organized for the protection of their territories and strengthened their reflections on the importance of creating alternatives to the prevailing economic model, combining actions of care and protection of territory and common goods with collective and community support.

In challenging times for organizations, it is essential to guarantee timely and flexible financing. In this context, our Strategic Grants (SGs) reached its



seventh year as a consolidated, dynamic, and contextual financing modality. Through such assistance, we continue to support strategies for political strengthening, advocacy, and communications, in addition to strengthening support for experiences of intersectional resistance in territories and migratory processes that are part of the daily logic and impact of dispossession. We continue to support collective care as a complementary strategy that contributes to sustainability, protection, and buen vivir¹ in the context of each organization, collective, and community.

¹ Buen vivir






Sustainable Activism

2021 was a year that required us to move in tune with the rhythms and news that life brought us. The departure of our beloved Tatiana marked a moment of pause and deep reflection on the prospects for Sustainable Activism in the future. In June, we began to imagine a new category of support that would honor Tati's legacy and the learnings that we have gathered throughout the years of implementing the program. This led to the birth of **Apoyos Caracola**. Since September we started piloting, and after a closed call for proposals selected six organizations that helped us identify the necessary material conditions for strengthening collective care in the feminist and women's movements of the region. It was also an important year to close the process of

dialogue and drafting "**How can we ground care to dance our revolution?**" a global investigation related to care and protection promoted by the Urgent Action Sisters Fund that we began in November 2017.

We continue to embody our ethical-political position to center care. The conversations within our team and engagement with the reflections of the organizations we support on these practices throughout the year confirm the mainstreaming of this commitment. We also advanced as a Program in building a team and strengthening internally with necessary conversations related to topics such as intergenerational trust, decision-making, limits, and the urgency of telling each other necessary





conversations related to topics such as **intergenerational trust**, decision-making, limits, and the urgency of telling each other necessary information in a timely and calm manner. During this process, we were able to rely on external support, which confirmed the importance of the care networks that have shown solidarity with our team during this year.

In the words of one of the participants in the in-person meeting of the Commission for the Latin American Meeting of Healers, "(...) *in the midst of emergencies, the role of healers, therapists, and people who cure others has become very visible*". We are deeply grateful and honored to be accompanied by them on this **journey towards a Society of Care!**





3 OUR AREAS



Strategic Communication

The constant changes in the regional context and within the team made us rethink and adjust many aspects of our work, however, we continue to be committed to serving as a bridge for communication across the feminist movements of Latin America and the Caribbean. Our social networks were nurtured by the work and activism of our partners, especially those who built new realities based on the defense of territories, nature, and common goods.

As mentioned before, at the beginning of 2021, we embraced with deep sorrow and gratitude the departure of our beloved Executive Director. We received love and solidarity from all of our channels of communication. During the second half of the year, we strengthened our commitment to the production of knowledge from the defense of territory, and to



close out the year, as part of our inter-programmatic work, we began a process of consultation to learn more about the realities, problems, and contexts experienced by organizations, networks, women, trans people, and gender dissidents with disabilities.



Institutional Strengthening

The commitment to Institutional Strengthening that we began in 2018 provided us with tools for remote work and the collective practices and agreements that were necessary to deal with the global confinement. In this way, it was possible for us to continue accompanying the movements of women, feminists, trans, and non-binary people in the region. At the same time, it also invited us to reflect on the importance of pausing and honoring other internal rhythms.

In 2021, it was necessary to take two collective breaks. The first in May, which provided us with space to mourn Tatiana's departure, and the second in December, as an alternative approach to end the year with our first in-person meeting of the entire team in two years and then to have days to pause and re define our rhythms for the next year



Administration

Throughout the 13 years that UAF-LAC has been in operation, we have managed to support more than 1,198 organizations and collectives in Latin America and the Caribbean. We have increased our budget 25 times, since we started in 2009.



4

HOW DID UAF-LAC SUPPORT
LEARNING TO LIVE IN A
CHANGING WORLD?



101 Grants for
Collective Care

40 ARRS to respond
to the context of
the pandemic

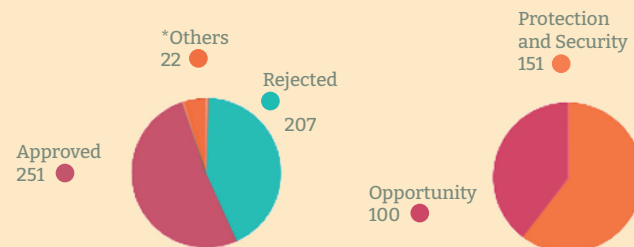
*Others refer to requests that at the time of data cutoff were withdrawn from SIGUEME or were in the process of being studied.



Direct and Timely Financing 251 Rapid Response Grants -RRGs- delivered in 17 countries

480 applications
processed

Applications approved
by type of grant



Primary issues

- Civil and political rights
- Environmental justice and defense of territory, nature, and common goods
- Sexual and reproductive rights
- State violence

Primary strategies

- Temporary relocation for the defender and/or her nuclear family
- Social mobilization
- Sustaining
- Individual healing processes and/or healing processes to counteract effects caused by attacks: medical treatment/psychological accompaniment/spiritual accompaniment

Opportunity Grant

In September 2020, the *#CausaJusta* in english “Just Cause”, movement filed an action of unconstitutionality before the Colombian Supreme Court against the crime of abortion in article 122 of the Penal Code. The lawsuit was approved and entered into the discussion in February 2022. With the help of a Rapid Response Grant, *La Mesa por la Vida y la Salud de las Mujeres* (The Table for the Life and Health of Women) carried out a communications campaign and actions to strengthen the political advocacy strategy, including hiring specialists in legislative techniques, as well as purchasing materials need to ensure the safety and wellbeing of participants in the mobilizations carried out as part of the campaign’s actions.





Protection and Security Grant

Within the framework of the trial against David Castillo, the manager of the DESA hydroelectric company found guilty of being the intellectual co-author of the murder of Berta Cáceres, El Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas en Honduras (The Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations in Honduras, COPINH) carried out security actions within the context of the public trial. They also carried out collective care and actions to come together with others through spiritual ceremonies of the Lenca and Garífuna people and accompanied other organizations, people from the communities of the **COPINH** teams, and the legal team for three months through the Viva Berta feminist encampment.

Strategic Grants

UAF LAC, recognizing the different levels of urgency that land and territory defenders have to address, started providing Strategic Grants in 2016. In these years, we have given a total of 94 grants, in 2021 we supported 21 new organizations in 8 countries .

As part of our Strategic Grants, we accompany the fishing community of **La Gamboa, in Salvador de Bahía, Brazil**, where black women view cooking as a collective practice of resistance and the creation of care alternatives, community cohesion, and sustenance. During this time, they have become more closely articulated with other movements that resist predatory tourism and structural racism. Organized women from the community have also had an important response to a recent police intervention that resulted in the death of three young people from





the community. They have raised their collective voice against the violence that they and their community have experienced, denouncing it as yet another reflection of structural racism and lack of opportunities, and have demanded that the death of the community's young people not go unpunished and forgotten. Existing networks have contributed to amplifying their voices and helping the women in this moment of collective mourning.

Inhabiting the Virtual World

During the second year of the pandemic, it was not possible to host in-person meetings[MG8] so we continued to look for strategies to inhabit the virtual world and to continue to share experiences and knowledge. With the intention of continuing to reflect on our ethical and political commitment to placing care at the center, we convened activists, defenders, and feminists to learn about the protection and care strategies they developed in the context of

confinement. We organized spaces with members of 16 organizations from Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, Honduras, Argentina, Chile, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. Throughout the meeting we were able to understand how their needs, practices, and strategies of protection and collective care have been transformed and how they have been rebuilding the social fabric during the emergency and the crisis resulting from the pandemic.

*“With others who accompany me along the way, I can see.
Holding others makes me strong.”
(Oralia - Mexico)*





Knowledge Production

The publication *“Extractivism, the pandemic and other possible worlds: Economic recovery and alternatives from women defenders of territories in Latin America”* share reflections inspired by the work and experiences of defenders from 29 organizations, associations, and groups of women, LBTIQ+ persons, and anti-racists, who work for the defense of the rights of women and territories. During the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, UAF-LAC closely accompanied women defenders of territory in the challenging situations they were facing and supported strategies that responded to community vulnerabilities and the comprehensive defense of their rights. While the economic activities and ways of life of the population were restricted by the globally adopted measures, companies and governments continued to advance an extractivist agenda

throughout Latin America, increasing risks to communities and making the defense of territory more difficult than ever.

In addition to a process of exchange and active listening, this report represents a great responsibility for the Fund. Through it we reiterate our commitment to support women, trans, and non-binary people in their demands for justice and protection of life and territory. Sharing the publication with the organizations that participated, as well as with allies and donors, has allowed us to continue deepening understandings of the financing needs of organizations and activists in defense of territory in the current context, as well as the impacts of the climate agendas of multilateral organizations, evidencing the fragility of false solutions.





5

ACCOMPANIMENT AND DIALOGUE SPACES WITH ACTIVISTS





Spaces for Participation and Dialogue

During the period of isolation, we looked for ways to mitigate the distance between us and the organizations we support by engaging in virtual bilateral and country dialogues. We continued to deepen our practice of virtual work strategies that allow us to effectively listen and learn collectively. Slowly we are returning to organizing small group meeting spaces with the intention of reaching more territories in the region and meeting strategic allies that connect us with the various contexts that we support. Even when we can't meet in-person, we seek to find a way to get to know the organizations and for them to tell us about how they are experiencing the social and political changes firsthand, as well as to better understand their needs and ideas and actions

to resist and create alternatives for the care and protection of life in the territories.

Latin American Meeting of Healers: the Commission's embrace

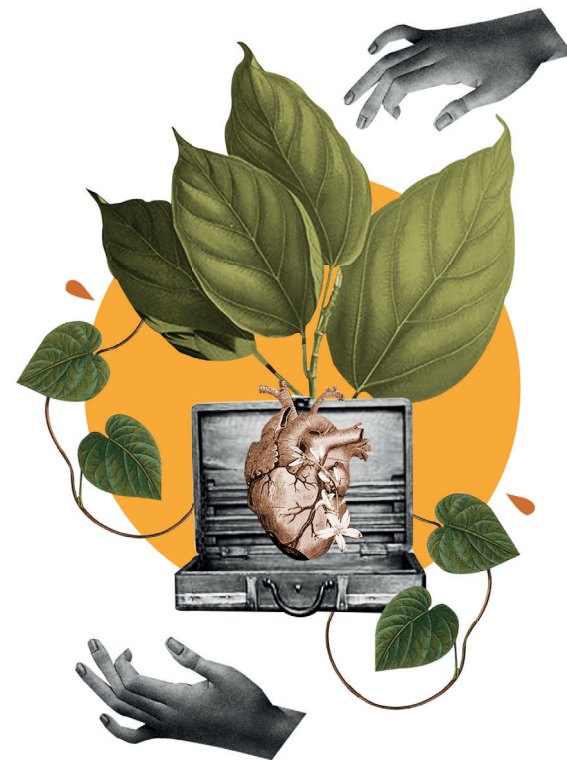
In 2021, we had the opportunity to meet in Antigua, Guatemala with the colleagues of the **Commission of the Latin American Meeting of Healers**, including witches, therapists, healers, herbalists, and artist-healers. The Commission is an idea that we have been building together with *IM-Defensoras*, *CAPACITAR Latinoamerica*, *Consortio Oaxaca*, *KAQLA*, *Centro Q'ANIL*, *Actoras de Cambio (Actors of Change)*, *JASS Mesoamérica*, *Aluna Acompañamiento Psicosocial (Aluna Psychosocial Accompaniment)*, *Red de Defensoras de Honduras (Network of Women Defenders of Honduras)*, *Red de Defensoras de Nicaragua*





(Network of Nicaraguan Women Defenders) and other accompaniers and therapist-activists.

During the month of July, the 17 representatives of the Advocate Commission met. Taking advantage of the embrace of this network, we invited an additional 86 participants to honor the life and legacy of Tatiana Cordero in a hybrid sharing space. Participating in this process has been a calming balm across the distance and a comforting embrace in the face of the personal and collective difficulties of those who participate in the Commission, the Methodological Commission, and the Healing Circles, which have been formed to plan the Latin American Meeting.







Voices

““With this support, it was possible to hold a meeting of indigenous women and unify the union of the village with other indigenous communities. With the support of UAF-LAC, it is evident that the world is not turning a blind eye to the indigenous cause”

“This support has transformed negative stories into positive ones, has saved and protected lives, and has restarted the lives of families, leaders, and youth. It has also generated hope to continue in the fight for the defense of human rights and of our land and territory in a country where the government and State persecute those who defend life and peace”

"This support was significant for us because it allowed the women of the Dominican community of Haitian descent (Afro-descendant women) to be present and to be represented in the fight for the 3 permitted circumstances for accessing abortion and the rights of women"

"The most evident change that we perceive is related to the inclusion of our opinions and proposals in the collective exercise (in the National Summit of Colombian Black People). Today our presence and participation in meeting spaces and assemblies is taken more seriously and is given a more relevant place"



Voces de las Mujeres

"We are very grateful and very happy. Thank you for not abandoning organizations like ours in this work. Our work is often difficult, but what you do encourages us to continue and to not let our guard down."

"Reaffirming the importance of accompaniment, of asking how we are, what we need, recognizing the value of the company of others, of embracing each other, and even of silence, the decision about how to be and to continue on a personal and collective level."

"It is not enough to build capacities of those with whom we work if the organizing dynamics of activism and life fail to adapt to the calls for new rhythms and times."

"It is important to build the work while connecting with softness, sweetness, patience, slowness, and love"



6

FINANCES

FINANCES

Our funding sources:

During 2021, **UAF-LAC managed a 3,361,881 USD budget**, representing an increase of 17.41% compared to 2020.

25%
USD \$848.218
Governments

75%
USD \$2.513.663
Private
Organizations



How was the budget distributed?

(\$3.361.881 USD)





7 GROWTH OF THE FUND







During 2021 we continued to be committed to the strategic growth of our team and to further regionalize our internal vision. We integrated new colleagues from countries such as El Salvador, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Mexico and we continue to be committed to internal strengthening and supporting the professional growth of our team members.



Our commitment to collective leadership

In January 2021, when Tatiana took medical leave to start her healing process, she left the Colectivo de Dirección in charge of her responsibilities with the approval of the Board.² As part of her valuable legacy, in 2019 Tatiana created this Collective as a feminist commitment to the construction of collective leadership. Since then, it has been functioning as key support to the Executive Director in decision-making and involvement in the daily operations of the organization.

² Colectivo de Dirección is a UAF-LAC's shared collective leadership space composed of the three Senior Coordinators and the Executive Director. It was created in 2019 as a feminist commitment to build collective leadership and to act as key support to the Executive Director. Since January 2021, and later after the sensible passing of Tatiana Cordero, former Executive Director, the "Colectivo de Dirección", has been in charge of the executive management of UAF-LAC.





In September 2021, the Board of Directors decided to build an Co Executive Leadership. From that point, we started a process of reflection and co-construction of the model that we hope to implement in 2022. This collective leadership model is made up of 3 people and is part of the Fund's political commitment to the construction of shared leadership, which generates greater strength and sustainability for our organizational fabric and allows us to respond in the best way to the enormous and diverse challenges faced by defenders and activists of our region, their organizations and movements.

Through this Leadership transition, the Fund is committed to reflecting feminist principles.





8

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



Donors

We send special thanks to the donors who funded us and allowed us to support the transformative power of women, trans ,and non-binary people in the region.

Partners

We recognize the work and resistance of the organizations, networks, and collectives with whom the work of UAF-LAC has resonated and who allowed us to accompany their struggles in times of crises and who, in such difficult contexts, were able to find the possibility for action.

Allies (activists and defenders)

We thank the defenders and activists who make it possible for us to continue with our mission. Without their support and trust, our work would not be possible.



**HOW WILL WE CONTINUE TO
INHABIT A WORLD IN CRISIS?**



2021 made it clear to us that it is vital to listen to each other and to continue committing to collective creation. It showed us that there are alternatives and visions for other possible worlds – strategies that are drawn and built from the strength of the south, the wisdom of Abya Yala, and that come laden with ancestral knowledge.

We will continue to nurture the seeds that others have sown for the movement and to walk the paths that our movements of resistance and change have created. We will inhabit the certainties that we hold in a world in constant transformation and crisis.



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