WOMEN'S FUND ARMENIA

GRANTMAKING TRENDS AT WOMEN'S FUND ARMENIA

2025

This document provides comprehensive information on the main trends in grantmaking at Women's Fund Armenia during 2025.

Intended Audience

The document is designed for both internal and external use. It can serve as a basis for internal and external accountability as well as an informational resource for a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, partners and organizations, current and potential donors, board members, and others. As a fund, it also functions as part of public accountability.

General Information

Types of grants provided by the Fund in 2025:

- General operational grants (core funding/operations): Provide unrestricted financial support for day-to-day operations, including expenses such as salaries and technical equipment.
- Programmatic grants (core funding/institutional support): Allocated to specific initiatives aligned with the organization's mission.
- Planning grants: Support strategic planning efforts to anticipate future actions and projects.
- Technical support grants (resilience grants): Aim to enhance organizational effectiveness in various areas, including financial management, communications, fundraising, and evaluation, with a focus on emotional and collective resilience in feminist and/or women's organizations.
- Research grants (studies, publications): Support research initiatives, essays, publications, and participation in conferences by grantee partners.

Geographical coverage: The Fund operates and provides grants across the territory of the Republic of Armenia. In rare cases, projects outside Armenia may be funded if they are implemented by local organizations or groups in collaboration with the Fund.

Fund's overall budget expenditures:
- 60% for grants and capacity building
- 20% for administrative expenses
- 20% for expenses related to the renovation of The Gardens of Silihdar relief areas

During 2025, the WFA received a total of 344 applications, including open calls/announcements, unsolicited applications, and closed grants initiated by the Fund.

Numerical indicators for funded programs: 25% or 86 programs were funded in 2025.

Grants provided using participatory approaches: 35%

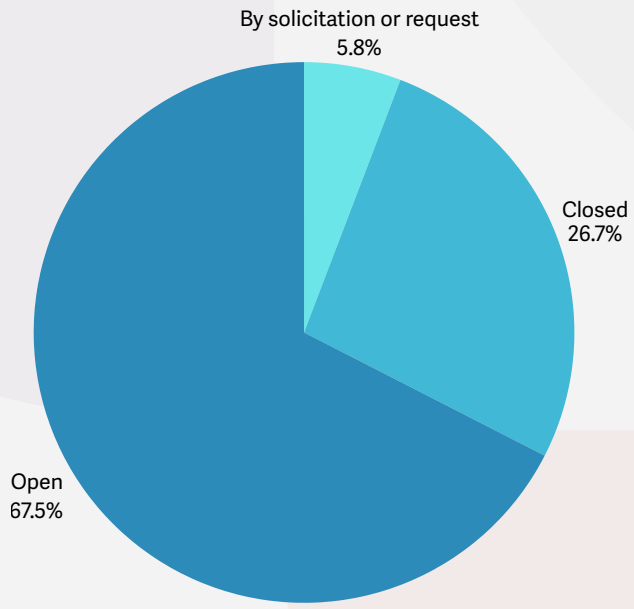
Funding range per project: 450,000 AMD to 4,000,000 AMD

Total amount of grants in 2025: 108,000,000 AMD

Project duration: Grant-supported programs typically last from 2 weeks up to 1 year.

Open and Closed Grants

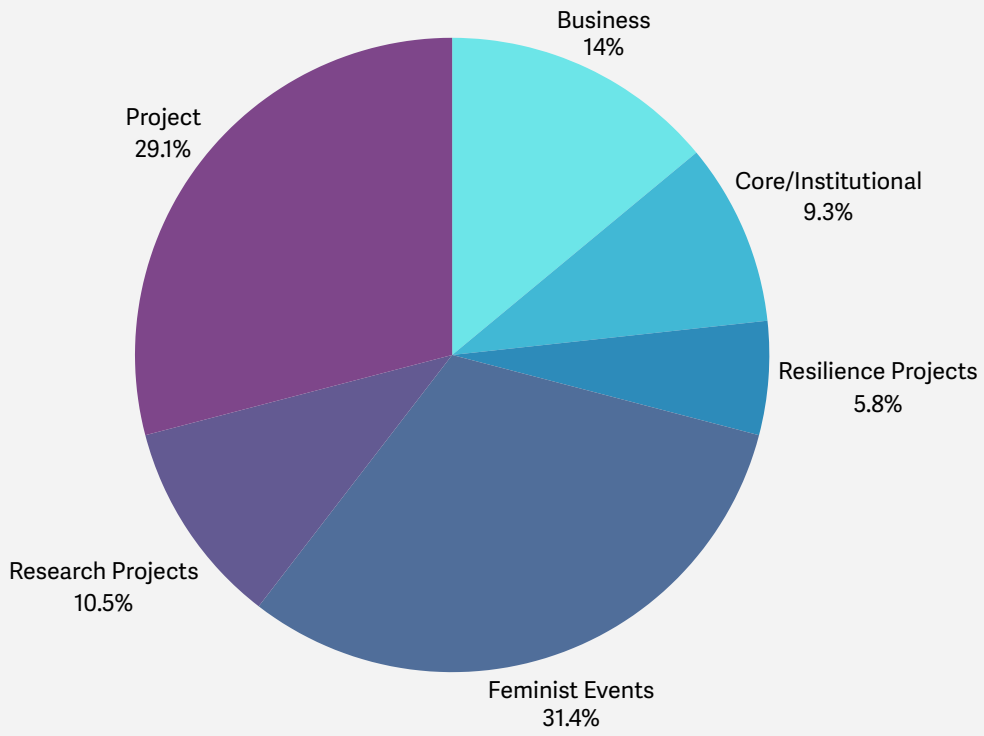
Most grant programmes (67.4%) are delivered through open calls, indicating a strong emphasis on procedural transparency and broad access. However, open calls may still privilege organisations with higher institutional capacity. Closed calls account for 26.7%, reflecting a parallel strategy of targeted funding for specific priorities or trusted partners. Grants awarded by solicitation or request remain limited (5.8%), suggesting relatively low use of discretionary or rapid-response mechanisms. Overall, the distribution points to a grantmaking model that prioritises openness while maintaining strategic control, with limited flexibility for emergent or non-standard initiatives.



Distribution by Grant Types

The distribution of grant types shows a strong emphasis on programmatic and movement-facing activities, with feminist events representing the largest share (31.4%) and project-based grants accounting for 29.1%. This suggests a grantmaking strategy oriented toward visibility, mobilisation, and issue-based interventions, rather than primarily toward long-term institutional support. Research projects (10.5%) and business-related support (14.0%) form a secondary tier, indicating recognition of knowledge production and economic sustainability, though neither dominates the portfolio.

In contrast, in 2025 core/institutional support constitutes a relatively small proportion (9.3%), while resilience projects account for 5.8%. This balance suggests that although organisational sustainability and crisis resilience are acknowledged, they are not central funding priorities. Overall, the portfolio reflects a preference for activity-driven and outward-facing grantmaking, raising strategic questions about whether the current mix sufficiently supports long-term organisational strength and resilience alongside feminist action and visibility.

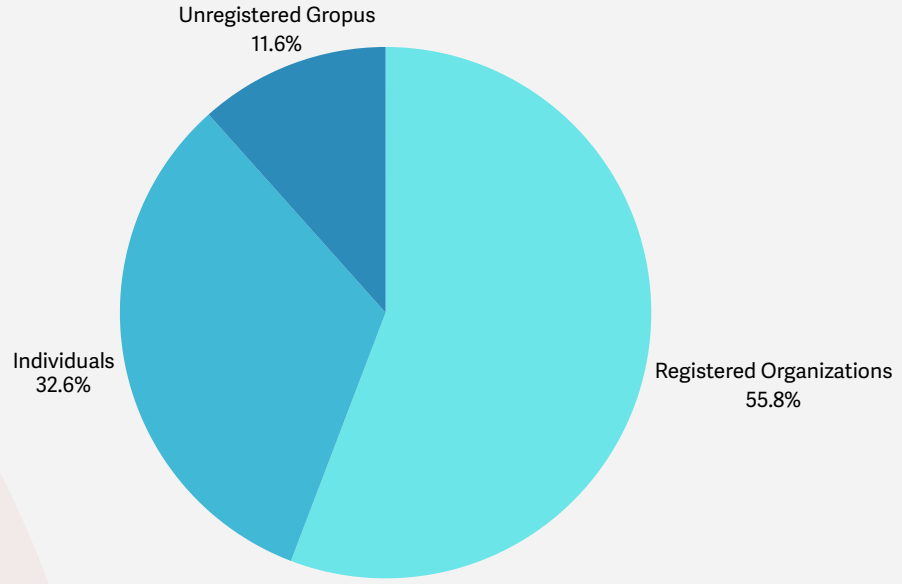


Distribution by Grantee-Partner's Status

The distribution of grants shows a clear preference for formally registered organizations, which receive the majority of funding at 55.81%. This indicates that grantmakers favor recipients with legal recognition, likely due to considerations of accountability, transparency, and formal reporting requirements. Registered organizations are often better equipped to manage larger grants and to demonstrate measurable outcomes, making them a relatively lower-risk choice for funders.

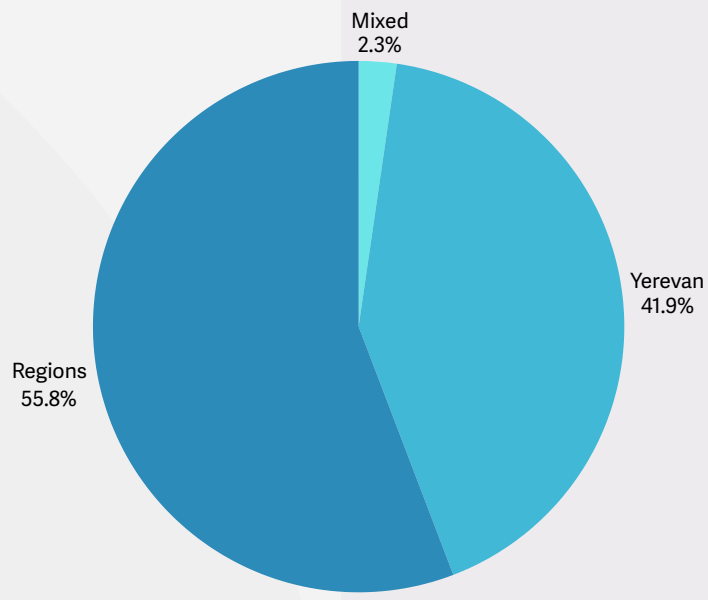
Individuals also receive significant support, accounting for 32.56% of grants. This suggests that the grantmaking body values personal initiatives and projects, potentially supporting entrepreneurs, activists, artists, or independent researchers. Funding individuals can encourage innovation, creativity, and flexibility, although it may require additional attention to administrative oversight and risk management.

In contrast, unregistered or informal groups receive only 11.63% of funding. This limited allocation may reflect concerns around legal compliance, accountability, or the capacity to manage funds effectively. At the same time, it points to a potential opportunity for grantmakers to engage more actively with emerging or community-based initiatives, which could address grassroots needs and reach populations that might otherwise remain underserved.

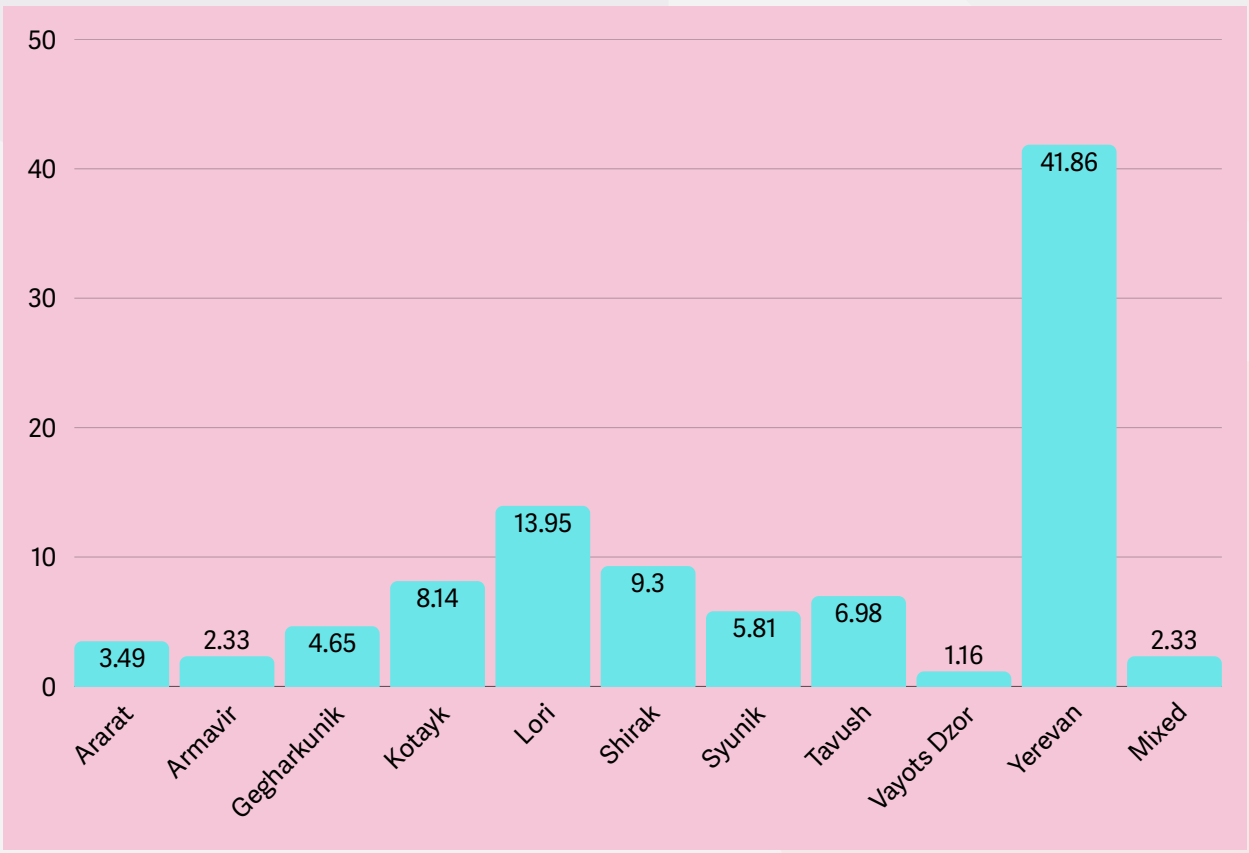


Grant Distribution by Location

The data on grant distribution by location indicates a strong regional focus, with a majority of funding—55.81%—directed toward projects outside the capital, in various regions of the country. This suggests that grantmakers are prioritizing support for initiatives that operate beyond the central urban hub, potentially aiming to reach underserved or rural communities and promote more equitable development. Yerevan, the capital, receives a slightly smaller but still significant portion, accounting for 41.86% of grants. This reflects continued investment in the city, which may host more established organizations or initiatives with greater capacity for scale and visibility. Only a minimal share of grants, 2.33%, is classified as "mixed," indicating projects that span both regional areas and the capital. Overall, the distribution demonstrates a deliberate attempt to balance urban and regional funding, though the emphasis on regions suggests a strategic commitment to decentralization and fostering impact outside the capital city.



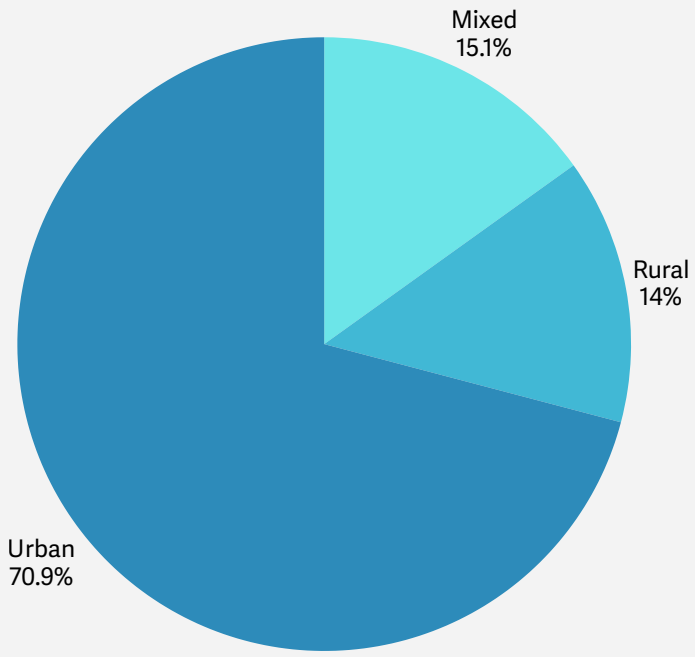
The data on grant distribution across individual regions reveals a highly uneven allocation, with a clear concentration in Yerevan, which receives 41.86% of all grants. This indicates that despite some focus on regional development, the capital remains the primary hub for grant-supported initiatives, likely due to the presence of more established organizations, infrastructure, and administrative capacity. Among the regions, Lori stands out with 13.95% of grants, followed by Shirak at 9.30% and Kotayk at 8.14%, showing a significant emphasis on northern areas. Other regions receive smaller shares: Syunik (5.81%), Tavush (6.98%), Gegharkunik (4.65%), Ararat (3.49%), Armavir (2.33%), and Vayots Dzor (1.16%). Notably, Aragatsotn receives no grants at all, highlighting potential gaps or barriers in reaching certain regions. A small proportion, 2.33%, is classified as "mixed," indicating projects that operate across multiple regions, including Yerevan. Overall, the distribution suggests a dual pattern: while Yerevan dominates funding, there is a conscious—but uneven—effort to extend support to other regions, with some areas remaining significantly underfunded or overlooked entirely.



Rural and Urban Distribution

The distribution of grants between rural and urban areas shows a strong urban bias, with 70.93% of funding directed toward urban projects. This reflects a common pattern in grantmaking, where initiatives based in cities—often with more established organizations, better infrastructure, and administrative capacity—receive the bulk of support. Rural areas, in contrast, receive only 13.95% of grants, indicating a significant underrepresentation despite the potential for high-impact interventions in these communities, which may face greater socio-economic challenges and have fewer local resources. A notable share, 15.12%, is categorized as "mixed," encompassing projects that span both rural and urban areas, suggesting some efforts to bridge geographic disparities.

This pattern suggests both an opportunity and a challenge for grantmakers. On one hand, supporting urban initiatives can generate visibility, scalability, and efficient use of resources. On the other hand, the relatively small allocation to rural areas points to a risk of reinforcing existing inequalities and overlooking communities that could benefit greatly from targeted investment. To address this imbalance, grantmakers might consider creating tailored programs for rural projects, offering smaller, flexible grants, capacity-building support, and technical assistance to ensure that rural organizations and initiatives can access funding effectively. Expanding the "mixed" category could also be strategic, promoting collaboration between urban and rural actors to leverage resources, knowledge, and networks across regions.

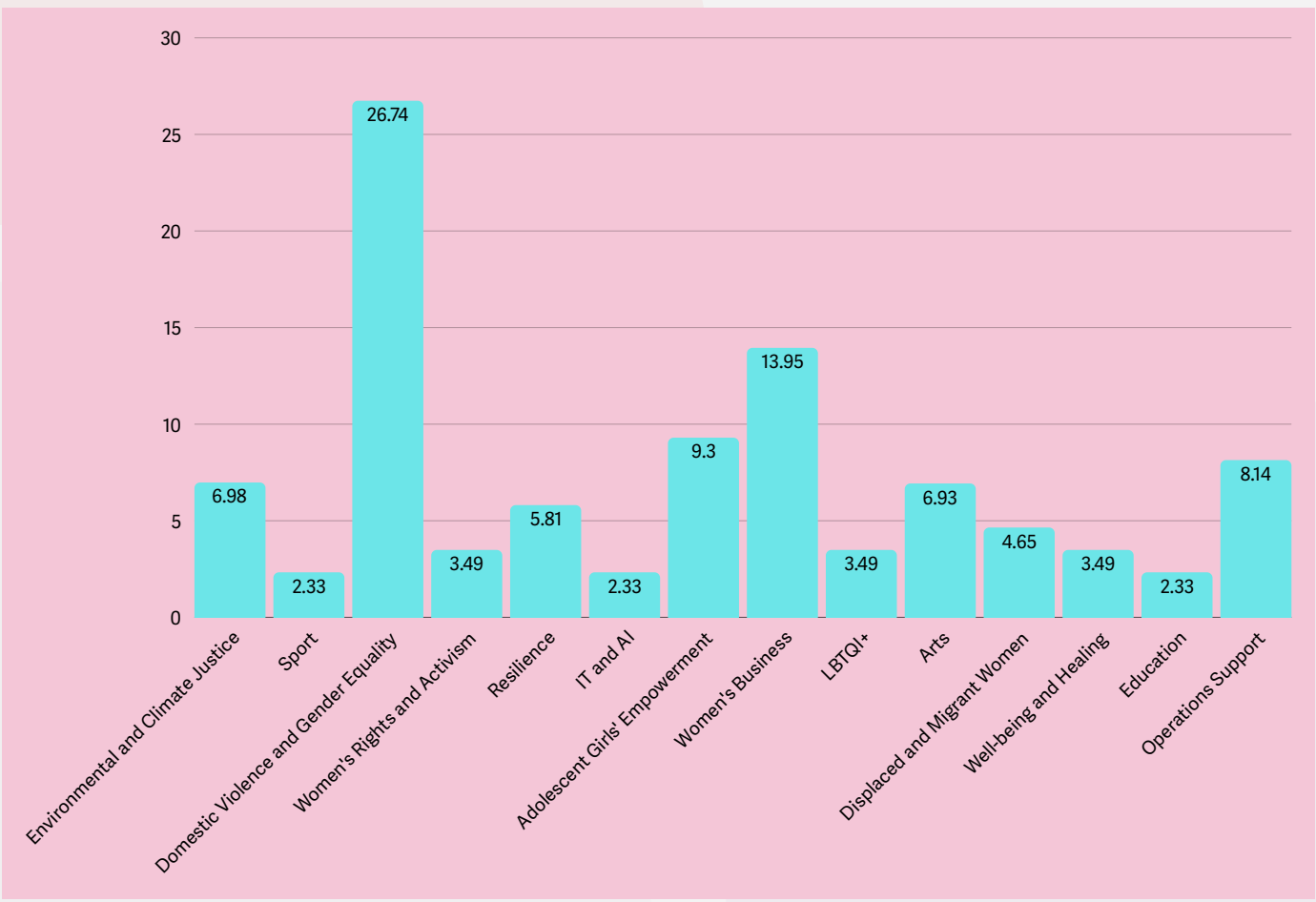


Grant Distribution by Thematic Areas

The grant distribution across thematic areas reveals a clear prioritization of issues related to gender and social equity, with Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence receiving the largest share at 26.74%. This indicates a strong focus on addressing immediate and critical safety concerns affecting women and vulnerable populations. Women's business initiatives also receive substantial attention (13.95%), reflecting a commitment to economic empowerment alongside protection and advocacy. Adolescent Girls' Empowerment (9.30%) and operational support (8.14%) further underscore efforts to strengthen organizational capacity and invest in the next generation of leaders.

Other areas, while smaller in share, reflect a diverse approach to social impact. Arts and Environmental and Climate Justice both receive 6.98%, highlighting attention to cultural expression and long-term systemic issues, whereas support for Displaced and Migrant Women (4.65%), Women's Rights and Activism (3.49%), LBTQ+ initiatives (3.49%), Well-Being and Healing (3.49%), and Education (2.33%) suggests targeted but limited investment in specialized areas. Sports and IT/AI both receive minimal funding (2.33%), which may indicate either nascent initiatives or underexplored avenues for social impact.

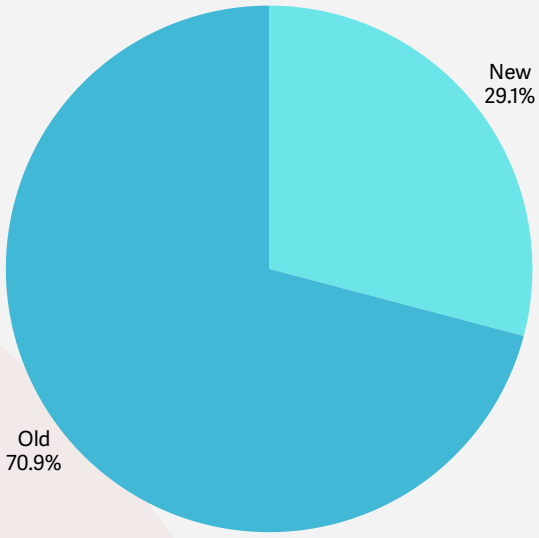
Overall, the distribution demonstrates a grantmaking strategy that balances urgent social protection and empowerment with strategic investments in sustainability, culture, and innovation. However, some areas—such as technology, education, and LBTQ+ rights—could benefit from more intentional resourcing to ensure a more holistic and forward-looking approach to social change.



“Old and New” Partners

The data on the age of grantee organizations shows a strong preference for established entities, with 70.93% of grants going to older organizations and only 29.07% to newer ones. This indicates that grantmakers tend to prioritize organizations with a proven track record, operational stability, and experience managing funds and programs. While this approach reduces risk and increases confidence in the effective use of resources, it may inadvertently limit opportunities for innovation and the emergence of new voices in the sector.

The relatively smaller share for new organizations suggests that nascent initiatives, which could bring fresh ideas, approaches, and responsiveness to emerging needs, face barriers in accessing funding. To create a more balanced portfolio, grantmakers might consider introducing targeted support for newer organizations, such as seed funding, mentorship programs, or phased grants that allow them to demonstrate capacity and impact. This could foster innovation and ensure that the grantmaking ecosystem remains dynamic and inclusive, while still maintaining support for established organizations that deliver proven results.

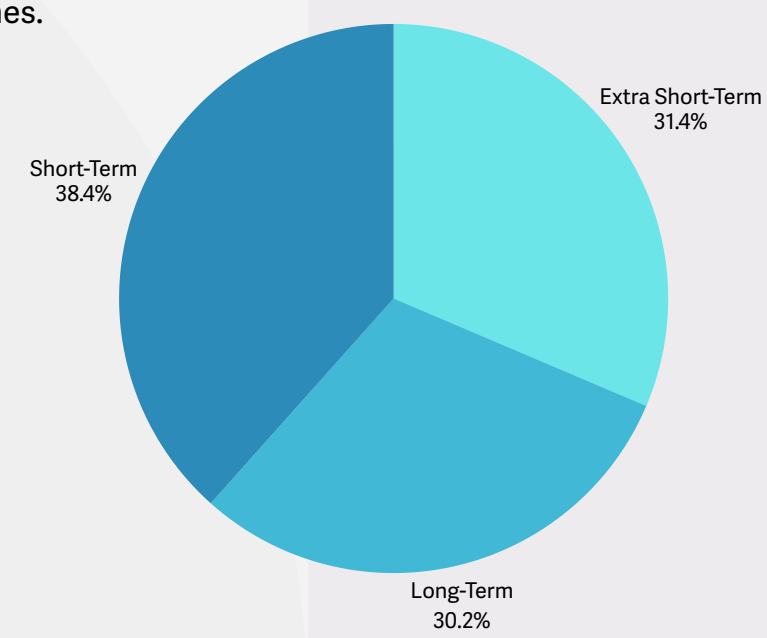


Looking across all the data, a clear picture emerges of a grantmaking strategy that balances risk, impact, and responsiveness, but still shows patterns of concentration and underrepresentation. Funding is heavily directed toward established organizations, urban areas, and Yerevan, with significant attention to pressing social issues such as gender-based violence, women’s economic empowerment, and adolescent girls’ empowerment. At the same time, shorter-term projects and flexible grants allow responsiveness and innovation, while long-term support ensures sustained impact.

Distribution by Project Duration

The distribution of grants by project duration shows a fairly balanced approach, with short-term projects receiving the largest share at 38.37%, closely followed by extra short-term projects at 31.40%, and long-term projects at 30.23%. This suggests that grantmakers are emphasizing flexibility and responsiveness, enabling organizations to address immediate needs, pilot innovative ideas, or respond to urgent issues quickly. The substantial allocation to long-term projects, however, indicates a recognition of the importance of sustained interventions that can generate systemic change, build organizational capacity, and create lasting impact.

The near-even distribution also reflects a strategic balance: short and extra short-term grants allow for experimentation and rapid adaptation, while long-term grants provide stability and continuity for complex initiatives, particularly those addressing deep-rooted social challenges such as gender-based violence or community resilience. Grantmakers might consider explicitly matching project length to objectives—for example, using short-term funding for advocacy campaigns or pilot programs, extra short-term grants for urgent relief or time-sensitive initiatives, and long-term support for structural programs like women’s economic empowerment or climate adaptation. Such alignment could enhance impact while ensuring resources are used efficiently across varying timelines.



Summary

The grantmaking data offers a rich and nuanced picture of how funding is distributed across recipient types, geographic locations, project durations, organizational maturity, and thematic areas. Overall, it reflects a thoughtful and evidence-informed strategy that balances accountability, flexibility, and responsiveness, while also pointing to promising opportunities for future growth and refinement.

A key strength of the portfolio is the allocation of grants by recipient type. Registered organizations receive the majority of funding (55.81%), underscoring a strong emphasis on formal structures, accountability mechanisms, and demonstrated capacity to manage larger-scale interventions. At the same time, individuals receive a substantial share (32.56%), signaling a clear openness to personal initiatives, grassroots innovation, and independent actors. While unregistered groups account for a smaller portion (11.63%), this distribution reflects a measured approach to risk management that prioritizes stability while still leaving space for flexibility and experimentation. It also highlights an area where additional support mechanisms could further unlock the local impact potential of informal community-based initiatives.

From a geographic perspective, funding is primarily concentrated in urban areas, which receive 70.93% of grants, with 41.86% allocated specifically to Yerevan. This pattern likely mirrors the concentration of established organizations, networks, and administrative capacity in the capital. At the same time, rural areas receive 13.95% of funding, and “mixed” projects account for 15.12%, demonstrating an existing effort to extend reach beyond urban centers. Regional analysis further illustrates this dynamic: Lori, Shirak, and Kotayk receive meaningful levels of support, while other regions—such as Vayots Dzor, Armavir, and Ararat—are more modestly represented, and Aragatsotn currently receives no funding. These patterns point to a clear opportunity for targeted strategies, including microgrants, capacity-building initiatives, or urban–rural partnerships, to deepen engagement with underrepresented regions and strengthen territorial equity.

Thematic distribution highlights a strong alignment with urgent social priorities. Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence receive the largest share of funding (26.74%), reflecting a clear commitment to protection, safety, and crisis response. Women’s business initiatives (13.95%) and adolescent girls’ empowerment (9.30%) underscore a focus on economic empowerment, leadership, and long-term resilience, while operational support (8.14%) contributes to organizational stability and sustainability. Additional thematic areas—such as environmental and climate justice (6.98%), arts (6.98%), resilience (5.81%), and support for displaced and migrant women (4.65%)—add depth and diversity to the portfolio. Meanwhile, areas including IT and AI, education, sports, LBTQ+ rights, women’s rights activism, and well-being receive comparatively smaller allocations, indicating untapped potential for future strategic expansion. Taken together, this thematic mix reflects a balanced approach that addresses immediate social needs while laying groundwork for broader systemic change.

Overall, the data reflects a grantmaking approach characterized by strategic prudence, flexibility, and responsiveness. It demonstrates strong prioritization of established actors, urban centers, and critical social issues, while maintaining openness to individuals and shorter-term initiatives. At the same time, it reveals clear opportunities to enhance impact through more balanced geographic coverage, deeper engagement with rural and underfunded regions, and intentional investment in emerging themes and newer organizations. By building on existing strengths through tools such as capacity-building, seed funding, mentorship, and cross-regional collaboration, grantmakers can further strengthen inclusivity and effectiveness—ensuring that resources reach a wide range of communities and initiatives with the potential to generate lasting social change.