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FEMINIST MOVEMENTS AND THE BEIJING VISION:

Organising · Resisting · Advocating



Womankind Worldwide

CIVICUS

URGENT ACTION FUND FOR AFRICA
FOR WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

GENDER & DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

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PHOTO CREDIT: PALOMA GARCIA FOR ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN DEVELOPMENT

Image above: Feminist march.

Acronyms.

BDPfA
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

CEDAW
Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CRC
Convention on the Rights of the Child

CRPD
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability

GBV
Gender-Based Violence

GDP
Gross Domestic Product

ICESR
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

IFFs
Illicit Financial Flows

ILO
International Labour Organisation

ISDS
Investor State Dispute Settlement

LBTQI+
Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex +

ODA
Official Development Assistance

SDGs
Sustainable Development Goals

VAWG
Violence Against Women and Girls

WHRDs
Women Human Rights Defender/s

Executive Summary.

2020 marks 25 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA), heralded as the most progressive blueprint in achieving full human rights for all women and girls. Yet, 25 years on the ambitions of the BDPfA have not been achieved. In fact, the process takes place at a time of ever increasing challenges for women's rights.

Technological surveillance, militarisation, religious and political fundamentalisms and rising authoritarianism are contributing to a closure of civic space that constrains women's rights. Systemic social divisions, exclusions and inequalities are becoming further entrenched, driven by harmful and discriminatory social norms that rely on unequal gender power relations and leave those facing multiple and intersecting discriminations, such as LBTQI+ women, women with disabilities and ethnically marginalised women, most at risk of being left behind.

These inequalities are driven by a neoliberal economic model that exploits and extracts. The harms of this economic system has been exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic as evident by governments' prioritisation of corporate interest over human life. With women being disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the crisis threatens to rollback women's rights. Pervasive violence against women and girls (VAWG*), unfulfilled women's economic rights and inadequate resourcing of women's rights organisations and movements remain some of the biggest challenges in achieving the Beijing vision.

Over the past 25 years much of the world has adopted legislation to tackle VAWG and many programmes and initiatives have been carried out, yet VAWG remains one of the most widespread human rights violations. All women are at risk of violence, but those facing multiple and intersecting discriminations are at increased risk. Women are also particularly at risk of violence for taking action to stand up for and defending rights and justice. An absence of a holistic approach to tackling VAWG means that initiatives are focused on symptoms rather than the root causes of violence that are systematic in nature. Limited financial resources and skewed funding models hinder efforts to tackle VAWG and result in a lack of meaningful engagement of women's rights organisations and movements.

Since the adoption of the BDPfA, women the world over are still denied the choice and control over economic opportunities, outcomes and resources, or the ability to shape economic decision-making. The economic reality for women in the majority of the world is a life of scraping by, working in an unprotected informal sector as well as being responsible for the bulk of unpaid care work. Women working in formal sectors are limited by gender stereotypes of women's work being less valued and less remunerated.

The unprecedented expansion and growth of multinational corporations in recent years, who aren't held accountable for their human rights abuses and environmental violations, further undermines women's rights. Regressive tax policies directly impact women's economic rights as underfunded public services perpetuate women's subordinate role within the economy. Once more, government responses to realising women's economic rights to date have been piecemeal and focused on micro-level interventions, rather than addressing structural issues.

Yet, despite these challenges, feminist movements persist and continue to rise up to claim women's rights. Transnational and community-level activism has never been greater. But failure of governments and donors to recognise the central role that women's rights organisations play in realising women's rights and appropriately resourcing them is one of the key barriers holding back progress.

As well as highlighting the role and contributions of women's rights organisations and movements in the implementation of the BDPfA, this report calls on governments and other key stakeholders to recognise this critical role that women's rights organisations play, their assessment of the current state of women's rights on the 25th anniversary, and the importance of properly resourcing them.

Inspired and informed by collective women's movements, the report provides a feminist analysis of the areas of progress, gaps and challenges in achieving women's rights, with a particular focus on violence against women and girls, women's economic rights and resourcing of feminist and women's movements, and presents recommendations on what needs to happen in order to address the current challenges and barriers to realise women's rights, gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.

*We use the terms VAWG and GBV interchangeably to recognise patriarchal violence against trans, intersex, non-binary and gender diverse people.'



PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX MASSEY
FOR WOMANKIND WORLDWIDE

INTRODUCTION

It was a ground-breaking moment when the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA) was adopted 25 years ago. The BDPfA intended to change gender power relations and set grounds for all women and girls to enjoy their full human rights. UN Women proclaimed it the most progressive blueprint ever for advancing women's rights.[1] Since 1995, a number of international commitments on gender equality have been made, building on the BDPfA and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).[2]

The most recent is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a dedicated goal to achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls – SDG 5. Over this time, feminist and women's movements have grown in their strength and determination, holding governments accountable for the commitments they have made to gender equality and transforming structural inequalities.

Yet, we are facing no less than a crisis of national and international accountability structures, and a global environment of technological surveillance, militarisation and fundamentalisms, accompanied by rising authoritarianism, all of which rely on conservative gender norms to advance their political agenda.[3] It is the convergence of these and other trends that contribute to what is popularly referred to as a closure of civic space, producing an environment in which women's rights are constrained even further by state and non-state actors who collude to limit civil liberties, and where the capacity to hold decision makers truly accountable to the people is compromised.[4]

The review therefore takes place at a time of persistent historical and presently increasing systemic social, economic and political divisions, exclusions and inequalities. These divisions are seen in harmful laws, and discriminatory social norms and practices driven by unequal gender power relations that threaten the rights of women and girls,[5] transgender, intersex, non-binary and gender-diverse people, particularly those facing multiple and intersecting discriminations. These inequalities and harmful norms drive, support and condone violence against women and girls (VAWG), one of the most pervasive human rights violations.

Image on left: Feminist march.

1. UN Women. 2015. The Beijing Platform for Action Turns 20. https://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/about

2. UN Women 2018 Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in The 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/sdg-report

3. Women Radically Transforming a World in Crisis: A framework for Beijing+25 shaped at a strategy meeting of feminist activists Mexico City, 22–24 Aug 2019. 2019. https://www.nswp.org/sites/nswp.org/files/eng_mexico_city_strategy_meet_framework_for_beijing25_0.pdf

4. UAF-Africa 2018 Fight for Justice...Trends Shaping Feminist Resistance & Resilience in Africa https://www.uaf-africa.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Fight-for-Justice.pdf

5. We use the term 'women' to be inclusive of girls and recognise that girls have specific needs and face specific risks



PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX MASSEY
FOR WOMANKIND WORLDWIDE

Now, as many countries find themselves in the aftermath of the first wave of COVID-19, we face a global financial crisis, but also an opportunity to restructure an economy that has been destructive for millions, that failed to recognise the vitality of care work for human survival, that contaminated land and polluted the oceans. The pandemic has made it even more evident that the extractivist, neoliberal economic model is all but capable of sustaining the basic needs of the world's population – health, housing, food security, ecology, to name a few. Neoliberal economic policies drive inequalities among people and between the Global North and majority world. The spread of COVID-19 across the globe has exposed the economic inequalities in both "developed" and "developing" countries, with a number of governments belatedly taking action to respond to the dire situation of their citizens and residents, in addition to "bailing out" corporations – the first port of call for most governments.[6] International financial institutions, primarily the International Monetary Fund, are stepping in with conditional loans that carry the threat of austerity. This is nothing less than a disaster for all those – women in particular – who rely on public services for survival.

We are reminded that not working, or working from home, is a choice that is out of reach for most people. Many do not have the option to practice social distancing due to the nature of their work, living conditions and means of transport. Underfunded public health systems are predominantly staffed by women of colour and ethnic minorities, who are underpaid and face health risks in these roles; meanwhile the cost of privatised and expensive health care systems increases the likelihood of casualties within historically oppressed and excluded communities.[7]

The economic downturn triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic has been decades in the making and is likely to intensify the following set of dynamics. The first is multinational corporations seeking to maximise their profits with impunity by taking advantage of deregulated environments. The second – a knock-on from the first – is the privatisation of public services and severe austerity measures that have curtailed equitable investments in health, education and social care. The excesses of privatisation have now moved into the appropriation of natural resources, labour, information and finance in the majority world.[8] The third, that underpins this economic system, is the exploitation of workers, seen in the high proportion of corporate-related human rights abuses, poor working conditions, sexual violence and economic exploitation.

Rising rates of violence

The rising rates of domestic violence across the globe during the COVID-19 lockdown have raised public concern and increased demand for emergency shelters. Other forms of violence have similarly increased, including sanctioned forms of violence against women, sexual exploitation and abuse, and child marriage. These immediate increases in VAWG lead to loss of lives and will have long-lasting and life-changing effects on women, girls, communities and societies. However, violence against women, girls, trans and gender-diverse people cannot be reduced to the private sphere and intimate partner violence; evictions, denial of medical care (including sexual and reproductive health and rights), precarious labour conditions and sexual violence at the workplace, are all among the frequent forms of violence perpetrated by state institutions or the private sector.

Care, not profit, must be at the centre of our economies. For a long time, feminists have argued that the greed-driven economy has always rested on patriarchy as an organising principle of our societies.[9] Women, who often work in the most precarious or informal sectors and rely on public services, contend with underfunded or reduced access to public services due to cuts and/or privatisation.[10] It is now well documented that when essential services such as water, sanitation, education and health services are underfunded, of poor quality or non-existent, women and girls unpaid labour is automatically expected to "cushion" the state,[11] and private profiteering.



PHOTO CREDIT: WOMEN AND LAND IN ZIMBABWE

Image above: Women and Land in Zimbabwe marking 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence 2016.

6. Rayner, Gordon. 2020. Chancellor unleashes £350bn bailout to rescue UK economy from coronavirus crisis. The Telegraph. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2020/03/17/chancellor-unleashes-330bn-bailout-rescue-uk-economy-coronavirus/

7. Tomlay, Susan and Morna, Colleen Lowe. 2020. Safeguarding women's rights during the Covid-19 shutdown. Mail & Guardian. https://mg.co.za/article/2020-03-24-safeguarding-womens-rights-during-the-covid-19-shutdown/?amp=1

8. AWID. 2016. Challenging Corporate Power: Struggles for Women's Rights Economic and Gender Justice. https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/ccp_exec_summary_eng.pdf

9. Ibid

10. Gender and Development Network & FEMNET. 2019. Briefing Push no one behind. How current Economic Policy Exacerbates Gender Inequality. https://gadnetwork.org/gadn-resources/push-no-one-behind-how-current-economic-policy-exacerbates-gender-equality

11. Craviotto, Nerea. 2010. The Impact of the Global Economic Crisis on Women and Women's Human Rights Across Regions. Toronto. AWID. https://www.awid.org/publications/impacts-global-financial-crisis-womens-rights-sub-regional-perspectives



PHOTO CREDIT: ESTHER RUTH MBABAZI
FOR WOMANKIND WORLDWIDE

Now more than ever the leadership of feminist, women's rights and gender justice movements is critical to transforming our societies in line with visions of rights and justice, rather than going back to the "old normal." It is critical that resources allocated to gender equality finally reach feminist movements in all their diversities, in the form of direct, core and multi-year funding.

Feminist movements and women's rights organisations worldwide are working towards structural changes to the economy, both nationally and globally. Going beyond traditional priorities, such as closing the gender pay gap, feminist macroeconomic agendas encompass restructuring of the global tax systems, advancing legally binding measures for corporate accountability, and reshaping the global trade regime, among others.[12] For example, in Uganda the National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE) and National Association for Women's Action in Development (NAWAD) in collaboration with Womankind Worldwide, lead the efforts of the national grassroots eco-feminist movement who mobilise and build movements of grassroots women to resist land grabs by corporates and to advocate with decision makers about their rights, and therefore realise the BDPfA vision.

This report is inspired and informed by the labour and activism of the collective feminist movement as highlighted above, Womankind Worldwide's partners who are engaged in the review, Womankind's strategic focus, and research conducted by Urgent Action Fund Africa.[13]

This report presents feminist analysis of three interrelated key themes underlying gender inequalities today: ending violence against women and girls; women's economic rights and resourcing women's movements. Each section highlights key recommendations for policy and decision makers in state, intergovernmental and funding institutions.



Image on left: Peninah supported by NAPE and NAWAD has joined the eco-feminist movement in Uganda advocating for women's economic rights. Image above: A young woman speaks at the African regional review.

12. Cadore, Christina. 2019. Putting Women Before Profit: A guide to the UN binding treaty on business and human rights. https://www.womankind.org.uk/blog/detail/our-blog/2019/10/14/putting-women-before-profits

13. UAF-Africa 2018 Fight for Justice...Trends Shaping Feminist Resistance & Resilience in Africa https://www.uaf-africa.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Fight-for-Justice.pdf

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Recommendations.

All women should be able to live free from violence, discrimination and abuse. States should address all forms of violence against women and girls, transgender and gender non-conforming people by;

- Accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) in all their diversities by **tackling the systems of oppression** – patriarchy, capitalism, racism, etc. – that fuel gender power imbalances and deepen the gender inequalities that cause, perpetuate and condone VAWG.
- **Fulfilling their role as the primary duty bearer** for the respect, protection and realisation of the human rights of all women, girls and gender non-conforming people, including by committing to fully implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its optional protocol, as well as other international and regional human rights treaties, and to removing reservations where they exist.
- **Implementing the recommendations** for eliminating VAWG contained in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA) and subsequent UN studies, guidelines, and reports. This involves escalating political will to make the elimination of VAWG a priority of all governments and civil society; building the knowledge base to better inform policy and practices; ending impunity for actors engaged in such violence; protecting the rights of women to control their bodies and sexuality, and experience social and economic security; and ensuring women's access to justice and redress.
- **Committing to confront and eliminate multiple and intersecting forms of violence and discrimination** that women with multiple identities face based on ground of race, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, caste, ethnicity, relationship status, etc. Ensure that an intersectional discrimination analysis informs international, regional and national policy making and implementation, and that the specific interests and needs of women and girls in all of their diversities are recognised and addressed.
- **Recognising and supporting the role of women's rights organisations and movements** in preventing and responding to violence, including by increasing core, flexible and long-term financial support to women's rights organisations to achieve long-term social change.
- **Protecting women human rights defenders,** including putting in place legislation that protects them from violence by state and non-state actors as part of national and international anti-VAWG policies and resourcing, with clear indicators to track violations and necessary protection.

PHOTO CREDIT: FREEDOM AND ROAM UGANDA



> ***“As a young, black, African lesbian I feel there is still a long way to go for me to hold my government accountable for the violence I face on a daily basis. While it has put in place strategies and procedures on VAWG, I feel now in this era it should be fairer as women come in different diversities. So, I want to know that I can be protected as a queer woman and how it protects my trans sister. How am I protected as a woman who faces multiple violations?”***
>
> **Gloria Mutyaba, Freedom and Roam Uganda (FARUG)**

Image: Gloriah Mutyaba, Programmes Director Freedom and Roam Uganda (FARUG).



Image above: Through support from Association for women's sanctuary and development (AWSAD) Semira has been able to rebuild a new, independent life free from violence.

The BDPfA commits governments to take all necessary measures to eliminate discrimination and violence against women of different diversities. It emphasises that VAWG prevents women from enjoying their human rights and fundamental freedoms and is an obstacle to achieving gender equality and sustainable development. There has been some progress over the last 25 years. For example the BDPfA was a key tool for advocacy for feminist movements to push for a target on ending violence against women and girls in the UN 2030 Agenda. To date, many countries across the world have passed legislations to fight violence against women, and global programmes and initiatives have been developed to deal with the issues. A few recent ones include What Works by the UK Government and the Spotlight initiative by the European Union and United Nations.

However, VAWG remains one of the most widespread human rights violations, with 35% of women globally experiencing either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.[14] Broader understandings of violence, encompassing psychological violence as well as its institutional forms, such as economic or state violence, multiply these already extremely high numbers. VAWG is underpinned by unequal power relations and structural barriers to equality that discriminate against all women and girls. It is a manifestation and a driver of the systemic oppression and exclusion of women and girls. Women and girls are subjected to different forms of violence throughout their lives, including physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence.

One of the most common forms of violence is intimate partner violence. Every day 137 women across the world are killed by a member of their own family[15] and the killing of women by intimate partners or family members is rising.[16] In addition, women are subject to harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, child, early and forced marriage, human trafficking, sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, and online violence and abuse.

All women and girls are at risk of violence but women and girls who face multiple and intersecting discriminations, are at increased risk.[17]

For example:

- **Women and girls with disabilities** have a two to four times higher risk of intimate partner violence than women without disabilities.[18]
- **LBTQI+ women** encounter physical abuse, sexual harassment, corrective rape, forced marriage to men, verbal and mental abuse.[19]
- **In Nepal, violence against Dalit women** takes multiple forms. They suffer a higher degree of domestic violence from family, as well as physical and mental abuse by the dominant castes. The prevalence of trafficking and forced sex work among Dalit women shows the nature of their vulnerability.
- **Widows in Nepal** face high levels of stigma, discrimination and violence in a society that remains conservative and patriarchal. Widows are accused of being witches and subjected to violence, beaten to death, and expelled from the community and their own property. Widows are not allowed to participate in auspicious events or wear red or bright colours.[20]
- **Adolescent girls and young women** experience violence in school, on university campuses and on public transport.[21]

> ***"A girl who identified as lesbian was raped by her own father when she shared her sexual orientation and told her family members about her partner. Her father time and again raped her saying that she needed to be attracted to male person. She told her mother about the violence. But her mother ignored her plea and asked her to keep silence as this will affect marriage of her younger siblings. She was also physically assaulted by her father, causing her to now have a hearing impairment."*** **Sita (Name changed) Mitini Nepal**

14. World Health Organisation. 2017. Violence Against Women. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women

15. UN Women. 2019. Facts and Figures: Ending Violence against Women. https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures

16. United Nations Office on Drug and crimes. 2019. Global Study on Homicide. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/Booklet1.pdf

17. Further references to women and girls acknowledge that this is not a homogenous category and the distinctions identified here are key to understanding experiences and responses to violence.

18. What Works to Prevent VAWG Global Programme. 2018. Disability and Violence Against Women and Girls. https://www.whatworks.co.za/documents/publications/195-disability-brief-whatworks-23072018-web/file

19. Womankind Worldwide. 2019. Making visible: The Lived Realities of LGBTQi+ across Nepal, Uganda and Zimbabwe. https://www.womankind.org.uk/docs/default-source/default-document-library/making-visible---the-lived-realities-of-lbtqi-across-nepal-uganda-and-zimbabwe.pdf

20. VAWG Helpdesk Research Report. 2018. Harmful Practices towards Widows. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c5966f3e5274a318116c3d0/VAWG_Helpdesk_Report_196_Widows.pdf

21. UN Women. 2018. Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2018/sdg-report-gender-equality-in-the-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development-2018-en.pdf?la=en&vs=4332

Women are at risk not only because of their gender and other intersecting identities, but also as a result of taking action for rights and justice. Violence and murder of women human rights defenders (WHRDs) is a new way in which VAWG is manifesting, especially in Asia and Latin America where 80% of the murders of WHRDs take place.[22] The Front Line Defender Global Analysis 2019 report notes that WHRDs constitute 13% of the 300 human rights defenders killed working to protect the environment, LBTQI+ rights and indigenous lands in 31 countries. Due to the vast economic and political power of extractive industries, there is an increased risk for WHRDs who defend their land and rural communities and oppose the devastation and pollution of their environment. In Uganda, over 24 organisations that focus on land rights and environmental justice, women's rights and corruption have been attacked in recent years, resulting in injuries and intimidation of civil society personnel.[23] Global Witness reports that WHRDs are regularly subjected to stigmatisation and discrediting campaigns, which use their private life and gender stereotypes to discredit their work and expose them to increased levels of online and offline violence.[24] Both the UN High Commission for Human Rights and human rights activists have highlighted the role of states in targeting WHRDs online for speaking out about rights, equality and justice.[25]

The prevalence and changing forms of violence above are sustained by the multiple barriers that women and girls face accessing justice, including harmful social norms that can discourage the reporting of violence, gaps in legislation, ineffective and unequal implementation of formal laws, customary laws that protect patriarchal systems, limited or no shelters and safe houses, and women's economic dependence on men.[26]

Women with disabilities are often dependent on others (in many cases their abusers), have low levels of awareness and access to information about their rights and the law, and can be perceived as unreliable witnesses.[27]

> ***"The social disadvantages faced by many women and girls with disabilities are compounded by factors such as age and ethnicity which may put them at further risk of violence.[28] In Nepal sexual violence of women and girls with disabilities is considered to be high but there is a lack of official evidence because these crimes are often not reported as their disabilities make them more dependent on the perpetrators, who are usually their husbands, carers or teachers."[29]***
>
> **Mitini, Nepal**

Image below: Laxmi Ghalan, founder of Mitini Nepal and LBTQI+ women's rights organisation, holds a meeting for LBTQI+ people in Nepal.



PHOTO CREDIT: MITINI, NEPAL

LBTQI+ people also face additional barriers, including legislation that criminalises gender identity or sexual orientation. Ineffective justice systems are often underpinned by broader systematic inequalities and negative social norms that generate anti-gender, racist and anti-LBTQI+ sentiments.

In Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro's presidential run in 2018 was characterised by a divisive campaign that encouraged violence, directly targeting women, indigenous and Afro-descendant communities and LBTQI+ activists. The election campaign fuelled existing social divisions and restrictions in Brazil where high rates of femicide and attacks on LBTQI+ activists, police brutality and a failing justice system persist. It is in this political climate that Marielle Franco was murdered. Franco was an influential Black lesbian councillor who campaigned against the disproportionate killings and police brutality directed at Black people in the favelas.[30]

The gaps in access to the justice highlighted[31] above are reflective of the absence of a holistic approach to tackling violence against women that address the root causes of VAWG, which are systematic in nature. Additionally, limited financial resources, especially to women's rights organisations, to support efforts to address systematic causes is a contributing factor to the continuously high levels of VAWG. For example, the Equality



Institute notes that less than 0.002% of annual overseas development assistance goes towards VAWG prevention.[32] A combination of skewed funding mechanisms that privilege large organisations to the detriment of small and medium sized women's rights organisations and the failure to meaningfully engage women's rights organisations in the design and implementation of VAWG prevention programmes contributes to inequity in resource distribution and the exclusion of women's rights organisations from the critical role they play in VAWG prevention.[33] This leads to prevention programmes that tend to focus on symptoms as opposed to root causes of VAWG, such as programmes to dismantle patriarchy and the norms it produces of gender power imbalances, male privileges and dominance and the control of women's lives and bodies.

22. Frontline Defenders, 2020. Frontline Defenders Global Analysis 2019. https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/sites/default/files/global_analysis_2019_web.pdf

23. CIVICUS. 2018. CIVICUS condemns another break-in at the office of HRAPF'. https://www.civicus.org/index.php/media-resources/media-releases/3076-uganda-civicus-condemns-another-break-in-at-the-office-of-hrapf

24. Global Witness. 2018. At What Cost. https://www.globalwitness.org/en/press-releases/deadliest-year-record-land-and-environmental-defenders-agribusiness-shown-be-industry-most-linked-killings/

25. Wasmi, Naser Al. 2018. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights says women are being silenced. The National. https://www.thenational.ae/world/the-americas/un-high-commissioner-for-human-rights-says-women-are-being-silenced-1.774871

26. Zimbabwe Women's Lawyers Association, 2017. Routes to Justice: Response to Violence Against Women. https://www.womankind.org.uk/resource/routes-to-justice/

27. Nepal Disabled Women Association and Womankind Worldwide. 2019. Invisible Realities: Understanding the Lived Experiences of Women with Disabilities in Rural Nepal. https://www.womankind.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/resources/invisible-realities

28. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and HelpAge International. 2012. Ageing in the 21st Century: A Celebration and a Challenge. New York and London: UNFPA and HelpAge International

29. Shadow Report submitted to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in its 19th session for the Country Review of Nepal, 2018, p.2

30. CIVICUS, 2019. Interview with Paula Raccanello Storto.

31. This includes laws, policing, social norms, health care systems

32. The Equality Institute. 2019. Global scoping of advocacy and funding for the prevention of violence against women and girls. https://www.svri.org/sites/default/files/Wilton%20Park%20Spread.pdf

33. Womankind Worldwide. 2014. Prevention Is possible: The role of women's rights organisations in ending violence against women and girls in Ethiopia, Ghana and Zambia. https://www.womankind.org.uk/resource/prevention-is-possible/

Challenging patriarchy and preventing VAWG.

It is nonetheless important to foreground that despite the picture painted earlier, the extent of transnational and community activism against VAWG has never been greater. In the last two years, we have witnessed the appropriation of social media by women's movements to increase public awareness on VAWG, to challenge violence online and offline, and speak out against sexual harassment, rape and women's bodily autonomy. Campaigns such as #MeToo, #NiUnaMenos, #NotYourAsianSideKick, #AbortoLegalYa and #Tal3at are a few examples. The occupation of social media by feminists has not come without challenges. The online sphere has become a site for bullying and other forms of misogyny directed at feminists.[34] Womankind Worldwide notes the silencing effect of online violence and abuse against women's rights activists in Zimbabwe, Nepal and Kenya, with 71% of women's rights activists surveyed in 2018 saying that the threat of online violence and abuse affected their participation on social media.[35]

Despite the violence, the impact of online campaigns in challenging patriarchy, norms and the misogyny that leads to VAWG has led to increasing calls for investment in digital tools and websites for VAWG prevention. Safety tools for women experiencing violence such as SafetiPin in India, Colombia, Kenya, Indonesia and the Philippines, HarassMap in Egypt, Háblame de Respeto in El Salvador are some examples of online applications that contribute to VAWG prevention.[36] It is important to note that online activism does not replace community activism that has historically been used by women's rights organisations and does in fact instigate new, transnational forms of community activism across borders.



Women's rights activists are increasingly using the online sphere to connect with women's movements and demand change.

The role of community activism and life-saving specialist VAWG services provided by women's rights organisations includes shelters and domestic violence helplines, awareness raising initiatives, psychosocial support in shifting harmful attitudes, roles and social norms in relation to VAWG, and have been noted to be important and effective VAWG prevention mechanisms.[37]

Womankind partner Association for Women's Sanctuary and Development (AWSAD) in Ethiopia is recognised as a national expert on shelter provision for survivors of VAWG. They work with a network of shelters across the country and have found that collaboration is vital to enable organisations to fill the gaps in state service provision for women and their children as survivors of violence facing significant psychological and physical harm.[38]

Image below: Sindhu, a resident at a safe house run by Association for women's sanctuary and development's (AWSAD).



PHOTO CREDIT: MAHEDER HAILESELASSIE TADESE FOR WOMANKIND WORLDWIDE

> ***"We learn from each other and grow stronger. We mentor women so that [they do] not give up and work hard. In the monthly meeting we have a savings program. The saving aims to help us get through rough times... thanks to AWSAD I am now a very strong confident woman."***
>
> **Eden, ex-resident, speaking at a learning event in 2018.**

In the context of COVID-19, women's rights organisations are stepping in to provide services to survivors of violence. AWSAD, in collaboration with other shelters, have recently opened a new emergency shelter as the global lockdown has left women and girls at even greater risk of violence and abuse. Another Womankind partner, Musasa in Zimbabwe is providing online counselling services to women facing violence and continue to call on government to put in place efforts to fight VAWG and provide essential services.

However, women's rights organisations, themselves severely underfunded, have no capital and limited resources to advance women's position in financial systems and labour markets that tend to work against, rather than for them. This has made micro-finance initiatives the default strategy to prevent VAWG from an economic perspective, even though there are divergent views about its long-term efficacy as a core strategy to prevent VAWG. In recent years, feminist and women's rights organisations gradually turn to influencing macroeconomics, as the next section examines.

34. Womankind Worldwide. 2018. Breaking the Silence: Ending online violence and abuse against women's rights activists. https://www.womankind.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/resources/breaking-the-silence

35. Ibid. 18 women's rights activists and feminists from 6 different countries completed an online survey distributed by Womankind to its former and current partner women's rights organisations

36. Kerr-Wilson, Alice, Andrew Gibbs, Erika McAslan Fraser, Leane Ramsoomar, Anna Parke, Hussain M A Khuwaja, Rachel Jewkes. 2019. A rigorous global evidence review of interventions to prevent violence against women and girls. https://www.whatworks.co.za/documents/publications/374-evidence-reviewfweb/file

37. Michau, Lori., Horn, J., Bank, A., Dutt, M. & Zimmerman, C. (2015) Prevention of violence against women and girls: lessons from practice. Lancet, 385: 1672-1684.

38. Association for Women's Sanctuary and Development. https://www.womankind.org.uk/partners/association-for-womens-sanctuary-and-development-awsad/

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC RIGHTS

Recommendations.

All women should be able to exercise choice and control over economic opportunities, outcomes and resources, and shape economic decision making at all levels. States should realise women's economic rights for all women by;

- **Adopting gender responsive macro-economic policies** including international investment, trade, debt and taxation policies that centre human rights including women's rights. This should aim to secure a fiscal space for investments in gender responsive and universal quality public services, public social protection systems and sustainable infrastructure. Gender bias should be removed from macro-economic policymaking to ensure that tax and fiscal policies are designed and implemented to recognise, represent, reduce and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work.
- **Tackle illicit financial flows (IFFs),** including cross-border tax abuse, and achieve tax justice, including by enacting progressive and gender responsive tax regimes and adopting a representative, intergovernmental tax body under the auspices of the UN to ensure that all UN member states play an equal role in setting the international standards that guide the international financial architecture including tax policies.
- **Reversing the expansion of corporate capture, power and impunity,** which is enabled by tax incentives and evasion, public-private partnerships, trade and investment agreements. Eliminate the use of Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) and mandatory arbitration clauses. Support the successful negotiation of a UN legally binding instrument to regulate the activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises, including in public spaces, that takes primacy over trade and investment agreements ensuring that all economic and investment decisions are compatible with human rights and the imperative to address climate change.
- **Halt and reverse land grabs** by ensuring the free, prior, informed, and continuous consent of all communities affected by land-based investment. Eliminate public policies that fuel land grabs through urgent, gender responsive action to redress the climate crisis and prioritise sustainable land use and the needs of women and other small-scale food producers. Implement an immediate shift from an extractive to a regenerative economy, ending reliance on fossil fuels and ensure those transitions are just for women and girls, particularly those who are marginalised, including due to their intersecting identities.

- **Ensuring universal social protection and labour rights for all women and girls** working in all sectors including informal sector, gig economy, and domestic work by respecting and promoting their rights to freedom of association and assembly and collective bargaining, ensuring that they get equal pay for work of equal value, have a minimum living wage and work in conducive environment that supports their physical and mental wellbeing.
- **Addressing gender-based violence and discrimination in the world of work for all women** by ratifying and implementing the ILO Convention 189 on domestic workers rights and ILO convention 190 on ending violence and harassment in the world of work.
- **Recognising and supporting the role of diverse feminist and women's rights organisations and movements** in providing intersectional feminist analysis to macro-economic policies and all economic policies and ensure their full and meaningful participation in formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of such policies at all levels.



Bizunesh is one of many women who has been supported to become financially independent through the support of saving schemes facilitated by Siiqqee Women's Development Association in Ethiopia.

PHOTO CREDIT: MAHEDER HAILESELASSIE TADESE FOR WOMANKIND WORLDWIDE



Image above: Many women work in agriculture or the informal sector where they are unprotected from abuses to their rights.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action's (BDPfA) substantive commitments to women's economic rights can be found within two of its twelve critical areas of concern: *women and poverty and women and the economy.* Economic rights, as enshrined in the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (ICESR) and ratified by 164 states, include the right to an adequate standard of living, such as the right to food and the right to housing, which is often not realised even when women work for pay. Appropriate public investment and policies that support the provision of gender transformative universal social protection systems, quality public services – including publicly funded education, health and care services – and sustainable infrastructure, are urgently needed.

For meaningful, transformative and lasting progress on women's economic rights, a rights-based feminist approach to how the global economy is governed and created is needed. All women should be able to exercise choice and control over economic opportunities, outcomes and resources, and shape economic decision making at all levels. In the past 25 years, we have witnessed unprecedented expansion and growth of multinational corporations, their lack of accountability for human rights and environmental violations, and their negative impacts on women workers' rights and women's rights more broadly, as evident in the growing influence of corporations in economic decision making.

A rights-based environment is constrained by an economic model that is organised to exclude and undervalue women's contributions – their labour generally, care work specifically – and limit the voices of women in informing economic decisions.

The economic reality for many women in the majority world is that they are scraping a living in subsistence agriculture or working in the unprotected informal sector. Decent work, including safe working conditions and social protection, is just an aspiration for millions of women workers and globally few women benefit from a living wage or employment rights such as paid maternity and sick leave. The options for women in the formal sector are often limited by gender stereotypes about "women's work" which is less valued, has less status and less remuneration. Government responses to women's economic rights are often

piecemeal and focused on "micro-level interventions", such as offering credit for women entrepreneurs or skills training, which benefits a few individual women and does not address major structural issues like decent work, unpaid care and gender transformative public services. In the section that follows we focus on decent work, taxation and gender responsive budgeting as catalytic areas for women's economic rights.

Structural barriers to women's economic rights.

Corporate power and accountability

Concern has grown about the activities of multinational corporations generally but actions of the extractive industries such as mining, timber, gas and oil production, are especially concerning. Extractive industries harm the environment, fueling the climate crisis, displace communities through land grabs, and fail to deliver development, all of which deepen gender inequalities. AWID's work shows that extractive industries particularly affect indigenous communities, where environmental damage increases women's workload and their ability to provide food and clean water for their families and communities.[39] Women human rights defenders are confronting the negative impacts of extractive industries on their communities and nature, disputing land grabs and displacement, and demanding fair compensation. For many women human rights defenders, they have a long history of struggling for social, economic and environmental justice for their communities.

Multinational corporations seeking to maximise their profits are operating with impunity and exploit workers and the environment through systematic violation of national laws, with few consequences for their actions. The signing of international trade and investment agreements give investors more rights than people. Multilateral institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and the World Trade Organisation also defend corporate interests through policies that support the interests of capital rather than those of people.[40] Civil society organisations are resisting these processes. For example, the Global Campaign to Reclaim Peoples Sovereignty, Dismantle Corporate Power and Stop Impunity has galvanised over 200 organisations, including women's movements such as the Feminists for a Binding Treat, to call on the UN to protect against violations of human rights by corporations and businesses by drawing up a Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights.

Transnational corporations wield enormous power, both formally and informally: 63% of the top 175 global economic entities are transnational corporations, not countries. An alliance of powerful corporations and global elites, in collusion with governments, exerts undue influence over domestic and international decision makers and public institutions. This undermines the realisation of human rights and the protection of the environment, as AWID concludes through "excessive control and appropriation of natural resources, labour, information and finance." This is enhanced by the financialisation of the world economy, through which "financial institutions exert a strong influence over economic governance and the direction of development policy."

Image below: Panellist at a seminar for gender and trade.



PHOTO CREDIT: PALOMA GARCIA FOR ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN DEVELOPMENT

39. AWID. 2017. Women Human Rights Defenders Confronting Extractive Industries: An Overview of Critical Risks and Human Rights Obligations, p.11 See also: Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD). Mining and Women in Asia: Experiences of women protecting their communities and human rights against corporate mining (Chiang Mai:Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), 2009

40. Global Campaign. Call to international action. https://www.stopcorporateimpunity.org/call-to-international-action/



PHOTO CREDIT: ALEX MASSEY
FOR WOMANKIND WORLDWIDE

Loss of resources for advancing gender equality and human rights

Despite states' obligations to ensure economic policies are non-discriminatory, non-regression of rights and prioritise meeting their human rights obligations, regressive tax policies and underfunded public services perpetuate women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work and lack of access to decent work. Tax avoidance, especially by multinational companies and wealthy individuals, has a direct impact on the future of work. It is estimated that countries in the Global South lost an estimated US$1.1 trillion through illicit financial flows (IFFs) in 2013 due to unfair and non-transparent tax rules.[41, 42] Africa loses up to an estimated US$50bn a year.[43] FEMNET estimates that US$2.8 billion is lost annually in East Africa due to tax exemption and incentives for multinational corporations, tax avoidance and tax evasion schemes as strategies to avoid paying corporate tax.[44]

The African Union estimates that 25% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of African countries is lost to corruption every year. 5% of these resources is lost through illicit financial flows with 65% of the outflows drawn from commercial activity of multinationals and 30% from criminal activities.[45] Organisations such as FEMNET have argued that resources recovered from curbing IFFs in Africa can be used to unlock gender inequalities, particularly in areas that remain underfunded despite existing African Union commitments.[46] For example, to counter the fact that bilateral aid remains the dominant source of funding for reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health.[47]

Gender responsive budgeting

Indeed, feminist movements and women's rights organisations globally increasingly draw attention to IFFs as vast resources that are taken away from the public and mobilise to claim those resources for economic and gender justice. Progressive taxation goes hand in hand with gender responsive budgeting in ensuring gender responsive fiscal policies. Gender responsive budgeting, a longstanding field of feminist organising, will mainstream gender analysis into fiscal policies. It can be used to hold governments to account on public spending for public services and can channel more funds into the likes of water, health and education.

Gender responsive budgeting is also an auditing tool that helps analyse the impact of public spending and taxation on women and monitor whether government expenditures are detrimental or favourable to the promotion of gender equality. Fiscal choices have gendered impacts and consequently states should ensure resources promote redistribution and do not increase the burden on women. Progressive tax revenue is therefore a critical enabler of increased investment to fund gender equality policies, women's human rights and public services.

Image on left: Women at the International Women's Day global strike 2020.

41. Womankind Worldwide. 2019. Towards a just feminist economy. https://www.womankind.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/resources/towards-a-just-feminist-economy

42. Global Financial Integrity. 2015. Illicit Financial Flows from Developing Countries: 2004-2013: http://www.gfintegrity.org/report/illicit-financial-flows-from-developing-countries-2004-2013/

43. United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa. 2015. Illicit financial flows: report of the High Level Panel on illicit financial flows from Africa. https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/PublicationFiles/iff_main_report_26feb_en.pdf

44. FEMNET. 2017. Factsheet, 2017. http://femnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Factsheet-on-Gender-and-IFFs-by-FEMNET-2017.pdf

45. African Union/UNECA. 2015. Report of the High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa.

46. FEMNET. 2018. Fight Corruption: Finance Gender Equality. https://femnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Policy-Brief-Fight-Corruption-Finance-Gender-Equality.pdf

47. London School of Hygiene and tropical Medicine. 2015. Donor funding for women's and children's health. https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/women-children-health/0/steps/8990

Women's labour and the economy.

Gender gaps persist in all economic activities. Women substantially lag behind when it comes to access to paid work or productive resources, such as land. Women are less likely to be in paid employment, and when they are their wages are lower and conditions less secure. Across the world, women perform the majority (76.2%) of global unpaid care and domestic work.[48] This unjust distribution of labour has a profound impact on women's ability to earn an income and realise the full spectrum of their human rights. The disproportionate burden of unpaid care work on women is both a product and a driver of gender inequality.

In terms of land ownership there are substantial regional variations but globally women represent 20% of landowners despite making up over 40% of the workforce in agriculture (raising to 50% in sub-Saharan Africa) and being overwhelmingly responsible for ensuring households have enough food.

Globally, women's labour force participation rate is 63% compared to 94% for men.[49] The widest gaps are in North Africa and parts of Asia, where women participation rates in the formal sector are less than 40%. Gender inequalities in the labour market remain pervasive and occupational segregation and gender pay gaps persist everywhere. Occupational segregation means that women are more likely to be concentrated in sectors, such as the caring professions, where low wages, insecure employment contracts and poor working conditions prevail, with few opportunities for training and promotion.[50]

In Africa, informal employment accounts for 79% of women's source of employment as opposed to men at 68%. Informal employment dominates the labour market in both urban and rural areas in Africa, at 76% and 88% respectively.[51] Women workers in the informal sector continue to face decent work deficits because they are not protected by the labour regulations found in the formal sector. The informal sector does not offer the decent work conditions promoted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which includes fair wages, safe working conditions, social protection, opportunities for training and advancement, and the right to organise and bargain collectively.[52] For example, research on Kenya's export processing zones found that 90% of women employees had experienced or witnessed sexual abuse at work, and almost all failed to report it for fear of losing their jobs.[53] Discrimination and violence against diverse groups is still widespread thus affecting access to decent work. This is not to imply that the formal sector lives up to these regulations even when they are in place, nor that it's free from exploitation, discrimination and gender-based violence.

Image below: These women work on a vegetable farm in Chapagaun, Nepal. Despite making up 40% of the workforce in agriculture women represent only 20% of land owners.



PHOTO CREDIT: SAJANA SHRESHT FOR WOMANKIND WORLDWIDE

Another key sector that accounts for limitations and obstacles to women's fair and decent employment is unpaid care and domestic work. An ILO study drawing on data from 83 countries shows that women and girls perform most of the domestic and care work in the home, with women doing 2.6 times more unpaid care and domestic work than men.[54] Care and domestic work are gendered roles, traditionally assigned to women and are not considered productive, thus making it unvalued and unacknowledged. Women therefore continue to be constrained by the triple burden – engaging in unpaid care work, productive labour outside the home and contributing to the wellbeing of their communities.[55] This has a negative impact of women's wellbeing and ability to participate in paid work.

A closer look at migrant labour patterns in domestic work – although paid but often underpaid with unfavourable working conditions – allows us to map the extent of global gender inequalities. Women constitute 80% of domestic workers and 50 million out of the estimated 67 million domestic workers being employed in the informal economy.[56] Only 10% of countries have domestic workers covered by labour laws with their work conditions generally unregulated.[57] Domestic working is a highly racialised sector, serving as the main means for poor Black, Indigenous and Dalit women and girls in the Global South to earn a living whilst facing intersecting discrimination based on sex, race and caste.[58]

This reproductive economy is a highly undervalued contribution to our societies and the global economy, given that unpaid care and domestic work is valued at an estimated 10 trillion USD a year globally, or 13% of GDP.[59] Increasing international migration of women to economically wealthier countries, where the few employment options open to them are often in the domestic and caring sectors, leads to the ILO to estimate that 11.5 million domestic workers are international migrants.[60] Migrant domestic workers do not enjoy the same legal protection and employment rights as other workers because they are isolated in private homes and at risk of exploitation.[61] In 2013 the ILO passed the Domestic Workers' Convention, (No. 189), which is the outcome of advocacy efforts by domestic workers and allies including women's rights organisations and movements but to date is only ratified by 29 Governments. Feminist movements and trade unions have welcomed the June 2019 ILO Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment in the workplace, which they worked long and hard to advocate for and they continue to call for its ratification and implementation as a key next step. In order to achieve women's economic rights, this report reiterates the feminist demands for gender transformative public services, universal social protection systems, the redistribution, recognition and reduction of unpaid care, access to decent work, sustainable infrastructure, and progressive gender responsive public resources and taxation.

48. Samman, E., Presler-Marshall, E., and Jones, N. 2016. Women's work: mothers, children and the global childcare crisis. Overseas Development Institute. https://www.odi.org/publications/10349-women-s-work-mothers-children-and-global-childcare-crisis

49. UN Women. 2015. Progress of the world's women 2015-2016: transforming economies, realizing rights. New York: UN Women. Available at: http://progress.unwomen.org/en/2015/pdf/UNW_progressreport.pdf

50. Ibid

51. International Labour Organisation. 2018. Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture. Third edition. ILO: Geneva. Page 30

52. International Labour Organisation. 2002. Decent Work and the Informal Economy. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_policy/documents/publication/wcms_210442.pdf

53. Gender and Development Network (GADN). 2017. Stepping up how governments can contribute to women's economic empowerment. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/536c4ee8e4b0b60bc6ca7c74/t/5899c0edbf629af011f45875/1486471511934/GADN+Stepping+up+briefing.pdfADN

54. Addati, Laura, Umberto Cattaneo, Valeria Esquivel and Isabel Valarino. 2018. Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work. Geneva. International Labour Organisation. https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_633135/lang--en/index.htm

55. Womankind Worldwide. 2019. Towards a just feminist economy. https://www.womankind.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/resources/towards-a-just-feminist-economy

56. International Labour Organisation. nd. Domestic Workers. https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/domestic-workers/who/lang--en/index.htm

57. Ibid.

58. See for example ILO Domestic Workers Convention. 2011 (No. 189) Access at: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C189

59. Oxfam. 2020. Time to Care: Unpaid and Underpaid Care work and the global inequality crisis. https://www.oxfam.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Time-to-Care_Oxfam-2020_Summary-2.pdf

60. International Labour Organisation. Nd. ILO Global Estimates on Migrant Workers: Special Focus on Migrant Domestic Workers. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_436330.pdf

61. The ILO Domestic Workers Convention 180 was published in 2011, has only been ratified by 27 governments.

RESOURCING WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND FEMINIST MOVEMENTS

Recommendations.

Feminist and women's rights movements and organisations play a central role in achieving women's rights, yet very few resources reach them. Governments, donor agencies and funders should support the resourcing of feminist and women's rights movements by;

- **Increase direct support for feminist movements particularly in the Global South.** This means long-term, flexible and core support to constituency-led feminist movements, including small and medium-sized organisations.
- **Increase funding through feminist and women's funds** that have a strong infrastructure and appropriate tools to support and accompany women's organisations globally.
- **Allocate specific budget** for organisations and initiatives that work at the intersections of identities and multiple forms of discrimination.
- **Tack financial commitments** for promoting gender equality in both national budgets and international flows of official development assistance (ODA).
- **Ensure adequate funding is allocated** to enable organisations to meet Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning requirements, and ensure that those requirements are in line with feminist principles of Monitoring and Evaluation.[62]
- **Be accountable to feminist movements.** Establish clear and ongoing structures for movements to inform your strategies, priorities, and mechanisms for resourcing.
- **Become an advocate** for more and better funding for feminist movements.

99%

of gender related international aid fails to reach women's rights & feminist organisations directly.[63]

Image on right: Sally Dura, National Coordinator of the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe.

62. https://www.awid.org/publications/strengthening-monitoring-and-evaluation-womens-rights-12-insights-donors

63. OECD. 2019. Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-topics/Aid-to-gender-equality-donor-charts-2019.pdf



PHOTO CREDIT: WOMEN'S COALITION OF ZIMBABWE



PHOTO CREDIT: PALOMA GARCIA
FOR ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN DEVELOPMENT

Image above: Activists at a feminist school learning about illicit financial flows.

Feminist movements and women's rights organisations are thriving despite the scarce resources that reach them. Yet, they are getting more and more vocal about the way resources are distributed – and the way they are generated. Feminists analyse national budgets, international aid and other forms of funding and advocate for more and better funding on all levels. And, even though a minor percentage of relevant funding reaches women's rights and feminist organisations directly, there is a growing interest among funders in feminist funding principles, practices and modalities.

The COVID-19 crisis presents a critical moment for funders to show up for feminist movements and women who are often the "first responders" in communities all over the world. Austerity would be disastrous for societies, particularly for women and marginalised communities. In order to come out of the crisis and rebuild societies, feminists and women's rights movements need more and better resources. What is meant by better resources? A growing body of feminist research on resourcing points to sustainable long-term core funding that is more responsive to the needs of groups and movements, that takes on forms and modalities that are accessible to groups, that entails simple and accessible process of application and reporting – these are just some of the key features.

Meanwhile, three-quarters of gender equality funding never leaves development agencies, and the remaining money goes almost entirely to civil society organisations and international non-governmental organisations that do not play the same role as feminist movements and women's rights organisations. Scarcity of resources and inaccessible modalities of existing funding also fuel unnecessary competition among organisations, stand in the way of collaboration, and impose the need to make adjustments to their priorities and ways of working.

For example, project-based funding, as opposed to a long-term flexible core funding, creates a state of permanent financial insecurity on the one hand, and on the other, doesn't allow organisations the flexible, agile and context-responsive planning that meets their vision. Strict project-based work also limits the time and energy available for spontaneous initiatives and alliances that are essential to long-term movement building and transformative social change.

The alarming trend in a number of countries to restrict or criminalise "foreign funding" does more than limit access to financial resources; it is also a political tactic to isolate civil society and cut it off from the international community, movements and solidarity. These restrictions are a feature of the closure of civic space by authoritarian-leaning regimes that result in greater financial and operational constraints for activists and greater politically-biased scrutiny and harassment by state organs.

Feminist organisations and women's funds have long advocated for more feminist and transformative funding policies, practices and models to support feminist organising.[64] A funding ecosystem is needed that is truly transformative and supports the priorities and needs of diverse women's movements and of marginalised groups and communities, not just established civil society organisations. Women's funds are an important mechanism within this funding ecosystem given that 100% of their grant making is directed towards feminist movements and gender justice. Women's funds have themselves prioritised movement needs in designing their grant making models and have put an emphasis on flexible long-term funding as an acknowledgement of the labour needed to pursue long-term transformations.

Donors need to give special attention to support women's movements in terms of eliminating trafficking and modern slavery to ensure the economic rights of disadvantaged and vulnerable women through sustained economic opportunities.

For the last 70 years, since the 1951 revolution, Nepal has been struggling to transform its feudal economic and political system, and to leave behind the ingrained hierarchies based on caste and gender discrimination. The chronic poverty of Dalit women at the bottom of the caste hierarchy has meant they have faced structural barriers to economic opportunities for generations. Financial resources should be available to address this. This may require changes in policies, resource allocations and institutional arrangements for funding availability of womens rights organisations. Dalit women's rights issues should be fed into the policy dialogue with government and other donors and be part of the longer-term strategy to support feminist organisations. The long-term strategy and implementation commitment to gender equality from the Dalit and marginalised perspective is an essential way of mainstreaming gender equality and it requires clear commitment from government, donors and civil society to this way of advocating a new, transformative funding ecosystem.

64. AWID. 2019. Towards a Feminist Funding Ecosystem. Toronto. AWID. https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/awid_funding_ecosystem_2019_final_eng.pdf



PHOTO CREDIT: BILLY MUTAI FOR WOMANKIND WORLDWIDE

Image above: Jane Anyango, Director of Polycom Development Project speaking at the Beijing+25 Africa regional review.

Conclusion.

International commitments to advance the rights of women and girls are under threat by conservative, populist, and fundamentalist agendas that are pushing back against rights enshrined in the legally binding Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women. We are seeing increasing attacks on women's and diverse people's human rights globally in different spheres and too little progress in many areas, including violence against women and girls and women's economic rights. In this report, we have highlighted issues raised by women's rights organisations, from macroeconomic inequalities to ever alarming rates of VAWG, including attacks against women human rights defenders who experience violence and have restrictions imposed on their activities in the public arena in defence of women's human rights.

The review of the BDPfA and the SDGs, as well as periodic reviews of progress in the implementation of international human rights frameworks and legally binding instruments such as CEDAW, the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), provide opportunities for feminists and women's rights organisations to assess how the call to 'leave no one behind' is being put into practice by governments. This concept promoted in the 2030 Agenda recognises that women are not a homogeneous group and that the needs, rights, and voices of the most marginalised should be privileged and those with the least power and income and facing intersecting discriminations, should take precedence over other groups. However, current economic policies implemented by governments and financial institutions exacerbate entrenched gender inequalities.[65]

WROs are calling for recognition of the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination which cause further exclusion and oppression of some women based on their ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity among other identities. The review process supporting grassroots WROs to prepare their own shadow report has brought to the fore the demands of these diverse groups which inform the recommendations throughout.

65. GAD Network and FEMNET Briefing Push no one behind, July 2019.

Womankind Worldwide

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