



ACCOMPANIMENT: STRENGTHENING GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS & ACTIVIST LEADERS

Supporters of AJWS know that we have a unique approach to addressing the root causes of inequality, authoritarianism, and the climate crisis. They know that at the heart of our funding philosophy is a trio of threads woven together into a single fabric we call our “grants-multiplier model.” Like other progressive human rights organizations, AJWS funds some of the world’s most marginalized people to fight for their rights—and mobilizes thousands of Americans to advocate for U.S. foreign policy that pushes for global human rights. However, it is the third thread in our model that makes us different from traditional grantmaking organizations. **Accompaniment makes us who we are.**

WHAT IS ACCOMPANIMENT?

Accompaniment is a form of providing holistic support to grantee partners that goes beyond traditional financial resources by following our partners’ self-determined goals and priorities. Accompaniment is rooted in **the cultivation of trusted relationships—relationships that foster mutual learning** between partners and our staff. At AJWS, this accompaniment extends beyond supporting our grantee partners at an individual level. We apply a social movement lens to our work, striving to connect community organizations to each other in ways that build toward a united purpose. By acting in solidarity with our partners and respecting their autonomy, AJWS can offer insight, experience, and resources that help connect our partners to create real, lasting change.

HOW DOES ACCOMPANIMENT WORK?

Accompaniment often begins with our local staff with activist backgrounds who work closely with the organizations we fund. Our staff build **long-term relationships** with partners and work to make sure they feel comfortable having honest and transparent conversations with us. In these conversations, AJWS staff and partners share ideas and reflect on experiences that help them navigate their current challenges. From there, **accompaniment may take on different forms:**

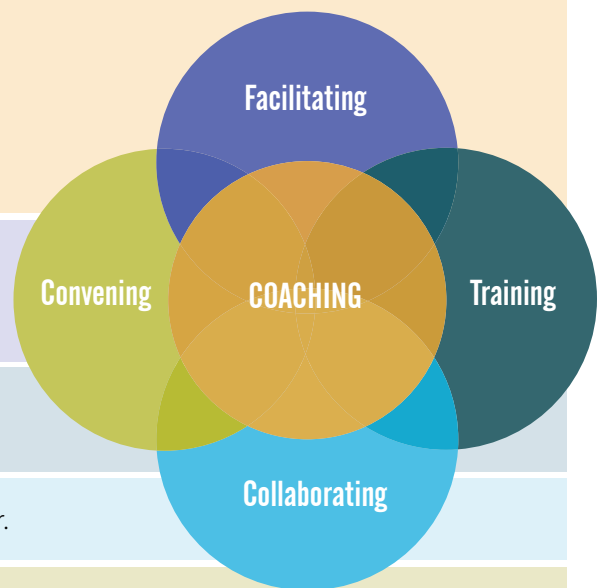
Coaching: AJWS staff and partner organization leaders are in constant conversation, discussing the work, problem-solving challenges and identifying opportunities for growth—with AJWS staff providing strategic guidance. These are conversations that not only assist our partners but also allow AJWS staff to improve our own strategic thinking and grantmaking to better ensure the success of the work.

Facilitating: Based on what develops during ongoing dialogue, AJWS staff may connect partners with other funders, organizations or allies that can further their goals.

Training: When partners identify a need for technical support, AJWS staff may provide or connect them to the relevant training.

Collaborating: AJWS staff and partners may make decisions together.

Convening: AJWS co-convenes meetings, gatherings and exchanges in order to learn together.



HOW IS ACCOMPANIMENT DIFFERENT FROM WHAT OTHER FUNDERS OFFER?

Traditional grantmakers tend to make grants contingent on satisfying any number of requirements that typically center their own goals rather than the needs of the grantees. At AJWS, we believe in an approach that emphasizes a deeper, more reciprocal relationship based on shared goals and solidarity, rather than a particular project or intervention. Our goal is to strengthen our partners' capacity and sustainability, enabling them to achieve their objectives and take greater ownership of their path forward.

Traditional Funder

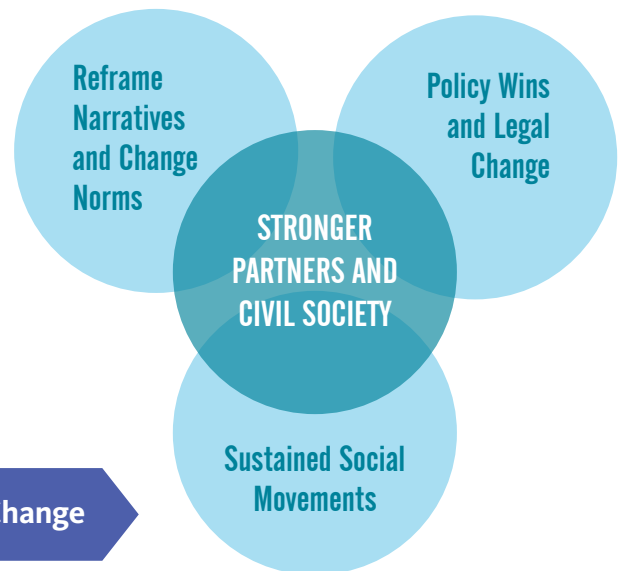
- Works with partners in isolation
- Centers their own priorities
- Supports from afar
- Limited and project-focused funding

AJWS

- Builds bridges between partners
- Centers partners' priorities
- Cultivates on-the-ground expertise
- Long-term and flexible funding

FROM ACCOMPANIMENT TO IMPACT

Accompaniment is essential to supporting strong, sustainable social movements. Without ongoing dialogue and collaborative planning, we would not be able to ensure that our partners are well-prepared to pursue and realize our shared vision. But with coaching, facilitating, training, collaborating, and co-convening, our partners can do more effective work and build and execute smarter strategies for social change. Only together can we win policy changes, strengthen economic security, and protect democracy.



CASE STUDY: AJWS Accompaniment in the Dominican Republic

In 2019, AJWS began supporting eight grassroots organizations working with adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in the Dominican Republic. In addition to funding, the partners expressed the need for increased collaboration and technical assistance to deepen the efficacy of their work. To support this, AJWS formed a consortium of all eight grantee partners to co-create a strategy and a collective action. Through facilitated learning spaces and convenings, AJWS supported partners to develop a five-year plan that focused on enhancing and strengthening their strategic thinking, action, monitoring and evaluation, as well as how to better meet the needs of AGYW. This led to the training and support of young women leaders from each of the partner organizations who led a consultation with AGYW in 2023 to show the impact of their work from the perspective of the girls themselves.

The consultation demonstrated that partners were helping AGYW achieve concrete changes. They became more

communicative, collaborative, and respectful of diversity, better able to express themselves, more likely to maintain relationships, and felt more emboldened to take on leadership roles within their communities. A further evaluation in 2024 showed that the partner organizations had increased their institutional capacity, deepened their collaborations, and began promoting youth leadership. AJWS continues to support these partners and their transformative work with AGYW.

Being there for organizations and their leaders is crucial for human rights progress. We will always be committed to better understanding the conditions and connections that are most useful to our partners—as well as figuring out how we can most effectively support them. Our accompaniment of partners multiplies the impact of each dollar and helps us make real-life human rights progress.