



THE 3RD CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S FORUM

On

LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNICATION FOR CEOs OF WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS

JUNE 2 – 4, 2014

NAIROBI, KENYA

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We wish to finally, thank The African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and The Gates Foundation for providing financial support for the forum. It is our hope that this report provides insight into our work as women's rights organisations. Material pertaining to the forum can be found at www.awdf.org

**NAFI CHINERY,
CAPACITY BUILDING SPECIALIST, AWDF**



SUMMARY

The Chief Executive Officers' (CEO) Forum, is a biennial event convened by African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), the third of which took place in Nairobi, Kenya from the 2nd - 4th of June, 2014 with CEOs/EDs from various women's organisations supported by AWDF. Within the forum, there were four interweaving themes; leadership; effective governance; communications; and self-care. Coaching garnished the four themes.

The forum was organized as an intimate conversation in which participants would be encouraged to share openly of themselves, their experiences and their observations. Some women leaders were invited to share their experiences.

During reflections on leadership, participants shared their successes, challenges and lessons as well as listening to the journeys of leading women in politics, business, and the women's movement. Facilitator Hope Chigudu warned against overexertion by the leaders of the various organisations in an emotional and intense handout given to each participant entitled "Dear Activist." She demonstrated how detrimental overwork could be to personal and professional lives especially if there is not enough time taken for wellbeing. According to her, "power within – a sense of one's own dignity, profound sense of empowerment is always undermined by doubt, shame and guilt produced by the fragmentation and exhaustion of activists lives; think of how much power within is still driven by ambition and fear".



Health care practitioner, Dina Cesano spoke to the leaders about the relationship between leadership, wellbeing and health. She was available for consultation on healthy lifestyles throughout the three days of the forum.

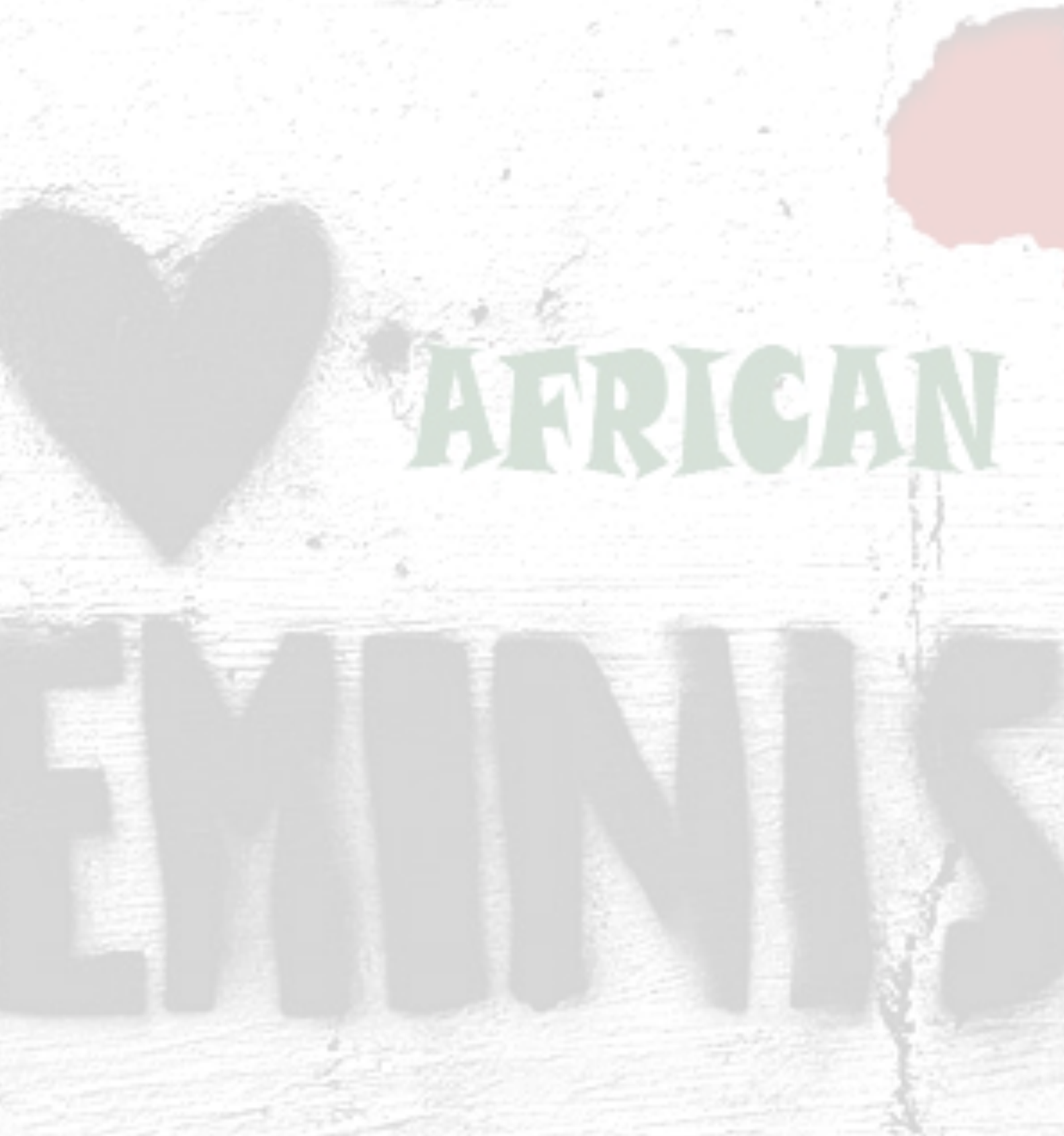
AWDF Board Chair Professor Sesae Mpuchane passed on the gems she has picked up on good governance through sitting on various boards. Both AWDF CEO Theo Sowa and Mentoring and Empowerment Programme echoed most of her sentiments for Young Women (MEMPROW) founder Dr. Hilda Tadria who shared their experiences of being leaders in their organisations as well as sitting on various boards. Participants were then put in two groups to discuss governance as they have experienced or seen it in various organisations.

During her presentation Paula Fray of Frayintermedia emphasized the need for the participants to recognize the importance of communication for their organisations. Without communication, she said, all the good work done by their organisations is invisible to the wider public and that is disadvantageous to them and their constituency. The participants were given a practical exercise of making the case for their work in front of the camera and thereafter gave each other feedback.

Finally, ten selected leaders were assigned to two coaches. In groups of two, they discussed what they felt they needed support with the most in the next ten months so as to be better effective and radical feminist leaders.

As the forum came to an end, it was clear that paying attention to the internal processes of the organisations is vital. "There is need for to be a big emphasis on quality and excellence in whatever is done. Inside, a feminist organisation must be alive and re-inventing its creativeness

– learning and leading from the inside, not just responding to the outside” emphasised Sarah Mukasa of AWDF.



INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE AWDF PASSION FOR FEMINIST LEADERSHIP AND ORGANISING

The African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) is a robust grant-making organisation. It supports local, national and regional women's organisations working towards the empowerment of African women and the promotion and realisation of their rights. The vision of AWDF is for women to live in a world where there is social justice, equality and respect for women's human rights. To this end, their mission is to mobilize financial, human and material resources to support African women and their movement so as to advance women's rights and gender equality in Africa. AWDF believes that if women and women's organisations are empowered with skills, information, sustainable livelihoods, opportunities to fulfil their potential, plus the capacity and space to make transforming choices, then there will be vibrant, healthy and inclusive communities.

The inaugural CEO's forum was held in Kampala, Uganda in 2009, followed by another in Nairobi, Kenya in 2011. The 2014 Forum was the third. This forum, like the previous two, was informed by the need to:

- i. Provide a reflective space so as to enable the leadership of women's organisations to share challenges and ideas within the current global context with their peers and collectively develop strategies for addressing these.
- ii. Create a platform for the leadership of women's organisations to discuss challenges around leadership, management and governance issues facing women's organisations in Africa and how to address these for development.

The third forum however added an element of coaching and support of selected leaders as a critical component of nurturing a rich pool of change leaders and agents and activating transformation on a large scale.



1.2 WELCOME AND CONTEXTUALISING THE FORUM: THEO SOWA



Theo Sowa, Chief Executive Officer of AWDF, welcomed the participants, an august group of peers. She introduced the lead facilitator Hope Chigudu. She explained that having Hope facilitate was greatly important as she has extensive experience in women's activist work as well as a thorough and provocative approach in her analysis. She also lauded the participants' presence and appreciated their work in shaping the future of Africa. Theo noted that public criticism was never in short supply and thus there was a real need to create a space where women can get support from each other, interrogate their current approaches, build new skills, and continue with on-going coaching, mentoring and support

beyond the three days of the forum.

She emphasized that the forum would engage in intense interactive conversation. The NGO leaders would learn from each other and others who have been in leadership positions in different sectors. ***“We can't change our organisations if we keep doing things the same way we have been doing them for many years,”*** she remarked. ***“Our organisations must be alive and constantly re-inventing their creativity”.***

“Where we want change, we need movements. And where we have seen change, we have had strong women's movements but we need a new generation of women leaders who realize that leadership isn't about

Theo underlined the importance of including a session on communication. ***“We do important and transformative work but it's invisible. We need to communicate, blow our trumpet loudly so that collective achievements can be heard far and wide”.*** She hoped that leaders would feel comfortable enough to talk about the difficult situations but if there should come a time when cameras or recorders felt intrusive or something particularly sensitive emerged, participants were to let AWDF or Hope know as this was their forum and their space to change the narrative of what African women's leadership is all about.

She said AWDF takes issues of wellbeing seriously. ***“As feminists, we cannot construct sustainable collective power if we are unable to recognise and respect our differences, deal with competition and needs for recognition which all emerges from our deep emotional, psychological and spiritual deficits and traumas”.***

1.3 Programme Objectives and Overview: Nafi Chinery & Nana Darkoa Sekyiamah

Nafi introduced the program objectives and overview by noting that the first CEO Forum in Kampala in 2009 focused on interrogating and analysing internal organisational strengths and challenges and how these can be addressed. While the second forum in Nairobi in 2011 also focused on developing strategies to address challenges obstructing the development and sustenance of women's rights organisations in Africa. She then noted that this year's forum would be two pronged.

- The first part would entail sharing skills and reflecting on leadership capacities in the hope that this would begin the process to transform the work organisations were doing.
- Coaching over a ten month period for the CEOs in order to sharpen the areas that they need support in so that at the end of the ten months, the leaders would have grown and become confident in their vision and better able to amplify their political influence.

Nana Dakoa of AWDF was available to offer support for any specific communication needs to participants be it PowerPoint presentations or opening a Twitter account for organisations and participants were encouraged to share stories of positive change moving forward.



1.4 Introductions and Expectations: Hope Chigudu

In a fun exercise, participants introduced themselves. They were placed in four groups where they talked of their expectations from the forum as highlighted below.

Expectations

- Health and Well-being
 - Leadership support
- Understanding Transition/Succession
 - Sharing Success Stories
 - Learning from each other



2.0 PRESENTATION ON LEADERSHIP

2.1 Three women shared their leadership journeys, experiences and what they have learnt along the way

They were Charity Ngilu, Lands Cabinet Secretary, Kenya, Betty Maina, Chief Executive of the Kenya Association of Manufacturers since 2004 and Mary Rusimbi, Chair of Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) and current CEO, Women's Fund Tanzania (WFT). Sarah Mukasa of AWDF conducted a provocative open forum session.



The aim of the session was to learn from different sectors and countries and from present practitioners so that the leaders can create a vision for their own lives and organisations or sharpen what they already have. Each of the presenters came in from a different angle, which was interesting, refreshing and engaging. The overall message was that as leaders, it's important to understanding how power operates in both its destructive and constructive configurations, thinking about and being mindful of power within us and power with others resulting in power to address and confront power over [oppression] from whichever sources it emanates. It's equally important to look and listen for leadership sparks in one's organisation and provide support. The more leaders in an organisation, the more support a leader has and hence more time for self-care.

Below is a summary of lessons presented

2.2 Lessons from the experiences of three women leaders

- There is power in women only spaces, where they can freely talk, share, and find voices without being judged.
- Clear ideology is important. For example using a feminist lens and analysis in our work offers us political tools to understand issues of inequality, class, ethnicity, caste, power, and citizenship. TGNP's animation methods have been useful in politically conscious work.



Mary Rusimbi (WFT)

- The work of gender justice involves working with uncertainties and taking risks: This is not a process that lends itself to quick fixes. It is political, personal, contextual and organizational and hence requires us to tease out the various strategies that we use.
 - Women should engage in public discourse and avoid isolating themselves from important discussions as this keeps them informed and knowledgeable about what is happening around them.
 - Our practice must be underpinned and shot through with self-reflection, both personal and organisational. Anything less and we succumb to the forces that we think we are so very different from.
- Strategic alliances are essential for women together with an understanding of their power, which they can use as leverage when engaging with allies. An example was given by a woman politician of how she formed an alliance with the current Kenyan

- President and Vice President before the elections as they agreed to adopt the issues that she and other women leaders had agreed were important to them.
- Success takes a lot of hard work and professionalism and the women's movement is no exception in order for the movement to thrive it must be managed transparently and professionally.
- Women need to surround themselves with positivity and eliminate people that bring negativity or develop the emotional intelligence to manage those that cannot be eliminated.
- Celebrating one's successes is key in sustaining energy and motivation and this is also true for celebrating other women's successes and seeing these as collective victory and not being threatened by it.
- There are learning resources all around us as African women, for example extended family can help one to learn how to network or build relationships so it is important to harness lessons from all around, leadership is not just about taking leadership training.
- African women need to continue to learn and build knowledge. Raising one's consciousness must continue in leadership and leaders need to grow together with their teams.
- Sometimes what is expected of you is far beyond your human capacity, it is important to draw the line and communicate this to prevent burnout.
- Keep asking: am I moving with those am leading? Is my leadership empowering others around me?



Betty Maina (KAM)

2.3 Questions and Discussions

After the three presentations, Hope invited leaders to ask questions or make observations and then following them.

Honesty

On a question related to mistakes and blunders, one of the Presenters shared that she had made decisions that cost her organisation a lot of money but she emphasised that the most important thing to do in such a situation is to tell the truth and be accountable for one's actions. She mentioned that having good board relations is important and failure to pay attention to the board dynamics can be costly. Ultimately though she said every mistake is a learning opportunity

Succession

Succession is a huge issue in NGOs and a few handle it well. It's not surprising that there were many questions related to succession. Mary Rusimbi, who said that TGNP had learnt to prepare not just one person for leadership but a group, offered the best succession model. For example during her term of office as Director of TGNP, a group of four women were collectively mentored and supported in preparing for taking on the role of Director and then were interviewed for the post with other applicants and one of the mentees was successful. She led and elevated the organisation to a higher level with the support of the board and other staff members.



Grounding and Well-being

A question regarding wellbeing was raised. In response, the three presenters shared their self-care exercises and relaxation routines as well as continued connection with other women that enable them to remain grounded.

Integrity

Being a leader can be challenging. The participants wanted to know how the three women presenters deal with issues of corruption such as bribery. One speaker highlighted problems related to being asked for bribes particularly in government departments, and her response to that has always been to look for someone else to do business with. She emphasised that integrity was essential in one's dealings and had to be maintained even at the expense of quick profit. She told the leaders that among important good habits to cultivate are to be observant engage meaningfully in dialogue and maintain one's individual style. One should not copy bad habits so as to emulate others.

Sexual harassment

Despite a lot of work being done to highlight and condemn sexual harassment, the issue remains critical for women, even those in positions of leadership as the grip of patriarchy continues to prevail in the public and private spheres. A discussion regarding how to deal with sexual harassment was intense but the conclusion was to speak out and to make one's stance clear.

Financial sustainability

The leaders indicated somewhat bitterly, somewhat realistically, that money remains a constraint and truth in all their organisations. In response, it was suggested that various ways of financial sustainability should be discussed and experimented with. The issue of endowment has not been discussed fully in the women's movement.

Strengthening feminist principles

Strengthening of the feminist organisations was highlighted as critical within the feminist movement on the continent and in the different organisations citing that more practical ways of operationalizing the charter of Feminist principles is required.

Bridge the disconnect of urban-rural based women

Feminist organisations strategies, context, movements and women's lives are a critical starting point yet most organisations are based in urban areas and there is a tendency to 'represent' rural women without discussing with them. Few NGOs know how to work with and give hope to the underclass, poor and rural. There is a need for self-representation by women in rural and urban areas in a manner that ensures that the issues raised are a true reflection of their needs and concerns. It is also important to work alongside them.



3.0 EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

3.1 Effective governance

Board members play a critical role in the development and success of NGOs. They act as guardians for organisation. They protect and maintain the core values and purposes of the organisations

Presentation was done by three prominent women: Sesae Mpuchane, Theo Sowa and Hilda Tadia



Professor Sesae Mpuchane, Chair of the AWDF was introduced. Theo informed the participants that as Board Chair of AWDF, Prof. Mpuchane asks difficult strategic questions but takes a real interest in the staff and the work of the organisation.

Sesae started her presentation by getting the leaders to view a video in celebration of mothers. She stated that there are mothers in academia, business, politics, civil society and many other fields who somehow juggle their day jobs with the very full time job of being a mother. In the work that we all are, one can't separate the private from the public.

Sesae started by sharing her story. In short, Sesae Mpuchane was born in Benoni, South Africa in 1949. Her family moved to Swaziland in 1958 and she did her primary and secondary education there. She credits her success to being raised by her mother, a strong woman who pushed her. In the narration of her journey she notes the following lessons she learnt along the way.

Lessons from Prof Sesae Mpuchane's journey

- **Risk taking:** Be able to take risks, not just in your job but also in your life. Sesae did some of the most unpleasant jobs imaginable but she survived and learnt a lot in the process.
- **Plan:** Sesae planned for retirement when she started work so whatever opportunities came in business; she put some cash there. You would also show a willingness to learn new skills.
- **Corporate governance is important:** In South Africa, the King's Report (www.iodsa.co.za) requested that every board must have a code of conduct to avoid conflict between the boards and the executive. It's important to fine-tune the system to your Board's requirements because before a board member sits, they need to know the rules.
- **Networking is important:** If you are familiar with your job, it means you will network with the right people who will improve the opportunities for your organisation.
- **Avoid being employed under a cloud:** As a woman, even if you know your job, if you get there because you are having a relationship with a decision maker in the organisation, you will always be treated with suspicion. Additionally, women are often in hostile territory on the work front because of 'old boys' networks.
- **Plan for succession:** There's no job that's there forever and it's always better to leave a job after having groomed someone.
- **Have confidence:** Cut out the shyness game. As a woman, do not downplay your achievements for fear of being labelled arrogant.
- **Know your enemies:** In any situation there will be allies, enemies and friends. Know them and map out a strategy for managing them
- **Sisterhood pays:** No leader is an Island. Keep sisters close by for professional growth, support, and for fun.
- **Stay out of unnecessary trouble:** Administration and finance usually get people in trouble so make sure you know how to read the audit reports and the accounts of your organisation because the buck stops with you.
 - **Time management is very important:** Get rid of the mentality of 'African time', there is no such thing. Secondly, manage time very well by carving out time in your schedule to do the things that you like. Remember wellbeing is part of leadership, for example connection with nature can help you better realise your leadership potential.



- **Manage power:** Power or capacity to take action is not just “agency”; it has to do with physical, emotional, spiritual and psychological wellbeing; a sense of boldness and creativity as activists and leaders requires on-going healing lest we bring our bitterness into our organisations.
- **Create a strong support system:** Remember leadership is like mountain climbing; you need guides and a strong support system.

3.2 Reflections on the presentation and additional presentation: Theo Sowa, Hilda Tadia & Hope Chigudu

This session discussed the role of the board and ingredients of effective governance

Role: A board is there to support, strategize, look ahead, besides and back so as to understand the context within which the organisation is operating and give relevant support. It asks difficult, strategic and constructive questions but is not just there to manage the ED. The board’s main responsibilities include establishing and supporting the institutions vision and mission, acting as the legal owners of the organisation, ensuring the organisation is sustainable, evaluating performance, supporting staff and reviewing and creating policies. Often boards operate subcommittees to support different areas of the organisation meaning they may be involved in fundraising, strategic planning, human resources and communications. Trustees are typically expected to act as ambassadors for the institution in the community.

A summary of ingredients of good governance

- An ED would like to hear that she is doing a good job but emphasis needs to be made that there should always be accountability. Affirmation is an important feminist concept that encourages growth and self-fulfilment in a job. Mistakes should be pointed out but in a supportive manner.
- Frequent communication from ED/CEO to board is essential so that there are no unpleasant surprises. For example if resources are drying out, the board should know.
- If there is a hard policy or difficult strategic related decision to make, the board makes it, as they are the final accounting officers. No one ever asks what happened to the ED. The question is always, ‘what happened to the Board?’
- Boards must also make sure that the ED and staff doesn’t lose their dignity by embarrassing them in public or under valuing their work. .
- Put value on the ED. Boards and EDs don’t always have to agree but the focus should be on the strengths and social capital that the ED brings in.
- Boards shouldn’t be mafia-like structure but should keep abreast of what’s happening in the organisation and the world and support the ED to position the organisation accordingly.
- The board and the ED share a common goal to ensure the best for the organisation. If the board and ED don’t have the organisation’s greater good, they have a problem.
- The board has a key role financially, that they must play in mobilising resources for the organisation. They need not write proposals but should try and point to possible sources of money.
- The board being ambassadors of the organisation need to have a thorough understanding of the core business, vision and the values of the organisation.

- Clarity on board recruitment policy is necessary. Focus on who is brought on the board with an emphasis on how board members are chosen and what values they bring to the organisation.
- When new board members are brought in, how does the organisation deal with institutional memory? Ensure that each board member understands the history of the organisation.



- There must be clear accountability systems, e.g. whom does the board account to? This is clear. In a membership organisation, it is to the AGM otherwise the board accounts to itself and to the general public.
- It is important to have a policy on conflict of interest and board re-imbursement. Board related policies should be in a manual.
- Board induction must be done for each board member. This is how the board members get to know, appreciate and support an organisation. It's also the way they appreciate their roles as individuals and as a collective.

3.3 Building Feminist Organisations

“Acknowledging the Human Dignity In Others Is A Pre-Condition to Striving for Great Results in Personal & Professional Relationships”.

“Feminist organisations are talked about but how are they built? Which feminist organizations can the leaders learn from?” With this introduction, a discussion on feminist organisations began.

- As a feminist, what do you really want to be remembered for and what are you doing to make sure that you will be remembered for it?
- What standards have you deliberately set for yourselves as individuals and for your organisations?

Avenues of measurement in a feminist organisation	What is being measured	Questions to ask
<p>ETHICS</p> <p><i>As a feminist leader and organisation, you must set yourself high ethical standards. What ethical standards have you set for yourself as a leader, for the</i></p>	<p>Accountability and Stewardship</p>	<p>How much can you be trusted with your organisations' funds even when no one is looking over your shoulder?</p> <p>How many times have you had a process or system</p>

<p>staff in your organisation and for the services you provide?</p>		<p>failure in financial accountability? (Process and system failures are indications of failure in stewardship).</p>
<p>VALUES AND PRINCIPLES</p>	<p>Consistency</p>	<p>Does what you say you stand for as a feminist match what you do in your organisation? Does your organisation stand for something or does it fall for anything?</p>
<p>HUMAN AND RESOURCES MANAGEMENT</p>	<p>Relationships with workers</p>	<p>As a leader, are you a high maintenance person whose personal needs are more important than those of your colleagues?</p> <p>Are you a converter or diverter for feminism?</p>

By Hilda Tadria of MEMPROW

3.4 Managing your board

Theo talked on managing a governance board. She noted:



The relationship between a CEO and the chair is critical. The dos and don'ts of this relationship should be spelt out and regular team building sessions held. The CEO should learn to manage her board, communicate regularly, know which board member is strong in which area, using their expertise, and manage power dynamics.

Spaces should be created for the board to interact with the staff members while ensuring also that space is created for staff members to know and meet the board members.

Most organisations work with legal frameworks that were set in countries out of the African continent that ignore the cultural and socio-political background of this continent. Feminist organisations should find a way to make these frameworks work for them.

One of the most contentious issues is that of the relationship between the ED and her board. The forum discussed the responsibilities of the ED/CEO

3.5 The responsibilities of the ED/CEO

- Take responsibility for board orientation
- Communicate to her board regularly without overwhelming them with information
- Direct and model transparency in the organisation.
- It's important to have clear channels of communication, and how do we make sure that all members of the staff know the board and every single board member knows the staff?
- There is need for a mechanism that ensures that the staff team feels as accountable to the board as they do to the executive.
- Ensure there is a hired individual who will clarify issues like accounts and auditing etc. on regulations that the company needs to comply.

Following the presentation, some questions were raised.

3.6 Questions and Discussions

Q: What happens when board members ask for remuneration?

A: Remuneration depends on policies of an organisation and what the article of memoranda says. In general, most CSOs have a legal framework where they do not pay board members. It is important for organisations to have clear policies and let board members know at the beginning of their board tenure.

Q: What happens when a board member breeches organisational confidentiality and starts talking about an ED/CEO and the affairs of the organisation to outsiders?

A: In such a situation, it is best for an ED to communicate their concern to the board and it would depend on the board to bring the member in line.

Q: What happens when a member of the board oversteps their boundaries?

A: It might be important to revisit the roles of the board as well as the feminist principles governing the organisation in order to remind the board of their responsibilities and function.

3.7 Management & Use of Power in Organisations: Hope Chigudu

In a recounting of three scenarios, Hope showed how the EDs and Boards can be corruptible, are corrupted and can also be lacking in the requisite skills to deal with controversies in organisations. She emphasized that there are some really good governance boards, effective and resourceful but in the session she would focus on ineffective ones.

In one story, an organisation started as a CBO to support young women who had been abducted by Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda. A bigger NGO then trained one of the women and took her everywhere. This CBO leader then became very arrogant and formalised the CBO to make it an NGO and she discounted the people that she had started working with. The woman claimed to be the ED and as money came in she started shafting everyone. The chair was now subordinate. After a while



she fired the Board because they weren't as sophisticated. She brought in teachers and District Assistants as tokens as there were no other persons available to take the board membership and the organisation has remained that way. The women who had started working with her went to complain to the larger NGO in Kampala but the NGO needed this woman to help raise funds for them. All NGOs based in Uganda use her as a resource person when in her District in Northern Uganda. So sometimes NGOs create monsters that they can't handle. Lessons; always-put issue of power on the table.

Another scenario was of a Chair who was powerful. The Chair was associated with the organisation as a former chair and founder. She would ask the staff to do work for her including writing sermons. It was not long before she clashed with the ED of the organisation.

In yet another case, the Chair wasn't very involved. When Hope was asked to evaluate the organisation, she was sent to interview the Chair who lived in another country. On arrival she found out the Chair had died two weeks prior.

Following the presentation of the three case studies, Hope asked the forum to work in groups.

Group Exercise

The participants were divided into two groups and acted out examples of ineffective and effective boards.

Reflection points for ED/CEOs

- As a feminist leader what is your relationship like with your staff members?
- How can you exercise and share power in ways that empower all staff in the organisation and avoid continually manifesting patriarchal power (power over) that keep others subordinate.
- How can leaders practice and innovate new forms of power, leadership and organisation without emulating the corporate culture and without learning from patriarchal organisations?



In conclusion, Hope said that feminist organisations should not shy away from power dynamics but talk about power openly. A feminist organisation must contradict the values which the bureaucracy holds dear - where the bureaucracy assumes, through its rules and regulations, a mistrust of the individual motivation and ability, a feminist organisation thrives on such freedom and personal responsibility.

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY



4.1 Media Relations: Paula Fray

HER STORY: In a real feminist popular education way, Paula started with her story. She was a journalist for

Independent media house in South Africa. She took time off to have a baby and during that time reflected on her career and her life. Like most people of her generation in South Africa, her mother, a powerful woman who did not allow apartheid to hold her back, raised Paula. Paula's mother was an incredible role model to her, as she both pushed and inspired her children. When Paula looked at her own daughter after she was born she started wondering about the legacy she would pass on to her daughter. She had been the first black woman editor at The Star but she wanted more. She realised that although journalists write the story, it is the person who decides what story is being told who matters the most. It was then that she decided to set up her media company. A key reason for this was that she realized that the people who should be speaking to the media are not doing so.

Why is media important for feminist organising?

- Media connects, attracts and amplifies an organisation's message and voice.
- Use of the media has an impact on staff morale as it creates visibility.
- It helps an organisation get feedback on the work they are doing.
- Media is an effective advocacy tool e.g. #BringbackourGirls campaign.

Communication is not the sole responsibility of the communications & media person. It is the collective responsibility of the entire staff and a level of preparedness is necessary for all staff on how to engage with the media.

One of the most critical issues in CSOs is that many don't have a media profile or policy so when someone sends out a wrong message, there is no control in framing the debate. It is important to understand the media terrain and know that journalists are looking for an interesting story and this is possible to provide with planning. If a strategy exists it is possible to ensure that the key messages of the organisation are captured in the interesting story.

The story certainly puts on the agenda what to think about and organisations cannot pass up this opportunity to put key issues into the public discourse. Every organisation needs a media plan and in its construction the 'then what' question must be continually asked.



4.2 What holds people in CSOs back from speaking to the media?

- Self-doubt
- Fear to offend
- Fear of being misquoted,
- Fear of endangering themselves
- Feeling of unpreparedness
- Fear of blackmail



4.3 How to overcome the barriers to media engagement

- Engage media as partners so that even as you're doing training, they're gathering material.
- Prepare before engaging
- Organise briefings with the media from time to time and develop a rapport this might help in overcoming fear.
- Decide and then do (be self-aware to mitigate any problem and know whether it's a hostile interview so you can be strategic).
- Constantly review your media engagements and make the adjustments and changes required.
- If one is misquoted recourse exists and should be taken up. Tell the news editor if you have been misrepresented in their editorial.

If you're starting a campaign on this continent, you start in print, move to radio, then on to television. Radio is still the place to go if you want to reach a wider audience. Television is preferred media because of visual impact. Print is still regarded as influencer. Online engagement has the greatest potential as a tool to grow 'relationships.'

4.4 Key Messaging

You can't go to the media with an unclear message of what you want to say. You need to check who you need bearing in mind the target of your messaging (potential funders, Lawmakers, Potential employees, the public?). Funders may not read your newsletter but they will read a case study in a journal. A young person will be on social media. Politicians will likely be in newspapers, television and radio.

Your key messages should:

- Be concise and jargon free
- Use active sentences with strong verbs
- Focus on the positive
- Have short and memorable sentences
- Address specific issues and should not be vague and long-winded.

4.5 Presentation skills (interview skills): Paula Fray

1. Know your interview environment (find out what the journalist/station has reported on the issue previously).
2. Research and know your topic so that you have answers on the given topic and if asked something you do not know it is best to be honest and clear that you are unsure. No one knows everything
3. Have an agenda. Decide what you want to bring across in your interview.
4. Prepare for unfriendly questions.

When in the interview:

Africa's story won't be told unless women find their stories and tell their stories and then make people listen because society is made in such a way that women speak but no-one listens until men validate them. Paula Fray

- i. Don't look at the camera
- ii. Maintain eye contact with the reporter
- iii. Don't fidget
- iv. Keep dressing and jewellery simple.

On camera practice: Paula Fray & Nana Darkoa Sekyiamah

Exercise and Feedback

The participants had on camera practice with Paula and Nana. Upon reflection participants noted that they got more relaxed as the interview went on. Some panicked and forgot key information but collectively they realised that with practice one could become comfortable in front of the camera.



4.6 Reflections on communication and media

The skills of engagement are one thing, but another question remains. Is it possible that an organisation can become so wrapped up in their public image that they could forget the essence of the work with which they are engaged? Instead of community activism is it possible to become camera puppets doing everything for show? What happened to the time where organisations simply did work whose results were visible and undeniable without having to pander to cameras for attention? Is there a way of remaining grounded in the work of the organisation and also amplifying its voice without it becoming the sole agenda?



5.0 SELF-CARE AND WELL BEING

5.1 Hard conversation among sisters: Hope Chigudu

The forum found itself exploring new boundaries of what is called work in our organisation: it was noted that in all of life there is a rhythm – of breathing in and breathing out, of action and reflection, of inner and outer. “And to honour our work and the quality of our work, we have to honour these rhythms by taking care of our wellbeing, (a

Dear Activist

.....Now that I have burned out, and tumbled into depression, I am no good to anyone. I am bitter, angry, fragmented and I have a feeling I am going to die alone and sad.

Yours Sincerely

“Self-care is part of being feminist, if you aren’t taking care of yourself; you consume yourself, your team and your board. You can’t build an organization where people are not taking care of their bodies or themselves. Make it part of the organization. After all, what are human rights if we are fragmented and we have no support and are not happy?” Hope Chigudu

“Self-care still sits as a separate space or methodology, and not fully integrated into our organisations, movement-building strategies and visions. As a result, we risk once again depoliticizing self-care and losing its potential as a vehicle for strengthening alternative and more sustainable agendas, forms of organizing, organizational cultures and leadership. Self-care is



real challenge for Directors in the present context)”.

A hard-hitting letter was handed to all participants by the facilitator, and possibly the toughest part of the forum. Many were certain that the letter was talking about THEM to THEM. How then do feminists working for women’s organisations on a continent that is never short of women’s issues that need to be addressed take a break without it seeming like a dereliction of duties or a failure?

There was frustration among some leaders because they felt too much time was demanded of them in activism at the expense of time with their families or themselves. A reason for this, others felt, was that they could not rely on anyone in their organisation to do the work as well and did not want to run the risk of the organisations collapsing. There was also concern of difficulties encountered for those not working in a country that isn’t home. This concern begs the question of whether women’s organisation is possibly lacking if only one person is keeping things together and feels they are alone in the work they are doing. Can other staff in the

organisation find self-fulfilment and continue to develop professionally if they are not given the space to do so and the opportunity to carry responsibility? Hope concluded that we have no choice but to integrate and shape wellbeing and self-care processes to become critical force for leadership development.

“Taking care of yourself is an act of revolutionary warfare-AudreLorde”

5.2 Listening to our bodies: Dina Cesano

Healthcare practitioner Dina Cesano made a presentation during which she talked of the dangers of poor dietary habits, overworking leading to insufficient sleep and the linkages of emotions to body function, disease and poor leadership. She cautioned that all pains are connected to emotions. For instance, knee problems are a result of kidney problems that is linked to fear. She advised the participants on the best way to eat. Dina also spoke of the dangers of anti-perspirant deodorants advocating instead, the use of bicarbonate of soda mixed with water to a paste and put under arms as a healthier alternative. She emphasised that fighting for women’s rights is a soul grinding work and without self-care it is not sustainable. Following her presentation Dina remained available for one on one consultation.



6.0 COACHING OF LEADERS

6.1 Significance of coaching

Nafi introduced the coaching programme and discussed with the leaders why that course of action had been decided upon. The coaching will last for ten months and the coaches will talk to the leaders for two hours a month. AWDF hopes that some lessons and insight gained from the coaching sessions will be implemented in the various organisations of the leaders in the next two years. The focus of the coaching will be on the EDs/ CEOs. Theo added that the focus was on EDs because of their leadership roles and the work their organisations do. In so doing, strong individual leaders are needed but the bottom line is that strong organisations are needed and therefore the programme cannot be done separately from the organisations. In other words, EDs needed to alert their staff that they would be embarking on a ten-month coaching programme.

6.2 From Theory of change to Results chain: Hope Chigudu & Paula Fray

Paula and Hope shared their understanding of the coaching ‘theory of change’. They also shared their understanding of what it means to coach. ‘A coach is someone who keeps you on track and understands what may be needed (critical input) for what you need to achieve. You can’t achieve everything you would want to but you work with the coach to identify all the main issues that you can comfortably work on in nine months. A coach should be supportive of the

leader so morale is high but they should also identify signs of fatigue, lack of interest or of time to complete the process. If that happens and if there are no solutions, a coachee (mentee) should be let off the hook. The two coaches said that there was need to identify what needs to be achieved (outcome/results) and the steps to take.

The major changes that the participants decided they wanted to focus on during the coaching programme for them and their organisations were:

- Governance
- Succession
- Media strategy/visibility
- Financial systems
- Refocusing while disengaging
- Inspiring young people and re-energising the organisation
- In the absence of the ED/CEO, someone should be able to take over and the organisation should be able to go on.

Sarah assured the participants that it was not in AWDF's interest to unearth dirt but rather the hope was for growth and visibility of their organisations.

Guidelines to the coaching were discussed and shared by the leaders.

6.3 Values and Principles to Guide Coaching

1. Mutual respect
2. Trust
3. Result-oriented
4. Commitment and dedication to the process
5. Integrity

The coaches and the leaders were divided into two groups.

Hope will coach: Amy, Mawusi, Deborah, Grace and Gertrude.

Paula will coach: Prudence, Esther, Wangechi, Leah and Herschelle.



6.4 Programming & Institutional choices/changes to be made

Hope suggested that there be a draft plan put in place during the ten months of the coaching which could be a blueprint for the problems encountered. She also pointed out that there was a need to understand how leaders may sometimes contribute to the situations they find themselves in and therefore there was need for self-awareness. Paula said that there was need for the Directors to re-visit their plans and assess what to let go if they are to create a room for coaching. Some of the work will have to be carried by other staff members. The challenge during the course of the coaching would be for the leaders and the coaches to leave their comfort zones and do something new.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The forum covered the agreed thematic area. It could not address every existing challenge but offered a space in which the leaders could start thinking more deeply about the ways in which they work, celebrating their victories and making changes where things might not be working. The feminist journey is one of constant evolution and learning after all. The importance of using a Feminist charter was reiterated.

8.0 CLOSING REMARKS: Sarah Mukasa



Sarah thanked everyone for coming through and sharing. She hoped that they would make the most of the opportunity to work with the two coaches, and that it would benefit them in terms of personal strength. AWDF would be very much in the background but will be available if needed. AWDF would also be interested in hearing the benefits and weaknesses for future reference.

She said that it was urgent for the leaders to infuse themselves and their organisations with a deep sense of humanity, of possibility; to redefine the boundaries of their endeavours so that they may become more reflective and foster wakefulness and deep learning into the lives of their organisations. She also underlined the importance of wellbeing of both individuals and organisations. Sarah concluded, “Our present is building our future: if we are able to become more whole, apprehend wholeness, create wholeness, understand wholeness, we are already halfway towards creating a more consciously chosen future”.

APPENDIX

Profiles 10 Executive Directors to be coached over 10 Months

**Leah
Chatta-Chipepa, Uganda**



Leah is the current Executive Director at *Akina Mama wa Africa*. Before joining AMwA she worked as a Program Officer at the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) in Zimbabwe for 6 years. Leah has also served in these various positions: Lecturer, Management Consultant, Executive Director of a national women's organization, Deputy Head of Program for the Women in Development Awareness Program, Coordinator SADC NGO Election Support Network, and a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer.

She has experience in program management, organizational development, policy analysis and advocacy, communications, research writing, gender activism, Monitoring and evaluation and mentoring young women and men.

**Wangechi L. Wachira,
Kenya**



Wangechi is the Executive Director of Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW). She is also the Head of Policies and Systems at CREAW. CREAW is a women rights organization that seeks to transform society by empowering women and expanding new frontiers for women's rights and freedoms. Wangechi is a highly motivated, creative, and versatile Executive Director with over 10 years of experience in senior management; with skills in lobbying and advocacy, gender integration and gender inclusion. She also possesses expertise in research information gathering, resources mobilization, program management, training, human rights and development.

Wangechi has also broadened her human rights training by engaging in various international training programs, such as the Training in Human Rights at the Raul Wallenberg Institute in Sweden. Strategic Management Training for NGO Leaders hosted by the Harvard Kennedy School and University of Navarra Spain; while holding a B.A. in Social Sciences and an M.A. in Gender and Development from Nairobi, Kenya.

**Esther Mwaura-Muiru,
Kenya**



Esther Mwaura-Muiru is the founder and coordinator of GROOTS Kenya (Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood), a network of more than 2000 self-help groups from poor communities in urban slums and rural areas across the country.

Esther's motivation to begin organizing and community development work arose from her background, growing up in complete poverty in a rural section of Kenya's Central Province. She carried herself through school tilling the farms of her rich neighbors, and earned a merit scholarship to attend University. Esther has been privileged to serve on several boards of organizations including UNDP Equator Initiative and on the Advisory Group on Gender Issues for UN Habitat. She is a regional organizer for GROOTS International and the Huairou Commission in Africa.

**Deborah Ahenkorah,
Ghana**



Deborah Ahenkorah is the co-founder and executive director of Golden Baobab, an organization that champions the development of captivating African stories for children. She has been credited by the Echoing Green Fellowship as one of twenty-two of the most “game changing social innovators in the world today.” In 2011, she was recognized by Playing for Change as one of Ghana’s leading social entrepreneurs working to make the world a better place for children and youth.

Deborah studied political science at Bryn Mawr College and pursued her passion for global issues by gaining experience in the European Union Parliament and The Global Fund for Children. Deborah is also an Aspen Institute New Voices Fellow and a Global Shaper of the World Economic Forum.

**Nobantu Prudence Mabele,
South Africa**



Prudence Mabele is the Founding Executive Director of the Positive Women’s Network, a grassroots organization that serves to build the capacity of, and advocate for improved service provision and greater involvement of Women Living with HIV in South Africa. She was nominated through the Progressive Women’s Movement of South Africa, where she serves as an Executive Member. Regionally, she sits on the African Women’s Leaders Network that aims to advocate for improved Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for women in Africa

Prudence Mabele has been living positively with HIV for more than two decades and has been a prominent South African activist and an expert in the field of HIV and AIDS since 1992. Ms. Mabele has received several awards internationally, nationally, and regionally in recognition of her dedicated contribution to the fight against HIV; and has been appointed to the Conference Coordinating Committee of the International AIDS Society to be a partner and organize AIDS Conference 2014-2016 as a representative for the region of Africa

**Herschelle Patricia Milford,
South Africa**



Herschelle Milford regards as a social justice activist and draw inspiration from the resilience of grassroots organizations and change processes. Her biggest strengths are my interpersonal skills and ability to motivate and identify potential; while my weakness is that I sometimes doubt my own abilities and avoid any form of public speaking.

She has gained extensive experience over the years and would love to share these experiences with others, while at the same time, would like to benefit from the experiences of my peers in different contexts.

Her professional career spans 23 years of working in a development organization. Herschelle holds a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Higher Diploma in Education, and currently working on completing Honors in Business Administration.

**Amy Oyekunle,
Nigeria**



Amy is a gender and development consultant, feminist researcher and facilitator, with experience in working with community based organizations in Africa. She has extensive experience in designing and implementing programmes on violence against women and girls and for women participating in politics.

She is the 2013 Vital Voices Lead Fellow, 2010 HOW fellow, and the 2009 Global fund for Children International Fellow. She is a trained West African Women Election Observer (WAWEO) and a global coordinator for One Billion Rising, a campaign initiated by VDAY to raise awareness to end violence against women. She is the Executive Director for the Kudirat Initiative for Democracy (KIND).

**Grace Yeanay Mayson,
Liberia**



Grace Mayson is a board member of ABANTU for Development, Ghana. She is a social worker, with 9 years' experience as a community development worker on issues of women's empowerment, advocacy, documentation and HIV and AIDS.

Grace is an alumnus of the Isis WICCE Institute, Community Leader's leadership training at the Columbia University, and received the Australian Leadership Award in 2012 under the theme of building African Women leaders on gender inclusive development at the Flinders University. She holds a BSC in accounting and manor in Management from the AME Zion University in Monrovia.

**Vida Awity,
Ghana**



Vida Awity strong passion for rural development pushed her to establish the Network of Women in Growth (NEWIG), Ghana, in 2002 as a skills-development, non-profit, non-governmental organization. NEWIG provides training, specialist advice to a wide range of clients in the area of small-scale enterprise development.

As the Executive Director of the Network of Women in Growth she also provides consultancy services to numerous organizations including the Rural Enterprise Projects, Council for Technical and Vocational Education Training (COTVET), and UNFPA.

Vida is a Small Business Development Expert with training in Advanced Entrepreneurship and Human Resource Management from the University of Ghana's School of Business, as well as Livelihoods & Markets Certificate course from Coady International Institute (St. Xavier University), Canada. Additionally, she holds an MFA Degree in Costume Design.

**Gertrude Fadziso Pswarayi,
Zimbabwe**



Gertrude Pswarayi, is the founder and Director of the Creative Centre for Communication and Development (CCCD). Gertrude has worked in the development sector for the past ten years and has profound experience in developing strategic and creative communication solutions in Southern Africa for various social, cultural, and political settings.

She has worked with issues sensitive to the surrounding social and political context on a daily basis and has led CCCD for the past five years. Gertrude holds a BSC degree in Journalism and Media Studies and is currently studying towards a Master's degree in Development Studies.

THE PROGRAMME

Lead Facilitator: Hope Chigudu, *Hope Africa*

Convenor: Nafi Chinery, *AWDF*

Day 1: Monday, 2nd June 2014	THEME: REFLECTING ON LEADERSHIP	
TIME	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE PERSON (S)
7:00 – 8:00 am	Yoga , Nzoia conference room	Billy Sadia
9:00 – 9:15 am	Welcome and Contextualising the Forum	Theo Sowa <i>CEO AWDF</i>
9:15 – 9:30 am	Programme Objectives and Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Defining what we want to achieve through the workshop</i> - <i>What will be the key outcomes expected from the overall coaching programme</i> - <i>What key results will transform service delivery and our activism? (Transformed as a result of the leadership and coaching programme)</i> 	Nafi Chinery, <i>AWDF</i>
9:30 – 10:45	Self-introduction and expectations	Hope Chigudu
10:45 – 11:00	TEA BREAK	
11:00 - 11:20	Experiences and lessons in my leadership journey: Lessons and Inspirations for CEOs in women's rights organisations in Africa.	Betty Maina <i>CEO, Kenya Association of Manufacturers</i>
11:20 – 12:00	Questions and Discussions	Hope Chigudu
12:00 - 12:20	Sharing my Leadership Journey	Mary Rusimbi <i>Board Chair, TGNP & ED, Women Fund Tanzania</i>
12:20 – 13:00	Open Forum	Sarah Mukasa, <i>AWDF</i>
13:00 – 14: 00	LUNCH BREAK	
14:00 – 15:00	A hard conversation among sisters: <i>When you are starved/drained, you look for the nearest thing to consume...</i>	Hope Chigudu
15: 00 – 16:00	Can there be a revolution when the	Dina Cesano, <i>Ethno Health Care Practitioners</i>

	body is fragmented? <i>Listening to our bodies!</i>	
16:00 – 16:30	TEA BREAK & End of Day 1	
	Evening Networking	All
DAY 2 Tuesday, 3rd June 2014	THEME: EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE	
TIME	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE PERSON (S)
9:00 - 9:20	Reflection	Hope Chigudu
9:20 - 9:45	My governance board journey and experience (gems along the way)	Prof. Sesae Mpuchane <i>AWDF Board Chair</i>
9:45 – 10:15	Questions and Discussions	Hope Chigudu
10:15 - 11:15	Reflections: a) Ingredients of effective governance b) Managing your board c) Relationship between governance board and CEO (CEO as a Function)	Theo Sowa
11:15 - 11:30	TEA BREAK	
11:30 - 13:00	Management & use of power in organisations	Hope Chigudu
13:00 - 14:00	LUNCH BREAK	
	THEME: COMMUNICATIONS	

14:00 – 16:30	<p>Session I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Why media relations -What is your expertise (what can you use your voice for)? -Key messaging <p>Session II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Understanding the media landscape -Creating a media plan <p><i>Overnight assignment: Develop key messages for your focus/give input into media plan</i></p>	<p>Paula Fray, Frayintermedia</p> <p>Nana Darkoa Sekyiamah, AWDF</p>
<p>DAY 3 WEDNESDAY, 4th June 2014</p>	<p>THEME: COMMUNICATIONS... (CONTINUED)</p>	
9:00 -12:30	<p>Session 1</p> <p>Presentation skills (interviewing skills)</p> <p>Session II</p> <p>On camera practice</p> <p><i>Final Assignment: Link media plan to coaching</i></p>	<p>Paula Fray & Nana Darkoa Sekyiamah</p>
11:15 – 11:30	TEA BREAK	
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH BREAK	
<p>THEME: COACHING OF LEADERS</p>		

14:00 – 15:00	Introduction of Coaching Programme From Theory of Change to results chain: <i>Define what we want to achieve during coaching in terms of key indicators for the desired outcome/s, expected key results and the expected outputs (Group work and discussion)</i>	Nafi Chinery, <i>AWDF</i> Hope & Paula
15:00 – 15:45	What programming and institutional choices/changes do I have to make to achieve the defined results and what support will need? (<i>Individual work</i>)	Hope & Paula
15:45 – 16:15	Practical: When, How, and With What resources? Taking this forward	Nafi & Sarah
16:00 – 16:30	Closing Remarks	Dr Hilda Tadria, Founder & ED of MEMPROW, Board member AWDF

List of Participants

	Name	Position	Organizations	Country
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