

NURTURING THE BEATING HEART OF FEMINIST MOVEMENTS

LESSONS DRAWN FROM WOMANKIND WORLDWIDE'S
MOVEMENT STRENGTHENING FUND



**Womankind
Worldwide**

Author

This paper was written by Hope Chigudu and is based on evidence and learning from nine initiatives delivered by Womankind partners through its Movement Strengthening Fund between October 2021 and March 2022. Interviews between the author and four organisations supplemented this: Female Prisoners Support Trust (FEMPRIST) in Zimbabwe, Setaweet in Ethiopia, Pakasipiti in Zimbabwe and Minority Womyn in Action (MWA) in Kenya.

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Womankind learning paper series

This report is part of an ongoing series of learning papers which aim to capture and collate some of the knowledge, learning and evidence around the focus and effectiveness of our work with partners. By sharing this learning, we hope to provide new knowledge around feminist approaches that support and strengthen feminist movements.

About Womankind Worldwide

Womankind Worldwide is a global women's rights organisation working with feminist movements to transform the lives of women. Womankind supports feminist movements to strengthen and grow by carrying out diverse joint activities, including advocacy and communications work, women's rights programming rather than service delivery, awareness-raising, knowledge-sharing, research, capacity development and fundraising.

Partners receiving grants from the Movement Strengthening Fund (MSF)

Setaweet, Ethiopia
Minority Womyn in Action (MWA), Kenya
National Indigenous Women's Federation (NIWF), Nepal
Sankalpa, Nepal
Strategic Initiative for the Horn of Africa (SIHA), based in Uganda
Deaf Women Included, Zimbabwe
Female Prisoners Support Trust (FEMPRIST), Zimbabwe
Pakasipiti, Zimbabwe
Women and Land Zimbabwe (WLZ)

Definitions

Women's rights organisations (WROs): These are women-led organisations working to advance women's rights and gender justice.

Feminist movements: These are broad social movements led by women and their organisations that campaign for women's rights and gender justice at national, regional and international levels. They include WROs and other actors, including activists, academics, journalists, lawyers and trade unionists.

List of Acronyms

DWI	Deaf Women Included
FEMPRIST	Female Prisoners Support Trust
GALCK	Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya
LBTQI	Lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex + (LBTQI+) (and other sexual and gender identities including pansexual and Two-Spirit)*
MWA	Minority Womyn in Action
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
MSF	Movement Strengthening Fund
NIWF	National Indigenous Women's Federation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODA	Official development assistance
RWA	Rural Women's Assembly
SRHR	Sexual reproductive health and rights
SIHA	Strategic Initiative of the Horn of Africa
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
WCoZ	Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe
WLZ	Women and Land Zimbabwe

** We acknowledge there is no universally accepted umbrella term to capture the diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, nor do our partners use the same terminology as each other. Therefore, in this report we will use the acronyms partners use in the context of their projects and LBTQI+ at other times, with the intention of including everyone. The divergent terms used by our partners also reflect the continued challenges of the politics of identity, inclusion and exclusion, which exists within the LBTQI+ spectrum.*

*** In this report, we have used the term movement strengthening where we are referring to the contexts in which the Movement Strengthening Fund has been used. Strengthening is the preferred term used by Womankind because we are not part of the local movements and cannot be an active agent in building them. Movement building is only used twice in this report to describe the active role of partners in building their movements.*

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ABOUT WOMANKIND AND ITS MOVEMENT STRENGTHENING FUND (MSF)

PART 1

Womankind Worldwide is a global women's rights organisation, working in partnership with women's rights organisations (WROs) and feminist movements to transform the lives of women in Africa and South Asia. Womankind's focus on supporting feminist movements is at the heart of its strategy. It is based on the understanding that sustainable and transformed improvements in women's rights are achieved when there is a critical mass of actors collectively acting together towards a common goal at local, regional and global level. This activity goes beyond advocacy and policy objectives often achieved in formal spaces; it also seeks change in informal spaces at the level of beliefs, attitudes, values, with cultural norms and practices. Womankind works with women's rights organisations principally because it understands that these are:

“

The sites from which movements are built, supported, serviced and governed ... they are the primary structures in or through which movement leaders, activists, and members are organised, trained, capacitated, protected and energised to pursue the transformational agenda of the movement.”

As a partner-led organisation, Womankind supports its partners on their agendas through diverse activities such as advocacy and communications initiatives, women's rights programming, awareness-raising, knowledge-sharing, research, capacity development and fundraising.

The Movement Strengthening Fund (MSF) was conceptualised during Womankind's previous strategy, which was operational between 2016 and 2021. Within this timeframe, Womankind ran a small pilot of the MSF from unrestricted funds to understand if this was a useful mechanism for partners working in movements. In 2021, Womankind finalised its new long-term strategy for change and a core demand of partners through this process was to continue to generate and move more flexible funding to them over the next 10 years. In response to this, the MSF was launched to shift more flexible funds to partners to support movement strengthening appropriate to their objectives and context.

¹ Batiwala, S. (2021): Changing their World: Concepts and Practices of Women's Movements
<https://www.awid.org/publications/changing-their-world-concepts-and-practices-womens-movements>

The Movement Strengthening Fund (MSF)

The aim of the MSF is to provide resources that strengthen the processes of movement strengthening without an overt focus on the aims of movements. Womankind believes movement dynamics are relational, and it is the connections, trust and understanding forged between diverse women that can make or break the subsequent collective actions that gender equality and feminist movements seek to deliver. In this way, collective action is not just *what* women do together, but *how* they do it.

As part of Womankind's commitment to being partner-led and living by its feminist principles of partnership, the MSF places funds in the hands of local actors, quickly and with many flexible conditions. This is significant in a world where women's rights organisations receive only 0.13% of the total official development assistance (ODA) and 0.4% of all gender-related² funding. Flexible funding meets those movement-strengthening needs often not funded by other big funders. Furthermore, Womankind introduced light-touch reporting requirements while remaining compliant with UK law and regulation around grant-making, so partners could focus on their work without the burden of paperwork.



The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA) works with women's rights organisations in the Horn of Africa to strengthen their capacity, build regional solidarity, initiate advocacy and document lessons learned.

² Dolker, T. (2020) The Need to Resource Feminist Movements Has Never Been Greater: Where is the Money for Feminist Organizing? <https://msmagazine.com/2020/12/01/giving-tuesday-the-need-to-resource-feminist-movements-has-never-been-greaterso-wheres-the-money-for-feminist-organizing/>

SUMMARY

In 2021/22, Womankind created its Movement Strengthening Fund (MSF)³ and sent out a call for partners to submit proposals to strengthen their movements. In total, 23 WROs applied (three in Ethiopia, four in Kenya, five in Nepal, three in Uganda and seven in Zimbabwe). All applications were from formally registered organisations, apart from one from an unregistered group. A total of nine grants were disbursed.

After each initiative was complete, the partners wrote well thought out reports highlighting how the resources had been used to advance the objectives of their work. Womankind felt the reports partners shared and the lessons harvested from them were worth sharing with those interested in feminist movements in particular and social transformation more generally.

This paper focuses on selected strategies highlighted in the partners' reports – those that speak deeply, not just to our heads, but to our hearts and spirits as passionate movement actors. It also summarises the learning, as far as possible. The paper also highlights the attempts partners made to organise and strengthen movements based on different identities, location and circumstances.

The strategies make it clear that the spectrum of how power is organised moves from individual or agency, to the power of organisations and movements. The power of movements is gained through growing the numbers and increasing the quality of links to us as activists and to others and influencing those with 'power over' and decision-makers at different levels of society. The importance of working at both formal (to change laws and policies) and informal levels (to change attitudes, taboos, stigma norms and values) is underlined. A year is a short time, but even then it is possible to identify shifts made or indicators of progress and lessons in movement strengthening.

Emerging key lessons from the nine organisations include the following:

One organisation can't meet the needs of all women, but can establish a robust presence that:

- ▶ Meets the broader mission of feminist movements.
- ▶ Identifies women's own priorities and enhances their strategies.
- ▶ Walks alongside them at every stage, building organisational infrastructure to support feminist movement strengthening.
- ▶ Builds trust while managing and strengthening relationships.
- ▶ Creates spaces for women to share their stories without judgement; providing support to collective multigenerational leadership while embracing and mentoring young people, intersectional organising and putting contested issues of sexuality on the agenda.
- ▶ Builds vertical and horizontal linkages with a range of allies, thereby enhancing strategic political power; using existing resources and generating new tools that raise critical political consciousness and feminist analysis.

³ The MSF is one resource among a range of others that the Womankind provides.
<https://www.womankind.org.uk/resources/>

- ▶ Strengthens the inner (self-care) so that it can serve the outer; and uses different forms of creativity to share messages.
- ▶ Remembers to identify the shifts movements make whether big or small, as a result of their work and the impact on the world.

For funders, the work of the activists makes it clear that if flexible funds are available, women's rights actors have the capacity to choose the activities they want to focus on and the resources they need. Therefore, there is a need to balance power between the funders and the grantees, to invest in building trusting relationships and listen to the voices of those most affected by gender injustice. The importance of analysing current funding mechanisms and employing decolonising approaches that do away with models that reinforce excessive donor power structures, demeaning language and policies, cannot be over emphasised. Small actions give feminist movements hope and a sense of possibility.

The National Indigenous Women's Federation (NIWF) coordinates a network of Indigenous women's organisations in Nepal. Its aim is to ensure Indigenous women can benefit from inclusive democracy, human rights and social justice.

Image courtesy of NIWF



Conclusion

Movement strengthening, unlike target campaigns, is an ongoing task and will never be fully concluded as feminist movements grow, shift and change all the time with new actors and organisations engaging with varying degrees of feminist consciousness, bias, approaches and links. The lessons harvested through the MSF indicate that even though the supported initiatives were small, they have already had a level of impact.

What the reports reveal is a degree of certainty, urgency and intentionality. Movement strengthening work at local/grassroots level is connecting people and giving them hope in the feminist movements in their countries. New supporting and nurturing relationships are being forged and strengthened. There is evidence the partners are engaging authentically, assertively and courageously with both their communities and national institutions. They are raising awareness, influencing, challenging and sharing information. They are doing all this work while taking time out to focus on self-care at an individual and organisational level.

Although all the nine partners work in difficult patriarchal contexts that include dehumanising global forces and other limiting policies at national levels, they are using whatever resources are available, and continue to spit liberating seeds in an effort ensure the future health, dynamism and wholesome flowering of the women rights sector. They are doing this using feminist approaches, while remaining accountable to their constituencies and the funders.

Recommendation for funders

The recommendations below emphasise the importance of flexible funding:

Meeting strategic needs: Given the lessons derived from the partners' activities, feminist movements need flexible funding (less rigidly structured, earmarked and project-based) so they can invest in strategic needs that strengthen their work, connect with each other and ensure learning is internalised as they experiment with new conceptual frameworks, convene to converse, reflect and troubleshoot.

Mainstream reflection and learning: Feminist movements need flexible funding to enable them to transfer their reflections and learning to much wider audiences to build new conversations and constituencies within the public at large.

Promote self and collective care: Feminist movements need funding to ensure their work does not fragment them and they have the ability to withstand processes of rusting and erosion. They need to engage with strategies focusing on holistic development with an emphasis on intellectual, psychological, physical and spiritual stimulation and wellbeing. All this emphasises the very real need to look after themselves, 'time out' to nurture and look at one's sources of inspiration.

- ▶ **Enhance agility:** Flexible funding enables movements to respond with agility and creativity to what matters the most to the constituencies and to overlooked critical political issues that might be important to them but do not attract the interests of funders.

For feminist movements

- ▶ **Create spaces for reflection and contestation:** Encourage inner personal, organisational and movement reflections. Reflect on the spectacles and lenses that inform the practice of the work and critique these. Critical reflection is core to the qualities of a feminist movement. Listen politically to the constituents so approaches are based on deep contextual knowledge.
- ▶ **Review contextual shifts regularly:** Ensure contextual knowledge is updated regularly and that they respond creatively. It is also important for WROs and feminist movements to bear in mind that as contexts change and new challenges emerge, different strategic choices and approaches have to be made. This implies remaining smart, adaptive, creative and infusing deep learning into the lives of their organisations and movements. A robust gender power analysis to act on the risks associated with gender-neutral approaches that ignore gendered impacts of crisis.
- ▶ **Be inclusive:** Include silenced voices, persons, positions and ideas of people that are normally overlooked in your movement work, such as ex-prisoners, women with disabilities and sex workers. This means continuing to identify who is at the table and who is missing. Focusing only on a few categories of people leaves the work of liberation unfinished.
- ▶ **Look out for emerging young feminists and nurture them:** Remember to continue mentoring emerging feminists, listen to leadership sparks, keep an eye on where potential lies and expand it. This is one of the ways of ensuring the continuity of feminist movements.

INTRODUCTION

PART 2

Womankind's last strategy (2016–2021) shifted from supporting individual WROs to supporting feminist movements. Womankind believes feminist values enable activists to envisage a future beyond patriarchy and that investing in the collective power of anti-racist, feminist movements can propel transformative change. The organisation roots power and decision-making in the regions. Like other sister funds, Womankind follows feminist principles of philanthropy, such as refraining from imposing external agendas, disrupting and healing unequal power relations to transforming the colonial structure still present in philanthropy and bringing a feminist lens to learning.⁴ Womankind places resources in the hands of the partners to meet the needs they identify as critical to sustaining their work and lives.

Key points of inspiration and motivation for Womankind include the following:

Shifting power, promoting inclusivity, partnerships, feminist documentation, research, and horizontal collaboration between partners. Womankind counters anti-racism and applies a decolonising lens to its practice. The organisation heightens partners' agency in their purpose and strategy, as partners are key to agenda-setting, prioritisation and decision-making. Womankind is reviewing its feminist leadership, accountability and governance structures to support their goals. This will fundamentally change the organisation, including locating more power in the Global South.⁵

It is against this deep sense of inspiration, dedication and commitment that Womankind resourced nine feminist organisations to carry out a range of movement strengthening activities in Ethiopia, Kenya, Nepal, Uganda and Zimbabwe. These organisations support the most marginalised and under-resourced women to build their movements from grassroots communities upwards. They are at different stages of organisational growth; but they all have strong movement bases and are led by women of particular identities, locations and circumstances. They work in different political contexts and are also influenced by the strengths of civil society in their countries. One of the things they have in common is they all work to build movements that eliminate structural violence.



Image courtesy of DWI

Deaf Women Included (DWI) is a women's rights organisation in Zimbabwe whose mission is to empower deaf women and other women with disabilities to claim their rights.

⁴ Transforming Philanthropy with Feminist Principles. (2021). <https://www.alliancemagazine.org/blog/transforming-philanthropy-with-feminist-principles/>

⁵ (Womankind Strategy update for the partners June 2022)

Movement strengthening contexts

In a short paper, it is not possible to exhaust all the contextual issues affecting partners, but here are a few examples.

- ▶ **Laws and policies that discriminate against lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender, queer, intersex people (LBTQI+):** Nepal excluded, there remains a great deal of work to be done in the other four countries to achieve just and democratic societies where everyone is free to live a safe and dignified life, have a family and contribute to society. Violence against LBTQI+ people is as common as the erosion of sexual and reproductive rights. In Kenya and Zimbabwe, regular attacks and targeted rape against lesbian women in poor townships is common. There are also growing limitations on freedom of speech and assembly for these groups. A report by the Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya (GALCK) highlights the culture of violence, fear and lawlessness and how it affects the LBTQI+ community.

“

Laughter, solidarity, and conviviality were in the air at a quietly remarkable event in a Nairobi hotel on February 12. Yet the subject matter discussed at the event was anything but light: depression and suicide, public stripping and rape.

”

GALCK was presenting its report *“Research on the Lived Realities of Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women in Kenya.”*⁶

- ▶ **Exclusion and marginalisation:** In all five countries, social exclusion is one of the factors of impoverishment and marginalisation. Different social groups are marginalised on the basis of caste, ethnicity, language, religion, sex, class, sexual orientation, disability and geographical territory. Many are not proportionally represented in their countries’ politics, legislative and executive bodies, judicial and civil services. They are also often not even intentionally represented in civil society organisations. For example, the National Indigenous Women’s Federation in Nepal (NIWF) highlights issues related to gender and caste/ethnic discrimination in the state structure and policies, while Setaweet in Ethiopia highlights issues related to the marginalisation of young married women.
- ▶ **Closing space for civil society:** Governments in the five countries continue to promote fundamentalist ideologies by cracking down on dissent and are increasingly using security to criminalise and stigmatise activists and shut down organisations seeking to challenge the status quo. There is limited freedom of association, speech and assembly. The CIVICUS Monitor tool that tracks the space available for citizen action has categorised Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Uganda as repressed, and Kenya and Nepal as obstructed.⁷ In both Uganda and Zimbabwe, new NGO acts have been proposed which, if passed, will turn organisations into welfare entities and curtail their ability to engage in advocacy and campaigns.

⁶ Research on the Lived Realities of Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women in Kenya. (2016). <https://www.icop.or.ke/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Research-on-the-lived-experiences-of-LBQ-women-in-Kenya.pdf>

⁷ Map - CIVICUS - Tracking conditions for citizen action

- ▶ **Environmental crises and climate change:** This has accelerated with alarming speed, leaving many communities coping with drought, floods, non-potable water, illness, crop collapse, hunger and displacement. Climate change has increased the economic vulnerability, insecurity and exploitation of women. It has also fuelled migration and further exploitation. An example is Nepal, where flooding is frequent.
- ▶ **Unbridled resource grabs:** Land-grabbing and extreme resource extraction are driven and enabled by both state and non-state actors. Despite women's central roles in agriculture production in Zimbabwe and across the Southern Africa region, it is agonising to see they are often excluded from property and land ownership on gender grounds. In general, women's rights to land are extremely insecure. The traditional structures of power and authority continue to marginalise their access to land and to widen the inequality gap. In this scenario, women are frequently believed to only have secondary rights to land, making them reliant on their husbands, male relatives and social networks.⁸
- ▶ **Militarisation of politics and economics:** Most governments in Africa are expanding their military budget and responding to crises as security matters, rather than devoting the requisite resources to addressing the underlying systems that perpetuate poverty, inequality and economic exclusion of the continent and its people. The over-reliance on military hardware and operations as the security parameter (including increasing invasion of privacy through digital surveillance) is a direct threat to the security of women, girls and gender non-conforming communities. Since November 2020 in Ethiopia there has been conflict in the northern region of Tigray in which violence against women and girls has been vicious. The conflict has also made movement strengthening difficult.

Internal contextual issues affecting feminist movements

- ▶ **Working in silos:** Working in silos, without a map of inclusivity showing who is at the table and who is missing, is common in feminist movements. Ironically, even movements of those who feel excluded sometimes exclude others who also need a home. In Uganda, urban sisters often forget rural women. In Zimbabwe, the feminist movement tends to attract visible members without having any exchange of information or experiences with those regarded as different such as disabled women and women ex-prisoners. In Nepal, key issues are siloed and it is hard to work outside of these, which limits what movements can do. In the civil society space, opportunities tend to be captured by elite women in the feminist movement, constraining marginalised women's rights organisations in terms of resources, finances, projects and initiatives.¹⁰ Working in silos has negative consequences for feminist movements as this leads to wasted opportunities and resources. Patriarchy is a huge mountain; to overcome it needs collaboration and a joint front.
- ▶ **Power sharing:** Power sharing and multigenerational tensions remain. As a result, there are limited nurturing, mentoring and providing opportunities for young feminists in a supportive manner.

⁸ Toro, B. (2016) Rural Women and the Land Question in Zimbabwe: The Case of Mutasa District. The International Journal of African Development. <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1075&context=ijad>

¹⁰ Amnesty International. (2021). 'I don't know if they realized I was a person': Rape and other sexual violence in the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr25/4569/2021/en/>

In addition, there is a divergence of views between younger and older women, especially around the contested issues of sexuality. The unique perspectives and strategies for organising in today's world that young women can bring to movements they are part of are not always appreciated. There are some deliberate efforts aimed at strengthening multigenerational networks and pools of feminist leaders, but more could be done.

- ▶ **Limited resources:** There are not many funders willing to support movements in their own right, as they are not organisations or projects, and do not fit neatly in the usual donor strategic framework formats. Additionally, the achievements of movements are not easy to measure. The sustainability of feminist movements becomes difficult and in desperation, some end up becoming ordinary NGOs where feminist political agendas for change are watered down.

Not all is negative

Today more than ever, what can be seen in all five countries is the diversity, resilience, innovation, creativity and sheer gumption of a vast and prolific NGO sector that is an integral aspect of the terrain of increasing individual and community freedom, rights and survival. There are many new forms of organising. Women are realising they must help themselves, as governments have failed to meet their needs. They are on the front lines, using their knowledge and collective power to defend their rights, protect their families and communities. Internet and communication technologies are intertwined in our lives, creating immense economic opportunities and potential for increased connection and political influence.

Women, whether they are farmers or cross border traders are growing their economic influence in their homes and countries, playing a catalytic role towards achievement of the transformational economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development. Disadvantaged communities are becoming assertive in an organised form as they claim their ethnic identities. The world is becoming aware of some of the stigma surrounding disability, caste, sexual orientation and gender identity, and the plight of women ex-prisoners. Different groups are acquiring the language to express themselves while those discriminated against are fighting for inclusion.

In Nepal, the feminist movement along with other activists, lobbied for a third gender category, making it possible for LBTQI+ people to claim their identity and rights.

Cross-movement strengthening is also becoming more common with national, continental, and international feminist forums taking place and acting in solidarity with marginalised women. In Uganda, the Feminist Forum stood in solidarity with LBTQI+ groups facing government crackdowns in 2022.¹¹

Global feminist movements are also strengthening their organising in the wake of increased backlash. For example, the SRHR movement SHE Decides took solidarity action in the wake of the overturning of the legal right to abortion in the USA (Roe v Wade) understanding that the loss of abortion rights in the USA will have implications for SRHR access for all women and girls all over the world.¹²

¹⁰ Saba, A and Hewitt, S. (2019) The Diversity of Nepal's Women's Movement Must be Recognized. <https://www.recordnepal.com/the-diversity-of-nepals-womens-movement-must-be-recognized>

¹¹ 2022 – Uganda Feminist Forum

¹² The Movement | She Decides

METHODOLOGY

This paper is informed by the reports submitted to Womankind, which were followed up by conversations with four organisations; the Female Prisoners Support Trust (FEMPRIST) in Zimbabwe, Setaweet in Ethiopia, Pakasipiti in Zimbabwe and Minority Womyn in Action (MWA) in Kenya.

The different movements, all working on different issues, in different countries and with different constituencies, shared their reports, which were a mixture of stories, case studies, poems, music and videos, all of which add greatly to the concept of inclusion. All partners who shared their stories with Womankind are feminists on a mission to end different kinds of exclusion and to create truly inclusive feminist movements.

To understand the work and derive lessons, the reports and related materials were read, listened to and watched and, where it was necessary, additional information was sought using interviews. The questions that guided the reading and interviews were:

- ▶ What strategies and approaches were used to strengthen each initiative?
- ▶ Are there elements that emerged to demonstrate Womankind's theory of change in strengthening feminist movements?
- ▶ What are some of the lessons that can be drawn from the various strategies and activities to inform other feminist movements?
- ▶ What can be learnt about creating a flexible funding mechanism to strengthen feminist movements?



Disability is a feminist issue. One of the core values of feminism is to be inclusive and value women's diversity. In order to reflect feminist values, feminist movements need to be inclusive and respectful spaces, where women from diverse backgrounds and experiences work as a team.

NUGGETS OF MOVEMENT STRENGTHENING AND LESSONS

This report picks a few strategies from the reports and interviews and shares them by indicating their relevance to movement strengthening and the lessons that could be learnt from them. Some of the strategies are common among all the partners and others unique to specific organisations. The fact that some of the organisations' strategies might not be mentioned in this paper does not mean they are not important or relevant. There will be other ways of recognising and using them.

We invite you to join Womankind on this the journey of exploring how change happens and how the feminist movements in different countries are disrupting the status quo.

“ Understanding power and how it works to exclude, is what gives those who are excluded the power to change things. – JASS ”

Personal transformation (Power within)

Feminism insists that personal and social transformation go hand in hand. ‘The personal is political’, and change begins with us, not ‘them’.¹³ Personal transformation is about agency. It starts the journey of progressive, transformative change. Professor John Gaventa, a political sociologist, educator and civil society practitioner has written on participation and power, noting *“invisible power shapes the psychological and ideological boundaries of participation, people’s sense of self, and acceptance of the status quo, even their own superiority or inferiority”*.¹⁴

The work of all the organisations led to personal transformation using different processes and strategies. However, just one example that used safe spaces for personal transformation is shared. This is a space where different voices meet and talk, not only about showing up but also about building confidence to occupy the space and having the courage to participate in it authentically.

Female Prisoners Support Trust (FEMPRIST) in Zimbabwe is a women’s rights organisation whose mission is to counsel, rehabilitate and reintegrate former female offenders into society. In its proposal to the MSF, FEMPRIST asked for funds to facilitate ‘*Women safe spaces of dialogue for gender equality*’ where women excluded, stigmatised and labelled by society could meet, feel safe and express themselves.

The space created by FEMPRIST gave ex-prisoners a platform to find their voices and their stories. In these spaces, women talked with honesty about the pain and shame they felt once they left prison. The women felt validated, energised and transformed by being listened to. They felt included.

¹³ Srilatha Batiwala, Oxfam key note address, (March 2018)

¹⁴ ‘Power operates on three interrelated levels: through visible forms—e.g. discriminatory institutions, laws and policies; through hidden power, referring to the ways powerful forces like multinationals and religious extremists shape public discourse and political agendas while delegitimizing opposing voices; and through invisible power, socialization, ideologies and harmful cultural norms and practices that prevent people from seeing and questioning injustice and reinforce women’s sense of inferiority and shame’

The words of an ex-prisoner and FEMPRIST member underline the importance of affirming one's self-worth and potential for change and personal transformation.

“

I can now speak for myself and defend my rights without being violent. Before I knew about my rights as a free citizen, I lived in a vacuum where my thoughts and hopes were my own. Being an ex-offender meant I did not have any right in the home and in the community. I was forced to live at the margins of the community and not fully participate in any community activities. Fellow women would exclude me from their village meetings and other activities.

”

Lesson: Transformation begins with finding one's voice and joining others that support its amplification. In strengthening feminist movements, it is important to start where the women are, and create space for them to share their stories, no matter how painful. The way the spaces are facilitated, the stories received and the discussions held is what leads to transformation and encourages self-belief. Social transformation is the foundation of developing critical consciousness, which along with other tools and activities sustains women's active involvement and capacity to self-organise in response to injustice.

Societal transformation

Organisations exist in societies and in most cases these societies have harmful patriarchal, racist, homophobic and classist power structures at work. Without transforming societies, change is almost impossible. Facilitating society's ability to see and analyse how power operates, helps them understand and challenge the structural drivers of inequality and violence. Feminist leadership is critical in working alongside communities to ensure social transformation.

Women and Land Zimbabwe's (WLZ) mission is to work with women in rural areas to provide them with information on their right to land and work with them to access, control and own land and natural resources. This is important considering that, in most countries, women are the guardians of the soil. In its proposal to the MSF, WLZ received funds to establish feminist schools to foster feminist leadership¹⁵ and build skills in digital engagement, networking and alliance building nationally and in the region. An example from the partners' reports summarises how it reached out to various groups to build collective power. On the invitation of the new districts, WLZ mobilised women in rural areas for the first time while it strengthened existing groups in districts where they had established relationships. This was done through mobilising its constituency, training and raising awareness.

¹⁵ "Feminist leadership for me is the process that can address the challenges imposed to women by the patriarchal model where we are in our societies. I mean domination, I mean control, I mean competitiveness, I mean all the issues of power. We need feminist leadership to address that" Cécile Ndjebet in Feminist Leaders for Feminist Goals. A tool kit based on the FairShare's Action Circle's Agenda for Change, 2019.

Among the people trained in feminist leadership skills were young women who will become part of the next generation of feminist leaders in Zimbabwe. They have become ambassadors and are able to train other women. The training with and across young women with multiple identities has resulted in building collective power [power with] for the excluded, marginalised, oppressed, landless, invisible women and girls in the selected districts to demand and exercise their rights.

The young women attending the feminist school said that when they narrated what they had learnt from the school with their peers, most of them became interested in joining the Rural Women's Assembly (RWA). Bringing in young women to the RWA with strong feminist leadership knowledge has the potential to contribute to a more vibrant, inclusive and sustainable RWA. The RWA movement's strength is now shown by its ability to influence, handle cases solidarity in times of need.

Lesson: The work of WLZ shows the importance of focusing on building and strengthening collective leadership of women (especially young ones) in the rural feminist movement in Zimbabwe. The leaders are activists who act as 'evangelists' and are accountable to their movement. They understand the context and so are acceptable in their communities. This enables them to organise effectively and raise political consciousness of the communities, build strong bases of transformed 'believers', strengthen different networks and collaboration possibilities. Working in communities is important given most of the oppressive practices feminist movements struggle with are societal. Without transformation, oppression will continue in the name of culture, tradition and religion. The main lesson here is that community organising is important. Society can only be transformed by people who are aware of the oppressions they live with and can act to end them and create a society built on justice and freedom for all.

Integrating some form of action in the process, a small or large step toward problem solving is vital to sustaining the growth and change initiated by reflection and analysis and building leadership and organising skills. The actions can be as small as young women in a community organising other women to attend a meeting. It gives them hope for a better tomorrow.

Women and Land Zimbabwe's (WLZ) mission is to work with women in rural areas to provide them with information on their right to land and work with them to access, control and own land and natural resources.



Feminist storytelling

Stories generate knowledge that is at the centre of influencing people. Storytelling is particularly important for any marginalised group whose stories are not heard or valued. It is an effective way for people to empower themselves by sharing their own stories, in place of ones told about them.

Stories are vital to feminist movement strengthening as women have unique relationships with stories throughout history. However, over time men have become the subject, and women the object, of storytelling. Stories of women were silenced while stories of men were glorified, celebrated and established.¹⁶ Yet storytelling has connected women's stories that have passed from grandmothers, mothers, daughters and sisters, both as keepers and tellers of stories. Stories are a powerful medium of information and storytellers have the power to mould it.

The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA) describes itself as a feminist, Indigenous African women's rights network with a soul. SIHA works with women's rights organisations in the Horn of Africa to strengthen their capacity, build regional solidarity, initiate advocacy and document lessons learned.

The MSF grant given to SIHA was used to increase knowledge and understanding of concepts and realities of the feminist movement among grassroots women in the Western Nile sub-region of Uganda. SIHA conducted a small needs analysis mapping exercise with 105 participants in the region. SIHA used storytelling to gather the data from women, which brought the sessions to life for all involved. The participants included women's rights organisations and activists, women with disabilities, women market vendors and representatives from the local Women's Council, particularly women councillors. The exercise reinforced that Ugandan feminist movements should not just be for educated women in urban areas but are relevant for all women and girls.

Lesson: Storytelling is important as women are energised and transformed by experiences that tap into how they feel, think and move and this approach reinforces their multiple forms of intelligence and ability to enjoy and contribute to society. Storytelling is a strong tool for feminist movement strengthening. It highlights women's experiences and perspectives, front and centre. When women tell their stories, they challenge the stories told about them. Storytelling liberates voices and the words that have been stuck in women's throats for many years are released. They challenge the way patriarchy operates to discredit women's ideas and emotions, denigrating how they view their own mental capacities, relationships, feelings and bodies.¹⁷



Image courtesy of SIHA

The MSF grant given to SIHA was used to increase knowledge and understanding of concepts and realities of the feminist movement among grassroots women in the Western Nile sub-region of Uganda.

¹⁶ FEMINIST DOCUMENTATION AND KNOWLEDGE BUILDING: <https://taannepal.org.np/feminist-documentation-and-knowledge-building>

¹⁷ <https://justassociates.org/what-we-do/feminist-popular-education>. Feminist Popular Education. Popular education is a participatory approach to political learning where people critically examine their lives, contexts, and the issues that matter most to them to

Wellness, wellbeing and self-care

Self-care is linked to pleasure. For marginalised people such as women, LGBTQI+ and others from oppressed groups whose bodies, lives and pleasure are controlled by patriarchal rules, the act of reclaiming and doing what gives them pleasure is deeply feminist and political. For many women and LGBTQI+ people, prioritising self-care is not about taking a break because one can, it is a courageous act that starts with acknowledging they have needs, their needs are important and those needs deserve to be met, no matter what their oppressors say. They have also learnt that individual self is not sustainable without collective care and this is where movements come in. One person should not carry the burden of self-care when there are many bags that she is forced to carry – the ones that she did not pack but were packed for her by the expectations of patriarchy, capitalism, heteronormative ideology and white supremacy culture.

Pakasipiti is a feminist organisation in Zimbabwe striving to create safe spaces to develop the capacities of lesbian, bisexual and queer people (LBQ) people and promote social acceptance of gender and sexual diversity in Zimbabwe.

Pakasipiti used part of their MSF grant to run wellness and wellbeing retreats for their constituents as a critical strategy for movement strengthening because fragmented bodies produce fragmented results. The retreats used a mixed approach of motivational songs, journaling and storytelling to appeal to all women, as there is no one blueprint for effective wellbeing.

The Pakasipiti director said a focus on wellbeing has improved relationships and the quality of their work.

Pakasipiti states;

“

Wellness and wellbeing were the centrepieces of our work, with more participants expressing how collective healing, mental health and wellness are the underlying pieces that need to inform all our strategies moving forward.

”

Lesson: A movement that does not prioritise wellbeing fragments easily. Wellbeing means different things to different people – it is diverse, individual but is also collective, political and contextual. There are many tools that can be used in promoting wellbeing activities. Pakasipiti used motivational songs, journaling and storytelling. Engaging in light and fun activities should not make people and their organisations forget that wellbeing should remain political, committed to equality and fairness, environmentally friendly and should highlight how power operates in everyday life.

In most cultures in Africa and South Asia, wellbeing is not separated from work. As people work, they sing, dance, share stories and share healing tips and strategies.



Image courtesy of WLZ

The work of WLZ shows the importance of focusing on building and strengthening collective leadership of women (especially young ones) in the rural feminist movement in Zimbabwe.

Knowledge and being a ‘thinking movement’

Continuous learning and knowledge development are key ingredients in a feminist movement. Learning is used as a movement-strengthening platform and is a key link among movement members. It helps movement members weave greater connection and coherence across their work using shared experiences, co-developed materials and knowledge documentation.

Minority Womyn in Action (MWA) is a feminist organisation in Kenya established to ensure lesbian, bisexual, queer and gender non-conforming people (LBQGNC) have full rights over their self and body, the right to self-accomplishment, full and equal protection of the law and real freedom from discrimination and violence. MWA are engaged in building a movement of membership actively committed to social justice. MWA used their grant from the MSF to invest in knowledge building across their constituents.

With the grant, MWA invited 28 LBQGNC frontline organisers from across MWA (staff, chapter focal persons, assistants and member representatives) to attend in person movement-strengthening workshops.

The syllabus for the workshops was crafted using the Srilatha Batliwala primer; ***All About Movements (CREA)***, *-A Primer for Activists*¹⁸, *JASS WE Rise Toolkit*¹⁹, the MWA strategic plan, recent research on discrimination faced by LBQGNC people and the Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists.²⁰

¹⁸ All About Movements – CREA (creaworld.org)

¹⁹ <https://werise toolkit.org/cycles/rising-up>

²⁰ Solidarity in Word and Deed: Translating the African Feminist Charter – The African Women's Development Fund (AWDF)

Lesson: A feminist organisation continues to learn and raise its profile as a movement-strengthening thought/practice leader using the process of knowledge building to enhance cohesion within itself. A progressive movement is a thinker and must stimulate clear thinking in others (its constituencies, allies and others). Without this, the intelligence and agility needed to respond to different issues that arise out of its very essence are lost.

Feminist circles

Feminist circles provide mutual support networks, sharing skills, tools and connections that enable feminist movements to be more strategic and safer. Within a movement there could be different circles: circles of learning, wellness and political memory that function independently. For the circles to be effective, they need well-equipped facilitators so the work remains political and transformative.

Setaweet in Ethiopia understands the power of feminist circles. It aims to articulate Ethiopian feminism and create the space for dialogue and research activism by Ethiopian women and men.

With their MSF grant, Setaweet are planning a conference* to build inclusive spaces that allow feminist actors to impact each other's work and build towards a shared political vision. The conference will include activities that will help participants plan and implement small gatherings called circles at their universities, gatherings where female university students can join and talk about their struggles and challenges as women. It is hoped the circles will foster sisterhood and solidarity, as well as a safe space to enable them to share their experiences. This can potentially lead to a strong collective mass movement within universities. While the young activists are planning and implementing circles within their communities, Setaweet staff members will visit the circles to further solidify collaboration and movement building.

Due to the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia, the activities have not been implemented fully.

Lesson: Feminist circles are strong movement strengthening tools. They are effective in bringing people together, as they are inclusive and diverse in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, political views and everything that is important to the people within them. They provide spaces where a wide range of perceptions is shared and acknowledged. Strong movements can be born from the circles. Circles are a powerful strategy especially for young people. They give them a sense of possibility and ability to redirect their energies.

Strong infrastructure for movement support

A feminist movement needs a solid movement building infrastructure that enables collaboration, cohesion and provides platforms for information sharing and accountability. The movement needs to strengthen its systems, relationships and structures to enable it to be transparent, resilient and sustainable. Movement-anchor organisations can often exist within feminist movements (often but not always based on membership subscriptions) and strengthening these groups has the potential to increase the impact across a wider group of people.

The National Indigenous Women's Federation (NIWF) coordinates a network of Indigenous women's organisations in Nepal. Their aim is to ensure Indigenous women can benefit from inclusive democracy, human rights and social justice. NIWF used its MSF grant to invest in the strengthening of the network's infrastructure at provincial level by establishing Provincial Co-Ordination Councils, better able to support activities to defend the rights of Indigenous women. The councils will be a critical space in which to link movement initiatives together and build feminist leadership capacity.

Lesson: Being a feminist institution is not incompatible with being professional, efficient, disciplined and accountable.²¹ A feminist movement should have the kind of infrastructure that enables it to be open and transparent. This means the members should know about the systems, structures and policies that protect the movement. Investing in anchor organisations can also reap significant rewards for movements because these organisations often have convening and mobilising power and have the potential to break down barriers between women representing multiple identities, especially if the leadership takes an intersectional feminist approach.

A well thought out feminist organisational infrastructure tends the inner garden so that it can deliver effectively on the outer. It enables staff to become more reflective and fosters deep learning into their lives.

NIWF used its MSF grant to invest in strengthening the network's infrastructure at provincial level by establishing Provincial Coordination Councils better able to support activities to defend the rights of Indigenous women.



²¹ Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists - Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charter_of_Feminist_Principles_for_African_Feminists

Intersectionality in a feminist movement is a must

A feminist movement should be intersectional. This is not about heaping ideas of caste, class and sexual orientation on top of each other so the movement holding them crumbles under the weight. These are entanglements of the intersections of identity: a testament to human beings' complexity. It is about leaving no one behind. It is about people speaking authentically and assertively from their experience rather than being spoken for.

Sankalpa in Nepal is an alliance of diverse women's rights organisations that have come together to advocate for women to be able to participate equally in all spheres of Nepali life. The organisation is dedicated to ensuring women's equal opportunity, irrespective of caste, ethnicity, religion, language, occupation or degree of physical ability. Intersectionality is not a new concept in Nepal but organising can often happen along the lines of gender and one other identity and then others are forgotten. This reality lessens the potential for national feminist activism to be effective and fully inclusive of the intersectional marginalisation of many women.

Sankalpa used its MSF grant to carry out a four-day intergenerational feminist leadership training to enhance collective leadership, strengthen their movement and the ability to advocate for a change of social norms which are against the rights of women. The programme focused on providing leadership training to the most marginalised group of women and to survivors of violence.

Lesson: Intersectional feminist movement strengthening means co-creating the movement with all those who have a stake in the change a movement is seeking. It means starting from a shared vision, commitment and appreciating the diversity of age, sexual orientation or gender identity, religious background and other experiences with which people come to the table. To ensure intersectionality, it is important to check with people in the room about who is present and who is missing, whose voice is being heard, who is seen and who is not, participating or not, empowered in contributing to shaping the movement or just a silent observer. Checking is important because no matter how politically conscious or woke people think they are, we all have gaps and biases that we might not be aware of and are likely to engage in discriminating practices that perpetuate the very power dynamics we are working to dismantle.

An intersectional feminist movement approach enables all to look towards the future together – beyond fragmentation, beyond inertia – and create needed new forms.

Disability is a feminist issue

Women living with disabilities are often left out of institutional policies and mainstream women's movements. Time is often not set aside to understand how issues of disability, gender and feminism interact. Women living with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to abuse of their rights, probably more than their sisters who don't live with disabilities.

Deaf Women Included (DWI) is a women's rights organisation in Zimbabwe whose mission is to empower deaf women and other women with disabilities to claim their rights and advocate for these rights with government, the private sector and other civil society actors.

DWI used the MSF grant to provide training on women's rights and feminism to women with disabilities.

The spaces offered an opportunity to learn how disability issues are largely missing in mainstream development planning and policy framing and within the general activities on human rights and development. Women with disabilities also concluded that disability issues are also often excluded from the agenda of feminist movements.

Lesson: Disability is a feminist issue. One of the core values of feminism is to be inclusive and value women's diversity. To reflect feminist values, feminist movements need to be inclusive and respectful spaces, where women from diverse backgrounds and experiences work as a team.

Feminist movements can do this by always planning their work with women with disabilities in mind. This includes making sure women with disabilities are in senior decision-making leadership roles in women's rights organisations, strategic thinking and budgeting always includes the needs of women with disabilities and the logistics for feminist organising goes the extra mile to make sure women with disabilities are meaningfully involved through accessibility planning.

Deaf Women Included (DWI) used its MSF grant to provide training on women's rights and feminism to women with disabilities.

Image courtesy of DWI



CONCLUSION

The partners' reports make it clear that feminist movements are places of human engagement, which through courageous activism and audacity, hold open spaces for the new, transformative and creative to emerge. Their activities change reality by arousing genuine possibilities of transformation and hope among people.

The reports show the feminist movement's qualities of being, doing and checking are based on building an enabling movement infrastructure, deep listening to people, patterns and power dynamics, paying attention to wellbeing while ensuring diversity and inclusion. Continuing to read the context, leading from the inside and not just responding to the outside, walking and thinking alongside the constituencies, continuous learning, leadership strengthening, as well as ensuring an internal aliveness and creativity to find new forms and go forward are key elements.

Feminist movements ebb and flow. They follow, lead and are constantly emerging. They require flexible resources so they do not stagnate.

Movement strengthening, unlike targeted campaigns, is an ongoing task and will never be fully concluded as feminist movements grow, shift and change all the time with new actors and organisations engaging with varying degrees of feminist consciousness, biases, approaches and links. The partners' work at local/grassroots level is connecting people and giving them hope in the feminist movements in their countries and sectors. The movements provide a space and place in which to be, to act and to realise you are not alone and can be part of something that can affect change. They provide opportunities for discussing and critiquing hierarchies of oppression, exclusion and discrimination, inequality and many other injustices.

Womankind's partners are visible on the frontline of change (with communities demanding their services) and politically effective, powered by active local constituencies of women. They are diverse, cross-sector alliances and have local-to-national links that have increased their influence at many levels. Many, if not all, are overcoming entrenched discrimination and violence, not only due to their gender, but also their ethnicity, class, ability, location, sexual orientation, caste and other factors of social exclusion. They have been largely overlooked and lack representation within the professionalised feminist movements that dominate civil society engagement with the state and in regional and international advocacy spaces.

But rather than being isolated and silenced by their families, communities, the state, or even their own networks and organisations, they are speaking out, building solidarity, and demanding their rights and freedoms be upheld. Through their organising and advocacy, these activists are demanding and securing increased recognition and access to resources; from basic needs to fundamental human rights and to real resources like land. And they are not only securing political victories, they are shifting mindsets, unraveling the very norms and institutions at the core of women's inequality and social exclusion. In short, they embody the active citizenry of deep democracy crucial to a more just and sustainable world.



When women tell their stories, they challenge the stories told about them. Storytelling liberates voices and the words that have been stuck in women's throats for many years are released.

New supporting and nurturing relationships are being forged and strengthened. There is evidence the partners are engaging authentically, assertively and courageously with both their communities and national institutions. They are raising awareness, influencing, challenging and sharing information. They are doing all this work while taking time out to focus on self-care at an individual and organisational level.

In spite of these achievements, flexible financial resources for feminist grassroots organising and movement strengthening remain scarce and they constantly have to make choices even when they need to respond urgently. Womankind is committed to finding ways to provide flexible funding but much more is needed from other funders.

Recommendation for funders

The recommendations below emphasise the importance of flexible funding:

Meeting urgent political and contextual relevant needs: Given the lessons derived from the partners' activities, feminist movements need flexible funding (less rigidly structured, earmarked and project-based) so that they can invest in what they see as most contextual relevant issues, connect with each other and ensure learning is internalised as they experiment with new conceptual frameworks and convene to converse, reflect and troubleshoot.

Collective reflection and learning: The world is changing all the time with economic crises, the impacts of climate change and a fast erosion of democratic value systems. The movements need to be supported with flexible funding to remain alive and reinvent their creativeness – learning from the inside, not just responding to the outside. They also need flexible funding to enable them to transfer their reflections and learning to much wider audiences to build new conversations and constituencies within and with the public at large.

- ▶ **Promote self and collective care:** Feminist movements need flexible funding to ensure their work does not fragment them and they have the ability to withstand processes of rusting and erosion. This is not funding that is easy to plan and budget for in advance but is essential if burn out is to be avoided.
- ▶ **Enhance agility:** Most feminist movements that function on the edge need to be agile so they do not miss political moments. Working with people that have been marginalised by society and live in fear of violence, might require urgency. Flexible funding enables movements to respond with agility and creativity to what matters the most to the constituencies.

For feminist movements

- ▶ **Enhance storytelling skills:** Storytelling is as evident in the work of the partners as a feminist strategy. Enhance skills building in storytelling, both old and new tools that raise critical political consciousness, leadership and organising skills, while providing concrete tools that can be adapted within their own communities, networks and organisations.
- ▶ **Overcoming issue silos and fragmentation:** Different feminist groups tend to organise in their spaces around their specific concerns. This weakens the potential for cross-movement building between natural allies. The sisters from Sankalpa in Nepal shared an example:

“

Nepal is a diverse country in culture, caste and ethnicity. It is a multi-linguistic, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural country. This diversity has also resulted in LGBTIQ+, Dalit women, Muslim women, Madhesi women, Indigenous women, single (widow) women, women with disabilities and women from minority groups working for their rights and issues. Although they have been working differently to ensure their rights, there exists some gaps on such issues, understanding and networking among them. Thus, to unite them and strengthen their movement a collective approach is needed for a sustainable participation of all the marginalised groups of women.

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To overcome silos and fragmentation, feminist movements should consider carrying out feminist organising in an intersectional way and build alliances with other feminist organisations to build common cause. In this way, feminist movements striving to achieve their goals are stronger.

“

There is no thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.

”

Strengthening links: Linking grassroots women to the national feminist movements will create solidarity and a critical mass of changemakers capable of moving huge mountains. What is needed are processes that build women's confidence and skills to organise their communities around deeply felt problems and surface agendas led by those most affected by injustice. The work of FEMRPIST is an example of what is possible. It has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Women's Coalition in Zimbabwe (WCoZ) to ensure its issues are represented in national level discussions.

Create spaces for reflection and contestation: Encourage inner personal, organisational and movement reflections. Reflect on the spectacles and lenses that inform the practice of the work and critique these. Critical reflection is core to the qualities of a feminist movement. Ensure dialogue with constituents and consider an analysis of the politics and power at play so that approaches are based on the deep contextual knowledge.

Review contextual shifts regularly: Ensure contextual knowledge is updated regularly and that feminist movements can respond creatively. It is also important for organisations and movements to bear in mind that as contexts change and new challenges emerge, different strategic choices and approaches must be made. This implies remaining smart, adaptive, creative and infusing deep learning into the lives of their organisations and movements and having a robust gender power analysis to act on the risks associated with gender-neutral approaches that ignore gendered impacts of crisis.

Be inclusive: Include silenced voices, persons, positions and ideas of people that are normally overlooked in your movement work, such as ex-prisoners, women with disabilities and sex workers. This means continuing to identify who is at the table and who is missing. Focusing on a few categories of people leaves the work of liberation unfinished.

Look out for emerging young feminists and nurture them: Remember to continue mentoring emerging feminists, listen to leadership sparks, keep an eye on where potential lies and expand it. This is one of the ways of ensuring the continuity of feminist movements. This nurturing might mean letting go of the old things that are held dear, that define older activists, guard them as part of who they and might be reluctant to let them loosen and begin to fall away. For example, communication and how it is being done has changed from what it was ten years ago. It means embracing many, varied forms of organising.

In its proposal to the MSF, WLZ received funds to establish feminist schools in order to foster feminist leadership and build skills in digital engagement, networking and alliance building nationally and in the region.



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