THE FEMINIST ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOL

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A TOOL TO OPERATIONALISE THE CHARTER
OF FEMINIST PRINCIPLES FOR AFRICAN FEMINISTS

The African Feminist Forum is being hosted by the
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THE AFF WORKING GROUP 2010

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"I have never felt offended by being addressed as a feminist, but rather humbled and daunted at the responsibility it bestows on me. Feminism remains a positive, movement-based term, with which I am happy to be identified. It signals a refusal of oppression, and a commitment to struggling for women's liberation from all forms of oppression—internal, external, psychological and emotional, socio-economic, political and philosophical. I like the word because it identifies me with a community of confident and radical women, many of whom I respect, both as individuals and for what they have contributed to the development of the world as we know it."

— Professor Amina Mama —

Introduction

The Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists (The Feminist Charter) was adopted at the 1st Regional African Feminist Forum which took place from 15th - 19th November 2006 in Accra, Ghana. The Feminist Charter serves as a guiding framework for our analysis and practice as feminists. Since its adoption, The Feminist Charter has been used as a mobilising tool, disseminated widely and discussed in a number of forums and gatherings. National feminist groupings have shared the charter with their constituents in a number of countries including Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

The Feminist Charter sets out the collective values that we hold as key to our work and to our lives as African feminists. It charts the change we wish to see in our communities, and also how this change is to be achieved. In addition it spells out our individual and collective responsibilities to the movement and to one another within the movement.

Two key recommendations were made in 2006 as mechanisms for operationalising The Feminist Charter. The first was that it be popularised and disseminated widely through such actions as translation into local languages, and the use of ICTs such as websites, blogs and so on. The second was that it be developed into a tool which women's organisations can use for monitoring their own institutional development as well as peer review with other feminists. In this way, The Feminist Charter can be seen as an accountability mechanism, assessing our commitment to the principles we have articulated and adopted.

The Feminist Organisational Development Tool

The Feminist Organisational Development Tool (OD Tool) has been developed in response to the identified need for a mechanism by which to operationalise The Feminist Charter. It is designed to be used as a tool for

organisational development and learning, training, staff and board development, monitoring and evaluation, peer review and exchange, as well as a tool for self improvement and reflection. Whilst developed primarily for women's rights organisations, the OD Tool is a useful resource for all activists and those interested in extending their knowledge and understanding of feminist theory and practice in Africa.

Recognising that women's rights organisations in Africa are at different levels of development in terms of capacity, staff size, budgets and so on, and also cognisant of the constantly shifting landscape and context in which African feminists work, the tool steers away from the 'one size fits all' approach of many OD tools. Rather its approach is to ask a series of questions designed to encourage joint dialogue and conscious thinking and analysis of the organisation's commitment to the principles of The Feminist Charter. This tool seeks to enable organisations and individuals to develop their own priorities within the confines of their capacities, contexts and resources. As such there is no scoring mechanism for the answers given. Instead it is hoped that the information generated from the exercise will contribute to greater learning of the challenges and successes that organisations have had so far in carving out a feminist identity not just in their programme content, but in their organisational infrastructure (policies, systems, staff and so on) as well.

As with The Feminist Charter, the OD Tool seeks to engage on a number of levels. The first part of the exercise is geared towards strengthening our understanding, analysis and values, and aligning that to our practice at the individual and collective levels. A number of case studies have been included to provide additional examples of how a number of organisations operationalise their feminist principles. We welcome more such examples from your experiences. An Additional References section has been included at the end in order to direct the users to further reading material by African feminists on these issues addressed by this tool. It is not meant as an exhaustive list and all are encouraged to add, adapt and revise as needs be.
This OD Tool is a work in progress. In its development, it has been shared, commented and improved on in a number of forums. Most notably:

- The African Feminist Forum Working Group Meeting, Dakar, Senegal; September 2009

- The Chief Executive Officers' (CEO) Forum on Leadership and Management, Kampala, Uganda; September 2009 – Convened by The African Women's Development Fund, the meeting sought to create space for board and senior management staff of regional and sub regional women's rights organisations to address the challenges of leadership and management in women's rights organisations. The tool was welcomed as having provided alternative perspectives and means by which strategies to address these challenges can be advanced.

- The African Women's Leadership Institute Specialist Training for Senior Women Leaders at ActionAid International, August 2010 – Convened by Akina Mama wa Afrika and ActionAid International, Africa the meeting provided an opportunity to test the efficacy of the tool with senior women leaders in generic organisations.

How to Use This Tool

Using the tool to discuss and explore collectively with all staff and board members will be one way of identifying gaps in the organisation but also encouraging intergenerational dialogue and learning. However, the discussions should start with the self. There are several ways in which it can be done depending on the particular circumstance. Flexibility and adaptability are the tenets of this tool. The following are some recommendations for its use.

- Ensure that the space that you have created is a safe and positive one in which free exchange of ideas, experiences, and suggestions are welcomed and valued. Try as much as possible to eliminate hierarchies of age, class, designation and so on.

- Ensure that you have allotted adequate time to engage as deeply and as meaningfully as possible (this time can be staggered depending on your circumstances).

- Be as honest and as open as you can in your responses to these questions. Remember there are no wrong or right answers.

- You may choose to undergo the exercises on an individual basis. If so it would help to share your responses with someone trusted who can give you objective feedback.

- As a collective, document your responses (according due diligence to confidentiality and privacy). This exercise is meant as a process that helps us move from one point to another in our attempt to operationalise The Feminist Charter. As part of that documentation is essential.

Remember to give us feedback on the process and your additional recommendations. We look forward to your comments, experiences and feedback both positive and negative. Good luck and have lots of fun doing it.

The African Feminist Forum Working Group
August 2010

1. Individual Ethics

A social movement is as strong or as weak as the individuals who are a part of it especially (though not exclusively) at the levels of leadership. Thus any dialogue that aims to build a strong movement needs to begin with individual/personal reflection. This section seeks to underscore this principle. It sets a series of questions for personal consideration and contemplation at 4 key levels: the concept of feminism; our organising and networks; feminist solidarity and self care and well being.

"As individual feminists, we are committed to and believe in gender equality based on feminist principles…"

1.1   The Concept of Feminism

"As African feminists our understanding of feminism places patriarchal social relations structures and systems which are imbedded in other oppressive and exploitative structures at the centre of our analysis."

This section is about strengthening our understanding of the concept of feminism and its relevance to our work and lives as feminist activists. It seeks to strengthen the link between theory and practice. Our conceptual understanding of feminism forms the foundation for our activism and it determines the priorities we set for ourselves as a movement. Thus, it is important to create time, space and to devote resources in our organisations to strengthen our learning, understanding and scholarship on feminist theory. This section sets us thinking on how we can do this.

- What is your understanding of the concept of feminism?
- What is your source of information about feminism? (e.g. Personal experience? Friends? Media? Publications? Workshops? Formal training? Other?)
- What formal training have you undergone in feminism?
- How often do you discuss the concept of feminism with your colleagues at work?
- How often do you discuss the concept of feminism with your personal friends?
- How do you apply your understanding of feminism to your work?
- How do you apply your understanding of feminism to your personal life?

For us, religious fundamentalism is a form of terrorism against women. Its manifestations are varied but its purpose is the same everywhere: the control of women and therefore the refusal to recognise them as autonomous human beings and citizens.
Ait-Hamou, Louisa. 2004. "Women's Struggle against Muslim Fundamentalism in Algeria: Strategies or a Lesson for Survival?". Warning Signs of Fundamentalisms.

- What is your own understanding of religion and spirituality within the context of feminist organising?
- What is your own understanding of culture and tradition within the context of feminist organising?
- What aspects of feminism have you found to be difficult or contentious and can you share some strategies of how you have dealt with them?

1.2 Organising and Networking for Feminist Transformatory Change

"As individual feminists, we are committed to and believe in gender equality based on feminist principles which are…
- the effective participation in building and strengthening progressive African feminist organising and networking to bring about transformatory change"

A strong movement requires that we build networks and alliances that can strategically enhance the aims of our movement. Are the networks we build reflective of the constituency of African women in all their diversities? How do we ensure that their interests and concerns are reflected in the agendas we put forward? In our activism, it is important to reflect on the networks we belong to (and if we do not as yet belong to any, to think of which to join) and how we strengthen them. This section asks a series of questions that helps us think about key considerations on networks.

- What organisations and/or networks do you belong to?
- What roles do you play in these networks?
- What principles informed your decision to join these networks?
- Please give examples of two things that the networks you belong to have achieved in terms of advancing feminist values and interests.
- How does your organisation build linkages across levels of activism, e.g., between those doing grassroots work and those doing advocacy at the public-policy level?

The degree to which women representatives can facilitate changes in gender power relations depends among other factors on the relative autonomy of the women's movement as well as the depth of engagement by women's movement with and within each party.
The existence of an autonomous women's movement can direct the terms of women's inclusion as well as act as a constituency holding the dominant party to account.
Tadesse, Zenebeworke. 2002.

- How does your organisation forge alliances and agendas between and with women from distinct locations, sectors, movements, ages, ethnicities and backgrounds?
- Does your organisation have a programme for strengthening activist and feminist leadership, especially amongst marginalised women?

1.3 Feminist Solidarity and Mutual Support

"As individual feminists, we are committed to and believe in gender equality based on feminist principles which are…
- A spirit of feminist solidarity and mutual respect based on frank, honest and open discussion of difference with each other"

The mechanisms we put in place to provide support and solidarity are what sustain a movement particularly in times of adversity. Do we see it as our personal responsibility to be part of the process that creates these mechanisms? Do we actively pursue these responsibilities? This section seeks to focus us on the importance of feminist solidarity and how we might go about it.

- How often do you invest in nurturing and building friendships that can support you in your personal and professional life? Please give two examples
- How often do you create the space to learn, reflect, and develop real relationships bases on solidarity, honesty, respect and dignity?
- How do you demonstrate your solidarity to a fellow feminist colleague/friend who is in need of support? Please give two examples.
- How do you reach out to and embrace diverse groups of women who may not necessarily be a part of our regular circle of friends or colleagues.
- How often do you respond to email alerts?
- What feminist issues do you blog about?

Whether consciously or unconsciously, there is no doubt that some women participate in defining and bestowing respectability. One of the ways in which patriarchy has been entrenched in Zimbabwean society is by dividing women, offering them limited power and social approval in exchange for behaviour strictly policed along binary lines. Women who are thus divided, and who label and insult each other continue to service patriarchal structures.

Hungwe, Chipo. 2006 "Putting them in their place: "respectable" and "unrespectable" women in Zimbabwean gender struggles. Feminist Africa, Issue 6. Cape Town: African Gender Institute.

- How often do you call women you know (who are not close friends) if you hear that they are going through a rough time?
- In what manner do you go out of your way to observe milestones with other women, i.e. travelling for birthdays, weddings, funerals, etc?

1.4 Self Care and Well Being

"As individual feminists, we are committed to and believe in gender equality based on feminist principles which are…
- The support, nurture, and care of other African feminists, along with the care for our own well-being"

A critical feminist concern is the need for women to value themselves enough to create time to respond to their needs and well being. Given the challenges generated from having to juggle multiple responsibilities, many women focus far too little attention on their own health, well being and needs, often ignoring them until the problems become acute. This section reminds us that self care is a political act of resistance to patriarchal notions that relegate women to the duties of care giving and nurturing of others at the expense of their own well being. This section asks a series of questions that examine our own practices on self care as well as that of the institutions we work for.

Friendship in the women's movement has been enriching, nurturing, sustaining and life giving. The movement has provided emotional support, loyalty and comradeship.
Hope Chigudu

- What challenges do you face balancing your personal and professional obligations?
- What strategies have you used to manage these challenges?
- How often do you take the time to reflect on your physical, emotional and spiritual well-being?
- Do you regularly set aside time for your own care and well-being?
- What challenges do you face in creating space to relax?
- Do you support your colleagues and friends to do the same? Please share some examples of the things you

do on a regular basis to promote your care and well-being.

- What policies does your organisation have in relation to the care and well being of employees?

1.5 Documenting Feminist Agency

"As individual feminists, we are committed to and believe in gender equality based on feminist principles which are…
- The acknowledgement of the feminist agency of African women which has a rich Herstory that has been largely undocumented and ignored"

Our 'herstories', our contributions to the development of our communities, nations and continent and even the globe as African women are largely missing from the historical accounts and narratives. Thus African women are invisible and patriarchy has consigned them to the realms of 'unimportant, expendable, and worthless.' To what extent to we as activists mirror these notions? What do we know about our feminist ancestors or do we not consider this important? This section asks a series of questions that challenge us to think of the critical importance of documenting our struggles and achievements.

- Have you documented your story (in any form) and shared it with others?
- Have you documented and shared the story of other women who have inspired you?
- Do you know the herstories of at least four African feminist ancestors? If yes, how do you use the information you have to raise the visibility of these figures?
- What specific insights have you gained from reading herstories?

Information and knowledge generation
…together with many other writings by women under the rubric of 'gender and democratisation' reveal the major difference between the immediate post-independence Africa and today. Unlike the past, highly vocal women's organisations have been able to disturb the silences and expose the centrality of women and gender in the construction of political identities…

…Undaunted by the hostile environment, women's organisations have focused their energies on exposed the limits of basic civil and political rights that exclude the "private" spheres of marriage and family life from democratic scrutiny. We now have detailed and context specific accounts of a vast array of culturally sanctioned practices that are classified as violence against women. These practices take place in a multitude of arenas: the household, the community, schools, workplaces and streets.

Tadesse, Zenebeworke. 2002. "Gender and Democratisation in Africa: The Long Road to the Front Seat". AGI Newsletter Vol 10.July

2. Institutional Ethics

Our institutions provide the mechanisms through which we mobilise and organise as social movements. It is important therefore to devote time to strengthening our institutions so that reflect our values and principles. As feminist organisations in Africa, we are often resource strapped and struggling to cope with several layers of challenge. As such whilst many of us would like to devote time to building feminist institutions, often the pressures of day to day management and survival leave little room for the wider yet critical considerations of building feminist institutions. There are very few signposts to how this can be done. This section seeks to explore possible areas for considerations. What does feminist leadership and governance and accountability mean or look like within the context of leading our organisations? What is feminist management practice and what are some of the indicators we can point to? And what are all the implications of this in relation to running multi generational organisations? These are some of the issues explored in this section.

2.1 Feminist Leadership, Governance & Accountability

"As feminist organisations we commit to ...
- Affirming that being a feminist institution is not incompatible with being professional, efficient, disciplined and accountable."

- How does your organisation define feminist leadership?
- In your opinion, which leadership models/practices obstruct or impede feminist leadership?
- Does your organisation have clearly stated and explicit organisational values? Could you share what these are? Which ones would you consider to be feminist?
- What systems do you have in place to ensure that your values are internalised by board, staff and other key stakeholders such as the members (for membership organisations)
- What if any challenges do you have in implementing and monitoring the adherence to these values by board members in the organisation? How have you addressed these challenges?
- Does your organisation have a written position on the role of men in leadership, governance and management? If so please state what the policy is?
- If your organisation does not have a written policy on the role of men in the organisation do you think it needs one?
  - If so please state what that policy would be?
  - If not, please state why?
- Do leaders in your organisation lead by example? Please give examples of ways in which they do/do not lead by example.

If we define democratisation as a process where people struggle individually or in groups in order to secure and effect inclusion and participation in the governance and management of their societies and communities (Parpart, 1986), then the discrimination against Zimbabwean women through stigmatization and violence prevents them from fully participating in this process. Such efforts at participation are undermined by a discourse of "unrespectability" that is sufficiently far-reaching to include even female politicians, and delineate them as "prostitutes". Women may therefore be reluctant to engage in politics; or, when they do, they serve conservative and patriarchal agendas. Obbo notes that at a 1972 conference of the All Africa Women's Organisation in Dar es Salaam, 200 women leaders from 41 countries spent much valuable time discussing the foreign "menace of miniskirts and hot pants" instead of addressing political issues that affected their female constituencies. This she attributes to women's fear of not "playing the right game in a man's world" (1986: 158). It is commonly held that politics in Zimbabwe is a "dirty game", but especially so for women.

- What qualities does your organisation look for in the selection/election of your governance board members or Trustees?
- Does your organisation have Governance Guidelines, which specify things such as job descriptions, code of conduct, term limits, board performance, etc?
- List the tensions (if any) that your organisation has in balancing the need for a nurturing feminist space with the desire to be professional and efficient.
- Who has power in your organisation?
- How do you address power challenges in your organisation? Is there a stated policy to address power and authority breaches or challenges in your organisation?
- Is your organisation a secular space?
  – If so, please state how you safeguard it as a secular space
  – If not, please state why it is not a secular space
- How does your organisation build its constituency?
- How is your organizational constituency's feminist consciousness developed?
- What strategies does your organisation use to reach out to those who are anti-feminist?
- What mechanisms does your organisation use to ensure that the state is accountable to women?
- What strategies does your organisation use to account to women?
- Does your organisation have processes to ensure that those who benefit from your programmes/projects have a significant voice in setting the agenda?

The following remark, cited by Obbo, succinctly summarises how female participation in either university or national politics is regarded: "A progressive and intelligent woman who participates in politics is regarded as a hooligan. She is said to have every possible fault, bad behaviour and so on. She isn't worth anything; she is finished" (1986: 159). Gaidzanwa (1995) shows how the term "prostitute" in Zimbabwe is mobilized against women in the political arena in order to delegitimise women's initiatives to democratise private and public life. For example, women such as Shuvai Mahofa and Margaret Dongo have been branded as prostitutes.

Hungwe, Chipo. 2006 "Putting them in their place: "respectable" and "unrespectable" women in Zimbabwean gender struggles. Feminist Africa, Issue 6. Cape Town: African Gender Institute.

2.2 Management and Institutional Processes

"As feminist organisations we commit to …
- Using power and authority responsibly, and managing institutional hierarchies with respect for all concerned. We believe that feminist spaces are created to empower and uplift women. At no time should we allow our institutional spaces to degenerate into sites of oppression and undermining of other women"

- Is yours a feminist organisation?
    - If so what makes it a "feminist" organisation?
- How does it character, approaches and strategies differ from other organisations, even those led and constituted by women?
- What systems does your organisation have in place to ensure that staff members internalise your feminist values?
- What if any challenges do you have in implementing and monitoring the adherence to these values by staff members in the organisation? How have you addressed these challenges?
- In your organisations what constitutes "success"? And how do you measure your impact?
- How do Line Managers in your organisation support the people who report to them?
- What systems does your organisation in place to ensure that women in your organisation feel cared for and respected?
- Does your organisation produce annual reports and audited accounts?
- What financial systems of control do you have in your organisation?

- Does your organisation have regular staff meetings?
- Does the organisation have clear human resource policies that are shared and clearly understood by staff?
- How often are the organisational policies reviewed? Who in the organisation is part of the process of review?
- Does the organisation have a clear communications policy (both for internal and external purposes)
- Who in your organisation is responsible for ensuring that your organisation is kept abreast of the national labour laws and requirements in which your organisation is located?
- What special measures if any, over and above statutory requirements has your organisation taken to respond to the needs of women employees?
- What are the diverse needs of different generations of women in your organisation, and has it incorporated those needs in its human resources strategy?
- Do all staff in your organisation have up to date contracts with clear job descriptions?
- What have been some your organisational experiences regarding conflict resolution?
- Do leadership and staff in your organisation take the time to reflect on the organisations, herstory?

2.3 Multi Generational Organising

"As feminist organisations we commit to …
- Exercising accountable leadership in feminist organisations taking into consideration the needs of other for self-fulfilment and professional development. This includes creating spaces for power-sharing across generations"

- What challenges (if any) do you have working with younger women in your organisation/network?
- What challenges (if any) do you have working with older women in your organisation/ network?
- Are you able to give examples of specific programs you have to attract and keep young women in your organisation/ network?
- How do you sustain links with 'older' feminist activists in your network?
- Have you developed feminist messages that can be understood by young women in their teens or twenties?
- Have you documented the experiences of older feminists in your organisation/ region/ community?
- Do you consciously promote the leadership of younger women in your organisation?
- Does your organisation have a stated policy on promoting the leadership on young women? If so please state what that policy is.

I come from a family that believes in a lot of hard work, but my determination to work harder was inspired by the women who had made it to the top. Listening to the way these women spoke about the issues that affect women, the opportunities for women, and how women should fight for their own emancipation, all this inspired me tremendously.
Thoko Ruzvidzo

2.4 Information and Knowledge Generation and Management

"As feminist organisations we commit to …
- Striving to inform our activism with theoretical analysis and to connect the practice of activism to our theoretical understanding of African feminism"

- Does your organisation have a Knowledge Generation and Management Strategy?
- What challenges do you have in the area of information and knowledge generation and management?
- What challenges do you have gathering information on feminist issues?
- Does your organisation have a resource centre? Does it have publications that are explicitly feminist? Please describe
- Does your organisation have a collection of material (books, articles, documentaries, etc) written by African feminists?
- Does your organisation encourage and support all forms of artistic expressions and different ways of generating feminist knowledge?
- Do you have access to an African feminist bibliography? Please share the title(s).
- Does your organisation have an IT strategy? Please describe in one or two sentences.

Women researchers tend to shun "controversial areas of research", concentrating instead on topics likely to get sponsorship or funding, and are more "respectable" (Mama, 1996: 85). Women who engage in politically or socially radical research projects are branded as stubborn and "unrespectable".

Hungwe, Chipo. 2006 "Putting them in their place: "respectable" and "unrespectable" women in Zimbabwean gender struggles. Feminist Africa, Issue 6. Cape Town: African Gender Institute. P44

3. Feminist Leadership in Governance and Political Participation

"As leaders in the feminist movement, we recognise that feminist agency has popularised the notion of women as leaders. As feminist leaders we are committed to making a critical difference in leadership, based on the understanding that the quality of women's leadership is even more important than the numbers of women in leadership."

Most if not all constitutions in Africa, have guaranteed women equal rights to participate in the political decision making processes at all levels. Some countries have instituted affirmative action measures to enable women to seek political office. Women's movements across the continent have invested heavily in getting women into decision-making, through training programmes, leadership development programmes, information sharing and advocacy initiatives. Whilst there has been a significant increase in the number of women in governance and political participation, the numbers are still woefully inadequate. Equally if not more important to women is the issue of the quality of women's representation and to what extent women in political leadership represent the interests of women's rights constituency. Consequently many feminists are seeking ways to build on the quality of women's participation in politics. This section examines a number of critical considerations for those in political leadership in 3 key areas namely, building a feminist constituency, feminist support networks, and mentoring and coaching.

If we define democratisation as a process where people struggle individually or in groups in order to secure and effect inclusion and participation in the governance and management of their societies and communities (Parpart, 1986), then the discrimination against Zimbabwean women through stigmatization and violence prevents them from fully participating in this process. Such efforts at participation are undermined by a discourse of "unrespectability" that is sufficiently far-reaching to include even female politicians, and delineate them as "prostitutes". Women may therefore be reluctant to engage in politics; or, when they do, they serve conservative and patriarchal agendas. Obbo notes that at a 1972 conference of the All Africa Women's Organisation in Dar es Salaam, 200 women leaders from 41 countries spent much valuable time discussing the foreign "menace of miniskirts and hot pants" instead of addressing political issues that affected their female constituencies. This she attributes to women's fear of not "playing the right game in a man's world" (1986: 158). It is commonly held that politics in Zimbabwe is a "dirty game", but especially so for women.

3.1 Sustaining a Feminist Agenda and Constituency

"We believe in and commit ourselves to…
- Ensuring that the feminist movement is recognised as a legitimate constituency for women in leadership positions"

- Do you think about women as a legitimate constituency to be represented?
- Do you have a specific plan/agenda of what you would like to do for women, which goes beyond the provision of social services?
- Can you share 2-3 recent milestones you/your organisation has achieved in advocating for women's rights?
- Do you have self identified feminists on your official advisory/staff team?
- Are you a member of any networks/caucus that promotes women's rights in your constituency?
- Do you have a resource mobilisation strategy that is not dependent on State/Party sources that can enable you to support women's rights programs?
- Have you developed a strategy for dealing with the media as a feminist politician/leader in public life?
- Do you regularly document your experiences as a leader in public life, i.e. through keeping a journal or blogging?
- How do you acquire information on what women experience in your constituency?
- Are you able to measure the impact of your personal leadership on women at a local, national or international level?

…Furthermore, women politicians frequently struggle against numerous challenges that constrain their full political participation, even where they do have a high degree of political visibility. Commenting on this in Uganda, Aili Tripp observes: Here the obstacles to women's full participant in the political arena are daunting. For example, female parliamentary candidates face a myriad of cultural prohibitions on political activity not experienced by their male counterparts. Married women politicians often find it difficult to find a constituency to run in: if they run in the constituency where they were born, they are told to go to the constituency where they are married. When they run in their husband's constituency they are told: "You came here to marry not to rule." (2000:229).

Salo, Elaine and Desiree Lewis. 2002.

…under what conditions can feminine presence or women's increased numerical representation influence policy in a feminist direction? (Goetz, A.M., 1998). Who are the constituents of women representatives and are women representatives accountable to their constituency? (Hassim, 2000).
Tadesse, Zenebeworke. 2002.

3.2 Feminist Support Networks

"We believe in and commit ourselves to…
- Being open to giving and receiving peer reviews and constructive feedback from other feminists"

• What support do you get from women's organisations/ networks?
• What support do you give to women's organisations/ networks?
• Do you have an informal advisory group of women you trust, who can give you sound, non-judgmental political advice?
• Do you have a safe space you can use when you need to relax and unwind?

3.3 Mentoring and Coaching

"We believe in and commit ourselves to…
- Creating time to respond in a competent, credible and reliable manner to other feminists in need of solidarity and support whether political, practical or emotional"

- Do you have up to five women who you regard as your mentors?
- Are you in regular contact with them? Do you have formalised interactions?
- What 'criteria' did you use for identifying the mentor?
- Do you have up to five women who regard you as their mentor?
- Are you in regular contact with them? Do you have formalised interaction?
- Are you able to list up to 10 women who could occupy the position you are in right now?
- Are you able to list up to 10 young women who could occupy your position in three-five years' time with mentoring and grooming?
- Do you have the networks to enable you to identify women who can occupy your position in ten years time?
- How does your organisation plan for succession?
- Do you have an organisational growth strategy to manage the growth of your organisation?

4. Some Examples

4.1 Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for Young Women - International Centre for Reproductive Health and Sexual Rights, Nigeria (INCRESE, Nigeria)

At INCRESE we provide sexual health services for young people. We provide them with information on life coping skills, which include values clarification, communication, self esteem, assertiveness, negotiation, decision making, pressure resistance, refusal and skills to read sexual scenes and manage them for risk reduction for rape. We take them through scenarios, and life cases which build analytical skills in them and an ability to assess life situations and make and implement sound decisions concerning life styles and choices. Dorothy Aken'ova, Executive Director and Founder, INCRESE, Nigeria

The International Centre for Reproductive Health and Sexual Rights (INCRESE) is an international organisation formed in December 2000. The objectives of INCRESE are to: create an enabling environment for expanded access to sexual and reproductive rights and health information and services; provide life skills and services including counseling and legal services to disadvantaged groups especially young women, those from LGBTI communities, sex workers and so on in the area of sexual and reproductive health.

The model of INCRESE services is based on the human rights principles of respect for bodily integrity and

personal dignity—issues that are fundamental to the human rights of ALL people, and especially the human rights of women. It is a model that aims to restore ownership and control over the woman's body to the woman. In this model, INCRESE educates women on female sexual anatomy and physiology, the human sexual response cycle, patriarchal reasons for FGM, and the physiological and psycho-social impact of mutilation on the sexual response cycle. INCRESE also does the Behavioural Change Communication activities to enable women to reclaim, love and take control over their bodies. For those who have sexual difficulties, otherwise known as sexual dysfunctions, the organisation offers therapy to them and their partners to enhancing sexual pleasure.

Work on sexual health and rights work has also included the struggle to support women for alleged sexual offences under the Sharia law and also cultural and Christian fundamentalist doctrines.

4.2 Building Networks and Bringing Feminists Together - The Gender Festival

Tanzania Gender Networking Programme and The Feminist Activist Coalition

The Gender Festival is organised by the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) and the Feminist Activist Coalition (FemAct), working together with other partners, including intermediary gender networks at district level and the many grassroots outreach groups who are part of the Gender and Development Seminar Series (GDSS), and those identified during outreach programmes.

TGNP is an activist non-governmental organisation advocating for feminist social transformation that leads to gender equality and equity, women's advancement, social justice, and access to and control over resources by women, youth and other marginalised groups. The organisation works to build a transformative feminist social movement that can contribute towards achieving a transformed society with high sensitivity to issues of gender, democracy, human rights and social justice. TGNP has built itself into an effective pressure group that promotes activism for gender transformation and social justice at different levels.

The Feminist Activist Coalition (FemAct) is a coalition of over 50 non-governmental organisations that has been working for social change in Tanzania and beyond since 1996. The coalition aims to develop, strategise, and implement a collective activist agenda for progressive and gender-focused transformation of economic, social and political policies, processes, and programmes.

The Gender Festival is an open forum for likeminded individuals and organisations to come together to share experiences and knowledge, to celebrate achievements and assess challenges ahead, to strengthen networking and coalition-building, and plan collectively for social change from a feminist perspective, to build capacity and to contribute to public debate.

The Festival provides the venue and space, and an opportunity to reach out to more than 1500 activists coming from all over the country and outside. This four-day event integrates analysis, research, activism, capacity development and art with effective results. The main goal of the conference each year is to bring together people interested in gender from all walks of life, from villages and districts of Tanzania and other parts of the world, for the purposes of activism and information sharing on a particular issue. Originally, the event was held annually, but since 1999 it has been organised every other year in order to allow more time for follow-up actions and preparation for the next festival.

The Gender Festival is a collective capacity strengthening, skills building and networking fora for civil society and development actors in and outside the country and beyond Africa. It provides a major opportunity for gender/ feminist and human rights activists and other interested actors to meet, share experiences, take stock of achievements and constraints and to foster joint action plans to further the, democracy and development agenda from a gender feminist perspective. At the Festival, individuals and groups will share outputs of their work, sharpen their skills and capacities, network and establish further linkages with other actors at different levels. It is further expected to enhance participants' capacity at the district, national and regional levels to organise and demand transformative approaches to governance, and decision-making on policies and resource allocation so as to promote gender equity and social transformation at all levels.

The four-day event features workshops, plenary sessions, and exhibitions. Furthermore, the Festival provides a forum to analyse alternative approaches to development, to share experiences with other participants, and participate in building a collective and consolidated agenda for change.

5. Additional Resources

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Appendix 1:

THE CHARTER OF FEMINIST PRINCIPLES FOR AFRICAN FEMINISTS

Introduction

The African Feminist Forum took place from 15th -19th November 2006 in Accra, Ghana. The meeting brought together over 100 feminist activists from all over the region and the diaspora. The space was crafted as an autonomous space in which African feminists from all walks of life, at different levels of engagement within the feminist movement such as mobilizing at local levels for women's empowerment to academia, could reflect on a collective basis and chart ways to strengthen and grow the feminist movement on the continent.

A key outcome of the forum was the adoption of the Charter of Feminist Principles, which was agreed by the Regional Working group for the forum, to be one of its principle aims. It was felt that we need something to help us define and affirm our commitment to feminist principles, which will guide our analysis, and practice. As such the charter sets out the collective values that we hold as key to our work and to our lives as African feminists. It charts the change we wish to see in our communities, and also how this change is to be achieved. In addition it spells out our individual and collective responsibilities to the movement and to one another within the movement.

With this charter, we reaffirm our commitment to dismantling patriarchy in all its manifestations in Africa. We remind ourselves of our duty to defend and respect the rights of all women, without qualification. We commit to protecting the legacy of our feminist ancestors who made numerous sacrifices, in order that we can exercise greater autonomy.

The charter is an inspirational as well as an aspirational document. Mechanisms for operationalising it were also drawn up at the meeting. Key recommendations were:

- The dissemination and popularization of the charter as a critical movement building tool. This requires such inputs as, translation of the charter into as many languages as possible, communication of the charter through different mediums such as radio, websites, television, and so on.

- The charter was viewed by many as an accountability mechanism for feminist organizing. As such it was recommended that it be developed into a tool that women's organizations can use for monitoring the own institutional development as well as peer review with other feminists.

CHARTER OF FEMINIST PRINCIPLES FOR AFRICAN FEMINISTS

PREAMBLE

NAMING OURSELVES AS FEMINISTS

We define and name ourselves publicly as Feminists because we celebrate our feminist identities and politics. We recognize that the work of fighting for women's rights is deeply political, and the process of naming is political too. Choosing to name ourselves Feminist places us in a clear ideological position. By naming ourselves as Feminists we politicise the struggle for women's rights, we question the legitimacy of the structures that keep women subjugated, and we develop tools for transformatory analysis and action. We have multiple and varied identities as African Feminists. We are African women – we live here in Africa and even when we live elsewhere, our focus is on the lives of African women on the continent. Our feminist identity is not qualified with `Ifs`, `Buts', or `Howevers'. We are Feminists. Full stop.

OUR UNDERSTANDING OF FEMINISM AND PATRIARCHY

As African feminists our understanding of feminism places patriarchal social relations structures and systems which are embedded in other oppressive and exploitative structures at the center of our analysis. Patriarchy is a system of male authority which legitimizes the oppression of women through

political, social, economic, legal cultural, religious and military institutions. Men's access to, and control over resources and rewards within the private and public sphere derives its legitimacy from the patriarchal ideology of male dominance. Patriarchy varies in time and space, meaning that it changes over time, and varies according to class, race, ethnic, religious and global-imperial relationships and structures. Furthermore, in the current conjunctures, patriarchy does not simply change according to these factors, but is inter-related with and informs relationships of class, race, ethnic, religious, and global-imperialism. Thus to challenge patriarchy effectively also requires challenging other systems of oppression and exploitation, which frequently mutually support each other.

Our understanding of Patriarchy is crucial because it provides for us as feminists, a framework within which to express the totality of oppressive and exploitative relations which affect African women. Patriarchal ideology enables and legitimizes the structuring of every aspect of our lives by establishing the framework within which society defines and views men and women and constructs male supremacy. Our ideological task as feminists is to understand this system and our political task is to end it. Our focus is fighting against patriarchy as a system rather than fighting individual men or women. Therefore, as feminists, we define our work as investing individual and institutional energies in the struggle against all forms of patriarchal oppression and exploitation.

OUR IDENTITY AS AFRICAN FEMINISTS

As Feminists who come from/work/live in Africa, we claim the right and the space to be Feminist and African. We recognize that we do not have a homogenous identity as feminists - we acknowledge and celebrate our diversities and our shared commitment to a transformatory agenda for African societies and African women in particular. This is what gives us our common feminist identity.

Our current struggles as African Feminists are inextricably linked to our past as a continent – diverse pre-colonial contexts, slavery, colonization, liberation struggles, neo-colonialism, globalization, etc. Modern African States were built

off the backs of African Feminists who fought alongside men for the liberation of the continent. As we craft new African States in this new millennium, we also craft new identities for African women, identities as full citizens, free from patriarchal oppression, with rights of access, ownership and control over resources and our own bodies and utilizing positive aspects of our cultures in liberating and nurturing ways. We also recognize that our pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial histories and herstories require special measures to be taken in favour of particular African women in different contexts.

We acknowledge the historical and significant gains that have been made by the African Women's Movement over the past forty years, and we make bold to lay claim to these gains as African feminists – they happened because African Feminists led the way, from the grassroots level and up; they strategised, organized, networked, went on strike and marched in protest, and did the research, analysis, lobbying, institution building and all that it took for States, employers and institutions to acknowledge women's personhood.

As African feminists, we are also part of a global feminist movement against patriarchal oppression in all its manifestations. Our experiences are linked to that of women in other parts of the world with whom we have shared solidarity and support over the years. As we assert our space as African feminists, we also draw inspiration from our feminist ancestors who blazed the trail and made it possible to affirm the rights of African women. As we invoke the memory of those women whose names are hardly ever recorded in any history books, we insist that it is a profound insult to claim that feminism was imported into Africa from the West. We reclaim and assert the long and rich tradition of African women's resistance to patriarchy in Africa. We henceforth claim the right to theorize for ourselves, write for ourselves, strategise for ourselves and speak for ourselves as African feminists.

Individual Ethics

As individual feminists, we are committed to and believe in gender equality based on feminist principles which are:

- The indivisibility, inalienability and universality of women's human rights
- The effective participation in building and strengthening progressive African feminist organizing and networking to bring about transformatory change.
- A spirit of feminist solidarity and mutual respect based on frank, honest and open discussion of difference with each other.
- The support, nurture, and care of other African feminists, along with the care for our own well-being.
- The practice of non-violence and the achievement of non-violent societies.
- The right of all women to live free of patriarchal oppression, discrimination and violence.
- The right of all women to have access to sustainable and just livelihoods as well as welfare provision, including quality health care, education, water and sanitation.
- Freedom of choice and autonomy regarding bodily integrity issues, including reproductive rights, abortion, sexual identity and sexual orientation.
- A critical engagement with discourses of religion, culture, tradition and domesticity with a focus on the centrality of women's rights.
- The recognition and presentation of African women as the subjects not the objects of our work, and as agents in their lives and societies.
- The right to healthy, mutually respectful and fulfilling personal relationships.
- The right to express our spirituality within or outside of organized religions.
- The acknowledgment of the feminist agency of African women which has a rich Herstory that has been largely undocumented and ignored.

Institutional Ethics

As feminist organisations we commit to the following:

- Advocating for openness, transparency, equality and accountability in feminist- led institutions and organisations.

- Affirming that being a feminist institution is not incompatible with being professional, efficient, disciplined and accountable.

- Insisting on and supporting African women's labour rights, including egalitarian governance, fair and equal remuneration and maternity policies.

- Using power and authority responsibly, and managing institutional hierarchies with respect for all concerned. We believe that feminist spaces are created to empower and uplift women. At no time should we allow our institutional spaces to degenerate into sites of oppression and undermining of other women.

- Exercising responsible leadership and management of organisations whether in a paid or unpaid capacity and striving to uphold critical feminist values and principles at all times.

- Exercising accountable leadership in feminist organisations, taking into consideration the needs of others for self-fulfillment and professional development. This includes creating spaces for power-sharing across-generations.

- Creating and sustaining feminist organisations to foster women's leadership. Women's organizations and networks should be led and managed by women. It is a contradiction of feminist leadership principles to have men leading, managing and being spokespersons for women's organizations.

- Feminist organisations as models of good practice in the community of civil society organizations, ensuring that the financial and material resources mobilised in the name of African women are put to the service of African women and not diverted to serve personal interests. Systems and structures with appropriate Codes of Conduct to prevent corruption and fraud, and to manage disputes and complaints fairly, are the means of ensuring institutionalized within our organizations.

- Striving to inform our activism with theoretical analysis and to connect the practice of activism to our theoretical understanding of African feminism.

- Being open to critically assessing our impact as feminist organizations, and being honest and proactive with regards to our role in the movement.

- Opposing the subversion and/or hijacking of autonomous feminist spaces to serve right wing, conservative agendas.

- Ensuring that feminist non-governmental or mass organisations are created in response to real needs expressed by women that need to be met, and not to serve selfish interests, and unaccountable income-generating

Feminist Leadership

- As leaders in the feminist movement, we recognize that feminist agency has popularized the notion of women as leaders. As feminist leaders we are committed to making a critical difference in leadership, based on the understanding that the quality of women's leadership is even more important than the numbers of women in leadership. We believe in and commit ourselves to the following:

- Disciplined work ethics guided by integrity and accountability at all times

- Expanding and strengthening a multi-generational network and pool of feminist leaders across the continent
- Ensuring that the feminist movement is recognised as a legitimate constituency for women in leadership positions.

- Building and expanding our knowledge and information base on an ongoing basis, as the foundation for shaping our analysis and strategies and for championing a culture of learning beginning with ourselves within the feminist movement.

- Nurturing, mentoring and providing opportunities for young feminists in a non-matronising manner

- Crediting African women's labour, intellectual and otherwise in our work.

- Creating time to respond in a competent, credible and reliable manner to other feminists in need of solidarity and support whether political, practical or emotional.

- Being open to giving and receiving peer reviews and constructive feedback from other feminists

OUTIL DE DEVELOPPEMENT ORGANISATIONNEL FEMINISTE

OUTIL DE DEVELOPPEMENT ORGANISATIONNEL FEMINISTE

Un Outil Pour Rendre Operationnelle La Charte
Des Principes Feministes A L'intention Des
Feministes Africaines

LE GROUPE DE TRAVAIL DU FORUM FEMINISTE AFRICAIN 2010

Ayesha Imam (Nigeria)
Bene Madunagu (Nigeria)
Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi (Nigeria/Ghana)
Codou Bop (Senegal)
Demere Kitunga (Tanzania)
Everjoice Win (Zimbabwe/South Africa)
Hope Chigudu (Zimbabwe/Uganda)
Jessica Horn (Uganda/UK)
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"Je n'ai jamais pris pour une offense le fait qu'on me traite de féministe, mais plutôt j'éprouve un sentiment de grande humilité face à la lourdeur de la responsabilité que me confère ce statut. Le féminisme demeure un terme positif et dynamique auquel je m'identifie avec joie. Il incarne à la fois le refus de l'oppression et l'engagement à lutter en faveur de la libération des femmes du joug de l'oppression sous toutes ses formes à savoir interne, externe, psychologique et émotionnel, socioéconomique, politique et philosophique. J'aime le terme parce qu'il m'identifie à une communauté de femmes confiantes et radicales dont je respecte un grand nombre à la fois comme individus et pour ce qu'elles ont apporté comme contribution au développement du monde tel que nous le connaissons."

— Professor Amina Mama —