

▶▶ Central America and Mexico Youth (CAMY) Fund



▶▶ Creating a Fund for Youth-Led Change

Young people in Central America and Mexico have historically been at the forefront of political and social change in their communities. Despite operating in an environment of authoritarianism, inequality, violence, and limited resources, they creatively and courageously organize to fight for their present and future by organizing themselves as part of social movements, founding and leading civil society organizations, empowering peers in their communities, and channeling their demands through artistic activism.

In 2014, Seattle International Foundation (SIF) created the Central America and Mexico Youth Fund (CAMY Fund) as part of its broader efforts to respond to the needs of youth-led organizations. We centered our work on flexible funding and respect for young change-makers, especially women and girls, so that they could develop projects that align with their worldview and strengthen their organizations' operational and technical capacities. In the first decade, our grantee partners and allies raised public awareness of the need for greater sexual and reproductive rights, gender justice, human rights, and youth rights throughout the region. As key leaders in civil society, they have galvanized broader public movements to come together and contributed to social shifts even when structural political changes have not been possible.



10 years supporting youth changemakers



▶▶ Ten Years of Impact

In our tenth year, CAMY Fund continues facilitating the work of young changemakers in the region while looking back on the impact of our first decade. We have **invested nearly \$6.5 million in 100+ youth-led organizations throughout Central America and Mexico**, enabling them to grow and advance their work. In recognition of the risks and challenges that young activists, especially young women, face in their fight for change, we created **the Collective Care Initiative** in 2020 to equip them with tools and provide support networks designed specifically to prioritize their wellbeing, resilience and security. We created a **participatory research initiative** to better understand the needs of young people taking part in social movements across the region, sharing the learnings generated from the studies with our strategic partners and applying them to optimize our own partnership practices. We curate **intentional virtual and in-person spaces** for our partners to come together, build strategic collaboration and foster connections with peers who share their visions.

This ten-year investment has helped to catalyze social and political change in the region:

- ▶ Many of our partners are part of the *Marea Verde* (Green Wave) across Latin America and have contributed to the strengthening of reproductive rights in the region.
- ▶ After nearly ten years of strategic, well-coordinated advocacy by youth-led organizations, Honduras overturned their ban on emergency contraception; organizations now advocate for full accessibility for all people with reproductive capacity in the country.
- ▶ Young Nicaraguan activists that fled political persecution have re-established their work in Costa Rica with CAMY Fund's support. Not only do they continue their fight for democracy and human rights in their home country, but also have become hubs of support and connection for the Nicaraguan refugee community in Costa Rica, which numbers more than 200,000.
- ▶ In El Salvador, where abortion is actively criminalized, organizations and movement leaders successfully advocated for the release of 70 women, and have enabled cases to be brought against the state and won in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.



CAMY Fund's overall focus on holistic, not transactional support, has enabled CAMY Fund to evolve and grow alongside our partners. We recognize our impact to be three-fold:

Investments Built on Trust: CAMY Fund has nurtured the growth of grassroots partners from the outset, investing in nascent organizations that had immense potential for change and continuing to support their work long-term.

Fostering Youth Empowerment: Through CAMY Fund-supported projects, our partners empower young people in their communities on their rights and their ability to create change, creating a broader 'ripple effect' to growth youth activism.

Putting Youth Issues on the Table: CAMY Fund has become a platform for global strategic actors to raise visibility of the impact of youth to create change as well as the challenges they face in the region.

▶▶ Looking Towards the Future

As we go forward, CAMY Fund envisions a future where the transformational power of young people ignites change across the region. This requires long-term dedication and investment, and we will prioritize initiatives that not only address immediate needs but also lay the foundation for enduring impact. Within this work, inclusivity is not just an aspiration—it is the guiding principle that shapes every aspect of our programming. We champion diversity as a source of strength and will accompany young people on their journey to create a world where every voice is heard and every contribution is valued.

We will keep investing in organizations that drive meaningful progress, providing flexible funding and accompaniment support, and we will increase our support to initiatives led by traditionally marginalized populations, including young members of indigenous, Afro-descendant, and LGBTIQ+ communities, and persons with disabilities. Collective Care will grow and evolve as needs arise for young activists in the region, and we envision training a cohort of young people to be able to deliver collective care programming in their own communities. We will continue to prioritize and facilitate the generation of knowledge from our participatory research as the basis of our work and also create spaces where young leaders can mutually exchange their own knowledge and build solidarity. Authentic and sustainable change is slow, but we remain steadfast in our commitment to support young people who want to shift the systems and recognize the impact of investing in their dreams and agendas.



▶▶ CAMY Fund in Numbers

Total # of grantees:

107

Percentage of Funding that is flexible and autonomous:

100%

Total amount granted:

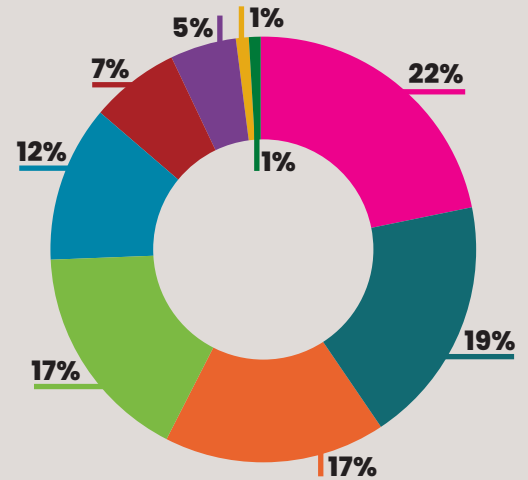
\$6,489,318

Average Grant Size:

\$24,953

Grants by Country:

- ▶ Mexico
- ▶ Honduras
- ▶ El Salvador
- ▶ Nicaragua
- ▶ Guatemala
- ▶ Costa Rica
- ▶ Belize
- ▶ Panama
- ▶ Regional



In the past ten years, CAMY Fund's partners supported the following:

- 70%** of CAMY Fund partners focus on empowering young women and girls through their programming.
- 60%** engage in human rights defense, especially for youth rights.
- 50%** provide significant programming for the LGBTIQ+ community.
- 30%** focus specifically on supporting rural youth and addressing challenges in rural communities.
- 20%** address broader issues impacting their communities, which also address needs of young women and girls.



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