



Organisational profile 2026

A pan-African feminist network turning women's rights law into everyday reality

1,143 member organisations in more than 35 African countries, connected by open data, continental advocacy, grants, learning and protection.

1,143

member organisations

35+

African countries

9.78 M

women and girls supported
since 2013

6

offices, headquarters in
Accra

Africa Office, Nmai Dzorn, Adjiringano Road, Eden Court, Accra, Ghana · rflgd.org · admin@rflgd.org

WHO WE ARE

Rights won on paper, defended on the ground

RFLD is a pan-African feminist network of 1,143 women-led organisations in more than 35 African countries. We connect the rights African women have won in continental law to the communities, parliaments and budgets where those rights are claimed.

Members lead the work in their communities, and RFLD stands behind them with data, advocacy, grants, learning and protection. We work in English and French, with Portuguese for the Africa Grant Portfolio.



RFLD network convening

AT A GLANCE

Key facts

Legal name	Réseau des Femmes Leaders pour le Développement (RFLD)
Founded	2013
Status	International Organisation in Senegal; NGO registered in Ghana, Benin, Nigeria and The Gambia
Headquarters	Africa Office, Accra, Ghana
Offices	Accra (Africa Office and headquarters), Porto-Novo and Dakar (Francophone Hubs), Banjul (ACHPR Liaison), Lagos (Nigeria Office), Igolo (Member and Local Platforms)
Network	1,143 organisations: 670 member organisations and 473 RFLD Suite beneficiary organisations
Languages	English and French, with Portuguese for the Africa Grant Portfolio
Continental standing	ACHPR Observer Status N°553; member of the Support Group of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders (Resolution 602); member of SOAWR; Co-Chair of the SEA-T Programme Advisory Council (BMZ/GIZ)

US giving	NGOsource 501(c)(3) equivalency; RFLD American Friends Fund at Myriad USA
Accountability	Unqualified external audits; Candid Seal of Transparency; IATI publisher
Leadership	Dossi Sèkonnou Gloria AGUEH, Africa Director and Founder; Hélène WOUINSOU, Board President

9.78 M

women and girls supported between 2013 and 2026

1,143

organisations in the network

5

countries of registration

2013

year founded

HOW WE WORK

Four functions, one network

Most organisations keep these functions apart. RFLD runs them as one cycle, so each strengthens the others and a grant to one programme benefits the whole network.



West Africa Feminist Data Summit, 2026

01

Open data

Twelve free tools show where states meet their commitments and where they fall short.

02

Policy hubs

Evidence goes to the African Commission, AU bodies, ECOWAS and national parliaments.

03

Re-granting

The West African Feminist Fund and the Africa Grant Portfolio move money to grassroots groups.

04

Direct programmes

Flagships such as PAWELE and BRAVE build leaders and systems that last.

THEORY OF CHANGE

From individual leaders to systemic change

LEVEL 1

Individual leaders

Women and girls gain the skills, safety and networks to lead, from local councils to continental institutions.

LEVEL 2

Strong institutions

Women-led organisations build the policies, finances and security that let them grow and withstand pressure.

LEVEL 3

Systemic change

Laws, budgets and norms shift, and states are held to the Maputo Protocol and the ACDEG.

How we choose to work

Member-led

Members shape priorities through the General Assembly.

Trust-based grantmaking

Flexible funding with financial training, security assessments, psychosocial care and funder introductions built in.

Bilingual by design

Working in English and French bridges movements that funding often keeps apart.

Data sovereignty

Grantee data belongs to grantees.

Feminist measurement

Outcome Harvesting and Most Significant Change, with quarterly accountability dashboards.

Equality and inclusion

At least 50% women's participation and a dedicated window for Vulnerable Groups.

Africa has written some of the strongest women's rights law in the world. RFLD exists to make it real in the lives of women and girls, with the organisations they lead at the centre.

WHAT WE DO

Six fields of work, anchored in African law

Each field is anchored in a continental instrument and delivered with the member organisations closest to the women it serves. Together they cover the rights women need to live safely, decide freely, earn fairly and lead.

MAPUTO PROTOCOL

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

Bodily autonomy under Articles 2, 4, 5 and 14 of the Maputo Protocol, carried by the BRAVE programme and member organisations.

UNSCR 1325

Women defenders, peace and security

Protection for women human rights defenders and women at the centre of mediation, early warning and recovery.

ACDEG

Women in power

Women's political leadership through PAWELE, with ACDEG monitoring and legislative tracking across West Africa.

AFRICAN CHARTER

Civic space

Freedom of association, expression and assembly on the street, in court and online, under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

AGENDA 2063

Economic and climate justice

Land and inheritance rights, women-led adaptation, the care economy and a just transition, under Articles 19 and 21.

ARTICLE 5

Ending FGM and child marriage

Community-led abandonment of harmful practices under Articles 5 and 6, led by families, elders, faith leaders and survivors.

THE LEGAL FOUNDATION

A strong framework with an implementation gap

The Maputo Protocol, adopted in 2003 and ratified by 46 of the 55 African Union member states, is widely regarded as one of the most progressive women's rights treaties in the world.

With the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007) and the ECOWAS Supplementary Act on Equality of Rights (2015), it gives African women a legal framework for every field of our work. The gap is implementation, and that is where RFLD works.



Network members at a regional workshop

46

states have ratified the Maputo Protocol

55

states tracked by the Maputo Protocol Hub

15

ECOWAS states in the Legislative Platform

01 · RIGHTS AND REPRESENTATION

Rights and representation

Sexual and reproductive health and rights and women's political participation form one agenda at RFLD. A woman who cannot decide about her own body cannot fully take part in public life, and laws change little without women where they are enforced.



Speaking at a women's rights dialogue

SRHR

BRAVE: Bodily Rights And Violence Eradication

BRAVE trains community organisers, supports feminist research and presses for the implementation of Article 14 of the Maputo Protocol: removing spousal-consent requirements for contraception, safe abortion in the cases set out in Article 14(2)(c), and comprehensive sexuality education within each country's legal framework.

LEADERSHIP

PAWELE: Pan-African Women's Empowerment for Leadership and Equality

PAWELE prepares women to run for office, win and govern, from local councils to national parliaments: campaign strategy, finance, media and security for candidates, legislative drafting, committee work and budget oversight for elected women, and advocacy for parity laws.

VIOLENCE

Cyber Harassment Legal Toolkit

A 2026 legal toolkit and advocacy for ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment at work.

DIGNITY

Against stigma

A stigma-reduction lens on HIV, infertility and disability, and support for survivors of violence.

LANGUAGES

Rights in local languages

The Maputo Protocol in professional audio in Hausa, Zarma, Yoruba and Goun, for women who do not read French or English.

What we are building next

- The Maputo Barometer every year for every state, with support for civil society shadow reports.
- PAWELE cohorts ahead of election cycles: more women on ballots and elected women ready to legislate.
- BRAVE national campaigns on consent, sexuality education and Article 14, backed by research.
- Rights in more languages: new recordings, community radio partnerships and listening groups.

02 · GOVERNANCE, CIVIC SPACE AND PROTECTION

Governance, civic space and protection

RFLD prepares women to lead, gives civil society the data to hold states to their commitments, and protects the women human rights defenders who hold that ground.

GOVERNANCE

Legislative tracking

The West Africa Legislative Platform and the ACDEG Hub, gender-responsive election observation and Universal Periodic Review submissions.

GOVERNANCE

Following the money

Gender-responsive budget analysis and public expenditure tracking with civil society and women parliamentarians.

GOVERNANCE

Media that make accountability visible

Training for journalists and community radio in gender-sensitive and fiscal reporting, with safety for women journalists.

Protecting women defenders: NAFASI and CHARM Africa

RFLD is a partner in two Sida-funded consortia. In NAFASI (2026 to 2028), which defends Africa's digital civic space, RFLD leads gender mainstreaming and the protection of women defenders and runs French and Portuguese digital security helpline desks. CHARM Africa brings together civil society, media and human rights organisations across sub-Saharan Africa.



NAFASI consortium partners

- Continental advocacy within the Support Group of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders: oral statements and shadow reports.
- Annual research on women human rights defenders in sub-Saharan Africa.
- African Digital Safety Compendium: 110 defenders trained in digital resilience in 2026.
- Referral of defenders at acute risk to Front Line Defenders, ProtectDefenders.eu, AWDF and regional networks.

Organisational resilience for members

Policies

Data and child protection, safeguarding, codes of conduct.

Finance

Budgeting, reporting and audit readiness.

Security

Threat modelling, encrypted communications, incident response.

Continuity

Board development, succession, peer exchange.

03 · ECONOMIC AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

Economic and climate justice

African women farm much of the continent's land, manage household water and energy and carry out the adaptation already under way. Securing their economic rights is the most direct route to climate resilience. Africa produces roughly 3 to 4 percent of global emissions and absorbs a heavy share of the impact.



Member organisations mobilising

PILLAR 1

Land, inheritance and livelihoods

Reform of customary inheritance rules, joint titling, legal literacy and paralegal support for widows, agroecology and women's cooperatives (Article 21).

PILLAR 2

Feminist climate justice

Early warning in local languages, drought-resilient crops, mangrove restoration, rainwater harvesting and access to loss and damage finance for women's organisations.

PILLAR 3

Care economy and finance

Recognising, reducing and redistributing unpaid care work, savings groups, credit that accepts movable collateral and decent work in the informal economy (ILO Convention 189).

PILLAR 4

Just transition and extractives

Clean cooking and community-owned renewable energy, free, prior and informed consent, binding community agreements and water as a public good.

WHERE WE ADVOCATE

Policy arenas

UNFCCC COP negotiations with African feminist coalitions; AU Agenda 2063 and the African Peer Review Mechanism; ECOWAS frameworks on land, trade and adaptation finance; Maputo Protocol Articles 19 and 21, tracked across 55 states.

OPEN TOOLS AND VOICE

Resources

Gender-Responsive Budgeting resources; Climate Action Platform with gender-disaggregated climate data; Economic Justice podcast (11 episodes); Water Justice podcast (15 episodes).

What we are working towards

Land rights that hold in practice for widows and daughters, climate finance that reaches women-led groups first through the West African Feminist Fund, and budgets that count women.

04 · ENDING HARMFUL PRACTICES

Ending harmful practices

Across West Africa, mothers, fathers, elders, religious leaders and former practitioners are choosing to end practices that harm girls and women. RFLD backs those decisions, anchored in Maputo Protocol Articles 5, 6 and 20 and the 2015 ECOWAS Supplementary Act.



A community dialogue

Female genital mutilation

About 230 million girls and women alive today have undergone FGM (UNICEF).

Child marriage

About one in three young women in sub-Saharan Africa was married as a child (UNICEF).

Widowhood rites

Isolation, forced remarriage and dispossession imposed on grieving women.

Breast ironing

Flattening girls' breasts to hide puberty, causing lasting harm.

Ritual servitude

Girls pledged to shrines, known as Trokosi in parts of Ghana and Togo.

Son preference

Valuing sons over daughters in schooling, food, care and inheritance.

Four pillars of community-led change

PILLAR 1

Community dialogue

The Community Conversations method: build trust, share knowledge, declare publicly and stay accountable. Alternative rites of passage and keeping girls in school.

PILLAR 2

Leaders and allies

Traditional leaders and queen mothers, imams and pastors, former cutters with new livelihoods, and fathers and young men who refuse the practice.

PILLAR 3

Law and enforcement

National laws in line with the Maputo Protocol, training for police, prosecutors and judges, birth registration and reporting channels.

PILLAR 4

Survivor support

Referral to medical, psychosocial and legal support, emergency action for girls at imminent risk and survivor-led advocacy.

Members also coordinate with law enforcement along border corridors, and the Maputo Barometer tracks how states write Articles 5 and 6 into national law.

05 · WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Women, peace and security

During conflict, women keep markets open and dialogue alive across dividing lines. When women take part in a peace process, the agreement is 35% more likely to last at least 15 years (UN Women Global Study, 2015). Our work is anchored in UNSCR 1325 and 2250 and Maputo Protocol Articles 10 and 11.



RFLD network activists

Women mediators

Training in negotiation, conflict analysis and shuttle diplomacy, and connections across borders.

Community early warning

Women report early signs of conflict so that local authorities can act before violence breaks out.

Survivors of conflict-related sexual violence

Documentation for prosecution and referral to medical, psychosocial and livelihood support.

National Action Plans

Civil society monitoring so that WPS plans come with budget lines and local plans.

Recovery and justice

Transitional justice that addresses gendered crimes and gender-sensitive disarmament and reintegration.

Young women peacebuilders

Mentoring between generations and a place for young people in formal peace processes.

06 · Health rights

Health is where women's rights are tested most directly. RFLD combines advocacy with open health data so that ministries and communities can see where care falls short.

Maternal and newborn health

Maternal, newborn and child health in francophone Africa, in partnership with the David & Lucile Packard Foundation.

Maternal Health Data

Open data on maternal health for advocates and policymakers.

Ending malaria

Malaria data and advocacy that puts women and children first.

My Health, My Right

An interactive SRHR education hub for young people.

OPEN DATA AS PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The DONUÈSÈ Data Center

Twelve free, bilingual tools that let civil society, journalists, parliamentarians and students measure states against their own commitments. The data comes from members and partners, is structured by RFLD and returned to the public so that advocacy rests on evidence.

01

Maputo Protocol Hub

Ratification, domestication and implementation across 55 AU member states.

02

ACDEG Hub

State compliance with the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.

03

AU Mechanisms Hub

Plain-language guides to the African Commission, the African Court and AU bodies.

04

West Africa Legislative Platform

Women's rights legislation across 15 ECOWAS states, with comparison.

05

Women in Politics Tracker

Women's representation data across 15 West African countries.

06

Francophone Academy

15 free certified courses for francophone civil society.

07

Gender-Responsive Budgeting

Budget monitoring tools and fiscal policy references.

08

African Digital Safety Compendium

Open protocols for the digital protection of defenders and organisations.

09

Climate Action Platform

Gender-disaggregated climate data and adaptation case studies.

10

My Health, My Right

Interactive SRHR education.

11

Maternal Health Data

Maternal health indicators for advocacy.

12

Malaria Data

Malaria indicators with a gender lens.

How the data moves

- Members and partners gather laws, budgets, cases and indicators in their countries.
- RFLD verifies, organises and translates the data in English and French.
- The tools go back to the public, free to use and cite without licence or fee.
- Explore all tools at rflgd.org/rfld-countries-data-center

LEARNING AND STRENGTHENING

The RFLD Francophone Academy

Fifteen free online courses in French, designed for African civil society. Each course combines videos, lessons and a demanding final quiz. The certificate, signed by the Africa Director and verifiable online, is issued only after every lesson has been followed and the quiz passed.

15

free certified courses

5

thematic schools

80%

minimum score on the final quiz

100%

of certificates verifiable online



A learning session of the RFLD network

School of rights

Maputo Protocol, CEDAW and laws against violence, the AU Convention on ending violence against women and girls.

School of advocacy and mobilisation

Advocacy theory and practice, civic space and digital advocacy, women in action, feminist mobilisation.

School of peace and protection

UNSCR 1325, human rights defenders.

School of economic and climate justice

Climate, economic and social justice; women, business and the law.

School of leadership and management

Afrofeminist leadership, organisational governance, internal policies, CSR for NGOs.

With German Cooperation

The Academy is implemented with GIZ on behalf of BMZ. rflgd.org/hub-francophone

The RFLD Management Suite and the Organisational Resilience Programme

RFLD makes an online management suite available to its members free of charge: finance, human resources, grants, monitoring and evaluation and compliance. 473 organisations already use it through the Organisational Resilience Programme, with training videos in French and English and cohort support.

473

organisations using the Suite

670

member organisations

FR / EN

training videos

Free

for members

GRANTMAKING

Money that reaches the front line

RFLD re-grants through audited systems and carries the compliance burden, so international funders can reach groups they could not fund directly.



Network partners and grantees

WAFF

West African Feminist Fund

Grants for feminist civil society in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Applications and reporting in French or English.

AGP

Africa Grant Portfolio

Opening in January 2027 for organisations in all 55 AU member states led by and serving women and girls, Vulnerable Groups and people with disabilities. Applications in French, English or Portuguese.

Our grant windows

Urgent Action

Open all year, decided within 5 business days: legal defence, medical emergencies, digital threats.

Capacity Building

Salaries, systems and planning.

Advocacy

Campaigns, research and coalitions.

Vulnerable Groups Inclusion

For organisations kept out of mainstream funding.

GRANTMAKING

How we fund

Flexible funding and light reporting, including oral reports. Sanctions screening and data minimisation for grantee safety. Financial training, security checks, psychosocial care and funder introductions. Fiscal sponsorship for unregistered movements, case by case.

From application to funding

- Screening of eligibility and documents, usually within 10 business days of the deadline.
- Expert review by regional feminist practitioners and thematic experts, over three to four weeks.
- Due diligence proportionate to grant size.
- Decision by the WAFF Grants Committee, with written feedback to every applicant.

How applications are scored

Strategic alignment		25%
Project quality		25%
Organisational capacity		20%
Impact potential		20%
Risk awareness		10%

In June to September 2026, RFLD awarded 27 grants worth US\$722,100 to 26 organisations, including organisations working with Vulnerable Groups.

RESULTS, RESEARCH AND VOICE

What the network delivers and publishes

9.78 M

women and girls supported between 2013 and 2026

110+

women defenders trained in digital resilience in 2026

42

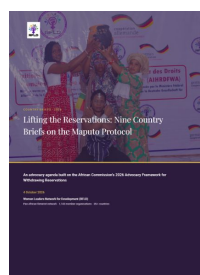
podcast episodes on economic justice, water and ending FGM

4

local languages for the Maputo Protocol in audio

RFLD contributed to the advocacy behind Benin's Law No. 2021-12 on sexual and reproductive health.

2026 publications, in English and French



Country briefs

Lifting the reservations to the Maputo Protocol



Policy brief

Women and water: Article 15 of the Maputo Protocol



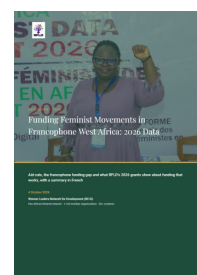
Manual

Writing shadow reports on the Maputo Protocol



Report

Online violence against women in West and Central



Data

Funding feminist movements in francophone West

Africa

Africa

OTHER REFERENCES

Research and tools

Women Human Rights Defenders in Sub-Saharan Africa, annual report 2025. Cyber Harassment Legal Toolkit (2026). Policy brief on young women defenders in West Africa and the Sahel (2026). Maputo Barometer, annual bilingual report. Strategic Plan 2023 to 2028 and 2025 Annual Report.

RECOGNITION

Standing

ACHPR Resolution 602 names RFLD to the Support Group of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders. Co-Chair of the SEA-T Programme Advisory Council (BMZ/GIZ). Member of the SOAWR coalition. Organisation profile on UN OCHA ReliefWeb. Alliance Magazine: the state of feminist funding in francophone West Africa.

For journalists and researchers

Spokespeople are available in English and French on women's rights law and policy, SRHR, digital safety for women defenders, feminist funding and African civil society. The Data Center can be cited free of charge, and the press kit at rflgd.org/press-kit carries boilerplate, key facts and logos. Press enquiries: communications.info@rflgd.org.

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Governed by members, verified by others

LEVEL 1

General Assembly

The members of RFLD. It sets direction and elects the Board.

LEVEL 2

Board of Directors

Five members elected on 15 January 2026 for five years. Oversight of strategy, finance and ethics.

LEVEL 3

Executive management

Day-to-day leadership of programmes, finance and compliance across six offices.

Board of Directors

Hélène WOUINSOU	President
Ruth HOSSOU	Vice-President
Tabiyi Mariam Bertille GBENAGNON	Secretary-General
Jeannine AGUEH	Treasurer
Colette KPOSSOU	Organisation Officer

Statutory auditors: Marlène SAGBOHAN and Rebecca TCHANVOEDOU, independent of the Board and management.

Executive leadership

Dossi Sêkonnou Gloria AGUEH	Africa Director and Founder
John GBENAGNON	Director of Strategy & Development
Gogo Ashifie	Regional Finance Lead

Financial accountability

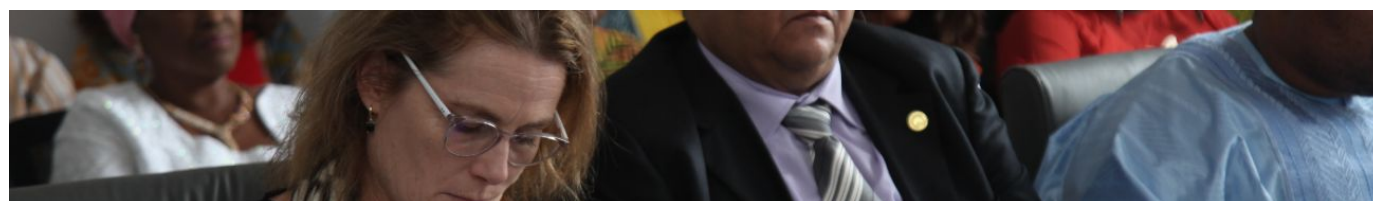
- Consecutive unqualified external audits, including 2024 and 2025.
- NGOsource 501(c)(3) equivalency.
- Candid Seal of Transparency and IATI publisher.

Ratified institutional policies

Statutes	Internal Regulations	Board Governance Charter	Safeguarding and PSEAH Policy	Anti-Corruption
and Conflict of Interest Policy	Risk Management Policy	Donor Compliance and Grants Management Policy		
Sub-Granting and Partner Management Policy	Procurement Policy	Human Resources Policy	Diversity, Equity	
and Inclusion Policy	Digital Security and Information Management Policy			

FUNDERS AND PARTNERS

Building together for the long term



Partnership meeting

Sida	GIZ / BMZ	David & Lucile Packard Foundation	Norad	AFD	CIVICUS	CIDH Africa
DefendDefenders						

RFLD co-chairs the SEA-T Programme Advisory Council (BMZ/GIZ) and partners in the CHARM Africa and NAFASI consortia.

Ways to invest

THEMATIC

Thematic partnership

Multi-year support for one field of work with a shared results framework.

WAFF

Core support to WAFF

Flexible re-granting in 15 West African countries, including Urgent Action support.

STRATEGIC

Strategic partnership

Support for the Strategic Plan 2023 to 2028 across all six fields.

Individual gifts are welcome at rflgd.org/donate-to-rfld. US donors can give through a donor-advised fund or the RFLD American Friends Fund at Myriad USA.

CONTACTS

Talk to the people who decide

AFRICA DIRECTOR AND FOUNDER

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Strategic partnerships, institutional gifts and multi-year commitments.
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DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY & DEVELOPMENT

John GBENAGNON

Flexible partnerships, thematic grants and new donor relationships.
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REGIONAL FINANCE LEAD

Gogo Ashifie

Audited financials, compliance, the NGOsource certificate and governance documents.
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PROGRAMME COLLABORATION

Programmes team

Member collaboration, research and grant applications.
programs@rflgd.org

REPORTING

Confidential reporting

Safeguarding and integrity concerns can be raised confidentially at integrity@rflgd.org or through rflgd.org/rfld-report.

DUE DILIGENCE

Documents on request

Statutes, audited accounts, the governance charter and all policies are available to funders from finance@rflgd.org.

Offices

Accra	Africa Office and headquarters · +233 53 496 8866
Dakar	Francophone Hub, International Organisation status · +221 77 541 84 37
Porto-Novo	Francophone Hub · +229 01 50 02 46 19
Other offices	Banjul (ACHPR Liaison), Lagos (Nigeria Office), Igolo (Member and Local Platforms)