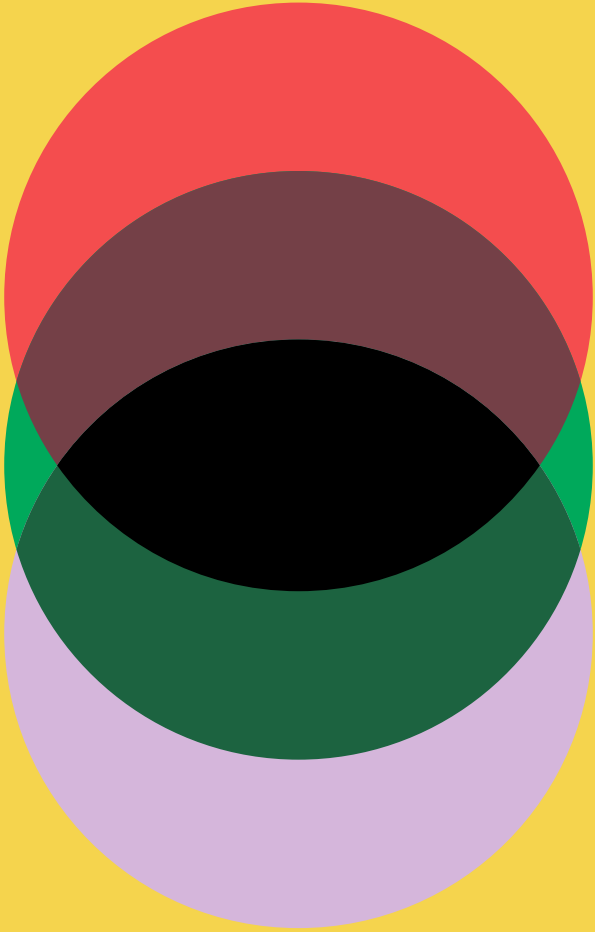


# Building a Feminist Social Impact Sector





**T**he international social impact sector is made up of millions of organisations, individuals and resources dedicated towards building a better world – and it has enormous potential to fulfil this goal.

But for too long, our sector hasn't been living up to the values it purports to hold, operating in ways that undermine equity, inclusion and civic participation. Structural gender inequity is one key part of the needed change.

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**We envision a social impact sector that models equity, inclusion and representation in its own structures and culture.**

**We want to see women – in all their diversity – represented and meaningfully included in leadership.**

**We want to see the sector embrace a feminist approach to leadership, collaboration and organisational change.**

When organisations work together towards intersectional gender equity and Feminist Leadership, the sector will become the change agent the world needs it to be.



To accelerate this process, FAIR SHARE  
of Women Leaders was established

**with the mission to spark and sustain  
a feminist transformation of the  
international social impact sector.**



Explore our strategy

**We saw a need for change**

page 5

**so we listened,  
tested and learned**

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**and encountered  
productive tensions**

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**leading us to the  
roles we aim to play**

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**while we continue our  
Feminist Leadership journey**

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# We saw **a need for change...**

## **The sector was not being held accountable for gender equity.**

The idea for FAIR SHARE was born when our co-founders realised that there was no continuous data on women in leadership in the sector. Our first project was therefore the FAIR SHARE Monitor in 2019, a data-based tool to track and publish the proportion of women leaders in the sector.

While there are other initiatives tracking other metrics, such as the Racial Equity Index, or gender equity in other sectors, like Women in Global Health, or looking at specific countries, we are currently the only organisation looking specifically at gender equity in our sector at large.

## **There is unharnessed potential in the growing global community of Feminist Leaders.**

To complement our work on women in leadership, we began exploring Feminist Leadership as a framework for transforming leadership and organisational culture. While many are already working on this topic, we have noticed that the demand for learning opportunities exceeds the offers.

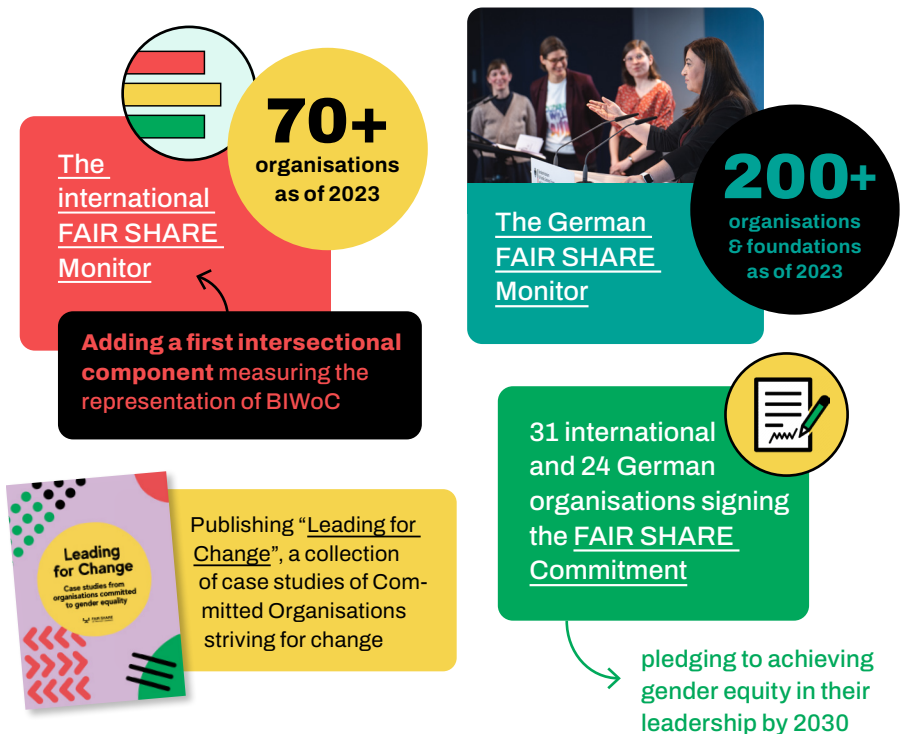
In particular, many people we encounter are searching for a peer community of support and inspiration. With support to regularly connect and collaborate, the enormous potential of this growing community of Feminist Leadership to shift power in the sector could be unleashed.

# ...so we **listened,** **tested and learned...**



Despite limited resources, a small team, and faced with a global pandemic shortly after our establishment, we have laid the groundwork for the systemic transformation we aim to see.

## Here's how we have strengthened accountability and transparency around gender equity:



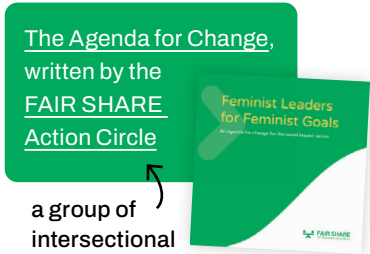
# But we don't just want equity within the system, we also want to transform it.

We provide organisations and individuals with resources and spaces to explore feminist approaches to leadership and organisational culture.



and a Feminist Leadership programme in Germany

Learning journeys such as an eight-week webinar series on Feminist Leadership



a group of intersectional Feminist Leaders from around the world



Contributing to Feminist Development policy with our podcast Feminist Global Collaboration



Building a virtual home for Feminist Leaders, through a highly participatory process with global engagement



The Feminist Leadership Project, an online platform that amplifies the voices of Feminist Leaders

This progress would not have been possible without the many individuals within and outside of organisations who have encouraged, challenged and supported us during this start-up phase as volunteers, advisers, participants, project partners and funders.

# ...and encountered **productive tensions...**

The reflection on our first years revealed challenging yet productive tensions in our work, which we will not shy away from but continue exploring:

Snapshots of  
numbers and data

VS.

complexity of lived  
experience & cultural  
change

The Monitor focuses on the proportion of women leaders as a metric of change. How can we use this data strategically, knowing that numbers never tell the full story? And how can monitoring the representation of women leaders complement instead of contradict the aim to have Feminist Leaders of all genders and at all levels of an organisation?

Desire for clear,  
tangible tools and  
structures

VS.

the open, explorative  
approach around  
Feminist Leadership

We are often asked for practical tools and resources that can be used to change structures and systems. Yet Feminist Leadership approaches resists a one-size-fits-all approach, instead inviting individuals and organisations to carry out critical self-reflection and contextual analysis. How can we leverage the potential of Feminist Leadership as a tool for change in a world longing for concrete guidance and indicators?



**Empowering  
individuals**

**vs.**

**change on  
organisational/  
structural level**

We are working closely with a growing community of dedicated individuals, but organisations are complex and often change-resistant systems. How can we best support individual change agents as they try to push for more feminist approaches in their organisations so that our work can contribute to systemic and structural change in the sector?

**Aiming for  
impact at an  
international level**

**vs.**

**leveraging our local  
network and  
potential for change**

FAIR SHARE was born to address and change the international social impact sector, yet our work in Germany, where we are based, has so far received more attention and funding. How do we embrace the opportunities for impact on the national level, without losing sight of our international scope and ambitions?

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**We embrace this complexity  
because we are convinced that  
we need **more women leaders –  
AND new ways to lead.****

**“FAIR SHARE**  
hosts some of the most  
interesting and meaningful  
conversations I have participated in  
on the topics of gender equality and  
leadership in the international social  
sector. They bring intense curiosity to  
each engagement, create safe spaces  
to share ideas and ask questions,  
and facilitate discussions with  
thoughtfulness and care.”



– Traci L. Baird, President and  
CEO EngenderHealth

**“The work and initiatives of  
FAIR SHARE in the promotion  
of feminist principles are crucial  
in achieving the gender equality  
goal and I am very honoured to  
be a part of their journey.”**



– Pema Wangmo Lama,  
indigenous youth  
activist

# ...leading us to the **roles we aim to play...**

Going forward, we will strengthen and intertwine these areas of our work in **4 ways**:



## We will be **critical friends**

### **WE BELIEVE THAT**

transparency and accountability around the representation of women leaders is crucial to make power structures visible and ensure that they are changing

---

### **SO WE WILL**

develop the Monitor into a comprehensive tool for tracking and advocating for intersectional gender equity in the sector's leadership

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### **LEADING TO**

a sector-wide culture of accountability to address structural inequities

---

### **OUR NEXT STEP WILL BE**

developing an intersectional data strategy and model for the Monitor through a community-driven process

# 2



## We will be visionaries

### **WE BELIEVE THAT**

our understanding and practice of leadership needs to shift and expand

---

### **SO WE WILL**

create spaces and resources for people to learn about Feminist Leadership, build a community of Feminist Leaders and leverage its potential for change

---

### **LEADING TO**

feminist approaches to how organisations are structured, run and governed becoming increasingly widespread

---

### **OUR NEXT STEP WILL BE**

piloting a virtual and participatory learning community for people at all points of their Feminist Leadership journeys

# 3

## We will be facilitators

### WE BELIEVE THAT

the challenges of inequity in the sector should be addressed together rather than by each organisation individually

---

### SO WE WILL

grow and strengthen a community of organisations working towards gender equity and exploring Feminist Leadership

---

### LEADING TO

innovative strategies, mechanisms and cross-organisational projects contributing to a sector-wide transformation

---

### OUR NEXT STEP WILL BE

turning our Feminist Leadership programme in Germany into an international, cross-organisational offering



Launch of German Monitor, April 2023 © Photothek/Felix Zahn

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# We will be role models

**WE BELIEVE THAT**

FAIR SHARE should lead by example and model the change we are advocating for in the sector

---

**SO WE WILL**

develop and test feminist approaches to HR policies, team structures, and other areas of organisational development and share our reflections

---

**LEADING TO**

further credibility, support for and trust in our work and resources for the sector

---

**OUR NEXT STEP  
WILL BE**

designing and testing a Feminist Governance model for the next phase of our organisation, including co-leadership

# ...while we continue our **Feminist Leadership journey.**

As a feminist organisation, we believe the means are as important as the ends. As we work towards our goals, we will let the following core principles shape the process and guide the journey. We strive to be:

**Curious** We recognise and embrace the fact that we are in a continuous learning journey, and actively seek out a diversity of perspectives to inform and shape our work. We don't shy away from complexity or the opportunity to learn from others and change our mind.

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**Bold** We are unafraid to rock the boat and cause productive discomfort to challenge the status quo in the sector. We will take the path less travelled and accept that we may sometimes fail or make mistakes; those experiences will strengthen us going forward.

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**Accountable** We do not see ourselves as immune to the power dynamics we aim to make visible and commit to actively unlearning oppressive beliefs and practices. As we hold the sector accountable for intersectional gender equity, we also aim to be transparent about our goals, methods and limitations. We will continuously look ourselves in the mirror as well as welcome critical questions and feedback from peers and partners.

**“I can hardly describe the sense of mutual acceptance, honesty and liberation that I felt in these two hours of deep learning and exchange.”**

– Webinar participant

**“The FAIR SHARE Monitor is pathbreaking in measuring the performance of civil society organisations in advancing women’s leadership in the very sector that advocates gender equity for the rest of the world. I expect it will soon be a globally respected, and cited, measure.”**

– Srilatha Batliwala,  
Senior Advisor Knowledge  
Building, CREA





Luckily, we are not in this alone – everything we do is in dialogue with others, and we are always seeking new partners and allies.

## FUNDERS AND PARTNERS

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HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG  
FEMINISM AND GENDER DEMOCRACY  
Global Unit

BMW Foundation  
Herbert Quandt

## COMMITTED ORGANISATIONS



EngenderHealth



Terre des Hommes  
International Federation



# Together

**We can achieve intersectional  
gender equity in leadership.**

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**We can make Feminist  
Leadership the new normal.**

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**We can transform the sector  
towards a true embodiment  
of its values and goals.**

**Will you join us?**

 [fairsharewl.org](https://fairsharewl.org)

 [hello@fairsharewl.org](mailto:hello@fairsharewl.org)

 [FAIR SHARE of Women Leaders](#)

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