

# Developing Leadership for the Next Generation of Women-led Change



Women's Funding Network is the largest philanthropic network in the world dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls. Through a network of more than 150 women's funds and foundations in over 25 countries, **we position women as solution builders who lead local, national, and global efforts.**

## Our Approach: Many kinds of leaders, many opportunities to lead

The power of our Network comes from a grassroots-to-global approach to women-led change. We connect and collaborate with members to strengthen the work of change at the grassroots... while using our voice and leadership to spread social innovation and impact through our global community. Therefore, our leadership development initiatives touch everything from the front lines of change to the broader field:



Our view of leadership begins with a belief that effectiveness and impact are sustained when donors, board members, and staff members — not only executive directors — uphold, guide, and lead organizations. We provide multiple points of entry into leadership, with initiatives that reflect the needs and interests of our Network and leverage the learning and successes gathered through our 30-year history.

Our leadership development initiatives create opportunities for changemakers to build on their individual and collective strengths, with a focus on enhancing personal leadership, practicing inclusion, and increasing ethnic and generational diversity. Past participants have affirmed that Women's Funding Network:

- Provides an opportunity for women's funds and foundations to collectively identify and respond to key issues impacting the lives of women and girls.
- Provides a critical opportunity for current and future leaders within the women's funding movement to come together and develop capacity and skills to effectively lead their organizations.
- Fosters new relationships, networks, and strategic alliances among women's funds and foundations.

Women's Funding Network is the largest philanthropic network in the world dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls. As a network of more than 150 women's funds in over 25 countries, we support and champion the work of women's funds that believe a better world for women and girls is a better world for all.

### Women's Funding Network Whitepaper Series

*This whitepaper takes a closer look at our grassroots-to-global perspective on women-led change, how we approach our work as a global Network, and the results we have delivered during a 30-year history of shaping philanthropy and social change. Learn more at [womensfundingnetwork.org](http://womensfundingnetwork.org).*

## A Look at Past Initiatives

We support all leaders in the women's funding movement — from the seasoned professional to women of color and young women working in communities around the globe — in deepening their capacity to lead within their organizations, collaborate with others in and outside the Network, and impact the lives of women, girls, families, and communities.

### Cultivating a New Generation of Leaders

**Bridge Builders & Voices on the Horizon (2009 to 2011)** – A cohort and year-long fellowship aimed at building the professional capacity of younger women's fund and foundation representatives, positioning them as leaders within the movement to promote women-led solutions for positive social change throughout the world.

**Girls Grantmaking Conference (2012)** – A partnership with four women's funds to create the first national Girls Grantmaking Conference, bringing together young women to explore their role as grantmakers, philanthropists, and citizens of the world who have the power to contribute to and initiate social change.

### Strengthening the Role of Women of Color

**Cultures of Giving (2009)** – Fundraising training and coaching designed to build the capacity of member funds to engage and lift up cross-generational, cross-cultural, and culturally-specific communities of color as donors in social change. Led to the creation of the *Generation to Generation* toolkit.

**Millions Give Back Campaign (2009 to present)** – A groundbreaking collaborative movement that identified, engaged, and recorded Black philanthropic giving. Formerly the Black Women Donors Action Group, this campaign comprises Black women leaders and donors from within and outside our Network.

**Women's Funding Movement, New Realities, New Opportunities (2013)** – A weekend retreat and special space that nurtured and recognized women of color leaders within the women's funding movement and provided opportunities for them to build a community of support and collaboration.

**Women of Color International Development Incubator (2003 to 2009)** – A program that built fundraising and leadership skills of women of color, not only successfully enhancing the fundraising capacity of participants, but also increasing the visibility of a pool of talented women of color throughout the Network. Sixty-three graduates have contributed to raising over \$35,000,000 for social change around the world.

**Women of Color Executive Director Retreats (2010 to 2011)** – Special space that nurtured and recognized women of color leaders and provided opportunities for them to influence the Network's vision of an inclusive movement promoting diversity among staff, board, and grantee partners.

### Deepening Capacity of Women's Leadership & Leveraging Collective Strengths

**Engage 2012** – A national summit of people of color policy experts, practitioners, and thought leaders. With an eye toward the 2012 election cycle, Engage focused on issues related to immigration, racial justice, economic security, LGBTQ rights, and reproductive and environmental justice to build a unified agenda for change.

**Partnership for Women's Prosperity (2012 to present)** – An initiative focused on improving the economic security of 13,000 low-income women and girls and single female heads of households in the U.S., with a particular focus on Minnesota, Mississippi, New York, Tennessee, and Washington D.C.

**Raising Leaders Raising Millions (2011 to 2013)** – An initiative focused on raising large gifts for reproductive health, rights and justice work by re-engaging individual donors and attracting new, more diverse, and younger donors.

**Women’s Funds 2.0 (2010 to 2011)** – A facilitated planning group for executive directors and other key staff members who researched and identified best business practices to strengthen their organizations.

**Women Moving Millions (2007 to 2011)** – A campaign incubated and led in partnership with Women’s Funding Network that engaged 45 women’s funds and foundations in raising million dollar gifts.

## Impact Highlights

### Raising Critical Funds

Women Moving Millions exceeded expectations with \$176 million raised in its first two years, far more than its goal of \$150 million. In 2012, Women Moving Millions became an independent organization and member of our Network.

### Bringing New Voices to the Table

Four alumnae of the Women of Color International Development Incubator joined the Women’s Funding Network board of directors, one founded a nongovernmental organization in her home country, and others went on to leadership positions in other organizations.

### Changing Mindsets

Our inclusion initiatives have changed the way its members think about diversity. One participant comments, “Once you see something, you can’t stop seeing it.”

### Strengthening Connections to the Work

Next generation leadership alumnae continue to network with peers and strengthen the effectiveness of their work. They report “feeling more pride about their work, feeling like they can speak more confidently about the work, and feeling like their voice is important in the work; there’s a sense of inclusion.”

### Catalyzing Personal Leadership

Bridge Builders alumnae increased their fundraising and communications capacity to take on increased leadership by training staff and board and spearheading strategic initiatives at their funds. The experience fostered “strong relationships and peer networks among participants, strengthening leaders who bring with them critical connections, trust and respect.”

### Connecting Confidence to New Resources

Leadership coaching of executive directors led several women to make their “first successful million dollar ask” and more confidence among executive directors and board members for fundraising.

### Holding Space for Honest Conversation

Our 2011 Conference drew 519 participants from 25 countries and six continents and included a “Great Debate” plenary session on whether women’s funds and foundations fully embrace the core social justice values of diversity, equality, justice and partnership. In addition, Millions Give Back and Bridge Builders cohort members facilitated and provided expertise in various conference sessions.

Ninety percent of members say we help them make a positive impact in women’s lives. As a result of their membership:

**80%** increased their engagement with other women’s funds.

**Over 25%** raised more money, engaged more culturally or age-diverse donors, or provided leadership on initiatives with other members.

**20%** now have a more culturally or age-diverse management team or board or support a more culturally or age-diverse group of community organizations.

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## Opportunities for Future Impact

In 2013 and 2014, Women's Funding Network will lead a series of initiatives to continue developing the leadership of our movement and expand our reach within and beyond the sector:

- Regional convenings, to be held in three communities across the United States in 2013
- 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration & Learning Series, with three events in 2014
- Phase II of Partnership for Women's Prosperity, which is helping 13,000 women achieve economic security
- Data-driven initiatives, including an online network mapping tool and bi-annual benchmarking report
- Enhanced knowledge platforms and tools, including a robust webinar series, white papers, and more

In addition to this work, a variety of additional opportunities have been identified to continue growing our leadership development practice, including projects and partnerships to:

- Provide professional training and coaching and follow-through on implementation of new learnings in order to create a highly successful leadership development experience.
- Infuse the network with the most successful elements of Women of Color International Development Incubator and other leadership cohorts so that even larger numbers of emerging leaders benefit from these programs than have in the past.
- Adopt an intentional focus on developing new leadership in the African American Diaspora community.
- Showcase successful strategies that individual member funds have used to diversify their leadership and donor base to provide models and tools for other members.
- Use our unique position to gather data from its members on race and diversity as they relate to women's issues — like the National Report Card on Women's Health — and spark a national discussion or campaign.
- Extend the benefits of the Women's Funds 2.0 study group to leaders of mid-sized funds by weaving discussions of sustainability and business models into conference and leadership curricula.
- Develop a curriculum on leadership succession in women's funds and foundations, including best practices for how to successfully onboard a new executive director.
- Tap into the leaders of color that are already in the Network and highlight them in meaningful ways whenever there is a discussion about growing the next generation of philanthropists.

## Will you join us?

We are seeking partners who share our belief in the power of diverse and inclusive leadership. To learn more about our future and discuss your connection to this important work, please contact Ruth-Anne Renaud, Vice President of External Affairs, at (415) 400-2227 or [rarenaud@womensfundingnetwork.org](mailto:rarenaud@womensfundingnetwork.org).

