

2018-2022



# Launch Report

JANUARY 2023



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## Message From the Executive Director

Greetings partners, allies and friends,

What a pleasure it is for me to share this report – a sweeping view of VidaAfrolatina's journey to date! VidaAfrolatina was just an idea in 2018. Five years later, we have an exciting story to tell about blossoming into an operational international women's fund.

Our concept was always outside the status quo. As an emerging fund, we see ourselves as pioneering in two ways: exclusively funding Black and Afro-descendant women in Latin America and focusing on sexual violence. And from inception, we set out to contribute to a shift in power by practicing participatory grantmaking, following in the footsteps of FRIDA The Young Feminist Fund and other innovative funds.

The lived experience of Black and Afro-descendant women in Latin America exists at the intersection of systemic racism and gender discrimination. Despite a centuries-long legacy of resistance and organizing, they continue to be the disproportionate victims of sexual violence. They also experience poverty at higher rates and have less access to resources for healing and systemic change.

VidaAfrolatina was created to address the acute void in resources. In this report, we share the story of our pilot grant cycle.

Most importantly, we highlight the work of our pilot partners.

Many sectors and institutions have acknowledged the need to address racial injustice in the aftermath of the undeniably unequal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the succession of highly visible acts of racist violence of the past several years. Philanthropy is no exception. It is in this context that VidaAfrolatina has begun contributing a unique, intersectional approach to grantmaking.

For our team, it is a privilege to connect Black women in Latin America with resources. For me, as an African American rape survivor, solidarity is the only option.

The actions of many individuals and entities contributed to our early-stage evolution. **Thanks very much to all who have co-created with us in any way, including our Board of Advisors, volunteers, individual and institutional donors and partners.** We welcome your continued collaboration and contributions. And we look forward to our collective future of healing, safety and Black feminist progress.



*Lori Robinson*  
**LORI ROBINSON**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# The Humanitarian Crisis

In the Americas, before the COVID-19 pandemic, 34% of women from ages 15 to 49 had experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, or both.<sup>1</sup> In Latin America and the Caribbean, 11% of women 15 or older were victims of non-partner sexual violence, nearly double the global average of 6%.<sup>2</sup>

While these numbers indicate the significant prevalence of sexual violence, actual rates are likely much higher. This data reflects self-reported violence. It is impossible to know how many women never disclose sexual assault. Additionally, many problems with survey techniques and measurement methods result in undercounting the incidence of gender-based violence.

While sexual violence data is insufficiently disaggregated by race in Latin America, when captured, the evidence of disproportionate impact on Black and Afro-descendant women is clear. A

national survey in Ecuador reports that sexual violence among Afro-descendant women is 7% higher than the rest of the population.<sup>3</sup> In another example, when the Colombian government documented victims of war-related sexual violence, 73% were Afro-descendant and Indigenous, yet estimates of Afro-Colombians range from 10% to 20% and Indigenous Colombians are 4% of the population.<sup>4</sup>

With the onset of COVID-19, gender-based violence surged as a result of a variety of factors and triggers, including women being isolated at home with their abusers during quarantine periods, job loss, financial distress and increased alcohol or drug use. Existing services for women experiencing violence became more difficult to access. In Brazil, where Afro-Brazilians are 56% of the population, the federal government slashed resources to address gender-based violence by 90%, from \$19 million in 2020 to \$1.7 million in 2022.<sup>5</sup>

With public health systems overwhelmed in some countries and with political shifts away from gender justice in others, the pre-pandemic crisis of gender-based violence intensified over the past two years. The repercussions continue to impact the lives of women and their families.



1 WHO. (March 2021). Region of the Americas Fact Sheet, Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018.

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-SRH-21.11>

2 WHO. (March 2021). Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates: Global, regional and national prevalence estimates for intimate partner violence against women and global and regional prevalence estimates for non-partner sexual violence against women, 2018.

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240022256>

3 Camacho, G. (2014). La violencia de género contra las mujeres en el Ecuador: Análisis de los resultados de la Encuesta Nacional sobre Relaciones Familiares y Violencia de Género contra las Mujeres, 34.

[https://oig.cepal.org/sites/default/files/violencia\\_de\\_gnero\\_ecuador.pdf](https://oig.cepal.org/sites/default/files/violencia_de_gnero_ecuador.pdf)

4 Secretary-General. (April 16, 2018). Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, 14-15, <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/report/s-2018-250/SG-REPORT-2017-CRSV-SPREAD.pdf>; Agüero, Felipe. (March 23, 2016). How more accurate census data can shape social justice in Colombia and Peru, The Ford Foundation, <https://www.fordfoundation.org/news-and-stories/stories/posts/how-more-accurate-census-data-can-shape-social-justice-in-colombia-and-peru/>; Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística - DANE. (2019). Press Release, Delivery of Results of the Indigenous population, National Population and Housing Census CNPV-2018, <https://www.dane.gov.co/files/investigaciones/boletines/grupos-etnicos/comunicado-grupos-etnicos-2019.pdf>

5 Resenda, Thiago. (Sept 17, 2022). Bolsonaro Cuts Budget to Fight Violence against Women by 90%. Translated by Cassy Dias. Folha de São Paulo. <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/internacional/en/brazil/2022/09/bolsonaro-cuts-budget-to-fight-violence-against-women-by-90.shtml>

# The Response

## WHAT IS VIDAAFROLATINA?

VidaAfrolatina is an emerging international women's fund that mobilizes resources and connects them with Black and Afro-descendant women-led organizations in Latin America that address sexual violence. Selected through a participatory process, our partners provide culturally relevant healing experiences in their communities and launch initiatives to reduce and, ultimately, eliminate sexual violence.

## WHY PARTICIPATORY GRANT MAKING?

At the heart of VidaAfrolatina's participatory model is the process by which participants collectively decide which organizations receive grants. Applicant organizations read each other's proposals and score them based on a rubric formulated using co-created selection criteria. We are committed to participatory grant making because it inherently shifts power to the historically excluded. This model allows for Black and Afro-descendant women who best understand the problem of sexual violence, as it impacts them, to determine their own solutions. We believe that those with lived experience and intimate familiarity of the context of the violence are best suited to guide funding decisions.

## WHY THE FOCUS ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

The harms caused by this trauma are commonly life-altering and long-term for survivors, as well as for their families, communities and societies. The World Health

Organization calls sexual violence “a global public health problem of epidemic proportions, requiring urgent action.” A human rights violation of this magnitude calls for innovative, expanded and protracted focus in order to effect change. The will to address and eradicate sexual violence has not actualized at the societal level due to deeply rooted gender discrimination. The victimized and vulnerable can't afford to wait for those with political and economic power to prioritize their healing and safety.

## WHY DO WE PARTNER WITH BLACK AND AFRO-DESCENDANT WOMEN EXCLUSIVELY?

While commonly perceived as a gender justice issue, VidaAfrolatina recognizes that sexual violence is also a racial justice issue. Women of African descent have been disproportionate victims of sexual violence throughout the Americas since the start of the transatlantic slave trade 500 years ago.

At the intersection of entrenched systemic racism and gender discrimination, Black and Afro-descendant women experience higher rates of sexual violence. They are also overwhelmingly excluded from the social and political resources and power necessary to foster sufficient safety, autonomy and healing in their own lives. Without investment in Black women's solutions, the structural, intersectional issues that perpetuate sexual violence will continue on

largely unabated and ignored.

## THERE'S A GAP IN FUNDING?

Black and Afro-descendant people are one-third of Latin America's population. Yet, of the total number of grants made in Latin America by human rights funders globally and by U.S. foundations, less than 3% are directed explicitly to people of African descent.<sup>6</sup>

Although one out of three women and girls have experienced gender-based violence globally, less than 1% of grants disbursed by human rights funders is directed to address gender-based violence.<sup>7</sup>

For funders committed to eradicating sexual violence from women's lives, improving women's health and wellness, strengthening feminist movements or addressing systemic racism, VidaAfrolatina provides a mechanism to reach women who are disproportionately impacted, routinely overlooked and outside the purview of traditional philanthropy.

## VISION & MISSION

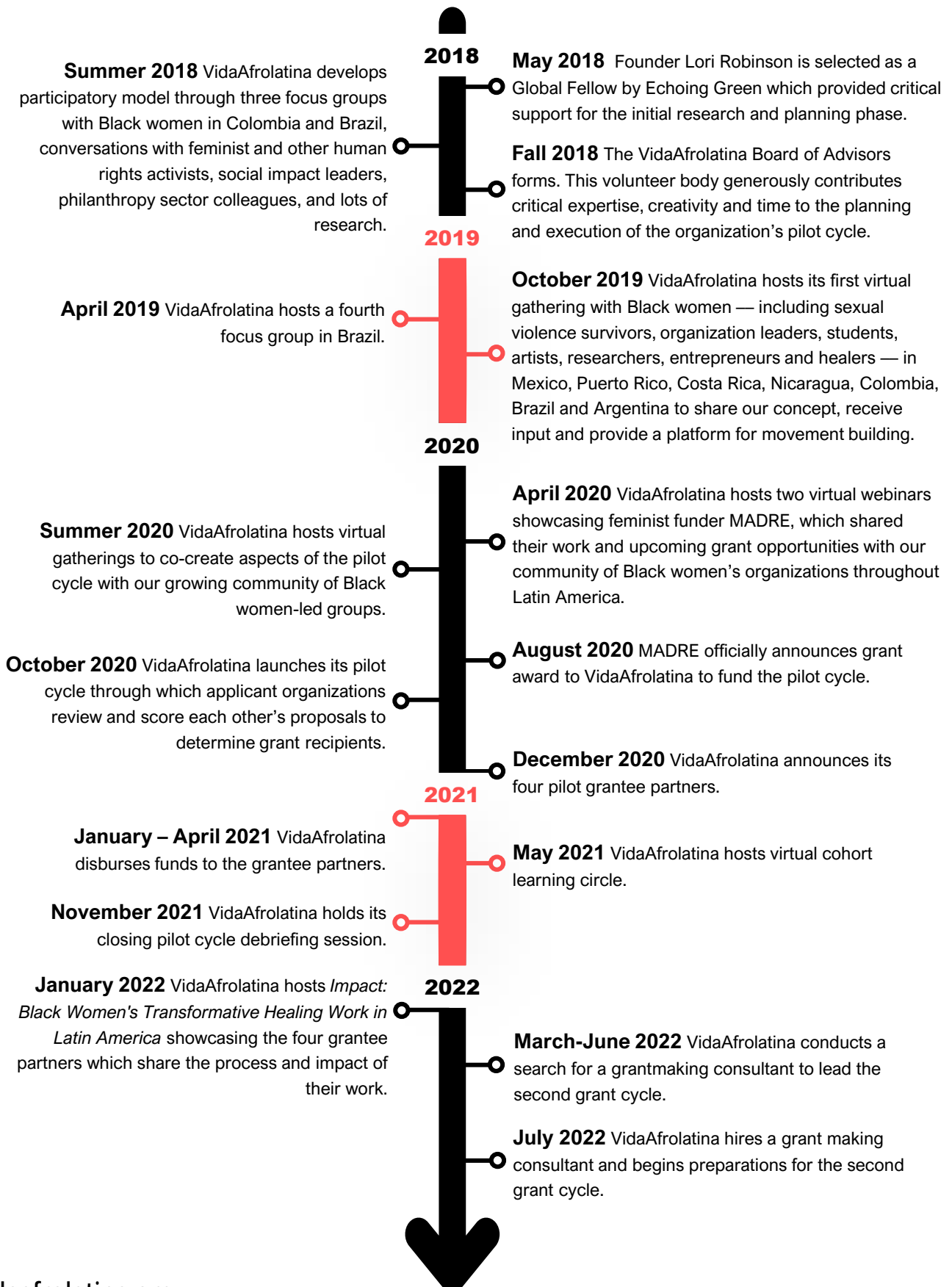
VidaAfrolatina creates a world where Black women and girls are free to flourish because safety and wellness are their everyday reality. We do this by connecting diverse resources, including funding and capacity support, with Black and Afro-descendant women's groups in Latin America, with a specific focus on organizations that provide healing services for sexual violence survivors and that create and lead systemic change to end sexual violence.

6 Advancing Human Rights Initiative (2009-2019), Total available grants that meet the human rights criteria; Candid IssueLab (2019), Total grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by 1,000 of the largest U.S. foundations; Council on Foundations, and Candid (2018), The State of Global Giving by U.S. Foundations 2011-2015. <https://www.issuelab.org/resources/31306/31306.pdf>

7 Stanton, Caitlin and Glasspockets. (2013, June 19). Ants in the Kitchen: The Role of Data in Human Rights Funding. Candid Learning. <https://learningforfunders.candid.org/content/foundation-center-features/ants-in-the-kitchen-the-role-of-data-in-human-rights-funding/>



# Timeline





**“I imagine a world  
where Afro-  
descendent women  
can be ourselves,  
women free to think,  
pray and love.”**

— Makota Celinha  
Gonçalves  
Journalist, social  
entrepreneur of the Ashoka  
Network, and National  
Coordinator of the Centro  
Nacional de Africanidade e  
Resistência Afro-Brasileira  
(CENARAB)



## Pilot Grant Cycle



**18**  
**PROPOSALS**  
received from  
organizations in  
Latin America



**4**  
**GRANTEE PARTNERS**  
**SELECTED**  
selected through a  
participatory process



**\$19.5k**  
**TOTAL AWARDED**  
to grantee partners to fulfill  
project goals outlined  
in proposals

VidaAfrolatina's participatory process facilitated collective funding decisions. Each applicant organization read and scored other applicants' proposals. The process produced a strikingly diverse cohort. Every region of Latin America is represented. Project leaders ranged in age from 20 to 48. Their projects incorporated a variety of modalities to foster healing and create systemic change.

### **AfroPoderosas** - Costa Rica/México

Project: Empoderando Mi Cuerpo Afrodescendiente  
(Empowering My Afro-descendant Body)

AfroPoderosas educated rural Afro-descendant girls and young women about conscious menstruation and sexual violence risk reduction and prevention through in-person workshops.

### **Colectivo Ilé** – Puerto Rico

Project: Talleres contra la Violencia Sexual: Raza y Género  
(Workshops Against Sexual Violence: Race and Gender)

Colectivo Ilé increased awareness about the intersection of race and gender and its impact on sexual violence through virtual workshops centering Black women who are HIV positive, deaf, trans and who have functional diversity.

### **La COMADRE** – Colombia

Project: Sensibilización sobre la Violencia Sexual vivida por Mujeres Negras Afrodescendientes, través de la Animación Digital (Raising Awareness about Sexual Violence Experienced by Afro-descendant Black Women through Digital Animation)

La COMADRE produced digital animated short films telling stories of Black women raped in the context of the country's civil conflict as a pedagogical tool and a healing process.

### **Revista Afirmativa - Coletiva de Mídia Negra** – Brazil

Project: Jornalismo de "escrevivência": Narrativas de mulheres negras pelo enfrentamento a violência sexual (Escrevivencia Journalism: Narratives of Black Women Confronting Sexual Violence)

Revista Afirmativa held a call for contributors and selected several professional journalists to produce a multimedia series of reports examining sexual violence and toxic masculinity.

**"I imagine a world free of physical, emotional and financial violence where Black women and our daughters can develop their dreams."**

— Ayda Córdoba

Activist & Executive Director of Niara News, an agency focused on ethnic, social and cultural issues in Colombia



**“I imagine a world where Black and Afro-descendent women live without racism and without fear of going out.”**

— Bibiana Peñaranda  
Afro-Colombian gender and racial justice advocate and organizer, Founder and Social Leader at Red Mariposas Alas Nuevas Construyendo Futuro, and serves as a first-order consultant to the Special High Level Body on Gender as agreed upon in the Peace Accord between Colombia's government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC)



## Amplifying Grantee Partners

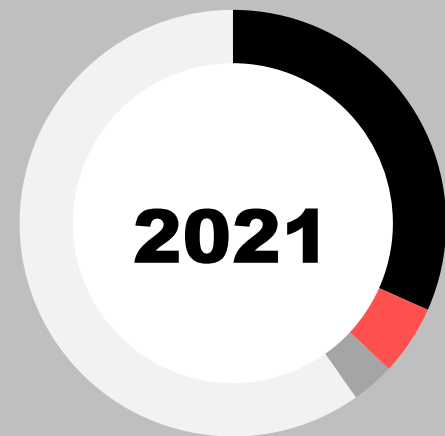
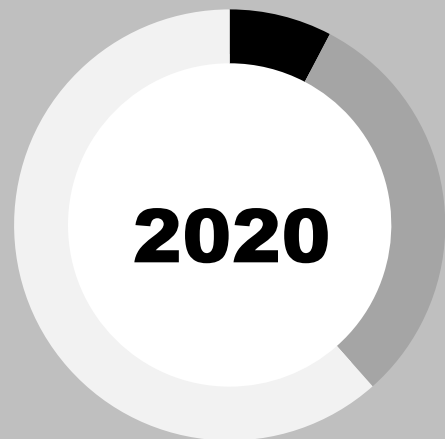
VidaAfrolatina recognizes that an important aspect of our work is to educate potential and current donors and other supporters and allies about the realities of Black and Afro-descendant women in Latin America, particularly because one of the major obstacles they face is their invisibilization across the region. We also work to influence the funding landscape by raising awareness about Black women's movements in Latin America and their acute lack of access to funding.

<u>Date / Host</u>	<u>Event</u>
September 19, 2020 VidaAfrolatina's virtual fundraiser	<a href="#"><u>Historias by VidaAfrolatina I</u></a>
February 25, 2021 University of North Carolina at Greensboro	<a href="#"><u>Conference on African-American &amp; Diaspora Cultures &amp; Experience</u></a>
March 26, 2021 Wayne State University	<a href="#"><u>Sisterhood Across Borders: The Participatory Grant Making of VidaAfrolatina</u></a> <i>Co-Presenter: AfroPoderosas</i>
June 12, 2021 Festival Afro Bahia	<a href="#"><u>Cultural History, Collaborative Efforts and Social Activism</u></a> <i>Co-Presenter: Revista Afirmativa</i>
June 17, 2021 VidaAfrolatina's virtual fundraiser	<a href="#"><u>Historias by VidaAfrolatina II</u></a> <i>Co-Presenter: Colectivo Ilé</i>
July 26, 2021 Proyecto Afrodescendencia México	<a href="#"><u>Conversatorio: Resiliencia y Resistencia en las mujeres negras en el continente americano</u></a>
July 30, 2021 Olodum	<a href="#"><u>Diálogos Contemporâneos - Julho das pretas</u></a>
September 15, 2021 Hispanics in Philanthropy Conference	Centering Afro-Descendant Lideresas: Women's Funds and Participatory Grant Making <i>Co-Presenter: La COMADRE</i>
October 25-28, 2021 Change Philanthropy Unity Summit	<a href="#"><u>Black Women's Revolutionary Resource Flows: Shifting Power in Latin America &amp; the UK</u></a> <i>Co-Presenter: La COMADRE</i>
January 26, 2022 VidaAfrolatina's virtual event	<a href="#"><u>Impact: Black Women's Transformative Healing Work in Latin America</u></a> <i>Co-Presenters: All four pilot grantee partners</i>
April 21, 2022 ABFE Harambe Conference	Leveling Up: Resourcing Black Women in Latin America. <i>Co-Presenter: Revista Afirmativa</i>



# Financial Report

VidaAfrolatina is fiscally-sponsored  
by Global Fund for Women.



WE TRUST BLACK AND AFRO-DESCENDANT WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND OUR DONORS DO, TOO. THANKS TO ALL WHO PARTNER WITH US TO CONNECT BLACK AND AFRO-DESCENDANT WOMEN WITH RESOURCES FOR THEIR TRANSFORMATIVE WORK.

● **Revenue – Institutional Donors** - \$20,000

● **Revenue – Individual Donors** - \$8,935

● **Operating Expenses** - \$1,500

● **Grants Disbursed** - \$0

Funding Partner: MADRE

Fundraiser: Historias I

● **Revenue – Institutional Donors** - \$220,000

● **Revenue – Individual Donors** - \$4,490

● **Operating Expenses** - \$116,495

● **2020-2021 Grant Cycle – funds disbursed Jan-Apr 2021** - \$19,500

Funding Partners: Channel Foundation  
Collective Future Fund  
Echoing Green  
Oak Foundation

Fundraiser: Historias II

● **Revenue – Institutional Donors** - \$511,162

● **Revenue – Individual Donors** - \$860

● **Revenue – Corporate Gift** - \$800

● **Operating Expenses** - \$280,000

● **2022-2023 Grant Cycle – funds disbursed Jan-Apr 2023** - \$95,000

Funding Partners: Channel Foundation      Equality Fund  
Collective Future Fund      Oak Foundation  
Echoing Green      Shop Latinx \*

\* Our first private sector partner.

## Next Priorities

### 01 CONDUCT 2<sup>ND</sup> GRANT CYCLE

Renew 4 pilot grantee partners and make first-time grants to 13 new partners.

### 02 OUTREACH

Identify and meet with Black and Afro-descendant-led women's organizations in Latin America. Galvanize interest in our third grant cycle.

### 03 TRAINING

Determine partners' priorities for strengthening and learning and provide organizational and leadership training resources.

### 04 STRATEGY

Design Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning strategy with collaboration from grantee partners.

### 05 NURTURE RELATIONSHIPS

Establish and grow relationships with new funding partners. Secure multi-year commitments from three to four new institutional donors.



## Message From Our First Advisory Board Member

My parents are both Afro-descendants from the Colombian Caribbean. During the first years of their marriage, they decided to move to Bogotá to provide their family with better opportunities and a better life.

Living in an area in which we were the only Afro-descendants was not easy for us. Racism was always present in our lives, but we settled there because we thought we were lucky to be part of that society, and because we knew how many Black families in Colombia didn't have the same opportunities.

It was especially challenging for my sisters and me. As Black girls, we were even more vulnerable, not just to racial discrimination, but also ever-present threats specific to our gender. My mom endured gender-based violence at home and sexual harassment outside.

Despite living in the capital city, the concept of resources for Afro-Colombian women victims of gender-based violence was not a priority for local or national government.

After my parents divorced, I immigrated with my mother and siblings to Ecuador. Living in another capital city, Quito, I observed the same gaps in terms of resources addressing gender-based violence for Afro-Ecuadorian women.

I moved to the United States in 2005 and 13 years later, reconnected with Lori Robinson, who I met while living in Ecuador. She shared the idea of VidaAfrolatina and invited me to be part of it. It was extremely rewarding to see how we, together, were

able to build not just a women's fund, but a strong network of Black women who collaborate, share experiences, ideas and the hope for a better future for Black girls and women in Latin America.

Serving as a VidaAfrolatina Advisor was transformative for me. I'm grateful for the opportunity to reconcile my roots and give back to Black communities in Latin America. I connected with amazing organizations struggling to support Black girls and women without sufficient resources. These groups can benefit not only from VidaAfrolatina's funding, but also from the opportunities it provides them to connect, learn from each other and strengthen a regional ecosystem for racial and gender justice.

The financial support that VidaAfrolatina has received has been extremely important, enabling us to lay the foundation for the work ahead. But this is just the beginning. With so few funders focused on resourcing Black communities in Latin America, it is critical that institutional donors and individual contributors give generously. I know first-hand the lack of resources for Afro-descendants. And I understand the transformative impact contributions to VidaAfrolatina will have on the region's Black women and girls.



*Ely Cipriani*  
**ELSY CIPRIANI**



## To Our Supporters

**¡Gracias! Obrigada! Thank you!** Profound thanks to the individual donors who discovered us online, through word of mouth or who attended our Historias online fundraising events. Many thanks to all of our institutional funding partners for your commitment to resourcing Black and Afro-descendant women's organizations. We deeply appreciate your financial and nonfinancial support. Your solidarity has been key to the advances we have made as an early stage women's fund.

VidaAfrolatina has received diverse support from many members of our transnational community of activists, organization leaders, feminist funders, translation and interpretation volunteers and other thought partners and friends. Special shout out to Echoing Green, EDGE Funders Alliance, FRIDA The Young Feminist Fund, Prospera, Project Tallawah, Central American Women's Fund, Fondo Semillas, Oak Foundation, Channel Foundation, Equality Fund, and MADRE for the distinct role you have played as nurturers and guides. Extra special gratitude to past and present Advisory Board members, and coach-mentors Shonna Sommer and Chris Underhill. Thank you all for championing VidaAfrolatina.

**DONORS****INSTITUTIONS**

Channel Foundation  
 Collective Future Fund  
 Echoing Green  
 Equality Fund  
 MADRE  
 Oak Foundation  
 Shop Latinx

**INDIVIDUALS**

Jared Ball  
 Allison Barnes  
 Diego Flores Benavides  
 Leo Barreto  
 David Bornstein  
 Leticia Bruce  
 Krista Brune  
 Kate Bryant  
 Cinthia Carvajal  
 Natalia Campos  
 Lina Cardona  
 Natalia Caruso  
 Maurice Carney  
 Fatima Casas  
 Franceli Chapman  
 Elsy Cipriani  
 Isabel Cipriani  
 Ashley Coleman  
 Vesta Cordero  
 Crystal Crawford  
 Caroline Cruz  
 Eunice Cuevas  
 Roselane Da Silva-Miller  
 Cheryl Dorsey  
 Maria Feliciano  
 Aisha Finch  
 Dawn Florence  
 Denise Garnett  
 Heloisa Galvao

Gabriella Garcia-Pardo  
 Jacqueline Garcia Suarez  
 Ariana Garzon  
 Megan Gebhart  
 Kylie Golden-Appleton  
 Emily Gonzales  
 Rain Gow  
 Yvette Gow  
 Alexandro Jose Gradilla  
 Martina Guzman  
 Keith Hammonds  
 Michele Harrison Sears  
 Jessica Hollister  
 Charles Horenstein  
 Ollie Johnson  
 Kelly Johnson  
 Christine Joseph  
 Sandra Jowers-Barber  
 Sara Leedom  
 Kevin Kain  
 Emilio Kobak  
 Caroline Kronley  
 Sherri Lumpkin  
 Stacy Maldonado  
 Gabriela Mancuso  
 Sonia Manjon  
 Dayanara Marte  
 Laura Martinez  
 Gail McDonald  
 Sarah McKenzie  
 Liza Meckler  
 Nodia Mena  
 Cecilia Mota  
 Yesenia Moya  
 Michell Myers  
 Adela Nieves  
 Elaine Nonneman  
 Liesl Nydegger  
 Carlota Ocampo  
 Pilar Ocampo  
 Adrienne O'Neal  
 Mandy Owen  
 Jennifer Paniagua  
 Lisa Parks  
 Geeta Patel  
 Naomi Patton  
 Camila Pazos  
 Dana Preston  
 Julia Pretsfelder  
 Janet Arelis Quezada  
 Patricia Rivera  
 Nikki Pritchett  
 Holly Pyke-Brown  
 Wanda Ravernell  
 Juanita Robinson  
 Lori Robinson  
 Ronald Robinson  
 Carmen Robles-Inman  
 Tina Rosenberg  
 Mikaela Romero  
 Jiea M. Rutland-Simpson  
 Kathryn Sampeck  
 Jeremy Scully  
 Robert Shimkoski  
 Justus Snyder  
 Sasha Sommer  
 Shonna Sommer  
 Divya Sooryakumar  
 Emily Sterk  
 Adam Stofsky  
 Danielle Sullivan  
 Karen Sun  
 Ada Symister  
 Sneha Tatapudy  
 Jeanne Talbot  
 Evelyn Thornton  
 Dolly Tittle  
 Eloisa Tovar  
 Kristia Watkins  
 Jessica Yuan

**TEAM**

Lori Robinson  
 Executive Director

Vesta Cordero  
 Executive Administrator

**VIDAAFROLATINA HAS BEEN SHEPHERDED BY AN UNPAID VOLUNTEER BOARD OF ADVISORS. MEMBERS HAVE NOT ONLY PROVIDED GUIDANCE, BUT HAVE ALSO PLAYED AN INTEGRAL, ACTIVE ROLE IN MANY OF OUR ACTIVITIES.**

**CURRENT ADVISORY BOARD**

Janet Arelis Quezada  
 Doreen Dankerlui  
 Eshe Lewis  
 Erica Williams

**EMERITUS ADVISORY BOARD**

Veta Byrd-Perez  
 Elsy Cipriani  
 Nodia Mena  
 Pilar Ocampo  
 Dulce Reyes  
 Natalia Santiesteban Mosquera

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**WWW.VIDAAFROLATINA.ORG**

Creating a  
world where  
Black women  
and girls are  
free to flourish.