



As we resist the neocolonial, corporatist, capitalist systems, we need to actively seek to build and amplify alternatives that signpost us to the world we truly need feminist, decolonial, just, and green.

# ANUMO

# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	05
COUNTERING REGRESSION IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND UN CAPTURE	07
INTERROGATING BORDERS	10
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE	13
WOMEN AND WORK	17
TRANSFORMING ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A FEMINIST APPROACH (TrEAD)	20
STRENGTHENING COLLECTIVE ACTIONS	<ol> <li>AMPLIFYING DIFFERENT VOICES         <ul> <li>Global South Women's Forum 2021: Global Feminist Visions of Environmental Justice</li> <li>Women Gaining Ground (WGG)</li> <li>Asia Solidarity Lab: Gender Justice in the Climate Movement</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
	<ul> <li>24 2. UPDATING CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES <ul> <li>a. Feminist Learning Exchange (FLEX)</li> <li>b. Forging Intersectional Feminist Futures (FIFF)</li> <li>c. Feminists for a People's Vaccine campaign</li> <li>d. Care Work</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>26 3. FORGING MOVEMENTS         <ul> <li>Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM): Rights of migrant women under CEDAW</li> <li>Gender Equality and Macroeconomics (GEM) Starter Kit and piloting workshops</li> <li>c. ESCR-Net's Women and ESC Rights Working group [WW]</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
COMMUNICATIONS	<ul> <li>28 - DIVING INTO THE MATRIX: NAVIGATING ONLINE REALITIES</li> <li>28 - SUPPORT TO PROGRAMMES</li> <li>29 - SOCIAL MEDIA</li> </ul>
SUSTAINABILITY AND RELEVANCE OF IWRAW ASIA PACIFIC	<ul> <li>33 - FINANCE AND FUNDRAISING</li> <li>33 - WORKING PRACTICES</li> <li>34 - PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS</li> <li>35 - PEOPLE</li> </ul>

# INTRODUCTION

2021—year two of the COVID-19 global pandemic-saw further mobilising and innovation by feminists, even as governments dialled back on their cooperation. While civil society had seized the momentum of 2020's disruption to envision better systems that protect marginalised and vulnerable communities, facilitate flexible and remote working, and enable digital participation of all, nations around the world repeated the same mistakes over and over again. COVID-19 protection measures were dropped, lockdowns were (re)imposed with insufficient social assistance, and equitable access to vaccines was blocked, all with the aim of returning to a flawed system in service of capitalist and neoliberal structures. Together with our partners, we held the line, seizing every opportunity to push back against this regression.

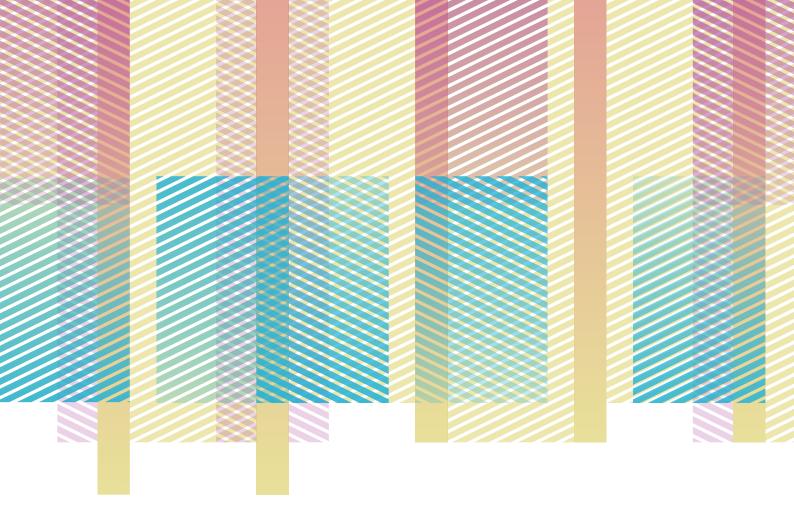
Reflective of the global climate, 2021 was a transitional year for IWRAW Asia Pacific. Changes in team members, updates and modifications across programmes and projects, the transition to remote working, and an increased need for organisational resilience collectively shaped the unique yet uncertain landscape of the year. Navigating 2021 required us to interrogate and relearn our feminist values and principles as Global South feminists to ensure that the work we did centred care, compassion, passion, and intentional intersectionality. Although these values are not new to us, during bleak times they helped guide us and remind us of why we do what we do.

But if any one value has characterised our work in 2021, it has been the concerted effort to create inclusive spaces and ensuring that the voices that usually go unheard are amplified. We continue to struggle to protect civic spaces in States that want to shut them down; we work wherever and whenever we can towards ensuring that all persons, especially the most marginalised, have the opportunity to meaningfully participate in the many spaces that influence the decisions that affect their lives.

We are clear that for IWRAW Asia Pacific, intersectionality is much more than a concept and 'nothing about us without us' is much more than a feminist slogan.

Our 2021 Annual Report outlines how we continue to ground our work in the struggles of women at the grassroots, and how we have strengthened our collaboration with marginalised groups in determining our priorities. This report provides an overview of our five core programme areas, our various programme outputs, our communication strategies, and the sustainability of our organisation.

IWRAW Asia Pacific sees this report as an opportunity for us to reflect on our work done to not only feel a sense of accomplishment but to also identify where we fell short and can hence do better. To us, feminism is not a destination but a journey that necessitates constant learning, unlearning, and relearning.



# COUNTERING REGRESSION IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND UN CAPTURE

As the basis for consolidating and organising IWRAW AP's political intent regarding the human rights system, this programme is more relevant than ever in the context of economic, social, and health crises impacting the world and organised actions by anti-rights actors that challenge and diminish advocacy and accountability spaces for human rights activism. As the main accountability space for women's human rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is at the heart of the Countering Regression programme. The programme aims to strike a balance between strengthening the system and simultaneously providing a systemic critique and a more Global South-driven perspective on the questions of UN reform, resourcing, and global platforms for advocacy on women's human rights.



*IWRAW AP's joint submission to the UN Independent Expert on SOGIE.* 

In 2021 we joined several collectives/alliances to collaboratively address different issues of regression. We deepened our involvement with several coalitions of organisations addressing UN capture, right-wing populism, and regression. We are engaging with the #EmptyChairs Campaign, having contributed to the drafting of the Campaign Manifesto and Action Plan, and initiated one of the first collaborative actions of the campaign through the publication of a joint statement of solidarity with the Palestinian people and a call to end the Israeli occupation. We moderated a side event hosted by the Observatory on the Universality of Our Rights (OURS), of which we are a member, parallel to the 48th session of the Human Rights Council and contributed to the Rights at Risk report put together by OURs.

In March 2021, we began planning a confidential briefing for the CEDAW Committee by Turkish NGOs on their country's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention. In that same month, we were invited to join the Feminist Faultlines group, a collaboration between Amnesty International, CREA, RESURJ, and the Yale Global Health Justice Partnership. This resulted in a <u>submission</u> to the subsequent <u>Reports on</u> <u>Gender</u> by the UN Independent Expert on SOGIE. As a member of OURs, we contributed to the same thematic call for submissions.

Our work towards ensuring the accountability and effectiveness of the UN human rights system includes several joint actions with other organisations demanding accountability as well as developing our own CEDAW Scorecard for use by women's rights organisations (WROs).

The scorecard development kicked off in April 2021; Alicia Wallace, the consultant helping us with its development, created a model scorecard for the team's review and worked on an accompanying guide to support WROs in using the tool.

2021



Graphic recording of a workshop on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) at the workplace designed by Sonaksha lyengar.

We envisage that the scorecard will provide us data across time on the quality of the CEDAW Concluding Observations and how far the Committee has taken up the issues raised by civil society.

In the third quarter of 2021, the programme was able to focus on these aspects of critical engagement, disruption, and movement building through IWRAW AP-led strategies such as the Feminist Learning Exchange (FLEX) and the Forging Intersectional Feminist Futures (FIFF) project. The programme also grew from the outcomes of the Global South Women's Forum 2021, the work of the Women Gaining Ground (WGG) project, and the Gender Equality and Macroeconomics (GEM) activities of the Transforming Economics and Development through a Feminist Approach (TrEAD) programme.

All of this work connects IWRAW AP's perspective and agenda to the experiences of grassroots actors and collectives and builds feminist narratives, perspectives, and positions using the frameworks of climate action, environmental justice, challenging capitalism and capture, defending human rights, and challenging anti-rights approaches.



A panel from the comic version of an excerpt from the FLEX 1.0 paper. Artist: Marian Hukom

# INTERROGATING Borders

The programme acknowledges the wide-ranging impacts of borders, affecting not only non-citizen groups such as migrants, refugees, and stateless people but also groups including the partners and families of migrants and deportees, migrant workers returning to their country of origin, people travelling for reasons ranging from accessing health services to UN engagement to leisure, and people living in territories occupied by foreign powers.

The programme further recognises nationality and citizenship as factors that inform privileges and oppressions through their intersections with gender, race, disability, age, gender identity and/or expression, sexual orientation, drug use, health and HIV status, income, and engagement in sex work and informal work, leaving non-citizens vulnerable to detention, deportation, and associated abuse and harassment by authorities, as well as impacting their right to privacy, family life, health, and decent work.

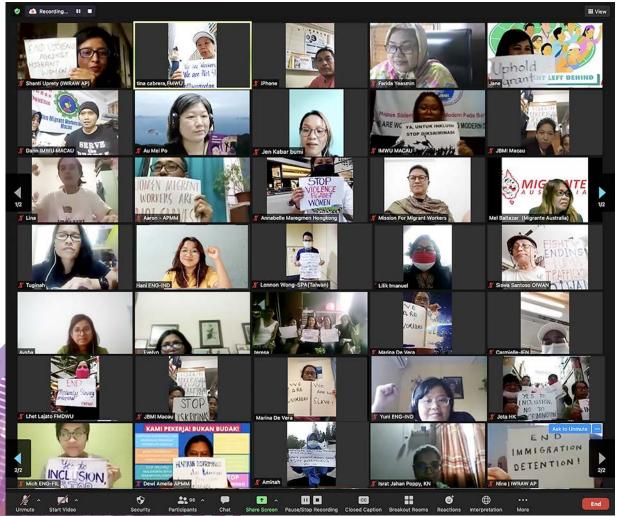
The programme recognises the different and disproportionate impacts of physical and legal borders on women and other marginalised persons and their unequal access to avenues for claiming their rights. With this in mind, the programme continually asks: Who is at risk? Who is excluded? Who is unprotected? 2021 was a transitional period for this programme. Disillusionment with the CEDAW Committee's handling of General Recommendation No. 38 on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration affected the enthusiasm with which the strategic outcome of developing CEDAW standards in relation to trafficking and migration in alignment with the Feminist Approach to Countering Trafficking (FACT) was pursued. The decision was made to review the activities that had been planned around trafficking and migration and pause some of them, focusing instead on creating a critical mass of civil society organisations around the FACT manifesto before engaging in global advocacy.

Meanwhile, the programme wrapped up some of the information outputs around GR 38. A two-part blog post—Disadvantaged, Ignored and Disrespected and How Did This Happen?—was published, reflecting the GSWF 2020 session on GR38 and providing a feminist analysis of the General Recommendation. We also produced the video Sex Work Is Not Trafficking with Falana Films, launching it on the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons on 30 July. The video has subtitles in Bangla, English, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Khmer, Lao, Malay, and Nepali.



Stills from our 'Sex Work Is Not Trafficking' video produced by Falana Films. Relationships with organisations working on migrants and refugees are being strengthened. IWRAW AP was present at the Women in <u>Migration Network (WIMN)</u> two-day dialogue 'Building Powerful Feminist Movements on Migration: dialogues on intersectionality', which identified different identities, oppressions, and privileges in the context of migration. The <u>Asia Pacific Refugee Rights</u> <u>Network (APRRN)</u> participation in the FIFF project has led to discussions on a separate collaboration around the rights of refugee women. The programme has also engaged in a practical intervention, supporting some of our Afghan contacts impacted by the Taliban takeover, including efforts to connect with resettlement programmes and a successful introduction to <u>MADRE</u> for emergency funds.

The need to interrogate borders has become very apparent since the pandemic began. Issues of vaccine passports and their varying requirements, and arbitrarily Global South-focused travel bans in response to new COVID-19 variants, are liable to become more central, affecting movement in general as well as UN engagement, and IWRAW AP will need to connect with the issues of vaccine access and the TRIPS waiver, as well as exclusionary and draconian practices related to compulsory digitisation of COVID-19-related personal information.



Participants share their demands at the end of the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants webinar on CEDAW.

# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

IWRAW AP's newest programme area, though still very fresh to the discourse on environmental justice and climate action, has been able to position itself very strongly within the context of Global South and intersectional feminist advocacy for climate justice and has engaged with several activists, organisations, and networks that are working on the issues. The programme has been intentionally situating itself in spaces where intersections with environmental justice are not usually addressed (e.g. in discussions of LGBTIQ+ and disability rights). Similarly, the programme ensures that issues faced by marginalised groups and communities are forefronted in dialogues that traditionally engage with climate and environmental justice debates.

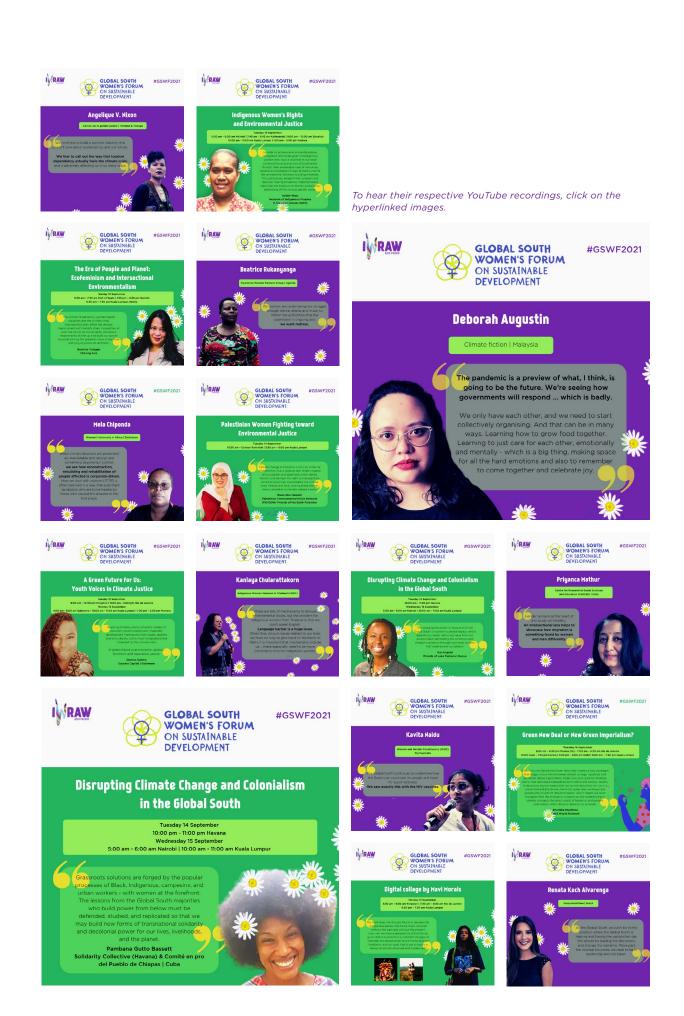
Issues of climate and environmental justice played a central role in our work in 2021, especially during the latter half of the year. Our annual Global South Women's Forum in 2021 was on the theme of Global South Feminist Visions of Environmental Justice. The 2021 Forum was supported by fellow Jhannel Tomlinson, who helmed the planning and execution of the event along with the IWRAW AP team. We observed that few of the usual global actors present in environmental and climate discussions attended the Forum. So while we were creating a space for marginalised groups to raise their voices, it appears that the mainstream was not listening.

> **Top:** Flyer from GSWF 2021. **Bottom:** Graphic recording of 'Indigenous Women's Rights and Environmental Justice' session hosted during GSWF 2021. Artist: Lulu Kitololo

We realise that the challenge is not just about getting community voices to the international space—it is also about ensuring that the more powerful actors are actually paying attention to these voices and engaging with what they are saying.



### PAGE 14



With this in mind, we decided to take the outputs of GSWF 2021 to the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) space which took place in Glasgow and online. The programme engaged with different working groups and networks including ESCR-Net, Women and Gender Constituency (WGC), and CIEL Human Rights and Climate Change Working Group (HR & CC WG), as well as with other constituencies present (e.g. Indigenous people and the UNFCCC constituency of Youth Non-Governmental Organizations - YOUNGO) towards collective advocacy for COP26. Marisa Hutchinson, the Programme Officer who leads the Environmental Justice portfolio, travelled to Glasgow to attend in person. The programme benefited from the solidarity of civil society activists, the space to articulate IWRAW AP's politics of inclusion around the climate crisis, and the ability to share some of our information products.



RAW

**Feminist Climate Justice** at COP26



**ENVIRONMENTAL JUS** 

Environmental Justice Programme Officer Marisa Hutchinson at COP26 in Glasgow.

SWGC\_Climate

NOMEN GENDER

In addition to organising GSWF 2021 and participating in COP26, the programme has been present in several civil society spaces that were organised around climate and environmental issues. These included online discussions organised by Care International UK, the OXFAM Mekong Water Governance programme, Meridian Just Rural Transition Working Group, and different consultations and training by ESCR-Net's environmental network, the WGC, and HR & CC WG. In August, the programme partnered with 350.org and led a three-day workshop conducted as part of the Asia Solidarity Lab and facilitated by Communications Officer, Nadia Mohd Rasidi. In the last quarter of 2021, the programme was also asked to support a mentorship programme under the organisation GirlsCare Jamaica, supported by the Clara Lionel Foundation and FRIDA Young Feminist Fund.

The outcome of these engagements shows that our fledgling Environmental Justice programme is not only gaining voice in a variety of 'new' arenas, but carving out and filling up our own platforms where harmful structures such as neoliberalism, neocolonialism, racism, historical exclusionism, and Global North hegemony are actively challenged. This programme brings into sharp focus our core Global South feminist values.

# WOMEN AND WORK

There has not been a major change in the context relating to the world of work since the onset of the pandemic, but within the CSO movement, there continues to be a strong interest in the work agenda and an increased realisation that a major shift is needed in our economic infrastructure. This was evident during the sixty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women CSW65, which saw a large number of sessions dedicated to issues around work and employment, particularly the importance of care work and the need for public investment in care infrastructure. The pandemic context helped in mainstreaming some key demands of labour rights groups in the women's movement, such as the demands for social security, eradication of violence and harassment at the workplace, and access to justice.

The two strategic thrusts of IWRAW AP's Advancing Gender Equality in the World of Work (WW) programme are to strengthen access to justice for women's human rights in the world of work and to engage and influence actors, agendas, and actions to demand accountability for women in the world of work, including paid and unpaid work. Within these overarching objectives, the programme planned for two outcomes over the five-year strategic period, namely:

- Women workers have capacity and access to formal and alternative justice mechanisms to claim their rights; and
- CEDAW recommendations/ standards concerning women's rights in the context of women and work have been implemented at the national level.

IWRAW AP has been focusing on supporting the development of alternative economic structures that centre care work, paid and unpaid, as essential for the economy, for society, and for the planet, and building cross-movement alliances between women's labour rights activists and women's human rights groups to strengthen women workers' access to justice at all levels, including the eradication of sexual and gender-based violence in the workplace.

The established systems of justice have failed to uphold the rights of women employed in the most precarious sectors as the remedies offered by such systems often do not take into account the unequal power relations. To this end, IWRAW AP has been convening platforms and initiatives to demand justice through alternative, worker-centred accountability systems.

It is evident that the national and international legal and human rights frameworks and systems are insufficient to hold multinational companies and big brands accountable. Therefore, we are calling on governments to support the <u>legally binding instrument</u> to regulate, in international human rights law, transnational corporations and other business enterprises.

Several different programme activities contribute to this: the work of the WGG project described above is supporting women with disabilities to advocate for their right to work as well as against SGBV in the workplace; the Transforming Economics and Development through a Feminist Approach (TrEAD) programme advocates that International Financial Institutions (IFIs) change their orientation to centre care in their lending practices; and the Interrogating Borders programme has an overlapping focus on migrant workers and extraterritorial obligation to address human rights violations in the global supply chains committed by transnational corporate actors. The Advancing Gender Equality in the World of Work programme has a strong focus on combating violence in the workplace. It is also a reflection of the post-COVID-19 impact on violent crimes including the rise of domestic violence and the inability of the state infrastructure and justice system to cope with it during

### **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

the pandemic. Additionally, genderbased violence was an important strategic entry point that helped us to engage women's groups including women with disabilities and labour unions to reflect and advocate on other structural issues and violations such women are facing in the world of work and advance decent work agenda.

In the middle of the year, this focus coalesced around marking the anniversary of the <u>ILO Convention</u> <u>C190</u>, and IWRAW AP and many of our allies ratcheted up the campaign for ratification. As the year drew to a close, we engaged with the 16 Days campaign, sharpening our advocacy around issues of violence in the workplace with the understanding that they serve as a manifestation of gender inequality and nondiscrimination within broader contexts of the impact of the pandemic on the rise of violence against women.

These issues also reflect the inability, and recalcitrance of States to delegate sufficient attention and action. Hence, contending with the problem of violence in the workplace was a strategic entry point for IWRAW Asia Pacific to engage women's rights organisations to collectively reflect, share, and express solidarity on other losses and violations women were facing during the pandemic.

Moving into 2022, the programme will actively build cross-programme linkages with the <u>Women Gaining</u> <u>Ground (WGG)</u> project's work on eliminating sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

# <section-header><section-header><section-header><text><image><image><section-header><section-header><section-header><section-header>

Graphics from IWRAW AP's tweet thread on Labour Day 2021.

The programme strengthened existing alliances as well as broadened its outlook. A key ally and partner is ESCR-Net, where IWRAW AP is represented on the Steering Group of the Working Group on Women and ESC Rights (WESCR) as well as on its Board. The work with WESCR during the first half of 2021 included crafting a strategy on care and participating in the CSW65 side event, 'Towards a Global Pact on Care'.

The COVID-19 pandemic may have changed the world of work as we know it. But until and unless existing inequalities are rectified, new developments will only worsen the plight faced by women workers, who will continue to bear the brunt of unjust structures. With that in mind, IWRAW AP will continue to incorporate work into our programme. aAlongside women workers from the Global South, we will bridge the gap between the women's and labour rights movements in our promise of equality and justice for all.



# TRANSFORMING ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A FEMINIST APPROACH (TrEAD)



# The macroeconomic context that provides the backdrop to this programme—and to all our programmes—is underpinned by neoliberal ideologies and dogmas that maintain or exacerbate inequality and undermine the ability of governments to fulfil their human rights obligations. Austerity, tax injustice, and the debt crisis remain central concerns among civil society organisations working in macroeconomic spaces, including IFIs and UN human rights and development spaces.

Feminists continue to highlight the gendered impact of these policy choices, emphasising that women, through their unpaid care labour, act as 'shock absorbers' of underfunded public systems, meeting the care needs of families, communities, and the planet when public and social safety nets no longer exist or become inaccessible.

Advocacy efforts are framed as a balance between highlighting the impact on women's lives and rights while pushing for a transformation of the foundations of conventional macroeconomic policies and the global structures that support them. Many are demanding a reframing of the economy, away from being growth-centred and towards care as a primary objective, as well as understanding spending on the public sector and care infrastructure as an investment, rather than a consumption expenditure that can be easily cut. There is a continuing sense that the window of opportunity for significant structural change at the global level is closing and that the next two years

may be critical. Among civil society, particularly in economic justice and women's rights spaces, there continues to be an interest in applying a human rights approach to macroeconomic policy, including the role of CEDAW and CESCR as accountability tools.

The programme was able to reconnect with longstanding IWRAW AP constituencies through the CEDAW-SDGs tool while expanding its sustainable development strategy to address structural barriers in the global development infrastructure through engagement in new development spaces. The programme recruited Vanessa Daza Castillo as its first Feminist Sustainable Development Fellow to focus on updating IWRAW AP's organisational policy on sustainable development, reviving the tool, and exploring how best to engage with the VNR process from 2022 onwards.

The programme also made submissions on the Zero Draft of the Doha Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries as part of the preparatory process for the Fifth UN Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDC5) that called for a gender consultation with diverse women's rights and feminist organisations and activists to ensure the full integration of a gender perspective across the entire Programme of Action. The submissions and call were well-received by the Chairs of the Preparatory Committee (Ambassadors to Canada and Bangladesh) and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries. However, due to the Omicron wave and the resulting rise in COVID-19 cases, the Conference and related Civil Society Forum was postponed from January 2022 to March 2023, with the Programme of Action being adopted by States in March 2022. The programme is collaborating with feminists at Equidad de Género in Mexico, Development Alternatives with Women in a New Era (DAWN), Third World Network (TWN), feminist economists, and others to ensure a feminist and human-rights based approach in the implementation of the Programme of Action, and anticipates participating in LDC5 in 2023. This conference, along with other UN development spaces, such as the Financing for Development Forum and advocacy around the Right to Development, is particularly important for connecting women's human

rights to development and economic framework in a context where the UN human rights system is facing constraints, such as underfunding and continued delays in State reviews by treaty bodies arising from postponements during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A main focus of the programme has also been creating an enabling environment for increasing the number and diversity of WRO participation and more information to treaty bodies, especially CEDAW, on the impact/ harms of macroeconomic policies, trade and development on women's human rights. Led by the keen insights and combined decades of feminist advocacy and training experience of Diyana Yahaya and Trimita Chakma, our key activity in this area was the designing of feminist participatory workshops and materials for the Gender Equality and Macroeconomics (GEM) Starter Kit. As part of the design process, we held two workshop series: one training of trainers (ToT) that combined substantive knowledge building on a range of GEM topics with learnings on feminist participatory methodologies; and a pilot workshop that narrowed in on GEM and the application of CEDAW and other human rights instruments as a tool for advancing feminists' economic justice demands. We were thrilled to be joined by participants from diverse groups, including Indigenous women, women with disabilities, sex workers, informal workers, domestic workers, migrant worker rights activists, labour rights activists, a parliamentarian, and development policy experts. Participants joined from South and Southeast Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, West Africa, Europe, and



Australia. Once published, the training materials will allow workshop participants and others to adapt and facilitate workshops on priority GEM issues for their country contexts and communities. We have also invited participants to join a pool of trainers that we can collaborate with for future workshops with different partners and constituencies.

The programme was able to make strong connections with the CEDAW Committee. Although CEDAW State reviews did not recommence until the 80th session, the IWRAW AP team presented an overview of all programme areas under the Strategic Plan in a private briefing to the Committee during the 79th session. Committee members expressed strong interest in macro-level economic issues and the role of CEDAW as an accountability mechanism. During the 80th session, joined by our founder and former CEDAW member, Shanthi Dairiam, and colleagues from the Centre for Economic and Social Rights (CESR), the Gender and Development Network, and the ESCR-Net Economic Policy and Human Rights Working Group, the programme also hosted a private thematic briefing with the Committee, entitled 'State Obligation within the Global Economy: The role of CEDAW in Filling Accountability Gaps and Strengthening International Cooperation'. The briefing explored concrete ways to incorporate macroeconomic issues and the complexities of States' accountability within a multilateral, global economic decision-making structure into the Committee's ways of working and constructive engagement with State Parties. We look forward to following up on these discussions with the Committee, WROs, and economic justice advocates in 2022.

# STRENGTHENING COLLECTIVE ACTIONS

# 1. AMPLIFYING DIFFERENT VOICES

# A. Global South Women's Forum 2021: Global Feminist Visions of Environmental Justice Programme Area: Environmental Justice

The Forum was co-created for and with climate and environmental activists, feminists, artivists, and grassroots and marginalised communities fighting against climate change and environmental degradation, providing an opportunity to learn and strategise through stories of resistance, feminist knowledge, and creative approaches. The involvement of marginalised communities in the event was key to the planning and implementation of GSWF 2021. It was held from 12-16 September 2021 and was an inclusive, intergenerational, and intersectional space that left attendees energised and feeling a sense of urgency and solidarity to join in addressing climate change and environmental crises impacting those most marginalised.

We were able to create a safe and affirming virtual space at GSWF 2021 that allowed participants to show up fully as themselves and for their communities, creating opportunities for inclusion, especially in the face of vaccine inequity and travel restrictions. Captioning and interpretation, including sign languages, facilitated the inclusion of those often left out of digital spaces due to hearing impairments and language barriers. Creativity corners, plenary sessions, and workshops throughout the five days saw the engagement of different audiences and helped to create spaces for information sharing through storytelling and artivism from their different contexts and perspectives. This use of diverse approaches to effectively disseminate information helped to enhance awareness of the issues at hand. The value of coming together across regions was particularly apparent.

# **B. Women Gaining Ground (WGG)** Programme Area: Countering Regression

We are part of the Global South-led Women Gaining Ground Consortium of three organisations-CREA, Akili Dada, and IWRAW AP-all with deep experience in feminist leadership, movement building, advocacy, and working with marginalised groups. CREA leads the consortium and the initiative will be implemented in five priority countries with 14 strategic partners: Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. It has two main objectives; 1) preventing and eliminating sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against women and girls; 2) strengthening women's leadership and women's political participation in decision-making. It aims to build the capacity and transformative leadership of young women and girls and women with disabilities. This initiative is funded under the Power of Women grant instrument of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is a five-year programme.

IWRAW AP will contribute to the overall project by facilitating the activities of the project's partners-Naripokkho, Women With Disabilities Development Foundation, and Bonhishikha-in Bangladesh and supporting the project's engagement with the CEDAW Committee and other global human rights spaces. The first global advocacy activity was to collaborate with the Sexual Rights Institute on advocacy at the Human Rights Council and make inputs into the resolution on violence against women and girls (VAWG) with disabilities. Working collectively to provide inputs was a learning exercise, particularly for partners who had not engaged with such processes before. IWRAW AP also organised a capacity-building workshop on addressing SGBV at the workplace with a focus on ILO C190 as part of the annual 16 Days of Activism campaign in 2021.

# C. Asia Solidarity Lab: Gender Justice in the Climate Movement Programme Area: Environmental Justice

In August 2021, the Environmental Justice programme partnered with 350.org Asia and led a three-day workshop during the 350.org Asia Solidarity Lab, discussing the integration of gender and feminism in climate justice advocacy in Asia. Partners for this event included BINDU (Bangladesh), KAMY (Malaysia), NIDWAN (Nepal), Powershift Nepal, and FRIDA. Contributions were also made to the development of a land tenure brief by the Meridien Working Group on Land Tenure, Social Equity, and Inclusion, and to a submission on land to CESCR by ESCR-Net's network members.

# 2. UPDATING CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES

# A. Feminist Learning Exchange (FLEX) Programme Area: Countering Regression

The first of what we expect to be many collaborations, this exchange focused on Defining Retrogression and Capture in the Context of Women's Human Rights in Asia. Much like our Updating Concepts activities in the past, the goals of FLEX are to consolidate feminist knowledge and analyse key concepts based on the contextualised experiences of women and marginalised groups advocating for their rights. FLEX Fellow/Project Coordinator Vivi Restuviani organised a six-hour interactive virtual conversation with human rights activists in Asia, spotlighting global feminist analysis and strategies addressing anti-gender and anti-rights movements locally and worldwide, with the intention of co-creating collective thinking and responses to these challenges. The text version (in English) of the paper developed in collaboration with the feminist facilitators can be found here.

# **B.** Forging Intersectional Feminist Futures (FIFF) Programme Area: Countering Regression

The Forging Intersectional Feminist Futures is an initiative that is funded by VOICE and will take place over a period of 33 months. It will deepen our understanding of how we can strengthen intersectional movement building in Asia as the key to developing transformative advocacy strategies that centre the voices and lived experiences of diverse groups of marginalised women and challenge multiple systems of oppression to achieve systemic gender equality. It is a strongly networked initiative, partnering with seven regional networks with a view to understanding the praxis of intersectionality across the Asia region: Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP); Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers (APNSW); Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN); Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTN); ASEAN SOGIE Caucus; International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC) Asia; and Special Talent Exchange Programme (STEP).

One of the first activities of the project was a training session by STEP on digital advocacy. It provided valuable learning about the technical aspects of making online mobilising and communications more inclusive of people with disabilities, a learning that was picked up by the other networks in the FIFF consortium. A sub-group of consortium members worked together to develop a communications strategy for FIFF, and in November 2021, the Asia Indigenous Peoples' Pact organised the first Regional Partnership Dialogues for the consortium members. These initial activities demonstrate development of a growing understanding among the networks of how to identify and address different forms of discrimination and to be more inclusive.

# C. Feminists for a People's Vaccine Campaign Programme Area: TrEAD

In 2021, IWRAW AP joined the Feminists for a People's Vaccine Campaign, facilitated by Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) and Third World Network (TWN). Working closely with the Campaign, IWRAW AP, DAWN, and TWN submitted a shadow report to Sweden's review, highlighting its responsibility as an EU member for the gendered impact of the EU's opposition to the WTO TRIPS Waiver on women's human rights, especially in low and middle-income countries.

During the review, the CEDAW Committee noted that Sweden's implicit opposition to the TRIPS Waiver through its membership in the EU might constitute a violation of the Convention, highlighting that many developing countries were unable to afford enough vaccines to protect their population against COVID-19, which had a disproportionate effect on women and girls. The Committee asked if Sweden would consider taking any measures to make vaccines more widely available in low-income countries that had no other way of obtaining them. This recognition of a potential implicit violation through Sweden's membership in the EU is an important stepping stone for leveraging CEDAW as a tool for strengthening individual state accountability for their actions within the multilateral system, including global economic governance structures.





We need to contemplate what role the IFIs can play – whether they are exacerbating or alleviating the impact of the lack of protections in the labour sector but also beyond. Women constituting the population engaging in the sector are racialised, coming from the Global South, and represent a lot of intersections of vulnerable groups.

Roula Seghaier International Domestic Workers Federation

Roula Seghaier's intervention during our joint session at the Civil Society Policy Forum.

### D. Care Work

### Programme Areas: TrEAD and Women in Work

In 2021, we organised a session at the Civil Society Policy Forum of the IMF - World Bank Spring Meetings. The session titled <u>'Creating a Caring Economy: The role</u> of IFIs and the CEDAW framework in transformative change', recognised that the economic and social fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic had brought care work to the forefront of economic policy discussions, with growing calls for a 'caring economy' that enables human rights and ensures the well-being of all people.

Through the lens of structural feminist analysis and application of the CEDAW standards of nondiscrimination and substantive equality, this panel explored how, by committing to this reorientation, the IMF and World Bank can ensure that their programmes, policies, and technical advice contribute to the transformation of the institutions and structures that reinforce and reproduce unequal power relations. The panel included CEDAW Committee Member Marion Bethel; Roula Seghaier, International Domestic Workers Federation; Bhumika Muchhala, Third World Network; and Emma Burgisser, Bretton Woods Project.

# **3. FORGING MOVEMENTS**

# A. Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM): Rights of Migrant Women **Under CEDAW**

# **Programme Area: Interrogating** Borders

Conversations between IWRAW AP and the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM) led to a collaborative plan and presentation at an introductory webinar on framing the rights of migrant women under CEDAW. This virtual event was attended by more than 150 participants from 15 countries.

The meeting provided initial knowledge about CEDAW and provided a framework for understanding the rights of migrant women under CEDAW. As a direct follow-up to this activity, we worked closely with the APMM team to provide technical assistance and support to understand the CEDAW review process and to write a shadow report on issues concerning women migrant workers for Indonesia's CEDAW review in the 80th CEDAW session. Since it was their first engagement in the CEDAW process and the report was submitted in a rather short timeframe, they found it challenging to navigate the process as well as apply the concept in report writing. However, the group is committed to engaging in the CEDAW process for future sessions.

# **B. Gender Equality and Macroeconomics (GEM) Starter Kit** and Piloting Workshops Programme Area: TrEAD

In November and December 2021, IWRAW AP held a series of feminist

participatory workshops on gender equality and macroeconomics designed and conducted by Diyana Yahaya and Trimita Chakma. The workshops, based on IWRAW AP's soon-to-be-published Gender Equality and Macroeconomics Starter Kit, brought together partners working in the areas of women's rights, development, and economic justice to explore the role dominant macroeconomic narratives, policies and institutions play in the lives of women, with a focus on feminist critiques and advocacy strategies towards creating a gender-just global economic and financial order. Oneworkshop series focused particularly on the CEDAW Convention and State review procedures as a tool for advancing feminist economic justice.

# C. ESCR-Net's Women and ESC Rights Working Group [WW]

**Programme Area: Women in Work** 

We continued to work closely with ESCR-Net's Women and ESC Rights Working Group and actively supported the organisation of the three-day strategy meeting on women and work organised by the working group in September 2021. By the end of the meeting, the working group had identified the following long-term impact statements:

- · Care work is increasingly recognised, redistributed, reduced, grounded in rights, and represented and shaped by caregivers, with socioeconomic alternatives that centre care and sustainability challenging dominant systems.
- Strengthened accountability in global supply chains contributes to women's full enjoyment of their human and labour rights, as well as dignified working conditions and active participation and leadership in employee representation bodies.
- Strengthened human rights standards and • implementation vis-a-vis women's rights related to work effectively counter gender-based violence and, more broadly, the precarity and marginalisation of women's work.
- The popularisation of a rights-based narrative on women and work challenges patriarchal and retrogressive tropes of economic empowerment and ultimately builds popular power to advance equitable, just, and sustainable alternatives.

**PAGE 26** 

# COMMUNICATIONS

# DIVING INTO THE MATRIX: NAVIGATING ONLINE REALITIES

As our communications strategies continued to exist solely online, the expansion of our Communications team to two persons has been a positive move. IWRAW Asia Pacific adopted a measured approach to our digital advocacy. Although we engage across multiple issues and campaigns, we are continually considering our audience's familiarity with each issue. In general, we aim at highlighting questions such as: who is being left out and how are they impacted? What is wrong with the current system? What can provide some deeper insight into the situation? Rather than simply preach to the converted, we aim to highlight ways that individuals and groups can move forward through learning, dialogue, and action.

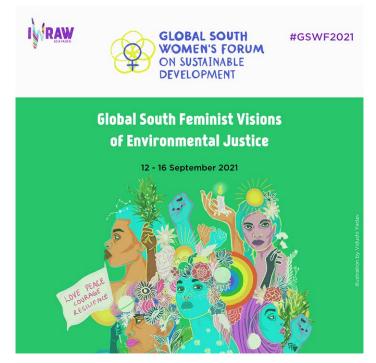
# SUPPORT TO PROGRAMMES

### #GSWF2021

The Global South Women's Forum was a key point of focus for IWRAW AP's communications in 2021, allowing the team to flex its newly formed muscles pertaining to successful virtual engagement. Expanding on the experience of coordinating the 2020 Global South Women's Forum, outreach to and accessibility for marginalised individuals and communities were prioritised. A greater effort was made to connect with people who would not otherwise be asked to participate in these discursive and network-building spaces.

The pre-GSWF accessibility survey saw requests for captioning and sign-language interpretation as accessibility features from around half the respondents. The highest demand was for Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic interpretations, though there were quite a few demands for local languages such as Bengali, Thai, Khmer, Shona, and Sinhala to name some. Despite some negative experiences, Zoom seemed to be the preferred platform but participants were particularly keen that the platform should be one that encouraged speakers and participants to interact.

In response to these requests, GSWF 2021 provided accessibility through simultaneous interpretation in multiple languages, including sign language; offering captioning for a number of sessions; establishing a connectivity fund for participants; and covering participation costs for session organisers and panellists. The addition of a 'Creativity Corner' to the programme line-up also spoke to IWRAW AP's acknowledgement of the many modalities of activism, and our desire to foster imaginative possibilities for a just future. Several sessions were live tweeted. This year's forum also included work from Global South creatives, featured on the website.



Flyer for the 2021 Global South Women's Forum.

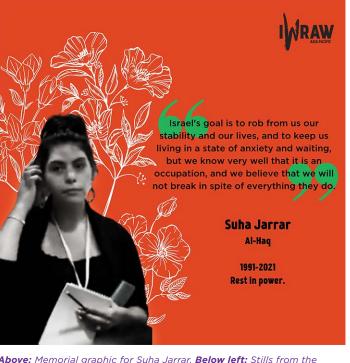
## Other Programme Support

The Communications team took the lead in using the <u>three-day</u> <u>virtual event</u> of the Asia Solidarity Lab to highlight IWRAW AP's work, especially on environmental justice, and create space for Global South environmental activists to showcase their work on gender and the environment whilst promoting the 2021 Global South Women's Forum.

The team also promoted and live tweeted the Introductory Webinar on Framing Rights of Migrant Women under CEDAW, and continued participation in the #Fem4PeoplesVaccine campaign and in the #FeministsWantSystemChange campaign on Twitter in July. We rolled out our CEDAW Demystified video series; a video titled 'Sex Work Is Not Trafficking', featuring sex workers from across South and Southeast Asia describing their experiences; and the #EmptyChairs campaign video.







**Above:** Memorial graphic for Suha Jarrar. **Below left:** Stills from the CEDAW Demystified videos, animated by Falana Films.

# SOCIAL MEDIA

IWRAW AP uses its active online presence to support and amplify the activism of our partners and to draw attention to inequality, discrimination, harassment and violations of human rights.

In 2021, IWRAW AP supported a diverse range of virtual campaigns: the <u>#HartalDoktorKontrak campaign</u> demanding fair treatment for Malaysian contract doctors and the <u>#CleanerJugaFrontliner campaign</u>. We <u>condemned Turkey's withdrawal</u> from the Istanbul Convention as an attack on human rights. We mourned the losses of activists <u>Emma Ritch</u>, <u>Suha Jarrar</u>, <u>Aegile</u> <u>Fernandez</u>, and <u>Lina Cabaero</u>; <u>commemorated</u> the first anniversary of activist Zara Alvarez's murder; and expressed <u>solidarity with Heidy Quah</u>, targeted for her support of migrant and refugee rights. We celebrated the <u>success of sex work organisations</u> in fighting for decriminalisation in Victoria, Australia, and milestones along the road to <u>equal citizenship rights</u> for Malaysian mothers. In conjunction with #HLPF2021, we advocated for the #TRIPSWaiver and vaccine equity and shared a number of resources: the Women's Major Group's infographic series linking SDGs with UN human rights mechanisms, a thread on the failures of the 'End Demand' approach to sex work featuring our own graphics produced in partnership with NSWP which were also featured on International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers, and a VOICE interview with former Programme Manager Ishita Dutta.



SWP Global Network of Sex Work Pro Promoting Health and Human Rights

We used social media to promote Programme Manager Shanti Uprety's post on the CARE International UK blog, the BRICS Feminist Watch seminar on South-South cooperation and the New Naratif artists database.

Our advocacy also included the following statements, including two that reflected our disquiet with the Generation Equality Forums organised by UN Women in Mexico and France:

- Letter on accountability for the GEF commitments and civil society engagement for endorsement.
- Open letter to the government of France and UN Women expressing concerns on the lack of accessibility and lack of inclusion of feminists with disabilities during the Generation Equality Forum.
- · Letter demanding an end to the violence perpetrated by paramilitary groups in Colombia.

Attempts to promote 'female labour force participation' usually fail to understand the root causes of gender inequality and do not pay enough attention to women's agency. Such approaches can lead to women being trapped in inherently exploitative capitalist, patriarchal structures and in survival livelihoods, which do not enable them to escape poverty and are counterproductive to achieving gender equality.

Shanti Uprety | IWRAW Asia Pacific



Above: A graphic featuring an excerpt from IWRAW AP's Programme Manager, Shanti Uprety's post on CARE International UK's blog Below left: Featured graphics from our collaboration with NSWP on the 'End Demand' approach to sex work.



**24,162** VISITORS

## Social Media and Online Engagement Statistics

1. **TWITTER.** As IWRAW Asia Pacific's primary social media platform, our Twitter page reached a total of 1.5 million impressions in 2021, referring to the total tally of all the times our tweets have been seen and engaged with by Twitter audiences.

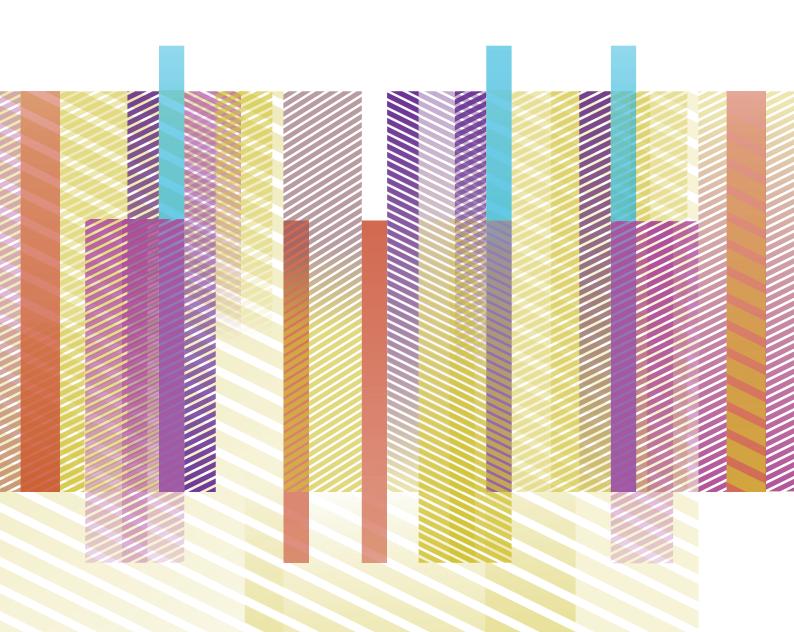
Our top tweets with the highest engagement included our threads on 'end demand' laws in conjunction with International Sex Workers Rights Day and International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers, our tweet on the Framework on Rights of Sex Workers & CEDAW developed with NSWP and our launch of GSWF 2021.

2. FACEBOOK. In 2021, IWRAW Asia Pacific's Facebook page achieved a cumulative reach of 51,922 which outlined the number of people reached, and the times they viewed and interacted with our page and content. Engagement with our page peaked in September 2021 as we livestreamed GSWF 2021 sessions on Facebook Live.

3. YOUTUBE. We received a total of 18,245 views in 2021 on our YouTube channel. Our most viewed videos during the year were our series on Gender Equality and Macroeconomics and CEDAW Demystified respectively, as well as our video titled 'Sex Work in Not Trafficking' which was one of two videos from our two-part Voices of Sex Workers from South and Southeast Asia series.

4. WEBSITE. As the host of IWRAW Asia Pacific's public-facing communications and information sharing, our website was visited by 24,162 users in 2021. Throughout the year it was regularly updated with essential CEDAW-related information, myriad resources as well as blog posts written by both team members and our partners. Our most widely accessed resource in 2021 was 'CEDAW: Prinsip Non Diskriminasi' which was an Indonesian-language video produced by UN Women and adapted from IWRAW Asia Pacific's CEDAW Quick & Concise video series. Meanwhile, our most popular blog post in 2021 was Feminist Demands for Environmental and Climate Justice: Realities, Resistance and Resilience, capturing the issues identified by activists who attended our convening in Bangkok in late 2021.

# SUSTAINABILITY AND RELEVANCE OF IWRAW ASIA PACIFIC



2021

# FINANCE AND FUNDRAISING

In 2021, IWRAW Asia Pacific was fortunate to receive sustained and continued funding from both our longstanding core funders and newer avenues.

Our donors in 2021 were:

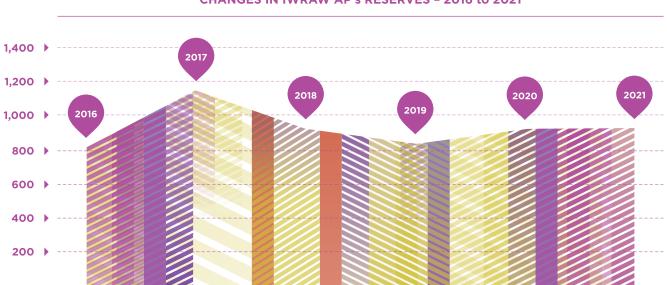
- The Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers
- Bretton Woods Project
- Business and Human Rights Resource Centre
- Co-Impact
- Ford Foundation
- Heinrich Boll Stiftung
- Laudes
- Open Society Foundation
- Swiss Development Corporation
- VOICE.

## **WORKING PRACTICES**

2021 and 2022 will be watershed years for IWRAW Asia Pacific, as they will determine how the learning from managing the pandemic and postpandemic time will feed into the changes to our structures and working practices. Having worked from home since March 2020 with only occasional forays into the office and one in-person reflection meeting, plus having expanded the team to include two colleagues working remotely from Bangalore and Manila, our vision of a globally-located virtual team seems to be becoming a reality.

It is important though that intentionality is embedded in this shift because it requires us to have policies and practices that ensure equality among team members, allow for ways of working that are mindful of different time zones and pressures of working, foster mutual support and interactions among team members, and ensure that learning and institutional memory are shared.

Working largely in a virtual environment requires different skills in management, but also in facilitation and mobilisation, and it is important that the team is able to access these skills and/or develop them inhouse. What we found critical is the need to invest in ensuring that women from marginalised communities have access to virtual spaces. The GSWF experience showed us that we need to budget for a connectivity fund for all our convenings, and this needs to become an organisational practice.



# CHANGES IN IWRAW AP's RESERVES - 2016 to 2021

# PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

IWRAW Asia Pacific's outreach continues to increase as we cast a wider net in search of partners, and in 2021 the team collaborated with colleagues and fellow women's rights activists from a range of national, regional, and international organisations and networks, and academic institutions. They were:

# NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

- Australia
- Scarlet Alliance

# Bangladesh

- Awaj Foundation

# Cambodia

- Gender and Development for Cambodia

# Indonesia

- AJI Jakarta
- Aksi Keadilan
- Jakarta Feminist
- Jawa Pos
- SAFENet

# Kenya

Kenya Legal and Ethical Issues
 Network on HIV and AIDS (KELIN)

# Malaysia

- AWAM
- Joint Action Group for Gender Equality
- Klima Action Malaysia
- KRYSS Network

# Mongolia

- Women for Change Mongolia

# Nepal

- Powershift Nepal

# Palestine

Palestinian Environmental NGOs Network

# Singapore

- NTUC Singapore
- Singapore Coalition of Women's Organisations (SCWO)

# South Africa

- Inequality Movement

# Turkey

- Etkiniz
- Turkish Women's Rights Coalition

# Vietnam

- CGFED

# **REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

- · 350.org Asia
- Akina Mama wa Afrika
- Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)
- ASEAN SOGIE Caucus
- ASEAN Youth Forum
- Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP)
- Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR)
- Asia Monitor Resource Center (AMRC)
- Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM)
- Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers (APNSW)
- Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN)
- Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTN)
- Asia Region of the International Lesbian,
   Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association
   (ILGA Asia)
- IGED-Africa
- Initiative for Strategic Litigation in Africa (ISLA)
- International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC) Asia
- Pesticide Action Network Asia Pacific (PANAP)
- Southern Africa Litigation Center (SALC)
- Special Talent Exchange Programme (STEP)
- SWASA
- WoMin African Alliance

PAGE 35

# INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND NETWORKS

- ActionAid
- AWID
- BRICS Feminist Watch
- CARE
- CIEL
- CREA
- ESCR-Net
- Feminists for a Binding Treaty
- GADN
- GATJ
- GI-ESCR
- Global Labour Justice
- Global Network of Sex Work
   Projects (NSWP)
- IEJ

# PEOPLE

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Amal Hadi
- Chee Yoke Ling
- Lesley Ann Foster
- Maria Herminia Graterol
- Nalini Singh
- Noor Farida Ariffin
- Noraida Endut
- Shanthi Dairiam

# ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Andrew Byrnes
- Ipek Ilkkaracan
- Ruth Manorama
- Savitri Goonesekere
- Shireen Huq

- Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion
- ITUC
- Observatory on the Universality of Our Rights (OURS)
- Sexual Rights Initiative
- StreetNet International
- SWIFA
- TB-Net
- Third World Network
- Women and Gender Constituency (WGC)

# ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

- Centre for Human Rights of the University of Pretoria
- Miami University School of Law Human Rights Clinic
- Transitional Justice Institute at Ulster University
- Tufts University
- University of Warwick

## TEAM

- Audrey Lee
- Anindya (Vivi) Restuviani
- Constanza Pauchulo
- Evelyn Loh
- Ishita Dutta
- Jhannel Tomlinson
- Kavitha Devadas
- Marisa Hutchinson
- Molly Yew
- Nadia Mohd Rasidi
  - Nine
- Phang Lai Yoong
- Priyanthi Fernando
- Shanti Uprety
- Siti Zainab binti Abdullah
- Vanessa Daza Castillo
- Vashti Rebong
- Zahirah Zainal

# INTERNS

- Amanda Frame
- Batrisyia Azalan
- Charlotte King
- Emilia Dominguez
- Khant Khant Zar Nyi
- Marguerite Delplanque
- Navya Dawar
- Rosma Karlina
- Putri Tanjung
- Tia Siddle

### VOLUNTEERS

- Aaliyah Noble
- Christine Samwaroo
- Dina Lyvann
- Kayonaaz Kalyanwala
- Nathalie Guzman
- Zuzan Crystalia



This report may be reproduced in any form and by any means for non-commercial and/or non-profit purposes, and must acknowledge IWRAW Asia Pacific as the source. All images found in this report remain with their respective copyright holders and are subject to copyright laws. Any reproduction/adaptation of this report, in part or in whole, must be sent to: iwraw-ap@iwraw-ap.org

# **IWRAW Asia Pacific**

10-2 Jalan Bangsar Utama 9 59000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Telephone: +603 2282 2255

# www.iwraw-ap.org