



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Advocating for peace, justice & equality

REFLECTION, REPAIR AND INNOVATION

Message from Our Laureates

The world witnessed compounded challenges from the global crisis of the pandemic to conflicts including the coup d'état in Myanmar and the withdrawal from Afghanistan — with disastrous impacts on rights and agency of women, and particularly, for women activists and women's civil society.

2021 at the Nobel Women's Initiative was a year of internal reflection and repair. Of leadership changes and the beginning of organizational transformation. It was a year that marked the 15th anniversary of the founding of NWI. One where pride in the legacy of global activism and advocacy in support of women peacebuilders was tempered by the awareness that significant harm had been experienced by former staff in the conduct of NWI's business, and the pressing need to remediate that harm.

In 2021 the groundwork was laid for the next chapter of the Nobel Women's Initiative, one that builds on the best of the social justice legacy. While these have been challenging times, we are grateful for the push and the opportunity to transform NWI, to be better, and to do better.

Shirin Ebadi, Iran

Leymah Gbowee, Liberia

Tawakkol Karman, Yemen

Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Guatemala

Jody Williams, USA



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Shirin Ebadi".

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Leymah Gbowee".

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tawakkol Karman".

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rigoberta Menchú Tum".

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jody Williams".

Message from our Board Chair

A reconsideration of the nature of feminist leadership and how it manifests in the day-to-day operations of the organization threaded its way through our conversations with staff, board members, partners, collaborators, activists, networks, donors and each other. It was a year in which the way we think about and approach our work at Nobel Women's Initiative shifted.

It manifested in the way we conceived of the Sister-to-Sister program which began in 2012. The pandemic compelled us to deliver it virtually, requiring significant innovation. Remote participation supported its growth from 3-4 in-person participants in Ottawa to 30 from sixteen countries online. The Sisters were invited to define and develop the program collaboratively — to determine what they needed and wanted NWI to deliver for them. The result was not training, but collective learning and allyship, and the opportunity to build a global network with each other. In 2021, they became partners rather than mentees.

These young feminist leaders continued to work with us throughout the year, joining and informing the transformation conversation — their insights, wisdom, experiences and voices filling the third season of *When Feminists Rule the World* and the stories we contributed to the annual *16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence*. Their energy was electrifying.

Aruna Rao,
Chair



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AR' followed by a stylized flourish.

OUR WORK, OUR IMPACT

Since 2006, we have worked in solidarity with women's movements, organizations, and activists around the world to build peace, defend justice, and champion equality for all.

We invest in young women's power and leadership:

We work to support the next generation of women peacebuilders as they make change happen. We provide young women activists training, tools and connections to contribute to the global women's movement.

We amplify women's voices in the media:

Visibility and consistent messaging shifts public conversations. We put women's messages and solutions in the media spotlight to change hearts and minds.

We work to ensure women influence in public policy:

Access to decision-makers leads to influence and policy impact. When decision-makers are exposed to women's analysis and solutions they put peacebuilding, human rights and the environment on their agenda.

We support women's movement building:

Change is driven from the ground up and women's movements provide the spark for change. The Nobel Peace laureates champion women and working across movements to strengthen our collective power to bring about change.

We approach change by:

- » Convening diverse groups of grassroots women activists and organizations to share women-led strategies and solutions, and then linking these grassroots women activists and organizations to policy makers and other decision makers.
- » Creatively using media to amplify the alternative narratives and solutions of grassroots women activists and organizations to policy makers and decision-makers, as well as powerful civil society partners and the public.
- » Working with grassroots women leaders to shape their messages and access media, as well as strengthen their capacity to conduct direct advocacy at the local, national and regional levels.
- » Leveraging the prestige and visibility of the female Nobel Peace laureates to bridge grassroots women leaders' messages and solutions to a global audience.

2021 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

INVESTING IN *YOUNG WOMEN'S POWER AND LEADERSHIP*

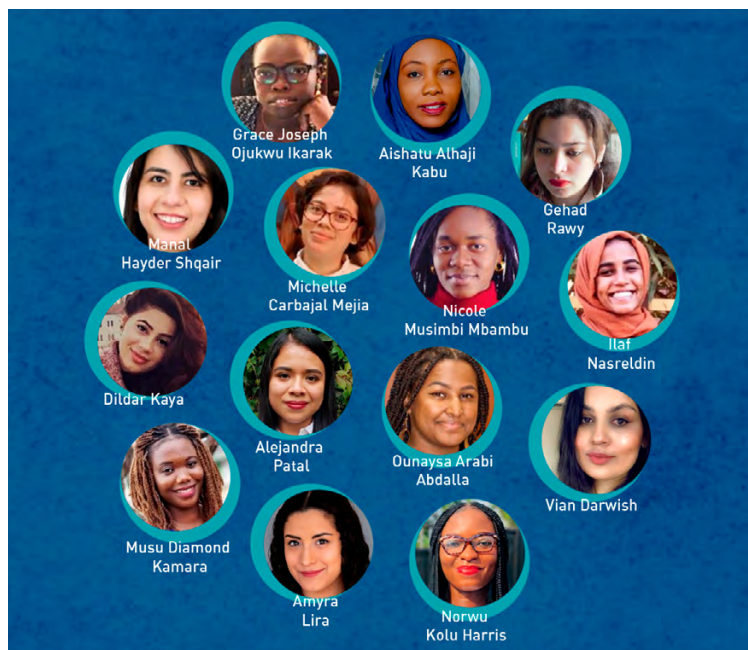
Sister-to-Sister:

A transnational feminist community evolves and expands
to adapt to crisis

Since 2012, in collaboration with the Coady International Institute, Nobel Women's Initiative has been providing an annual *Sister-to-Sister* capacity-building and skills development program for women peacebuilders and feminist leaders under the age of thirty, from conflict and post-conflict countries. We paused the program in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and used the opportunity to re-imagine it. In 2021, we piloted the new virtual model.

The most significant change was to redefine it as a **sustainable and ongoing community of learning and support for young feminist leaders** — much more than a traditional training and mentorship program. This included weaving feminist principles and practices more intentionally and explicitly into every aspect of program design, pre-program preparation with participants, facilitation, monitoring, evaluation and learning. This reframing put everyone in the program on equal footing. Sessions were co-created based on participant needs and each participant had the opportunity to add content in response to emerging needs and interests during the program.

Spring Cohort



Pivoting to online delivery made the program more widely accessible and allowed us to engage experts with lived experience working in conflict zones. This provided a rich and mutually beneficial exchange of learnings and experiences. A network of feminist leaders who continued to collaborate and support one another was born.

NWI held two sessions of *Sister-to-Sister* in 2021, with 15 participants in each. Participants from the first session had the opportunity to deepen their learning as facilitators and mentors during the second session. They also launched a *Sister Solidarity and Sanity Book Club* to continue their learning and discussions together after the program ended. Demonstrating their immense commitment, there was an average 85% attendance rate in the online sessions despite military coups, terrorist attacks, natural disasters, connectivity issues, and ongoing pandemic concerns.

It was not only possible to convert this program into an effective online convening, but **the ability to connect, learn and support each other virtually on a weekly basis was essential to participant well-being and ability to continue their work during this period.**

Our largest *Sister-to-Sister* cohort ever: 30 young feminist activists!

Young feminist leaders joined from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Guatemala, Honduras, Iraq, Indonesia, Lebanon, Liberia, Mexico, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Palestine, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria.

Meet the Sisters here:

SPRING COHORT: https://www.nobelwomensinitiative.org/sister_to_sister_mentorship_program_2021

FALL COHORT: https://www.nobelwomensinitiative.org/sister_to_sister_membership_program_2021_fall

Fall Cohort



Reflections from *Sister-to-Sister* 2021 participants

“ I feel like I’m in the pro-max version of myself. Things that I had second thoughts of mentioning because of a traditional society I now speak them without fear. If we have to dismantle these harmful stereotypes and traditions that promote gender biases and inequality then we have to raise the awareness and speak out.”

“ My network has increased not just for support and solidarity only but also professional development and growth. It gives me great comfort to know that I have sisters around the world who are faced with similar struggles like mine and that together with combined resources and energy we can create a gender just environment.”

“ Because I got knowledge on different strategies...from different sisters around the world, I was able apply those skills during my advocacy visits to communities after the program [and mobilize them to participate] in activities we wanted to carry out for International Women’s Day 2022.”

“ [The] storytelling session with Jaya was amazing for me. I am applying the knowledge – three proposals post-program submitted and three approved! I am getting persuasive. [...] In many cases, based on my proposal, I was offered more than I asked for (e.g., one donor gave me \$30,000 USD when I asked for \$5000 USD). My proposal has touched people personally.”

“ For most of us, the COVID crisis has been a period of separation from the things that feed us and replenish our energies for the critical work that needs to be done to achieve feminist social change. What we have experienced as a diverse group of transnational, young feminist leaders during the crisis are the opposite – that the virtual interconnectedness of feminist activists, especially in times of crisis, is a powerful tool at our disposal to ensure intersectional feminist responses to the most pressing issues our communities are facing.”

— Quotes taken from the spring cohort’s submission to the Generation Equality Forum

AMPLIFYING WOMEN'S VOICES IN THE MEDIA

“WHEN FEMINISTS RULE THE WORLD” PODCAST

Season 3: Let's Talk About Power!

In Season 3 of the podcast *When Feminists Rule the World*, host Martha Chaves (Latin-Canadian-LGBTQ award-winning comedian, actor, activist, and playwright) talks with emerging feminist changemakers about the future they are creating. **The five episodes featured ten women peacebuilders** — eight of whom were participants in the spring session of *Sister-to-Sister*, and two program mentors. The season's theme was power — who has it, how it manifests in our communities and workplaces, how it impacts our lives and our ability to drive progressive change, and its role in the loving and just world we are all working toward. **Between its release in November and the end of December, the podcast was downloaded more than a 1000 times!**

Listen to Season 3 here: https://www.nobelwomensinitiative.org/podcast_season_3

**WHEN
FEMINISTS
RULE THE
WORLD**

S.03

**LET'S TALK
ABOUT
POWER**



16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



Read about the women profiled in the 2021 campaign here: https://www.nobelwomensinitiative.org/16days_2021

Every year, from November 25th (the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to December 10th (Human Rights Day), individuals and organizations around the world campaign for the prevention and elimination of violence against women. Nobel Women's Initiative joined the campaign in 2009 and contributes by **spotlighting the incredible work of grassroots women activists and peacebuilders.**

In 2021, we profiled:

Nicole Musimbi (DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO)

Michelle Carbajal (HONDURAS)

Vian Darwish (IRAQ)

Dildar Kaya (IRAQ)

Norwu Kolu Harris (LIBERIA)

Musu Diamond Kamara (LIBERIA)

Amy Lira (MEXICO)

Aishatu Kabu (NIGERIA)

Manal Shqair (PALESTINE)

Grace Ikarak (SOUTH SUDAN)

Ounaysa Arabi (SUDAN)

Fahima Hashim (SUDAN)

Ilaf Nasreldin (SUDAN)

INTERVIEWHER

connects the media with women experts
on conflict, peace and security

InterviewHer is Nobel Women's Initiative's online **database of grassroots women peacebuilding experts.** The featured experts include activists, peace negotiators, former political prisoners, international lawyers, grassroots organizers, university professors, and human rights defenders from all corners of the globe — **women who can speak with authority** on paths to building peace and sustaining stability.

In 2021, 46 new profiles were added, bringing the total number of featured experts to 134. Our Twitter profile visits shot up to 18,400 monthly. This year, we are delighted to have established connections with the Marie Colvin Journalists' Network, the International Center for Transitional Justice, the Coalition for Women in Journalism, and the Iraqi Women's Academic Network.



SUPPORTING WOMEN'S MOVEMENT BUILDING

WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

share their successes,
challenges and need for
international solidarity

Early in 2021, NWI interviewed women human rights defenders (WHRD) in MENA to determine the status of their work on the **tenth anniversary of the Arab Spring**, in preparation for a report to be released in 2022. They were asked what they most needed from the international community in order to achieve their goals, protect their well-being and secure their futures.

In the fall of 2021, NWI held a series of virtual roundtables bringing together WHRD from the **Middle East and North Africa region** to review and expand on these recommendations. Five young Iranian activists were able to participate in at least one of the virtual roundtables in spite of the high risk to their personal security.

NWI continues to consult with roundtable participants on next steps and the role NWI can play in furthering opportunities to share knowledge and strategies, and building broader international solidarity.



A CONVERSATION WITH HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

On March 21, NWI hosted an intimate discussion between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Nobel Peace laureates Jody Williams and Tawakkol Karman, moderated by Lynne Twist (author and founder of the Soul Money Institute).



The theme was ***Peace in our Hearts, Peace in Action: A Commitment to our Planet.***

NWI's Philanthropy Circle joined the virtual meeting where the three Nobel Peace laureates reflected on how peacebuilding and climate justice are critical to each other.

Joining 101 other Nobel laureates, the three signed a letter urging world leaders to phase out fossil fuels in advance of U.S. President Joe Biden's Climate Summit on Earth Day 2021.

ENSURING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC POLICY

The laureates call for justice

In 2021, the laureates spoke out on international events which threatened the security and rights of women. We share two examples:

THE COUP D'ÉTAT IN MYANMAR

On February 1, 2021, Myanmar's military overpowered the democratically elected government. The laureates denounced the coup, the detention of the leaders of the National League for Democracy (NLD) and pro-democracy activists, and the curtailment of freedom of expression in the country. They added their names to a letter signed by over 150 women's organizations and led by women from Myanmar calling on the UN Secretary-General to send a monitoring and mediation team to Myanmar, without pre-conditions.

In May, the laureates wrote to UN Secretary-General António Guterres and members of the UN Security Council calling for urgent action to end the violence in Myanmar.

Noting that Myanmar's military has tortured and killed ethnic minorities, used gender-based violence as a weapon of repression, and killed peaceful protesters for decades, the laureates called on the United Nations to fulfil its duty as the most powerful organisation for peace in the world.

“Finally, what is happening in Myanmar is not a stand-alone tragedy. Unfortunately, it is reminiscent of other ongoing conflicts where peaceful protests for human rights are met with violence and repression. The United Nations stated purpose to end armed conflict and bring peace through dialogue can only happen if United Nations fulfils its obligations not just to the State, but first and foremost, to its people. The prospect for peace in Myanmar depends on the United Nations fulfilling this obligation.”

Read the full statements here: https://www.nobelwomensinitiative.org/statement_nobel_peace_laureates_denounce_coup_violence_and_detentions_in_myanmar and https://www.nobelwomensinitiative.org/open_letter_un_security_council_myanmar

WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN

The precarious situation in Afghanistan worsened dramatically with the withdrawal of foreign troops and the government's collapse. Human rights violations and war crimes were widespread, including reprisal killings, forced evictions, and curtailment of rights to freedom of expression and assembly. The rights of women and girls were quickly repressed.

The laureates joined the Afghan women's movement in a statement of solidarity on September 2, 2021.

“ We strongly condemn all violations against the fundamental human rights of the people in this process and call upon all parties to cease hostilities. We demand the restoration of humanitarian access and the protection of humanitarian organizations and spaces. We ask that civilians be able to move freely in and out of the country without being harmed.”

They called on the United Nations to establish a fact-finding mission and on the Human Rights Council to take decisive action to protect civilians and revive the peace process.

“ The UN HRC must act with urgency and moral clarity, taking bold and deliberate action to ensure that vulnerable people are shielded from harm. There must be no reprisals against women human rights defenders, feminist leaders or women civil society actors... We call for immediate and inclusive peace negotiations. Afghan women's organizations are asking for not less than 40% representation of women peace activists, feminist groups, and women politicians. We support this call unequivocally.”

Read the full statement here: https://www.nobelwomensinitiative.org/nobel_peace_laureates_statement_on_afghanistan

NWI

ON SOCIAL MEDIA

TWITTER:
103,000 followers

INSTAGRAM:
23,000 followers

FACEBOOK:
165,222 followers

TRANSITION AND RENEWAL AT NOBEL WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

2021 has been a year of reflection, learning and re-imagining within Nobel Women's Initiative. In 2020, it became clear that a gap existed between the core values guiding the organization's external work and the internal culture and practices of the organization.

In response, NWI embarked on a journey of introspection and transformation.

It started with commissioning an **independent external review** by Community Resource Exchange (CRE). In their report *Reckoning & Repair as a Feminist Effort*, CRE summarized evidence of a toxic culture and harm emerging from interviews they conducted with former and current staff, interns and consultants, the founding Laureates, partner organizations, program alumni and funders.

CRE offered a set of recommendations to support NWI's realignment and clarification of purpose.

An **Interim Board of Directors** was appointed in August 2021 to lead the transformation process: Aruna Rao, Dildar Kaya, Roberta Clarke and Sarah Jewell, all leaders in peace, justice, equality and organizational change. At the time of their appointment, the Board stated:

We are confident that **the repair and rebuilding of the organization is well underway** and will allow NWI to more effectively achieve its mission, and to do so on a foundation of shared values, authentic connection, and fervent desire for everyone in the NWI community to thrive.

Further information on NWI's transition and renewal process is available here: https://www.nobelwomensinitiative.org/transition_renewal

“Our work as an independent governing body begins today and our first priority is repair. The findings and recommendations of the external report by the CRE will guide our decision-making. At the top of our agenda will be establishing a new governance model that re-centres the power base of the organization in its people, bringing on board new leadership, and beginning to chart a new feminist vision, policies and systems for the organization. We will aim to cultivate an internal culture that does the same.

As women committed to peace, justice, equality and organizational transformation, our belief in the core values of Nobel Women's Initiative is unwavering. We pledge to carry out this work with humility and transparency, and in collaboration with key partners and stakeholders. We also commit to reporting back on progress made in six months' time.”

15 YEARS OF WORKING TOWARDS PEACE, EQUALITY AND JUSTICE



Jody, Betty, Mairead, Shirin and Wangaari – at the first conference in Galway in 2007.



Shirin, Rigoberta and Mairead in Guatemala in 2009.



Jody, Rigoberta, Shirin and Mairead in Guatemala in 2009.



Shirin and Wangaari in Nairobi on the day they decided to start NWI in December 2004.

It began over a cup of tea. Shirin Ebadi, Jody Williams and Wangari Maathai recognized that the access and influence afforded to them as Nobel Peace Prize winners could support the work of other women throughout the world. So they reached out to other women Nobel laureates to devise a plan.

In 2006, Nobel Women's Initiative was born. The founding Nobel laureates were: Mairead Corrigan Maguire (Northern Ireland, 1976), Betty Williams (Ireland, 1976), Rigoberta Menchú Tum (Guatemala, 1992), Jody Williams (USA, 1997), Shirin Ebadi (Iran, 2003), and Wangari Maathai (Kenya, 2004).

Together, they rallied around the shared vision of a world of security and equality for all.

In subsequent years, Leymah Gbowee (Liberia, 2011) and Tawakkol Karman (Yemen, 2011) joined NWI. Together they have seized opportunities to advance women's peacebuilding initiatives, and to amplify the voices of women human rights defenders, feminist leaders, and activists globally.

Learn more about NWI's achievements by visiting: <https://www.nobelwomensinitiative.org/highlights>

“The inspiring group of Nobel Women Peace Laureates is our heart and soul. They embody the passion for idealism paired with action that informs our organization and everything we do.”

— Liz Bernstein, Founding Executive Director

21 DELEGATIONS

6 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

10 THEMATIC MEETINGS

15 THEMATIC REPORTS

90 SISTER-TO-SISTER PARTICIPANTS

187 ACTIVISTS PROFILED IN THE 16 DAYS OF ACTION AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN

3 DOCUMENTARIES

2 PHOTO EXHIBITS

1 BOOK

THANK YOU LIZ BERNSTEIN FOR 15 YEARS OF LEADERSHIP

How do you help grow the global women's peace movement? By connecting feminist peacebuilders around the world, amplifying their advocacy and activities, and inspiring support from others. As Nobel Women's Initiative's founding Executive Director, this is precisely what Liz Bernstein did. With boundless energy and determination, she forged relationships with women's movements on every continent and nurtured a global tide of support for feminist peacebuilding.

"Liz is fiercely principled and driven. She understands the delicate dance between diplomacy, advocacy, and activism. Knowing that change is inspired in myriad ways, she encouraged the incorporation of the arts, direct action, and people-power into the work of the organization".

— From the Nobel Peace laureates' farewell statement.

In 2021, Liz moved on from Nobel Women's Initiative.



WELCOME TO TANIA PRINCIPE, INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Tania Principe led Nobel Women's Initiative throughout 2021 as Interim Executive Director. As the organization embarked on a journey of organizational transition and renewal, we were delighted to welcome Tania Principe onto the team.

Tania is a feminist and disability rights activist who is passionately committed to building cultures of equality and inclusion. Since 2018, Tania has worked as a consultant, coaching large and small institutions, social change organizations, and activists to live and practice their feminist and social justice values. She has over two decades of experience leading efforts to end systemic and cultural inequality with global organizations like Gender at Work as well as at home in Toronto with the North York Harvest Food Bank.

Together with the laureates and the Interim Board, Tania supports the development of internal practices, policies and culture that align with our core values of equality, justice, and peace for all and coordinates our ongoing program of work with staff, partners and funders.



Acknowledgements and Gratitude

The Nobel Women's Initiative would like to thank the following organizations and individuals whose generous support allows us to be a voice for women, peace and security around the world:

Kimberley Agnew	Lynne Dobson	Margaret Paul
Cynda Collins Arsenault	Lauren Embry	Sue Shalley
Rebecca Austen	Lisa Foley	Marcy Shimoff
Anat Baniel	Elizabeth Fisher	Kathy Terry
Susan Byrd	Gloria Joseph	Dyan Triffo
Mary Byron	Debbie King	Nancy & Emily Word and family
Sarah Cavanaugh	Carolyn Buck Luce	Trea Yip

General Donation Fund, hosted by Swiss Philanthropy Foundation

Inner Bonding® Educational Technologies, Inc

KBF Foundation CANADA

Norad, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

NoVo Foundation Fund of Tides Foundation

Oak Foundation

The Women and Girls Leadership Fund

Funded by the
Government of Canada.

Canada

...and many more generous individuals.

We acknowledge the vision and tenacity of our Nobel peace laureates:

Jody Williams
Leymah Gbowee
Rigoberta Menchú Tum
Shirin Ebadi
Tawakkol Karman

We acknowledge the time and commitment of the Interim Board of Directors who have guided us through this period of transition:

Aruna Rao
Dildar Kaya
Roberta Clarke
Sarah Jewell
Tania Principe, Ex-officio member

We thank our dedicated and talented staff for their commitment to our mission and for contributing their expertise, energy and skills to the work of the organization:

Tania Principe
Interim Executive Director
Kim MacKenzie, Manager
Communications and Public Engagement
Maureen Prebinski
Coordinator, Finance and Operations
Jacqueline Cadena
Program Associate
Susanne Ure
Communications Advisor

We extend thanks to consultants and advisors:

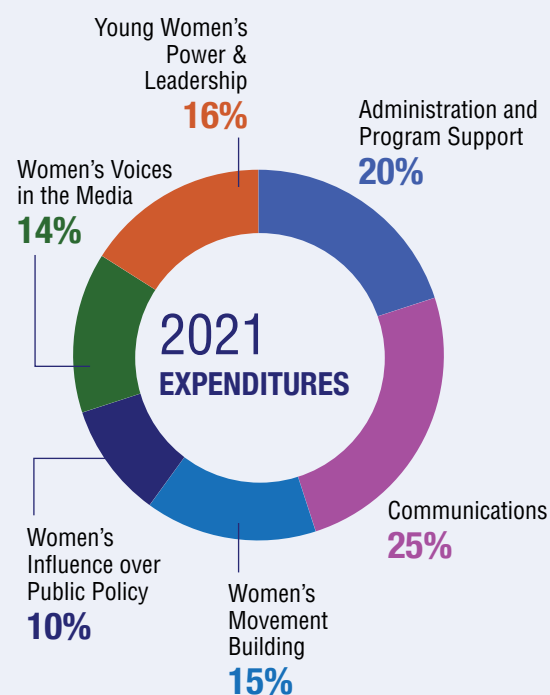
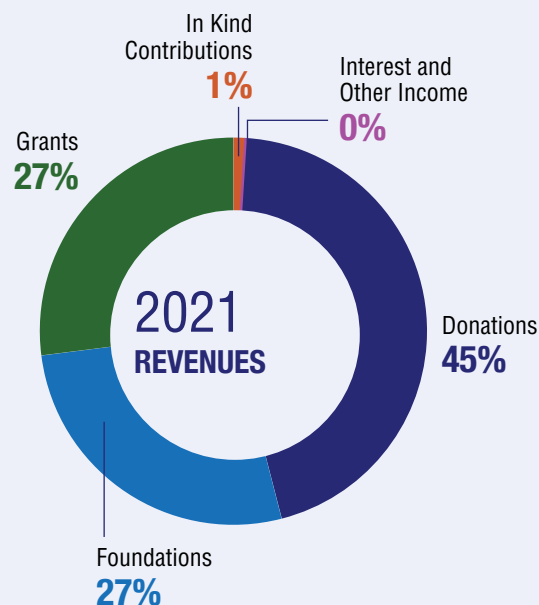
Nancy Ingram Briki
Katia Gianceschi
Sara Saleh
Juliet O'Neill
Mary Reid
JP Davidson
Richard Villeneuve
Martha Chaves
Jenny Walker

*It is only through your solidarity and collaboration
that we can succeed.*

Acknowledgements and Gratitude

Financial Summary

	2021	2020
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	\$ 823,902	\$ 558,480
Temporary investments	-	460,000
Accounts Receivable	78,052	411,285
Prepaid Expenses & Deposits	3,813	1,926
	<u>\$ 905,767</u>	<u>\$ 1,431,691</u>
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable & Accrued Liabilities	\$ 101,985	\$ 92,157
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS	59,983	758,444
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS BEGINNING	581,090	461,757
Net Revenue (Expenditures)	162,709	119,333
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS ENDING	<u>743,799</u>	<u>581,090</u>
	<u>\$ 905,767</u>	<u>\$ 1,431,691</u>
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS		
REVENUE		
Donations	\$ 732,718	\$ 611,159
Foundations	450,015	338,956
Grants	435,442	298,231
Government Pandemic Assistance	-	76,984
In Kind Contributions	13,144	-
Interest & Other Income	3,440	7,366
	<u>\$ 1,634,759</u>	<u>\$ 1,332,696</u>
EXPENDITURES		
Administration & Program Support	298,054	250,292
Communications	360,132	374,996
Women's Movement Building	225,612	118,012
Women's Influence over Public Policy	146,577	166,427
Women's Voices in the Media	202,485	239,514
Young Women's Power & Leadership	239,189	64,120
	<u>\$ 1,472,050</u>	<u>\$ 1,213,363</u>
NET REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURES	<u>\$ 162,709</u>	<u>\$ 119,333</u>



FIND US ON: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram,
YouTube & Flickr @NobelWomen

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: nobelwomensinitiative.org

430 - 1 Nicholas Street • Ottawa, ON K1N 7B7 • Canada



Advocating for peace, justice & equality