



THE WOMADIX FUND

Slow Fuse Flow Fund Program Description

"We are either going to have a future where women lead the way to make peace with the Earth or we are not going to have a human future at all."

- Vandana Shiva, Author, Activist, Pioneer, Scientific Advisor, Mother

What is the Slow Fuse Flow Fund?

In its first year of three, Slow Fuse will activate a new cohort of New Mexico-based Flow Funders made up entirely of women.¹ This program was born in response to the [NewMexicoWomen.Org](https://newmexicowomen.org) (NMW.O) report, *The Heart of Gender Justice in New Mexico: Intersectionality, Economic Security, and Health Equity*. This program seeks to strengthen the gender justice² movement and efforts in New Mexico, while addressing power dynamics inherent to traditional philanthropy. We are thrilled to be taking our passions around democratized philanthropy, gender justice, community-building, and feminism into this dynamic new experiment.

What is Kindle Project?

[Kindle Project](#) is an outside-the-box grantmaking organization supporting wild solutions by unusual suspects, in the attempt to move mountains. Kindle Project works with donors and grantees who are catalyzing change -- those who are addressing our most pressing problems but who would otherwise fall outside-the-box of traditional philanthropy.

What is The Womadix Fund?

[The Womadix Fund](#) is a voyage of exploration through the art of giving. Every day brings new opportunities for learning. With funding across key impact themes, we discover new things and learn more. We provide funding that supports women's rights, women's economic empowerment, and climate justice.

We work primarily within the geographical boundaries of Africa and the US (with attention to Minnesota and New Mexico). The Womadix Fund hopes to strengthen its social impact through grant-making and impact investments that positively benefit women and girls.

What is Flow Funding?

Flow Funding is an experiential and experimental approach to philanthropy that provides community members opportunities to participate in grantmaking processes, thereby widening who influences philanthropic resources. Flow Funding empowers individuals, groups, and organizations with funds they can reallocate to communities and organizations of their choice. This bold and trust-based funding model builds community and diversifies decision-making power for the redistribution of resources. Kindle Project has been strategically utilizing Flow Funding and building upon its principles for a decade.

Why did we create this program?

In response to recommendations to funders in the NMW.O report³, we knew that we wanted to co-create a grantmaking program that would allow us to explore and put into action how money can uniquely help move our communities towards gender justice. Recommendations in the report came from communities within New Mexico, and as such we

¹ Our definition of 'woman' is anyone who identifies as a woman, including cisgender, transgender, gender non-conforming, and gender non-binary people.

² NMW.O defines gender justice as a commitment to end patriarchy and to create a world free from misogyny. Further, gender justice encompasses the various social, economic, and environmental justice issues associated with gender. A gender justice analysis also acknowledges that men and gender non-conforming individuals are constrained by patriarchal gender roles and norms.

³ See page 7 in Part 1 of the report: <https://newmexicowomen.org/the-heart-of-gender-justice-in-new-mexico/>

have made those recommendations the heart of this program. The Womadix Fund has substantial experience in gender justice. Kindle Project has a decade of experience with community-based decision-making practices. Together, our collective wisdom, openness, and spirit of experimentation make us ideal partners in this venture.

What are the goals of the Slow Fuse Flow Fund?

This is a collaborative project that will:

1. Explore the potential for Flow Funding as a way for funders to be responsive to recommendations in the NMW.O report;
2. Delve into how a cohort of community members who are part of New Mexico-based organizations can organize around selected criteria and use data to identify and recommend projects to improve outcomes for women and girls; and
3. Strengthen the capacity for community-led decision-making in New Mexico around funding issues related to gender justice.

What does Slow Fuse look like in action?

The Cohort Structure

The program will consist of a cohort of five New Mexico based Flow Funders and will include staff members from both the Kindle Project and The Womadix Fund teams. During this pilot year, our eight month cohort process will include two in-person group meetings in Santa Fe, New Mexico as well ongoing cohort learning via virtual platforms. Each of the six Flow Funders will be asked to make recommendations about where the money in their individual Flow Funds should be allocated. In addition, each Flow Funder's affiliated organization will receive a general support grant.

Ethos of the Cohort

The intention of the cohort is to create a community of learning and practice to educate, share wisdom, and provide a space to unpack the nuances of grantmaking in a shared environment. From our experience, the power and efficacy of Flow Funding is best practiced within a group context. During our in-person retreats we'll be cooking together, sharing meals, and learning about each other as individuals, and having some fun!

Cohort Learning

The Flow Fund cohort will engage with several levels of learning including the dynamics present in philanthropy, the current context of support for women and girls in New Mexico, and the intricacies of being a decision-maker in a funding context. Through an emergent and group-guided experience, this cohort will not only experience something powerful as a community, but will also be supported in their journey's as leaders in their field.

As a group-guided experience our role as facilitators of this process is to be responsive and to listen to the needs of the group. However, from our experience the most common conversations and requested explorations in Flow Funding processes include the following topics:

- What dynamics arise by funding people you know or organizations you've worked with?
- How to talk about your role as a Flow Funder within your community?
- How to learn when to fund an urgent request.
- Unpacking the gender dynamics of wealth redistribution.
- How to learn how to say no to a funding request.
- How does traditional philanthropy handle power dynamics?

What will happen at the end of this pilot year?

We intend to use this initial year (of three years) to explore ways to collect data, share in storytelling, and capture learning, which in turn will inform the following two years of the program. In 2018 we intend to document the Flow Funding processes, culminating with a brief and easy-to-use guide to Flow Funding. We intend to then be able to use this guide in concert with in-person training. Our vision for this guide is that it can be a living resource -- something that evolves from year to year as we continue to learn more about how Flow Funding is used in practice. The exact type and format of the guide is something we are still determining. We are also exploring other creative ways of capturing cohort learning that could be of service not only to the guide, but to the field of philanthropy and gender justice in general.

If you have any questions about this program be in touch with Arianne Shaffer: arianne@kindleproject.org

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