

WATER JUSTICE FUND

Powered by Simavi



©Tareq Mahamud

INVESTING IN WATER JUSTICE

The Water Justice Fund (WJF) positions women at the forefront of climate action, strengthening climate resilience through locally led adaptation. The fund addresses systemic inequalities in water governance and aims to improve access to climate finance for water justice.

THE CLIMATE CRISIS IS A WATER CRISIS

In today's fast-paced world, climate change worsens water security. Climate change alters rainfall patterns, leading to droughts, water scarcity, and extreme flooding. Today, 1 in 4 people – or 2 billion individuals worldwide – lack safe drinking water, and climate change is expected to increase water scarcity globally. More frequent and intense storms and floods disrupt water systems, contaminate water sources, and increase waterborne diseases. Sea-level rise causes saltwater intrusion into freshwater resources, affecting coastal populations. Vulnerable communities in remote and underserved areas are disproportionately affected by water scarcity leading to lack of access to safe water and sanitation impacting nutrition and health and resulting in climate induced migration. This exacerbates existing inequalities, including gender inequalities.

WOMEN ARE KEY TO CLIMATE ACTION

Women play a central role in water management within their households and communities. They are often responsible for fetching, using, and overseeing water for drinking, cooking, cleaning, and agriculture. This hands-on involvement gives them intimate knowledge of local water resources and the challenges of scarcity and quality. Adaptation to climate change requires action at the local level. By supporting female leadership in water and climate action, communities can leverage this expertise to develop more effective and sustainable solutions.

CLIMATE FINANCE FAILS TO REACH THE LAST-MILE

Despite the increasing availability of climate financing, it often fails to reach the most vulnerable populations. Effective climate finance must prioritise these communities and focus on adaptation strategies to ensure those most impacted can build resilience against climate change. Only 5% of global climate finance is currently earmarked from climate change adaptation, about half of which is allocated to the sector.

90%

OF CLIMATE DISASTERS ARE WATER-RELATED

WATER JUSTICE FUND

Powered by Simavi



©Sacha de Boer

THE WATER JUSTICE FUND EMBRACES THE

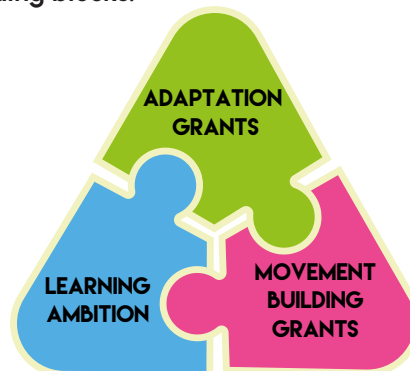
8

LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION PRINCIPLES

THE WATER JUSTICE FUND

The **Water Justice Fund (WJF)** is based on the principle that decisions are made by those closest to action. Through inclusive governance and **participatory grant-making**, we shift power to last-mile women in remote, underserved, and climate vulnerable regions. By grounding our work in the principles of **Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) principles**, the fund supports solutions designed and led by the communities who experience the challenges firsthand. This ensures adaptation is not only effective but deeply rooted in local realities.

The fund has three building blocks:



- **Adaptation Grants:** We support locally led climate adaptation initiatives to improve access to water and sanitation.
- **Movement Building Grants:** Support network development, advocacy, and campaigns at national, sub-national, and global level for water justice.
- **Learning Ambition:** Investing in participatory learning, action research, capacity building and evidence generation to strengthen both locally led actions and broader movement building efforts to advance water justice.

WORKING ON FOUR OBJECTIVES

1. **Women Empowerment:** Strengthen women's leadership in advancing water justice through informed decision making, knowledge sharing, and strategic alliance building.
2. **Climate Resilience:** Enhance knowledge and skills for adaptive local solutions addressing climate crisis and water security.
3. **Shared Governance:** Promote shared governance and accountability through collaborative partnerships.
4. **Climate Financing:** Increase equitable access to and availability of finance for the most vulnerable groups enhancing water resilience and locally led adaptation.

WATER JUSTICE FUND

Powered by Simavi



©Shirish Bajracharya

70

WOMEN-LED GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES RECEIVED SUPPORT SINCE 2023

A SHARED GOVERNANCE MODEL

The WJF's governance structure is designed to reflect the diversity and expertise of the Global South, ensuring that decision-making power rests with those closest to the challenges. It includes:

- **Women-led Grassroots Groups:** At the centre of action, grassroots groups plan and implement initiatives for water and climate resilience.
- **Advisory Board:** Comprising female thought leaders from the Global South, the Advisory Board provides strategic guidance and oversees learning and due diligence.
- **Peer Panels:** Regional and community-level panels review and score grant applications, ensuring that decisions reflect lived experiences and contextual expertise. The WJF envisions grassroots women transitioning into Peer Panel and Advisory Board roles to further embed local leadership.
- **Partner Organisations:** NGOs, CBOs, and technical institutions work alongside grassroots groups, providing training, technical advice, networking opportunities, and advocacy support.
- **WJF Secretariat:** The Secretariat oversees fundraising, administration, and Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL). It is managed by Simavi until the Fund's independence in 2030. With decades of experience in empowering women in WASH and climate adaptation, Simavi ensures the fund's effectiveness and sustainability.

THE IMPACT OF THE WATER JUSTICE FUND

The WJF was launched in 2023 with a pilot in Bangladesh, Kenya and Nepal. Since then, the fund has supported more than 70 women-led grassroots initiatives to implement climate adaptation actions through the Locally Led Adaptation Grants.

Women leadership

Women-led groups in all the three countries have engaged in the process of identifying the problem, submitting proposals, mobilising funds and managing implementation. This has been an empowering exposure for the women, strengthening decision-making skills, as well as building their confidence and negotiation skills.

Climate resilience and water justice

In all three countries, the actions taken by the women-led groups have increased their resilience against water related climate change impacts. For example, in Bangladesh, where waterlogging is a challenge, women's groups have built elevated latrines, ensuring access even during periods of waterlogging. Likewise, in Kenya, women's groups have used the grant to purchase rainwater harvesting tanks to collect water during high rainfall periods. This has ensured they have stored water to last a few weeks to months longer during dry spells.

WATER JUSTICE FUND

Powered by Simavi



©Sacha de Boer

THE WJF IS
ACTIVE IN
BANGLADESH,
KENYA, NEPAL,
AND
EXPANDING TO
INDONESIA,
UGANDA

Participatory decision-making

An important part of the shared governance and shifting power model of the Water Justice Fund is the Advisory Board and Peer panels. This ensures that decisions to achieve water justice are guided by the insights, experiences, and expertise of those living and working in the target communities.

Access to Climate Finance

Women's groups, through their lobby and advocacy efforts have successfully secured additional co-financing from the local government to support their adaptation solutions. By demonstrating the impact and value of their community-led initiatives such as managing community water systems, pond construction, bio-embankments and solarisation of water boreholes – the women's groups have convinced local authorities to contribute financial resources. Collaborating closely with local governments have also strengthened their responsiveness and accountability towards marginalised groups. Between 2023 and 2024, the women-led groups in Nepal, Bangladesh and Kenya leveraged an additional 148,833 Euros through local government as well as community contribution.

JOIN THE WATER JUSTICE POOLED FUND!

The WJF is more than a fund – it is a bold step toward equity, resilience and justice for communities on the frontlines of climate crisis. Are you committed to a water-just future for women and girls? Do you want to be a part of a collaborative effort to empower vulnerable communities to address the negative effects of climate change? Join the Water Justice Fund!

For more information about how you can support the WJF, please contact **Veerle Ver Loren van Themaat**, Director of Fundraising and External Engagement at veerle.verloren@simavi.nl

www.waterjusticefund.nl

