



JASS

Strengthening Women's
Collective Power for Justice

JASS (Just Associates) is an international feminist organization driven by the partners and initiatives of its regional networks in Mesoamerica, Southern Africa and Southeast Asia. JASS is dedicated to strengthening and mobilizing women's voice, visibility and collective organizing power to change the norms, institutions and policies that perpetuate inequality and violence, in order to create a just, sustainable world for all. Founded in 2002 as a learning community by a group of activists, popular educators and scholars from 13 countries, JASS generates knowledge from experience to improve the theory and practice of women's rights, development and democracy. JASS taps into the political histories and organizational affiliations of its community to multiply its reach and impact. JASS' political education, research and action strategies have strengthened and sparked new alliances from grassroots to international levels, engaging over 60,000 women in organizing to better lives and advance rights and freedoms.



What Drives JASS' Work

Today, far-reaching economic, climatic and political shifts fuel militarization, scarcity and fundamentalisms. Given these dynamics, women everywhere face heightened insecurity – economic, political, emotional and physical. Many states lack the capacity or political will to protect and uphold women's rights and freedoms, while safety nets that women rely on are shrinking. Increasingly, women find themselves holding the line to prevent the reversal of rights, and pushing hard against intolerance, misogyny and homophobia. More urgently than ever, women need to mobilize the political power of their numbers – not only to enhance their visibility and influence, but also to protect and sustain women activists. Around the world, JASS sparks, mobilizes, and builds on path-breaking forms of organizing by diverse women, in order to challenge injustice and build alternatives.



"I saw how the change that JASS promotes comes in on the margins – as one woman crosses the line by challenging feared institutions – the police, the hospital. I saw how one woman can change the whole community." Hope Chigudu

What JASS Does

JASS' interconnected strategies seek to build women's political influence, ensure their access to resources, and protect their safety as activists. To this end, JASS:

- ◆ **equips activists leaders from all walks of life** with the confidence, information, skills, strategies and connections they need in order to organize women for democratic change and to navigate backlash and risky contexts;
- ◆ **promotes and sustains grassroots and local-to-global organizing** to build broad, well-informed, flexible alliances that are responsive to urgencies and opportunities as well as rooted in the concrete demands of organized constituencies;
- ◆ **maximizes women's creative use of social media to amplify the visibility, appeal and reach of women's rights agendas** and the role of women's movements in advancing democracy and justice;
- ◆ **produces and publishes knowledge from practice** – in multiple formats from videos to analysis and tools – to enable **smarter responses to women's rights challenges**, particularly by human rights and development institutions and governments.

Solidarity and Action

The dynamics of insecurity and authoritarianism that women face transcend national boundaries and test the limits of established NGO and civil society responses, demanding bold alternatives. Recognizing the interconnections between the injustices women face worldwide and prioritizing the resistance strategies of frontline activists, JASS leverages international presence and local-to-global relationships strategically to amplify calls for action and redress. JASS provides solidarity through political accompaniment, supporting women to "cross the line," and work in alliance towards shared goals.

JASS Regional Networks

JASS Southern Africa

JASS Southern Africa builds and strengthens a web of varied women's rights activists and partnerships in Malawi, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Here, emerging women activists – many of them young, grassroots and/or affected by HIV/AIDS – gain skills in political analysis and organizing. They use JASS' frameworks to understand and address the different ways that power shapes inequalities and access to health services, ARV treatment, land, and local development funds. Country-level organizing becomes concrete as women activist leaders design and implement strategies to address needs, including access to land and credit, and to stop violence against women. In Zimbabwe, JASS puts self-care at the heart of sustained women's organizing with the Heart-Mind-Body process. JASS Southern Africa's unique regional alliance brings together LGBT activists, progressive religious leaders living with HIV/AIDS, youth organizers and ICT feminist activists to maximize their reach and impact on women's lives and rights.



JASS Mesoamerica

Following a roadmap originally forged by 30 diverse women activists and leaders in 2006, JASS Mesoamerica's strategy links political education and action, partnering with women human rights defenders (*defensoras*), indigenous leaders, and feminists to strengthen women's movements and mobilize political and media pressure for accountability and safety. *Mar de Cambios* (Sea Change) Feminist Leadership Schools, a learning, training and knowledge-generation strategy, fills the urgent need of Mesoamerican women and activists to reconnect and retool. In safe spaces, women deepen their analysis, skills, and defense strategies, developing creative uses of social media to connect, organize and amplify agendas. In response to the threats and violence suffered by *defensoras*, JASS Mesoamerica supports and mobilizes solidarity networks to protect these frontline activists. With regional allies, JASS facilitates communications and an urgent-action network to spotlight violence and promotes solidarity and action through a growing international network. JASS has worked closely with the Nobel Women's Initiative since 2006 to increase the visibility and legitimacy of women's agendas and contributions to justice in this volatile region.



JASS Southeast Asia

Through activist leadership training since 2007 – local, national and regional – JASS Southeast Asia has engaged over 300 primarily young women in a fast-growing network of newly self-identified feminists. Many now lead their mixed organizations while others have launched their own initiatives. These women are making a visible impact on LGBTI organizing, reproductive health, economic empowerment, and land and indigenous people's rights. The analysis and learning that happens in workshops and online are linked to strategic actions and broadened alliances across Southeast Asia from local to regional levels. These networks, informed by the experience of grassroots women, leverage the power of women's numbers to influence decision-making and advocate for policy and social change. This sustained approach to political capacity-building informs and drives JASS SEA's regional advocacy at the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).