

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE 2026

Better health and equal opportunity for women and girls in Africa

A pan-African network of 1,143 organisations in more than 35 countries, working on health, gender equality, human rights and development. Local organisations lead the work and RFLD backs them with data, policy work, grants and training.

1,143

organisations in the network

35+

African countries

9.78 M

women and girls reached since 2013

US\$722,100

in 27 grants, June to September 2026

12

open-data tools

6

offices, headquarters in Accra

WHO WE ARE

Pan-African Network for Gender Equality and Development

RFLD is a pan-African network of 1,143 organisations in more than 35 countries. We work where laws and budgets meet daily life: maternal and reproductive health, gender equality, human rights, ending harmful practices, peace and security, and climate and economic justice. Local organisations lead in their communities. RFLD backs them with data, policy work, grants, training and protection.

Key facts

Legal name	Réseau des Femmes Leaders pour le Développement (RFLD)
Founded	2012, operating since 2013
Status	International Organisation in Senegal; NGO in Ghana, Benin, Nigeria and The Gambia
Headquarters	Africa Office, Accra, Ghana
Offices	Accra, Porto-Novo, Dakar, Banjul, Lagos, Igolo
Languages	English and French, with Portuguese for the Africa Grant Portfolio
Standing	ACHPR Observer Status N°553; Support Group of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders (Resolution 602); SOAWR member; Co-Chair of the SEA-T Advisory Council (BMZ/GIZ)
Accountability	Unqualified external audits; NGOsource 501(c)(3) equivalency; Candid Seal; IATI publisher
Leadership	Dossi Sêkonou Gloria AGUEH, Africa Director and Founder; Hélène WOUINSOU, Board President

How we work

Evidence

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

Policy

We take that evidence to the African Commission, AU bodies, ECOWAS and national parliaments.

Grants

The West African Feminist Fund (WAFF) and the Africa Grant Portfolio move money to local organisations through audited systems.

Programmes

PAWELE, BRAVE, NAFASI and the Francophone Academy build skills and systems that last.

THEORY OF CHANGE

From people to systems

Level 1 · People Women and girls gain the health, skills, safety and networks to take part and lead.	Level 2 · Organisations Local organisations build the systems, finances and security to grow and to withstand pressure.	Level 3 · Systems Laws, budgets, services and norms change, and states are held to the Maputo Protocol and the ACDEG.
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How we choose to work

Led by members Member organisations shape priorities through the General Assembly.	Trust-based grants Flexible funding with financial training, security checks and psychosocial care built in.	Bilingual by design English and French bring together movements that funding often keeps apart.
Measured results Outcome Harvesting and Most Significant Change, with quarterly dashboards.	Inclusion At least 50% women's participation and a dedicated window for Vulnerable Groups.	Data belongs to partners Grantee data stays with grantees.

The legal foundation

The Maputo Protocol, adopted in 2003 and ratified by 46 of the 55 African Union member states, is one of the strongest 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 covers every area of our work. The gap is implementation, and RFLD works on that gap.

46 / 55 AU states have ratified the Maputo Protocol	55 states tracked by the Maputo Protocol Hub	15 ECOWAS states in the Legislative Platform
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OUR AREAS OF WORK

Each area is grounded in African and international commitments and delivered with the organisations closest to the women and girls they serve.

01 Health

Maternal, newborn and child health, sexual and reproductive health and rights, malaria, and open health data for ministries and communities.

02 Gender equality and leadership

Women's political participation through PAWELE, parity laws and the Women in Politics Tracker.

03 Human rights and civic space

Protection of women human rights defenders, digital safety and freedom of association, with NAFASI and CHARM Africa.

04 Policy and accountability

Tracking how 55 states apply the Maputo Protocol and the ACDEG, legislative monitoring and gender-responsive budgets.

05 Ending harmful practices

Community-led abandonment of FGM and child marriage, law enforcement and referral for survivors.

06 Peace and security

Women in mediation and early warning, survivors of conflict-related violence and National Action Plans on UNSCR 1325.

07 Climate and economic justice

Land and inheritance rights, the care economy, women-led adaptation and access to climate finance.

08 Development and the network

Grants, management tools and certified training that make local organisations stronger and more accountable.

RESULTS

- 9.78 million women and girls reached between 2013 and 2026.
- Contribution to the advocacy behind Benin's Law No. 2021-12 on sexual and reproductive health.
- Contribution to the 2024 campaign that kept the ban on FGM in The Gambia.
- 27 grants worth US\$722,100 to 26 organisations between June and September 2026, including organisations working with Vulnerable Groups.
- 110+ women human rights defenders trained in digital safety in 2026.
- 473 organisations using the free RFLD Management Suite.

01 Health

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

Maternal and newborn health

Maternal, newborn and child health in francophone Africa, in partnership with the David & Lucile Packard Foundation, with open data for planners and advocates.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

BRAVE trains community organisers and supports the implementation of Article 14 of the Maputo Protocol, including access to contraception and comprehensive sexuality education within each country's legal framework.

Malaria

Malaria data and advocacy that put women and children first.

Young people

My Health, My Right: an interactive sexual and reproductive health education hub.

Dignity and care

A stigma-reduction approach to HIV, infertility and disability, and referral for survivors of violence.

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

02 Gender equality and women's leadership

Laws change little without women in the places where they are made and enforced. RFLD prepares women to run, win and govern, and tracks representation across the region.

PAWELE

Pan-African Women's Empowerment for Leadership and Equality: campaign strategy, finance, media and security for candidates; legislative drafting and budget oversight for elected women; advocacy for parity laws.

Women in Politics Tracker

Representation data across 15 West African countries.

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.

Next: PAWELE cohorts ahead of election cycles and the yearly Maputo Barometer for every state.

03 Human rights and civic space

Women human rights defenders keep services, information and accountability alive in their communities. RFLD protects them and defends the space they work in, offline and online.

NAFASI (Sida, 2026 to 2028)

RFLD leads gender mainstreaming and the protection of women defenders, and runs French and Portuguese digital security helpline desks.

CHARM Africa (Sida)

A consortium of civil society, media and human rights organisations across sub-Saharan Africa.

Continental advocacy

Oral statements and shadow reports within the Support Group of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders.

Referral

Defenders at acute risk are referred to Front Line Defenders, ProtectDefenders.eu, AWDF and regional networks.

110+ women defenders trained in digital safety in 2026.

04 Policy and accountability

Strong commitments only help women when they reach laws, budgets and services. RFLD gives civil society and parliamentarians the evidence to follow that path.

Legislative tracking

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

Following the money

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

Media for accountability

Training for journalists and community radio in gender-sensitive and fiscal reporting.

The Maputo Barometer reports each year on how states apply the Protocol.

05 Ending harmful practices

Across West Africa, families, elders, religious leaders and former practitioners are choosing to end practices that harm girls and women. RFLD backs those decisions under Maputo Protocol Articles 5 and 6.

Community dialogue

Trust, shared knowledge, public declarations and follow-up; alternative rites of passage and keeping girls in school.

Leaders and allies

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

Law and enforcement

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

Survivor support

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

About 230 million girls and women alive today have undergone FGM, and about one in three young women in sub-Saharan Africa was married as a child (UNICEF). RFLD contributed to the 2024 campaign that kept the ban on FGM in The Gambia.

06 Peace and security

When women take part in a peace process, the agreement is 35% more likely to last at least 15 years (UN Women, 2015). RFLD's work is anchored in UNSCR 1325 and 2250 and Maputo Protocol Articles 10 and 11.

Women mediators

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

Community early warning

Women report early signs of conflict so local authorities can act before violence starts.

Survivors of conflict-related violence

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

National Action Plans

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

Young peacebuilders

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

07 Climate and economic justice

African women farm much of the continent's land and manage household water and energy. Securing their economic rights is a direct route to resilience in a region that produces 3 to 4 percent of global emissions and carries a heavy share of the impact.

Land, inheritance and livelihoods

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

Women-led adaptation

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

Care economy and finance

Reducing and sharing unpaid care work, savings groups, fairer credit and decent work in the informal economy.

Just transition

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

Advocacy at UNFCCC negotiations, AU Agenda 2063 and ECOWAS frameworks, and on Maputo Protocol Articles 15, 19 and 21.

DONÜESÈ DATA CENTER

Open data as public infrastructure

The DONÜESÈ Data Center gives civil society, journalists, parliamentarians and health planners twelve free tools to measure states against their commitments.

01 Maputo Protocol Hub

Ratification and implementation across 55 AU states.

02 ACDEG Hub

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.

05 Women in Politics Tracker

Representation data across 15 West African countries.

06 Maternal Health Data

Maternal and newborn health indicators for planning and advocacy.

07 Malaria Data

Malaria indicators that show the burden on women and children.

08 My Health, My Right

Interactive sexual and reproductive health education for young people.

09 Gender-Responsive Budgeting

Tools to follow public spending on women and girls.

10 Climate Action Platform

Sex-disaggregated climate data and adaptation case studies.

11 African Digital Safety Compendium

Open protocols for the digital protection of defenders.

12 Francophone Academy

15 free certified courses for civil society.

Francophone Academy

15 free certified online courses in five schools: rights, advocacy, peace and protection, economic and climate justice, leadership and management. Certificates are verifiable online and issued after every lesson and a final quiz passed at 80%. With German Cooperation (GIZ on behalf of BMZ).

RFLD Management Suite

Free online tools for finance, human resources, grants, monitoring and compliance, used by 473 organisations through the Organisational Resilience Programme, with training videos in French and English.

GRANTMAKING

Grantmaking that reaches local organisations

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

West African Feminist Fund (WAFF)

Grants in 15 West African countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Applications in French or English.

Africa Grant Portfolio

Opens in January 2027 to organisations in all 55 AU member states that serve women and girls, Vulnerable Groups and people with disabilities. Applications in French, English or Portuguese.

Grant windows

Urgent Action

Open all year, decided within 5 business days.

Capacity Building

Salaries, systems and planning.

Advocacy

Campaigns, research and coalitions.

Vulnerable Groups Inclusion

For organisations left out of mainstream funding.

How applications are scored



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

RESULTS

What the network delivers

1,143 organisations in the network	35+ African countries	9.78 M women and girls reached since 2013	US\$722,100 in 27 grants, June to September 2026	12 open-data tools	6 offices, headquarters in Accra
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2026 publications

Lifting the reservations to the Maputo Protocol: nine country briefs	Women and water: Article 15 of the Maputo Protocol	Writing shadow reports on the Maputo Protocol: a training manual
Online violence against women in West and Central Africa	Funding women's movements in francophone West Africa: data report	

Recognition

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. Profile on UN OCHA ReliefWeb.

Spokespeople in English and French on women's health and rights policy, gender equality, protection of defenders and African civil society. Press: communications.info@rflgd.org · rflgd.org/press-kit

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Governed by members, verified by others

General Assembly

The member organisations.
They set direction and elect the Board.

Board of Directors

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

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.

Status and accountability

International Organisation in Senegal; NGO in Ghana, Benin, Nigeria and The Gambia. ACHPR Observer Status N°553. Co-Chair of the SEA-T Programme Advisory Council (BMZ/GIZ). Unqualified external audits, NGOsource 501(c)(3) equivalency, Candid Seal of Transparency, IATI publisher.

Ratified policies

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

Confidential reporting: integrity@rflgd.org or rflgd.org/rfld-report

FUNDERS AND PARTNERS

Building together for the long term

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

Ways to partner

Thematic partnership

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

Grantmaking

Flexible support to WAFF and the Africa Grant Portfolio, including Urgent Action.

Strategic partnership

Core support for the Strategic Plan 2023 to 2028 across all areas.

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

Contacts

Dossi Sèkonnou Gloria AGUEH

Africa Director and Founder
agueh.dossi@rflgd.org

John GBENAGNON

Director of Strategy and Development
gbenagnon.john@rflgd.org

Gogo ASHIFIE

Regional Finance Lead
finance@rflgd.org

Programmes team

Members, research and collaboration
programs@rflgd.org

Accra (HQ) +233 53 496 8866 · Dakar +221 77 541 84 37 · Porto-Novo +229 01 50 02 46 19 · Banjul · Lagos · Igolo
rflgd.org · admin@rflgd.org

Full profile, audited accounts and policies on request: finance@rflgd.org