Women Leaders Network for Development
Réseau des Femmes Leaders pour le Développement



INVESTMENT PROSPECTUS · 2026-2028

Fund the African women who are already doing the work.

A pan-African network of 1,143 women-led organisations in more than 35 countries. Since 2013, 9.78 million women and girls supported. This is how we work, who stands with us, and where your support goes.

WHY WE WROTE THIS

A letter to the people who fund change

We started in 2013 as a handful of women leaders who were tired of watching good laws stay on paper. Thirteen years later, more than a thousand organisations share that work with us.

Most of them are small. The median feminist organisation in Francophone West Africa runs on about US$22,000 a year. They are the ones who sit with a girl and her family the night before a cutting ceremony, who walk a survivor to the clinic, who explain to a village council what the Maputo Protocol says in Goun, Yoruba, Hausa or Zarma. They rarely see an international grant, because the calls are written in English and the paperwork assumes an office they do not have.

RFLD exists to close that distance. We publish the data funders ask for. We take the evidence our members collect to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, to parliaments and to ministries. We run programmes directly where we are needed. And we regrant: between June and September 2026 we awarded 27 grants worth US$722,100 to organisations that most funders would never find.

This prospectus is our honest picture. Every figure in it comes from our monitoring, our audited accounts or a public source we cite. Where we are still measuring, we say so. If something here raises a question, ask us, and if you would like to hear about us from someone other than ourselves, we will put you in touch with the funders who already work with us.

We are not asking you to take a risk on Africa. We are asking you to back the women who are already carrying it.

With gratitude,
The RFLD team

Accra · Porto-Novo · Dakar · Banjul · Lagos · Igolo

RFLD AT A GLANCE

Led by African women, built to move resources fast

1,143
member organisations in more than 35 African countries

9.78M
women and girls supported since 2013

575,823
women leaders in our network

US$722,100
in 27 grants to African organisations, June to September 2026

~US$3.1M
regranted to member organisations, 2023 to 2025

79.8%
of 2025 spending went directly to field programmes

55
African Union member states covered by our advocacy, with direct programmes in 15+ countries

12
free open-data tools, in French and English

6
offices: Accra (HQ), Porto-Novo, Dakar, Banjul, Lagos and Igolo

Who we are

The Women Leaders Network for Development (Réseau des Femmes Leaders pour le Développement, RFLD) is a pan-African feminist network founded in 2013. We are registered as an International Organisation in Senegal and as an NGO in Benin, Ghana, Nigeria and The Gambia. Our annual budget is about US$3 to 4 million in 2026.

Where we stand

We hold Observer Status N°553 at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. We are one of 12 organisations in the SEA-T flagship cohort of German Development Cooperation and Co-Chair of its Advisory Council. The David and Lucile Packard Foundation chose RFLD for long-term core funding.

THE FUNDING GAP

The money exists. It is not reaching Francophone Africa.

0.13%
of the US$26.3 billion published in Yield Giving's own public database went to organisations headquartered in Francophone Africa

-23.1%
record fall in official development assistance in 2025

~1%
of gender-related aid reaches women's rights organisations

US$22,000
median annual budget of a feminist organisation in Francophone West Africa (RFLD, 2026)

Funding follows language, networks and paperwork. French-speaking organisations lose on all of them, however strong their work.

Calls for proposals are written in English. Due diligence assumes a registered office, audited accounts and a bank that accepts international transfers. Many of the groups doing the hardest work, in rural Senegal, northern Benin or the Sahel, cannot meet those terms on their own.

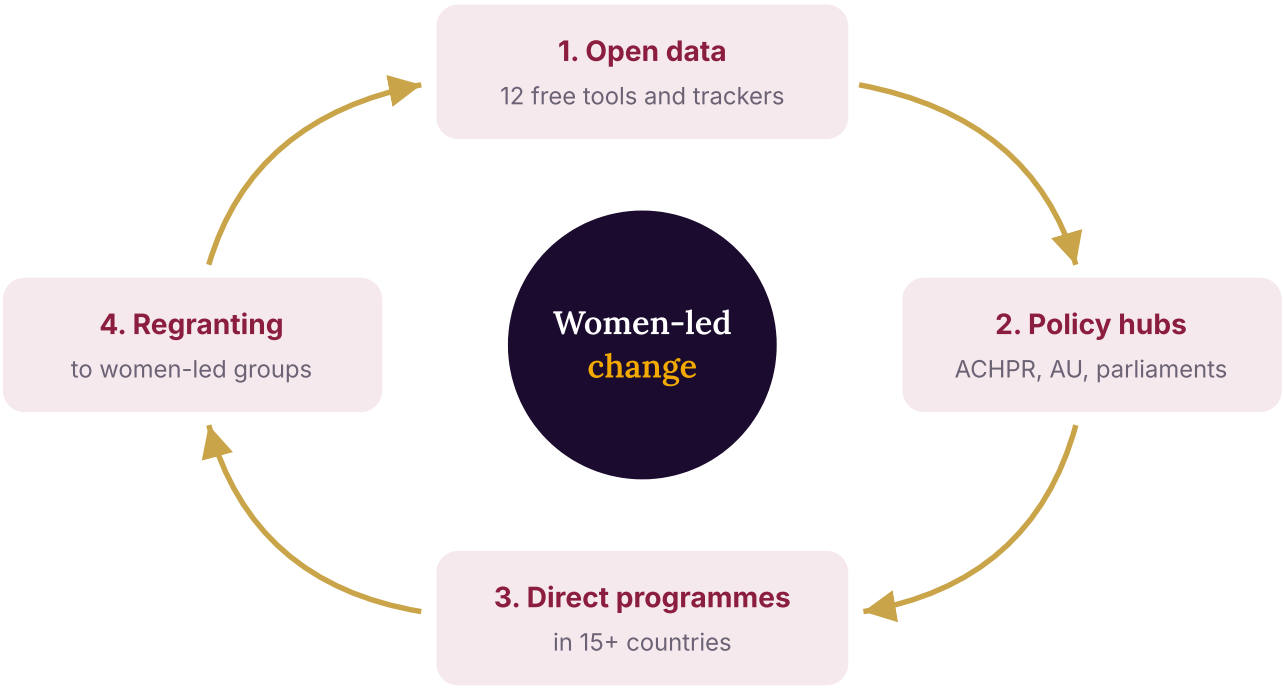
RFLD was built for exactly this gap. We work in French and English, we hold the audits and policies funders require, and we pass resources on to women-led groups with the support they need to manage them. Global funding often arrives in English. With French-language data, programmes and partners already in place, we can put new resources to work quickly.

Sources: Yield Giving open data (analysis by RFLD, November 2026); OECD preliminary ODA data 2025; OECD DAC gender equality statistics; RFLD, *Funding feminist movements in Francophone West Africa*, 2026.

HOW WE WORK

Four functions, one cycle

Each part of our work feeds the next. Data shows where rights are failing. Policy hubs take that evidence to decision-makers. Programmes put it to work in communities. Regranting funds the local groups who carry it further, and their results become new data.



Open data

We collect and publish the evidence that funders, journalists and governments use, including the DƆNÙESÈ Data Center and the Maputo Protocol Hub.

Policy hubs

We turn signatures into measurable progress on the Maputo Protocol, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality.

Direct programmes

Our teams work with national authorities, communities and defenders where the network needs a stronger presence on the ground.

Regranting

We fund women-led organisations directly, including unregistered movements through a fiscal host, and act as the compliance layer between them and international donors.

OUR SIX FIELDS OF WORK

Where we put our effort

01

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

Grassroots SRHR advocacy, French-language resource hubs and last-mile malaria prevention, so that more mothers and newborns survive.

02

Civic space

Working with national authorities on the space civil society needs to operate, and documenting where that space is shrinking.

03

Human rights defenders, peace and security

Training, digital safety and rapid response for women defenders, guided by the African Digital Safety Compendium.

04

Economic and climate justice

African women already hold the land, the seeds and the markets. We back their leadership with gender-responsive budgets, land rights and adaptation.

05

Women in power

Bringing women into governance and holding states to the parity commitments they have signed.

06

Ending FGM and child marriage

Community work alongside legal advocacy, including our public call on Liberia to ban female genital mutilation.

> *States have already signed the Maputo Protocol, the African Charter on Democracy and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality. Our work is to turn those signatures into change women can feel.*

FLAGSHIP PROGRAMMES

What your support makes possible

PROGRAMME	WHERE IT STANDS	WHAT MORE SUPPORT ALLOWS
Human rights in Francophone West Africa (AIHRDFWA) German Development Cooperation (BMZ, with GIZ)	Works with national authorities in eight countries on civic space, protection of women defenders and inclusive policy.	More countries and more defenders reached, with time to turn national commitments into lasting protection systems.
West African Feminist Fund	Grants to women-led organisations in 15 West African countries, including unregistered movements through a fiscal host.	More grassroots groups funded directly, with RFLD as the compliance layer between them and international donors.
Maputo Protocol Hub	Tracks implementation of the Maputo Protocol by all 55 AU member states, with resources in local languages.	Country-level evidence members can take to parliaments, and wider coverage of the countries lagging behind.
Organisational Resilience Programme	Member organisations receive RFLD's management suite free of charge, with training in financial management and compliance.	More members able to pass donor audits and manage grants of their own.
Defender protection and digital safety	Training and practical guidance for women human rights defenders, in French and English.	Training in more countries and faster support for defenders under threat.
Health and SRHR	Grassroots SRHR advocacy, French-language resource hubs and last-mile malaria prevention.	More communities reached and better maternal and newborn health outcomes.
Flexible, multi-year support	Unrestricted grants from the Packard Foundation keep our offices and data centre running.	Multi-year core funding lets us plan ahead and say yes when members bring urgent opportunities.

Current budgets and results frameworks are available from programs@rflgd.org. We are glad to build a programme around your priorities.

REGRANTING IN 2026

Money that reaches the women who need it

27
grants awarded between June and September 2026

US$722,100
total, an average of US$26,744 per grant

€160,000
in nine SEA-T institutional strengthening grants

A grant of US$25,000 can be more than a year's budget for the organisations we fund. It pays a coordinator, rent, a safe phone, the audit that unlocks the next donor.

How we choose

Calls are published in French and English. Unregistered groups can apply through a fiscal host, so a movement does not need a lawyer to get its first grant.

What comes with the money

Our grants come with organisational strengthening, and members can use RFLD's management suite free of charge, with training in financial management and compliance. The goal is that they can manage donor funding on their own.

How we account for it

Every grant is published on IATI. Grantees sign our code of conduct and safeguarding commitments. Our accounts are audited each year to ISA standards.

Part of a wider model

RFLD is one of 12 organisations in the SEA-T flagship cohort of German Development Cooperation, which funds African civil society directly and in French, and Co-Chair of its Advisory Council.

See the full 2026 grants list on rflgd.org

EVIDENCE AND PROTECTION

Open data, and safety for the women who use it

Twelve free tools

Anyone can use them: funders, journalists, ministries and our members. They are free, in French and English.

- **DƆNÙESÈ Data Center**, our open data platform on women's rights in Africa
- **Maputo Protocol Hub**, tracking all 55 AU member states
- **ACDEG Hub**, on the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance
- **African Digital Safety Compendium**, practical guidance for defenders

We have published the Maputo Protocol in Goun, Yoruba, Hausa and Zarma, so women can read their rights in the language they speak at home.

Protecting defenders

110+
defenders trained in 2026

18h
response time for defenders at risk, down from 72h

When a defender is threatened, hours matter. We respond with risk assessment, digital safety support and rapid response, guided by the African Digital Safety Compendium. We are a member of the working group of the ACHPR Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders.

To protect them, we never publish the names or photos of defenders at risk without their written consent.



The 89th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, October 2026, where RFLD organised panels and delivered an oral statement.

MOMENTS FROM 2026

What this work looks like up close



An RFLD consultation with civil society partners, 2026.

16 June 2026, Dakar

For the consultation "Solidarity, protection and a line of commitment", we hosted the ACHPR Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, H.E. Catharina Cappelin, Ambassador of Sweden to Senegal, and Germany, represented by Ms Henriette Wolf of the German Embassy and Ms Katja Roeckel, GIZ Country Director in Senegal. Around thirty institutional actors, defenders and journalists joined them at the same table.

October 2026, the 89th ACHPR session

Our delegation of defenders and staff organised panels at the NGO Forum and on the Commission's main agenda, including "Defending without being exposed", chaired by Hon. Rémy Ngoy Lumbu. Our oral statement, read under Observer Status N°553, carried members' evidence straight to the commissioners.

What a grant changes

For a small organisation, a grant from RFLD can be the first time it can pay a coordinator for a full year. With that, it can keep a helpline open, document cases properly and prepare the audit that opens the door to the next funder. That is the change we look for: an organisation that no longer depends on us.



A side event during the 89th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, Dakar, October 2026.

RESULTS

What has changed, and how we know

96%
of the women and girls we support say they are better able to set their own life goals*

575,823
women leaders in our network

72h → 18h
response time for defenders at risk

2021 · A law that protects women's lives

RFLD took part in the civil society advocacy that led to Benin's Law No. 2021-12, adopted in October 2021. It amended the 2003 law on sexual and reproductive health and widened legal access to safe abortion, a change that protects women's lives and health.

Rights in local languages

The Maputo Protocol is now available in Goun, Yoruba, Hausa and Zarma.

How we measure

Our Head of Impact and Learning runs one monitoring, evaluation and learning framework across all programmes, combining gender analysis, results tracking and regular learning cycles. We track:

- women and girls reached, by age and location
- school retention and learning outcomes
- self-reported agency over life goals
- member organisations strengthened, and grants passed on to them
- policy and legal changes we contributed to
- response time and outcomes for defenders at risk

*RFLD participant survey, July 2026. We share the data and methods behind every figure with partners on request.

VERIFIED AND ACCOUNTABLE

Every accreditation can be checked

African Union

Observer Status N°553 at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and member of the working group of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders.

US funding

NGOsource 501(c)(3) equivalency: US foundations and donor-advised funds can grant to RFLD as they would to a US public charity.

Audits

Annual independent audits to ISA standards, with three consecutive unqualified opinions.

Transparency

Every grant published on IATI. Candid Seal of Transparency.

Safeguarding and risk

Safeguarding and PSEAH. Our code of conduct, child protection policy and anti-harassment policy prohibit sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. Every sub-grantee commits to them in writing.

Whistleblowing. A confidential channel at integrity@rflgd.org, with whistleblower protection and an independent ethics committee.

Anti-fraud. Zero tolerance, risk assessments, dual signature for large transfers, competitive procurement and annual external audits.

Defender safety. Risk assessment, digital safety support and rapid response, guided by the African Digital Safety Compendium.

Our audited financial statements and internal policies are available on request from finance@rflgd.org.

PARTNERS AND DONORS

The funders who stand with us

We are grateful to every institution that has backed our work. Their trust is the reason we can say yes when our members call.

Sida

German Development Cooperation

BMZ, with GIZ, including the SEA-T programme

David & Lucile Packard Foundation

Long-term strategic core funding

AmplifyChange

African Women's Development Fund

CIVICUS

Hivos

CIDH Africa

DefendDefenders

DONORS TRUST DONORS

Ask the funders who already know us

If you are a foundation, a family office or an individual philanthropist considering Francophone Africa, the best reference is another funder. Talk to the institutions above about how we manage grants, report and handle risk. We will gladly make the introductions.

WAYS TO INVEST

From a catalytic grant to a five-year partnership

Each level is costed from our real programme costs. Our governance, audits and regranting systems are built to receive large, flexible gifts and put them to work quickly.

CATALYTIC

US$50K

Six months. Funds grants to two grassroots women-led organisations, with organisational strengthening.

REGRANTING CYCLE

US$300K

A six-month West African Feminist Fund cycle: about ten women-led organisations at €20,000 to €25,000 each, with strengthening and follow-up.

STRATEGIC · RECOMMENDED

US$1M

Over three years. Funds a flagship programme from start to finish, with its fair share of core costs.

TRANSFORMATIONAL

US$5M+

Unrestricted over five years, about a quarter of our annual budget each year. Makes the West African Feminist Fund permanent, extends the Resilience Programme across the continent and opens new country presences.

Giving from the United States or as an individual

Thanks to our NGOsource equivalency determination, US foundations and donor-advised funds can grant to RFLD directly. Individuals can give online at rflgd.org/ways-to-give or through their DAF. Amounts are in US dollars.

LEADERSHIP

The team you will work with

Gloria AGUEH
Founder and Africa Director

John GBENAGNON
Director of Strategy and Development

Major Gogo ASHIFIE
Finance

Dr Pascal DOHOU
Programmes

Dr Sandrine CHIKOU
Grants

Florence ENIAYEHOU
Impact and Learning

Country leads

Heuleche TOGNONMEGNI · Bathor SECK (Senegal) · Simbiat BAKARE (Nigeria) · Yankuba KEITA



RFLD with partners at the SEA-T Civil Society Convening 2025, German Development Cooperation.

Offices

Accra, Ghana (headquarters) · Porto-Novo, Benin · Dakar, Senegal · Banjul, The Gambia (ACHPR liaison) · Lagos, Nigeria · Igolo, Benin

NEXT STEPS

Let's talk

The first step is a conversation. Tell us what you care about, and we will show you where it meets the work of our members.

1

Book a first call

Tell us what you would like to support and our programmes team will set up a call.
programs@rflgd.org

2

Request our due diligence pack

Audited financial statements, policies and NGOsource determination.
finance@rflgd.org

3

Talk to our current funders

We will introduce you to the partners who already fund our work.
admin@rflgd.org

4

Design a programme together

Budgets and results frameworks for the work you want to support.
programs@rflgd.org

Read more

- About RFLD, our model and accreditations
- The 27 grants RFLD awarded in 2026
- Funding feminist movements in Francophone West Africa, 2026 data report
- Op-ed: US$26 billion given, 0.13% for Francophone Africa

Whistleblowing and integrity concerns: integrity@rflgd.org



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rflgd.org · admin@rflgd.org

NGOsource 501(c)(3) equivalency · ACHPR Observer Status N°553 · Annual ISA audits · Every grant published on IATI

November 2026 edition. Figures from RFLD monitoring and audited accounts unless otherwise stated.