Stronger Together:

The power of feminist programmes to strengthen women's movements in Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe

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Womankind Learning Paper Series

This is the first in a series of learning papers that aim to capture and collate some of the knowledge, learning and evidence around the focus and effectiveness of our work with partners. By sharing this learning, we hope to provide new knowledge on feminist programme approaches that support and strengthen women's movements.

About Womankind Worldwide

Womankind Worldwide (Womankind) is a global women's rights organisation working with women's movements to transform the lives of women. Our vision is a world where the rights of all women are respected, valued and realised. We support women's movements to strengthen and grow by carrying out diverse joint activities, including advocacy and communications work, women's rights programming rather than service delivery, awareness raising, knowledge sharing, research, capacity development and fundraising.

Definitions

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

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

List of acronyms

Association of Women in Development (AWID)

Civil Society Organisation (CSO)

Department for International Development (DFID)

Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR)

Gender and Development Network (GADN)

Information, Communication Technologies (ICT)

International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs)

Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LBTQ)

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

National Association for Women's Action in Development (NAWAD)

National association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE)

Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)

Theory of Change (ToC)

United Nations (UN)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ)

Women's Rights Organisation (WRO)

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NAWAD women's group perform
drama on oil land grabbing,
Nwoya
© Womankind /Sarah Waiswa

Executive summary

Womankind Worldwide's programmatic approach to strengthening women's movements, as detailed in her strategy and Theory of Change,[1] asserts that progressive change for women happens when diverse and independent women's movements have strength, resilience and collective power. Whilst the actors in women's movements are varied, Womankind understands that women's rights organisations (WROs) form the backbone of women's movements and are the sites from which movements are built and supported.[2] Collaboration and partnership between Womankind and WROs is central and is grounded in feminist values. To avoid replicating the power imbalances of patriarchal structures and systems, these partnerships are based on a power-with strategy with joint ownership and shared risks, responsibilities and benefits.[3] Womankind's Theory of Change identifies a set of programme inputs, called pillars, (See Box A on page 9) underpinned by feminist leadership, which summarise the areas of support that Womankind includes in her programmes and in project design with partners to strengthen women's movements.

The focus of this paper: Introducing the three initiatives

In this paper, Womankind draws on evidence and learning from three distinct projects (sometimes called initiatives in this paper and summarised below) to better understand her programmatic approach through project delivery and partnership in line with the Theory of Change and to document how women's movements are strengthened and sustained. In addition to existing project documentation and evidence, Womankind explored a range of movement-focused questions, including which strategies and approaches were used in each initiative to strengthen the women's movement, and what sustained changes were achieved for the women's movement as a result of the initiative.

The three projects are described in more detail later on in the paper but are briefly introduced here: Kenya, a convening of young feminists; Uganda, the eco-feminist movement use of Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR);[4] and Zimbabwe, pre-election positioning by the women's movement.

Kenya: The young feminist convening

In 2017-18, Womankind conducted a consultation with women from the Kenyan women's rights movement to understand priorities for women's rights. Following this, a project concept began to emerge to address some of the issues raised with particular focus on creating a safe space and opportunities for young feminists to share and organise. A key challenge was the fragmentation of the Kenyan women's movement with various groups (young feminists in particular) expressing feelings of exclusion and/or discontent that their concerns are omitted from key debates.

Understanding her own position and role, and the potential for transformation that young women can bring, Womankind provided strategic support for young women and their organising in Kenya. Due to the fragmentation of the movement and the desire not to replicate some of the issues raised in the consultation, Womankind worked with an informal group rather than a partner organisation. This resulted in the creation of a carefully considered organising committee of ten young Kenyan feminists to plan, design and lead a two-day convening with participants from across the country. The engagement and leadership of young feminists in the organising committee with oversight from Womankind was a new way of working for all involved and at times challenged a shared understanding of feminist values and approaches. However, this was an important aspect of learning from the project as such challenges were addressed between committee members and, when appropriate, with Womankind. Whilst the convening itself was a short event, the new connections made by participants will be longer lasting, underpinned by solidarity and commitment to support each other and emerging initiatives.

Uganda: Supporting the eco-feminist movement

While land – access, control and ownership – has long been a locus of conflict and dissent, the most recent wave of dispute is caused by what has been termed the land rush or land grabs: investors purchasing or leasing land for mining or producing cash crops. Women's right to land is suppressed by the convergence of patriarchal social norms and commercial pressures on land and natural resources, while neither customary nor statutory law fully protects their rights. This has particular impact on women in rural areas, including violence and forced evictions, negative impact on women's livelihood and income, an increase in unpaid care and domestic work and restrictions to civic space.

The National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE) and the National Association of Women's Action in Development (NAWAD)[5] initiated a movement for women to have a say on energy, fossil fuel and climate justice issues in addition to agribusiness and extractive industries. To date, NAPE and NAWAD have identified 1,500 Ugandan women who are part of a vibrant eco-feminist movement with the goal of mobilising 5,000 more in the next 2 years. Through consultation and collective action, they aim to influence decision making in national development processes as well as promote the adoption of feminist livelihoods and energy alternatives in communities affected by land intensive industries.

1. Womankind Worldwide (2016), Women's movements: a force for change. Womankind Worldwide's Strategy 2016-2021. Available online at https://www.womankind.org.uk/docs/default-source/resources/womankind-worldwide-external-strategy-summary-2017.pdf
2. Batliwala, S. (2012), Changing Their World: Concepts and Practices of Women's Movements. AWID, 2nd Edition. Available online at https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/changing_their_world_2ed_full_eng.pdf
3. Institute of Development Studies (2018), Participatory Methods: Power. Available online at https://www.participatorymethods.org/method/power
4. NAPE/NAWAD/Womankind Worldwide (2018), Digging deep: The impact of Uganda's land rush on women's rights. Available online at https://www.womankind.org.uk/docs/default-source/resources/reports/digging-deep-the-impact-of-uganda's-land-rush-on-women's-rights.pdf
5. For more information about NAPE and NAWAD see: http://www.nape.or.ug and http://www.nawad.co.ug

In partnership with Womankind, NAPE and NAWAD conducted a Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR)[6] study in 2017 to fully understand the impact and scale of land rights issues affecting women in several provinces, which aimed to strengthen the eco-feminist movement in Uganda. The FPAR methodology builds on feminist practice developed throughout the 1990s and 2000s and is used to equip women with increased knowledge and power as well as the ability to create ideas and identify solutions to effect change. The resulting report, 'Digging Deep: The impact of Uganda's land rush on women's rights,'[7] contributed to the evidence base on this issue, raised awareness, helped to broaden movement membership at the grassroots level whilst also supporting women's participation in high-level spaces. As a movement, eco-feminism aims to organise and enable women to challenge oppression. Thus, FPAR as a methodology promoted safe spaces and a process of women's movement building and collective action, thereby building solidarity, respect, safety, care and consent.

Zimbabwe: Responding to emerging opportunities for the women's movement in the 2018 elections

The 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe was heralded as a great success amongst the women's rights movement in Zimbabwe, as 80% of their demands were met.[8] However, these gains did not materialise in practice and the lack of prioritisation of women's rights in a context of continued crisis underscored the enduring need for a strong and resilient women's movement. The ability of the women's movement to identify and respond to unforeseen opportunities is key and the 2018 election provided scope for the Zimbabwean women's movement to organise and mobilise support for women's rights to be upheld in line with the progressive Constitution.

In times of rapid change, support from allies and other women's organisations is vital. This is why Womankind assisted the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe with creating responses to this unforeseen opening at the national level. WCoZ is central to the women's movement in Zimbabwe and with a national grassroots membership structure is well placed to work with diverse women's rights organisations and other allies and actors.

In partnership with Womankind, WCoZ focused on the development of a women's manifesto for the elections, a conference on women and the election (titled Sisters in Solidarity) and media campaigning, including social media. Throughout the project, a collaborative and consultative process was taken as evident through a collectively designed feminist analysis of the pre-election monitoring environment and the development of an election strategy with members and key allies to address gaps through advocacy. The project achieved all of the outcomes that it had planned, including the Gender Parity

Pledge, which was signed by 14 political parties.

However, often overlooked but essential for movement strengthening, the project also supported women to quite literally come together, to meet in safe spaces and to explore their own understanding of the election context in order to discuss and agree on a joined-up approach and engage in project activities from community level voter registration through to national level advocacy and political support. Overall, the women's movement improved election preparedness by strengthening capacity, developing strategy and working group mechanisms, recruiting community champions to support women's rights and gender responsive election advocacy, monitoring, civic education and citizen mobilisation initiatives.

Summary of the lessons learned

These three initiatives each aligned with key elements of the Womankind Theory of Change. This is a brief summary of initial learning with particular reference to Womankind's inputs (known as pillars). More comprehensive information on each initiative is included in the relevant case study.

Pillar 1: Women activists are supported and encouraged to understand the political importance of self-care and wellbeing

In each project, there has been implicit acknowledgement of the need for time and space for women to consider and respond to their own needs in relation to self-care and wellbeing. However, this remains a challenge for many women due to patriarchal norms and prevalent gender roles not to mention adequate resourcing and time. There is consideration of this as well as the commitment to further integrate this into future activities to help sustain women in the movements they are part of.

Pillar 2: Opportunities are provided to movement actors to connect with each other in safe spaces

In each project, it is evident that the resourcing and inclusion of time for women to meet and engage in safe spaces for project activities is a central aspect of movement building. This was the case for smaller organising committee type engagement as well as larger meetings and conferences.

Pillar 3: Appropriate communications and ICT support is provided to facilitate network and alliance building and action

From developing and agreeing messaging for social media or an election manifesto, through to the development of an agenda and sessions for a two-day convening, or conducting FPAR resulting in a publication, it is clear that strong communications and ICT support are essential for women's movements. This is both for the delivery of specific project activities and outcomes but also for organising and mobilising the wider movement and to coalesce around agreed priorities and action.

6. Gatenby, B. & Humphries, M. (2000). Feminist participatory action research: methodological and ethical issues. Available online at https://www.participatorymethods.org/resource/feminist-participatory-action-research-methodologicial-and-ethical-issues
7. NAPE/NAWAD/Womankind Worldwide (2018), Digging deep: The impact of Uganda's land rush on women's rights. *op. cit.*
8. UN Women (2013), Zimbabweans say yes to new Constitution strong on gender equality and women's rights. Available online at http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2013/4/zimbabweans-say-yes-to-new-constitution-strong-on-gender-equality-and-womens-rights

Pillar 4: Key actors in the women's movement are mapped and issues of intersectionality are raised, understood and addressed

Each project involved a range of diverse women identifying in various ways and with particular needs and priorities. There is a tacit understanding through the process of project design and delivery with Womankind that taking an intersectional approach is key to feminist values and approaches in movement building and strengthening.

Pillar 5: Feminist documentation and research form the core of umbrella initiatives to bring WROs together

In these three projects, the most obvious evidence of documentation and research includes the publication of the women's election manifesto in Zimbabwe and the 'Digging Deep' report from Uganda. Both have formed the basis for women to gather, engage and develop recommendations for future action, including in policy and advocacy. In the case of Kenya, the process of designing and developing the agenda, sessions and materials for the two-day convening brought young women together and subsequently convened a wider group of participants at the event itself.

Pillar 6: Women's movement actors are given the opportunity to connect to wider platforms for movement building and learning

The creation and ownership of evidence and policy recommendations are essential to making the continued case for change and action in support of women's rights. In the case of Uganda and Zimbabwe, women engaged in policy development and advocacy with influential targets

NAPE drama group members,
Kigaaga, Hoima County
© Womankind /Sarah Waiswa

and stakeholders, as well as connecting with other women's rights organisations, the global women's movement and allies from other social movements.

Feminist transformative leadership is key in strengthening women's movements and grounded in principles of collective and non-hierarchical approaches to decision making and influencing

Feminist transformational leadership was evident in each case study documented in this paper. In Uganda, FPAR embeds feminist principles that empower women to analyse the impacts of land grabs and formulate responses and solutions themselves. In Zimbabwe, women from across the women's coalition participated equally in leading the pre-election work, building on their respective strengths. In Kenya, young women worked together in a non-hierarchal committee structure to plan the convening. Whilst these processes sometimes took time and power imbalances surfaced, which needed to be addressed, the process of collective leadership deepened women's solidarity and collective power.

Other learning

The case studies also highlighted other aspects of learning about strengthening movements, such as the importance of political education and cross movement building. As Womankind supports more initiatives in the future, she is eager to learn more about movement strengthening approaches and to document and share these learnings.

Introduction

For decades, women's movements have been vital instruments for change to laws and policies affecting women's rights. By tackling root causes of inequality, such as patriarchy, and seeking transformational change at individual, community and systemic levels, women's movements have been the most critical factor in achieving progressive policies, such as those for violence against women and girls (VAWG).[9]

Women's movements have similar characteristics to other social justice movements in that they organise a broad base of constituents to pursue a common political agenda of change through a range of collective action strategies.[10] Women's movements differ from other social movements in that their constituents and leaders are women, the majority of which are the most impacted by patriarchal norms, often in multiple and intersecting ways, who campaign for women's rights and gender justice at national, regional and international levels. Women's movements place emphasis on developing gendered analyses of the problems they want to address and establish political goals that challenge social power relations through feminist strategies and methods, such as women's mobilising. Centring feminist values and ideology at the heart of movements is key and often has the secondary impact of creating more feminist organisations.[11]

In her strategy 'Women's Movements: A Force for Change (2016-2021)' and 'Theory of Change (ToC),'[12] Womankind asserts that progressive change for women happens when diverse and independent women's movements have strength, resilience and collective power. Whilst the actors in women's movements are varied, Womankind understands that women's rights organisations (WROs) form the backbone of women's movements and are the sites from which movements are built and supported.[13]

> *"(Women's rights organisations are) … the sites from which movements are built, supported, serviced and governed — and sometimes, destroyed. They are the primary structures in or through which movement leaders, activists, and members are organised, trained, capacitated, protected, and energised to pursue the transformational agenda of movements."*
>
> **Srilatha Batiawala, Association of Women in Development (AWID)**

Womankind has 30 years of experience working with over 280 WROs across more than 13 countries and three continents. She has expertise and experience on how to support WROs to achieve their goals on preventing violence against women and girls, enhancing women's political participation and realising women's economic rights. Womankind also has in depth experience of building the capacities of WROs to strengthen their feminist approaches

through shared principles of partnership and to increase effectiveness through organisational development support.

Womankind has a unique programming approach. Collaboration and partnership between Womankind and WROs is central and is grounded in feminist values. All partnerships are based on a power-with strategy in order to avoid replicating power imbalances of patriarchal structures and systems.[14] Decision makers must be women in order to strengthen women's leadership and agency and initiatives should take a rights based approach. Initiatives evolve from partner priorities and are developed with close and extensive support from Womankind. Womankind works with local experts to support partners where appropriate and in support of initiatives, which contributes an additional layer of feminist leadership.

During the development of the current strategy and related country strategies, it was important for Womankind to retain her feminist approach to partnership but she was eager to understand the additional ways in which she could better focus her support to women's movements. Womankind's analysis was also cognisant of the trend towards the 'NGOisation of feminist movements' where non-governmental organisations (NGOs including WROs) are often not able to centre politics in their work because Northern actors stipulate the agendas and define success.[15] Whilst understanding the tensions around power dynamics and resourcing for partners and projects, deliberate consideration was given to including spaces for political reflection and action in programme design.

During the development of the current strategy, which runs from 2016 to 2021, Womankind consulted with over 100 WROs and allies[16] and subsequently developed programme design guidelines to situate partner initiatives within existing movements and integrate activities that would both help the initiative to succeed and contribute to strengthening the political goals of women's movements. Consideration is also given to monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) through the connection between project-focused MEL and Womankind inputs as expressed in the Theory of Change. The design guidelines encourage partners to deliberately consider (giving due consideration to safety and security) the following areas:[17]

- What movement is your initiative is a part of (thematic, identity based, geographical, online etc)?[18]

- Which other actors are working on the same topic both inside and outside the women's movement? What has already been achieved and what are the current gaps?

- What opportunities exist for partnership/ consortia/alliances with other women's rights actors, those in other social justice movements or non-usual actors to further your initiative?

9. Htun, M. and Weldon, S.L. (2012), The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective, 1975-2005, American Political Science Review, 1-22.

10. Batliawala, S. (2012), Changing Their World: Concepts and Practices of Women's Movements. AWID, 2nd Edition. op. cit.

11. Ibid.

12. Womankind Worldwide (2016), Women's movements: a force for change. Womankind Worldwide's Strategy 2016-2021. op. cit.

13. Batliawala. S. (2012), Changing Their World: Concepts and Practices of Women's Movements. AWID, 2nd Edition. op. cit.

14. Gatenby, B. & Humphries, M. (2000), Feminist Participatory Action Research: methodological and ethical issues. op. cit.

15. Al-Karib, H. (2018) The dangers of NGO-isation of women's rights in Africa. Available online at https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/dangers-ngo-isation-women-rights-africa-181212102656547.html

16. Womankind Worldwide (2016), Women's movements: a force for change. Womankind Worldwide's Strategy 2016-2021. op. cit.

17. Influenced by Batliawala, S. (2012), Changing Their World: Concepts and Practices of Women's Movements. AWID, 2nd Edition. op. cit.

18. Womankind : violence against women and girls; women's economic rights; and women's participation and leadership

- What kind of collective action strategies can be used in your initiative? Do these build on women's own mobilising capacities and involve women at every stage?
- Is your work grounded in a robust gender analysis?
- Are the goals of the initiative gendered and seek a change in gender and social power relations?
- Is your approach rights based (if possible in your context)?

19. Batliwala, S. (2011), Feminist Leadership for Social Transformation Clearing the Conceptual Cloud. Available online at https://www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/ucwc/docs/CREA.pdf

The Womankind consultation also led to the specific development of pillars (see Box A), which are coupled with feminist leadership[19] as a cross cutting theme. The pillars are not an exhaustive list or one-size-fits-all toolkit, but are a guide for programme design with partners. As the strategy continues to be implemented, Womankind is hoping to deepen her understanding of how to further support women's movements.

Womankind's selection of these pillars are rooted in her understanding of the following realities for women's rights organisations and the wider women's movement they work with and within:

Box A – Womankind's movement pillars

1. Women activists are supported and encouraged to understand the political importance of self-care and wellbeing

2. Opportunities are provided to movement actors to connect with each other in safe spaces

3. Appropriate communications and ICT support are provided to facilitate action and network and alliance building

4. Strategies to raise, understand and incorporate intersectional approaches are developed and supported

5. Support is provided for feminist documentation and research as a key part of initiatives bringing WROs together

6. Opportunities are provided to women's movement actors to connect to wider platforms for movement building and learning

7. Support is given to the women's movement to access and input into sustainable, progressive funding and financing models

Self-care and wellbeing: Women's rights activists are constantly at risk of attack (including physical, financial, judicial, sexual and online) as they challenge power holders and duty bearers. Consistent exposure to attack and backlash takes its toll on activists both physically, emotionally and psychologically. Womankind will support partners to individually and collectively reflect on the importance of self-care as a key strategy in sustaining activism.

Safe spaces: Activists working on changing deeply entrenched societal norms can be targeted for the views they hold as a way to scare them into stopping or changing their activities. This can take place in their homes, in public and in their workplaces. Womankind will support spaces for women to meet, support each other and create strategies to progress their work.

Communications and ICT: Activists are using innovative technologies, such as social media and films, to share the successes of their work, educate women on their rights and amplify the voices of women nationally, regionally and globally. Womankind will support women's movements and feminist communicators in mobilising their constituents for action and reporting on their work via various ICT channels.

Intersectionality:[20] Many women face multiple discrimination based on their identity that intersect with gender discrimination, such as race. However, intersectional programming is not well understood. Building on the UK Gender and Development Network's (GADN) work,[21] Womankind will support women's movements to better understand and integrate intersectionality into their work.

Feminist documentation and research: This is a preferred approach by women's movements because it emphasises the lived realities of women. However, this work is often unfunded, making it challenging to show the extent of discrimination against women. Womankind will support partners to development and utilise feminist documentation and research so that there is a strong evidence base upon which to advocate for change.

Platforms for movement building and learning: Women's movement actors are often not able to attend learning events outside of their contexts due to limited economic means and increasing restrictions on their ability to travel overseas due to visa requirements. Where possible and appropriate, Womankind will support partners to attend these spaces to enhance the potential for impact of their agendas beyond their contexts.

20. A term first used by Kimberle Crenshaw to demonstrate the intersection between race and gender. See: https://philpapers.org/archive/CREDTI.pdf
21. Gender and Development Network (2018), Intersectionality: Reflections from the Gender & Development Network. Available online at https://static1.squarespace.com/static/536c4ee8e4b0b60bc6ca7c74/t/5a130e9d53450a0abd9c0f8f/1511198367912/Intersectionality+GADN+thinkpiece+November+2017.pdf

Sustainable, progressive funding and financing models: Women's movements are under-resourced and this severely limits the potential to realise women's rights. Womankind will continue to advocate for long-term, flexible funding for women's movements in addition to supporting actors to develop sustainable operating models.

Transformational feminist leadership:[22] This is a leadership style that does not revolve around the demands or identity of one person in a hierarchical structure. It seeks to share leadership between different actors, bringing their mutual strengths and skills to bear towards the same goal. This style is empowering: it models feminist purpose and principles, challenges patriarchal power, builds on collective skills and strengths and supports women to integrate heart, mind and body.

22. Wakefield, S. (2017) Transformative and Feminist Leadership for Women's Rights. Oxfam America Research Backgrounder series. Available online at https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/research-publications/transformative-feministleadership-womens-rights
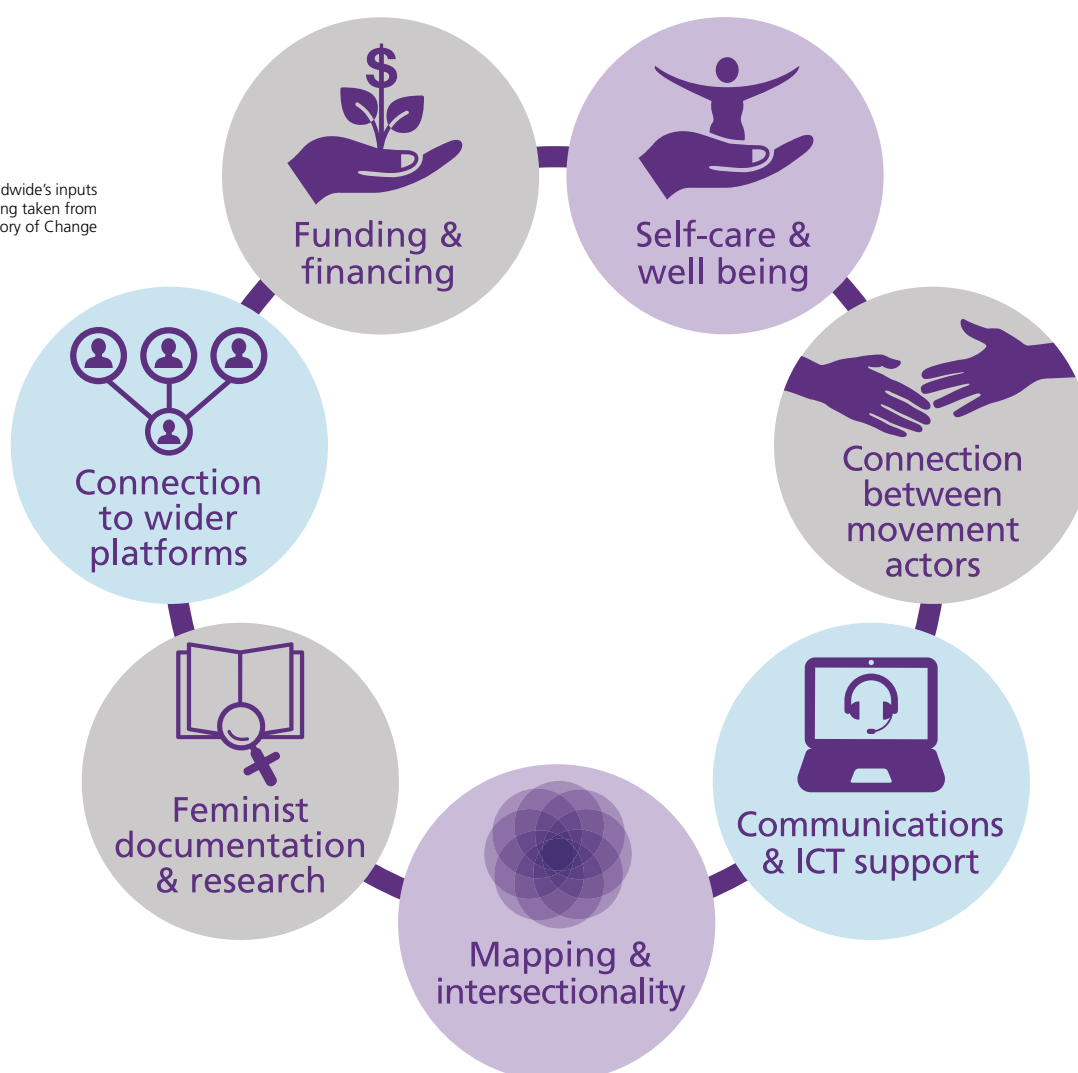
Methodology

This report highlights learning from three movement strengthening initiatives that Womankind has supported during the first three years of her new strategy. In developing the paper, Womankind conducted stakeholder interviews with actors from each movement, analysed key literature and reviewed relevant project documentation.

The key learning questions were:

- What strategies and approaches were used in each initiative to strengthen each women's movement?

- Are there elements that emerged that demonstrated Womankind's Theory of Change in strengthening women's movements?

- What were the synergies across contexts?

- What were the challenges?

- What sustained changes were achieved for the women's movement as a result of the initiative?

- What further support can this initiative receive from Womankind and others in the future?

Womankind Worldwide's inputs for movement building taken from her Theory of Change

Case study: Kenya: The young feminist convening

Context

In 2017, Womankind carried out a series of consultation meetings in Nairobi with members of the Kenyan women's rights movement to understand the priorities for women's rights at local and national levels. The issues raised were wide ranging, from the need for a sensitive approach to bringing women together to the need for finding and agreeing on entry points for transformative change within the movement itself. A key trend that emerged was the extent to which the Kenyan women's movement is fragmented. This included views from women about the lack of cohesion and strategy in the aftermath of the 2002 elections. Although during this time women leaders assumed government positions, they gave little handover to others in the women's movement, and feelings of exclusion and/or discontent that their issues are omitted from key debates also arose. A common strand was that there are limited meaningful spaces for WROs and activists to come together or to act in true solidarity. Young feminists expressed their views about wanting to engage and debate with the broader women's movement but that there is a lack of sustained intergenerational engagement which has led to limited inclusion and unrepresentative voice. There are also tensions related to competition over resources and a lack of spaces to reflect on what makes the movement stronger and to set a common vision.

Young feminists in Kenya

In relation to her strategy and understanding of the national context, Womankind understands that young feminists have the potential to make a significant contribution to women's rights in Kenya through their own social capital as well as the connections and access to information required to build and maintain relationships and networks. Young feminists represent a diverse range of social issues, including youth, sex work, LBTQ, climate and environmental justice, SRHR, issues faced by rural women, safety and security issues faced by WHRD, health, education and disability rights.

As a result, Womankind chose to focus its support in a strategic way to support young feminists (under 30 years old) through a two-day convening and follow up activities. The convening approach was agreed as it provides supportive and safe spaces to empower young feminists who are so often on the margins of women's movements, as well as in their own communities due to their views and outlook. This approach also aimed to nurture the development of feminist consciousness, including through the ability to make decisions and to design and lead an initiative for themselves by themselves. This underscored their desire and need to come together and challenge prevailing power dynamics within the women's movement and enabled them to strategise how to respond to backlash and provide solidarity and support for each other.

The initiative

Although Womankind is partner-led organisation, she decided that situating this initiative within an existing partner or other registered WRO in Kenya could have contributed to further fragmentation of the women's movement. Womankind therefore chose to pilot an innovative alternative programme structure whilst remaining true to her feminist values. As a result, a local committee of young feminists was established to lead the initiative with logistical support from a Kenyan women's rights expert and fiscal host. As a learning organisation, Womankind was keen to test this approach and understand if this could complement her usual partnership approach of working with WROs.

The organising committee comprised of ten young Kenyan feminists drawn from across thematic sectors, locations, ethnicities, abilities and sexualities and were chosen because of their role and scope of engagement in the young Kenyan women's movement. Committee members came from Lamu, Kisumu, Nakuru and Nairobi, worked in SRHR, eco-feminism, VAWG, peace and security, girl's leadership, disability rights and LBTQ organising and had experiences in women's rights organisations at the national and grassroots levels. With support from a Kenyan women's rights expert and in modelling feminist leadership principles, the committee chose its own organising structure. Womankind retained financial oversight of the initiative (due to its accountability responsibilities with the donor) and contracted a partner in Kenya to act as the project fiscal host in order to disburse and account for funds locally and minimise exchange rate losses.

The committee held regular meetings and shared responsibilities to convene and develop a shared agenda for each one. The process of planning for the two-day convening itself included the creation of three sub-committees, each focused on a different aspect of the event: participant selection, convening content, and event logistics.

> *"Working with such a diverse and dynamic group in the committee afforded me the unique opportunity to become deeply aware and sensitised on the struggle of others and not only my own. It was eye-opening to listen to environmental activists, LBTQ identifying women and human rights defenders and trying to link their struggle to my own. In retrospect, I did learn a simple but powerful lesson; that even in our diversity, we are all fighting for the same thing, inclusivity. We are one! That is the essence of solidarity and sisterhood."*
>
> **Catherine Kandie, Organising committee member**

The selection criteria for participants of the young feminist convening mirrored that used for the organising committee with a focus on diversity and experience. Efforts were made to reach out to and accommodate the most excluded, whether this was due to lack of finances to support their participation, their ability to engage online or their remote locations. Resources were provided to women with children to be accompanied by their usual childminder, the venue was made accessible to accommodate wheelchair users,[23] and internal flights were arranged to transport women from five counties across the country.

Themes of the convening: 'Critique, Influence, Change'[24]

The first day of the convening provided background and opportunity for participants to engage with each other and understand the background to current struggles through the sharing of daily realities and experiences of living under patriarchy, the history of the feminist movement in Africa and Kenya, and feminist organising. The second day focused on future action and envisaging feminist futures together.

This approach, through the development of the agenda by and for young feminists, was well received, as demonstrated through the event evaluation. Many young feminists reported that this was the first time they had been to a feminist event and heard core feminist material around power and the HerStory of the Kenyan feminist movement. Many had not been in such diverse feminist spaces before and welcomed the meaningful engagement of women with many identities, all accepted as equals. Whilst the event was only short, it gave impetus to many young women to forge new connections and collaboration for their organising with and for each other in solidarity. Of particular note are the following:

Below: Young feminists participate in discussions at the Young Feminist Convening © Womankind /Atieno Muyuyi

23. CBM International (2017), Disability Inclusive Development Toolkit. Available online at https://www.cbm.org/article/downloads/54741/CBM-DID-TOOLKIT-accessible.pdf
24. Influenced by Mies, M. (1999), Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour (Critique Influence Change), Zed Books.

A greater sense of solidarity and sisterhood: Participants shared that they benefitted greatly from understanding patriarchy as a system of oppression, including how everyone is affected in different ways by the same system. They also strengthened their understanding of the relationship between individual versus collective responsibilities and how this developed their sense of solidarity and sisterhood.

An understanding of African feminist history gave hope: This was invaluable as many young feminists were unaware of the HerStory of African feminism, including the impact of colonial oppression and capitalism on women. Understanding both the past as well as the progress made to date by African women on women's rights gave participants a sense of hope.

How the initiative contributed to strengthening the young feminist movement in Kenya

This section is organised under broad headings in relation to Womankind's movement pillars and includes additional learning and insight drawn from the initiative.

Strategies

Self-care and wellbeing: As young feminists shared their stories on the first day, many were triggered by painful memories that strengthened their understanding of the connection between personal experiences and the political nature of feminism. At the beginning of day two, the participants took part in an impromptu healing circle to acknowledge these painful stories and experiences, to heal together from negative emotions, and to accept the important need for time for oneself, so often overlooked or forgotten by women. The inclusion of the healing session highlighted the importance of being flexible in

feminist spaces to respond to women's emotional needs as a result of sharing their stories. It also underscored the importance of creating spaces for wellbeing and self-care activities in advance.

> *"Thank you so much for this space, it has started a healing process for me and is refocusing and strategising my feminism."*
>
> **Participant at the young feminist convening**

Spaces for young feminists: There was recognition that young feminists are organising differently to other women despite limited time, funding and the spaces to do this. There are different initiatives framed around the issues faced by young women within specific contexts and localities but many of these issues are shared regardless of location or scope of work and a national convening helps to highlight these shared and interconnected struggles and work.

Many participants welcomed the safe space of the convening because they could share their views freely without judgement from others. Consideration about the ages of some of the younger participants (16-18 years and those with children under 16) was incorporated into the choice of venue for the event (physically secure, and alcohol and smoking prohibited) and aligned with Womankind's safeguarding policy and practice and governance requirements.[25] There were some tensions around this choice with some organising committee members stating a preference for more liberal spaces, which can be further explored when planning subsequent events whilst also fulfilling best practice and statutory requirements. Some members of the organising committee also questioned the power dynamics of involving some session facilitators who were over 30 years of age, including those who provided insight and background to Kenyan and African feminist HerStory, an area where participants reported little or no prior knowledge. This underscored the need to identify and invest in capacity building of young feminist facilitators (under 30 years), including on feminist leadership development and feminist analysis. Questions around a shared understanding of feminist values emerged throughout the process with agreement that this process and reflection is a critical part of creating feminist spaces and understanding what makes feminist organising different to other organising.

Communications and ICTs: Organising committee members reflected that there were both positive and negatives to the approach agreed on media engagement. The choice to have minimal mainstream media engagement ensured that the convening agenda remained centred on young feminists and was not hijacked by bigger, more established organisations. This decision also meant the convening location was not widely publicised or known, an important consideration in terms of potential security concerns.

Information and consent forms (the ability to determine and decide whether to be quoted, photographed etc) were available to participants in relation to communications and media which contributed to their feeling truly safe in the space. Through minimising media coverage before, during and after the convening, a level of privacy was maintained, which reduced the risk of reprisal to participants who may be targeted and singled out if their identities were broadcast in the media. There were some select online conversations through social media, which engaged the public and some young women who did not attend. It was acknowledged that this could be further strengthened in future initiatives to broaden reach to a significant number of women, including through community or vernacular radio and TV channels. Further development of a media strategy in future can also raise awareness and counter stigma and misinformation about young women's organising[26] to reinforce diversity and inclusivity but the choice of media outlet needs careful consideration.

> *"This also created visibility on the power of young women working together and a forum where only young women were represented from all over Kenya to discuss very critical issues that are affecting women and girls and the need for movement building."*
>
> **Shyleen Momanyi, Organising committee member**

Intersectionality: The agenda and approach taken at the convening provided scope and space to ensure that the multiple struggles of diverse women were raised and heard. Young feminists shared their stories of formal and informal organising from across the country (rural and urban), from different socio-economic backgrounds, on disability rights, sexual minority activism, organising as young mothers and as women of faith. By bringing such a diverse group of women together for the first time to share their stories, the convening made the term intersectionality[27] a reality for many and helped to grow empathy with others.

> *"I learnt that intersectionality should inform every aspect of our feminist organising."*
>
> **Participant at the young feminist convening**

Feminist leadership in action for self and others: In the evaluation of the event, most participants committed to keeping in touch with the women they had met at the convening within a broad network of sisterhood and solidarity. They also committed to exercising feminist leadership in action by sharing and documenting information, mentoring young women, promoting and supporting other women when they organise, and having an active presence on social media. Organising committee members also expressed how being involved in the planning for the event contributed to their feminist leadership.

25. The Charity Commission (2018), Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees. Available online at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees
26. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2018), Disability and the Media. Available online at https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/resources/disability-and-the-media.html
27. National Association of Independent Schools (2018), Kimberlé Crenshaw: What is Intersectionality? Available online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViDtnfQ9FHc

"The convening also played a bigger part in building my feminist leadership and transforming so many women to be feminist to the extent of contributing to the first feminist centre in Kibera."

Editar Ochieng, Organising committee member

Challenges

Diversity: Whilst most felt that the convening was very diverse, some young feminists noted that some voices were still missing, including those with intellectual disabilities. There was some reflection on language as although both Swahili and English were spoken at the event in accordance with participant preferences, some felt that English was overused, including through the use of complex terms in relation to feminism.

Project governance: The organising committee reported satisfaction with the diversity in the group and how participants with specific needs had been fully supported to attend meetings. However, appropriate meeting venues with wheelchair access were limited. The division of labour between the three sub-committees was felt to be a good approach, although some members felt overburdened at times. As in most feminist spaces, there was healthy divergence of opinion, dominant voices and conflict, and so further consideration could have been given to a stronger mechanism to help manage these challenges from the outset.

Resourcing: Womankind raised the funds for the initiative and designed the project to be led by an organising committee of young feminists. However, some feedback included requests for greater control over finances and more clarify on the original premise of the organising committee selection process.

Sustained changes for the young feminist movement in Kenya as a result of the convening

The convening created a platform for young feminists across Kenya to meet in a safe space. Whilst the convening was only a short event, the feedback suggested that women were making new connections between themselves to support each other's initiatives through a greater sense of solidarity and sisterhood. The follow-up forums that are planned as part of the overall project will help to maintain momentum and identify future initiatives.

Future support from INGOs like Womankind

The convening was the first activity in an 18-month project with the young feminist movement. This will be followed by regional feminist forums and exchanges including for adolescent girls, to take the essence of the convening to other young women. In addition to the forums, the organising committee hope to seek support to develop a young feminist leadership academy in Kenya to build a cohort of facilitators who can become trained in feminist leadership skills, principles and movement building, and share these with young women across the country. Organising committee members are also eager to share their learning on young feminist organising with women in countries in the Global North. In addition, the organising committee requested further time to implement some team building activities and develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with each other, outlining time and financial expectations, agreeing feminist values and principles, how to resolve conflicts and mapping out how to reach more young feminists across the country.

Young feminists participate in discussions at the Young Feminist Convening
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Esther Lalwedo from NAWAD's
Lagazi women's group, Nwoya
© Womankind /Sarah Waiswa

Case study: Uganda: Supporting the eco-feminist movement

Context

Land grabs (land rush or land grabs – investors purchasing or leasing land for mining or the production of cash crops) in Uganda have become widespread, leaving rural landowners or dwellers landless without choice or say in the matter. Disputed land deeds and an intermix of formal and informal laws, the roles of large corporations and governments, combined with deeply embedded patriarchal power systems which exploit women's subordinate position in society, have combined to place rural women's rights in jeopardy. These unjust practices often leave them without a say in how their land is used, appropriated and sold, placing them at highest risk of abuse, violence, homelessness and destitution.

Land developments and disputes can result in violence specific to women, including violent intimidation to sell their land, threats of sexual violence from workers at newly developed refineries, or violence against women in large and unregulated displacement camps. As well as the threat of violence and oppression, land grabs have often rendered women in rural areas (who are often responsible for feeding their families and generating livelihoods from produce and small-scale farming on their land) unable to feed their families and generate income in times of need. The concern of women's powerlessness in decision making in relation to the environment and land is even more pertinent in Uganda where over a quarter of households do not include an adult male.[28]

The Uganda eco-feminist movement

The eco-feminist movement in Uganda emerged in response to systemic abuses of women's rights resulting from corporate and government land abuses. The movement covers a range of environmental issues, such as climate change and land rights and places women at the centre of its analysis, ultimately understanding that women are disproportionately affected by injustices associated with environmental issues in Uganda.

The movement is made up of a wide range of grassroots women's rights organisations, individuals and activists, and has crossover with other women's rights movements and social movements, including environmental movements in Uganda and the wider region. At its core, the movement utilises collective power and voice to highlight gender injustices and the lived realities of rural women in Uganda. The movement seeks transformational change at both the individual, societal and institutional level to the ways in which women's rights are viewed and experienced, particularly in relation the environment.

The National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE) and the National Association of Women's Action in Development (NAWAD) play a key role in the Ugandan eco-feminist movement.[29] These organisations lead the eco-feminist women's movement in Uganda, which aims to amplify women's voices, especially the voices of marginalised women whose significant contribution to national development is not matched by representation in decision making.

The initiative

Womankind's partnership with NAPE and NAWAD (as part of the Uganda eco-feminist movement) was an excellent opportunity to implement Womankind's approach to movement strengthening, focused on documentation and research, and also to support women's economic rights as outlined in her paper 'Rights and Realities.'[30] The eco-feminist movement already had its own strategy and goals and was clear about how Womankind could support these. NAPE and NAWAD were already connected to WoMin (an African feminist movement working on extractives[31]) who had experience of using the Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) approach.

In partnership with Womankind, NAPE and NAWAD developed a FPAR study to fully understand the impact and scale of land rights issues affecting women in several provinces. The study aimed to strengthen the eco-feminist movement in Uganda through solid evidence building, raising awareness and widening the movement membership.

The choice of FPAR was a conscious one: FPAR facilitates movement strengthening by building the capacity of the female researchers as grassroots members of the movement. The researchers were then able to cascade knowledge and produce solid recommendations and evidence, validated by women and the organisations involved in the eco-feminist movement. This evidence, published in Digging Deep: The impact of Uganda's land rush on women's rights,[32] has been used in advocacy and lobbying with mandated government institutions and companies to challenge the environmental and land rights injustices faced by women whilst also tackling deeply embedded patriarchal structures in Uganda. As a result of the research initiative, the membership base grew significantly.

As part of a feminist movement, the central analysis of the initiative looked at how women are disproportionately affected by exploitation and violence and how they can also be advocates for change and claiming their rights. The analysis looked at women's power within the home and society and found that although women possess wide ranging knowledge on issues relating to land and the environment, they often have little power or support to exercise the right to say no, or voice what they are unhappy with, both at home and in public spaces.

The analysis found that women who speak out or

28. World Bank (2016), The Uganda Poverty Assessment Report 2016. Available online at http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/381951474255092375/pdf/Uganda-Poverty-Assessment-Report-2016.pdf
29. For more information on NAPE and NAWAD see: http://www.nape.or.ug and http://www.nawad.co.ug
30. Womankind (2017), Rights and Realities: A briefing on women and the economy. Available online at https://www.womankind.org.uk/docs/default-source/resources/briefings/womankind-rights-and-realities-economic-rights-briefing.pdf
31. For more information about WoMin see: https://womin.org.za/
32. NAPE/NAWAD/Womankind Worldwide (2018), Digging deep: The impact of Uganda's land rush on women's rights. Op. cit.

resist the violence associated with land grabs are seen as women who are resisting social norms and defying what society is expects them to do. This puts them at particular risk of violence, abuse or ostracisation and highlights the power of collective voice, mobilisation and movement building.

> *"To me, I think ever since this process began, we have had more connections and relationship building with women who are working on women's rights more broadly. That is because of the research and our work with Womankind…We have more sister organisations and movements wanting to work and partner with us than we had before."*
>
> **Sostine Namanya, National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE)**

The initiative enabled the movement to develop its strategy and widen its membership base at a grassroots level, as well as instigating participation in high-level spaces, such as the Commission of Inquiry on Land, initiated by the President of Uganda, and foreign government consultations on responsible investment, such as with the Dutch Foreign Ministry. The process also allowed cross movement alliances to develop by identifying shared experiences of women and how they can work together. The report also demonstrates the importance of gender equality and strengthening grassroots women's groups. Similarly, it highlights how movements can address crosscutting issues, such as climate change, and contribute to sustainable land use, responsible investments, economic prosperity, as well as preventing and reducing conflict.

How the initiative contributed to strengthening the eco-feminist movement in Uganda

This section is organised under broad headings in relation to Womankind's movement pillars and includes additional learning and insight drawn from the initiative.

Strategies

Safe spaces: Women, WROs and environmental justice organisations are working more closely together following the FPAR study. It has opened up and expanded spaces for women to openly talk about issues affecting their land rights at home or in their communities, such as weekly radio listening groups. In these spaces, women can discuss potential solutions and seek support through the movement. These spaces have also increased awareness of women in leadership from affected communities and helped to share knowledge and raise consciousness about the issues of land rights.

Intersectionality: The initiative emphasises how all women involved in the movement are affected by land grabs, but it is important to understand how women are affected differently by the land grabs, such as women with disabilities, those living with HIV and widows, who are disproportionately impacted. In order to reflect this understanding in the FPAR study, the researchers came from diverse groups, including women who are young, old, formally educated, widowed, single and disabled. Research participants were also selected to represent a variety of intersecting identities.

Feminist documentation and research: The report and FPAR study have built a strong evidence base for land rights issues affecting women's human rights in Uganda. This has strengthened the eco-feminist movement in Uganda both at the grassroots level and also in terms of policy and legislation by supporting women to understand and claim their rights, and providing solid evidence to lobby and influence key decision makers. The report highlighted a series of recommendations by women engaged in the research as well as by Womankind that are aimed at different stakeholders. The 'Digging Deep' report has been widely shared with influential stakeholders, including Ugandan media, government and at UN level, enabling new partnerships and influence to be developed. It has also formed a key base for the movement to extend its reach through women's rights organisations. It has been referenced in evidence as part of the Commission of Inquiry on Land that was initiated by the President of Uganda and has been used to generate discussions with foreign governments in relation to supporting responsible investment. The research process was participatory, and mindful of power relations (such as between the researcher and participant), which strengthened the movement's solidarity. Research questions were framed by the research team in a way that ensured it was grassroots-led. The findings were validated by the researchers and exchange visits were held for a selected number of the researchers to share learning.

ICT and communications: The Community Green Radio[33] show reaches an audience of approximately 60,000 people and is particularly useful to women who might not speak or understand English. Following the FPAR study, several of the researchers involved in the project were invited to speak as panelists on the radio show. On the show, they have highlighted evidence and recommendations from the study, and continue to suggest solutions, share their experiences as women affected by land grabbing, encourage others to do the same through story-sharing and organise listening groups amongst women at the grassroots level.

Transformational leadership: The process of the FPAR developed women's capacity as researchers and enabled them to step into a leadership role by convening, rather than reproducing patriarchal hierarchical systems. Those involved in the research had equal authority and at the same time were able to share knowledge and build capacity amongst other women at grassroots levels which supported

33. For more information about Community Green Radio see: http://www.greenradio.ug/

the movement's aim of promoting transformational feminist leadership and deepened collective vision of the changes envisaged by the women involved. Likewise, the initiative promoted positive governance amongst the movement, with decisions being made by consensus and through open dialogue rather than reflecting traditional patriarchal leadership approaches. Decisions were managed by steering committees who were comprised of a mix of women and ensured active involvement of grassroots women to avoid domination of NAPE and NAWAD. This was centred within a feminist approach to movement building, and at times meant that the administration of funding or budgetary approval could take longer than expected due to the collective approach of decision making.

Cross movement building and expansion:
The report has initiated dialogue and partnerships with other movements (such as the environmental movement) relating to women's rights. This has helped to further highlight gender injustice and share goals that seek transformative change. In addition to cross movement building, the FPAR study enabled the eco-feminist movement to extend its reach further through grassroots organising and outreach. NAPE estimate that the numbers of women involved in the movement has more than doubled.

> *"Land goes beyond being a personal issue, to being a political issue … Women's own lived experiences around land, sharing stories in their communities - it brought them to connect the dots of shared experiences … a collectiveness of problem sharing deepened understanding of what violence on land is to a woman - this to me, deepened an understanding of strengthening women's knowledge."*
>
> **Sostine Namanya, National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE)**

NAPE advocacy group members,
Kaiso-Tonga, Hoima
© Womankind /Esther Mbabazi

Challenges

Initially, at the grassroots level, the term feminism was seen as a threat to cultures and tradition with feminists often labelled as anti-family, anti-God and anti-men. Additionally, ongoing social norms and patriarchy at a societal and familial level meant that it was sometimes difficult for women to participate, for example some women still need permission from husbands to attend meetings. The movement responded to this by reaching out to women to explain that its work was built on African sisterhood, grounded in eco-feminist principles and reflects the lived realities of the grassroots women who are driving the movement.

Sustained changes for the eco-feminist movement in Uganda as a result of the initiative

The FPAR process has enabled the eco-feminist in Uganda to broaden its reach and deepen its impact. Access to a core resource, especially one explaining complex legal frameworks and entitlements around land, has begun to open up spaces and raise awareness with duty bearers of land rights violations (and other violations associated with land grabs) and strengthen changes in advocacy and policy legislation.

Future support from INGOs like Womankind

The eco-feminist movement in Uganda needs continued support to expand the abilities of marginalised women in Uganda to actively participate in local, national and international decision-making that affects their land ownership and livelihoods, gain access to justice, and advocate for policy change. In addition, the movement needs capacity building support in a range of areas, including ways to connect with other women working on the same issues around the world, leadership training, conflict management, and relevant knowledge on global issues like energy justice and capitalism.

Case study: Zimbabwe: Responding to emerging opportunities for the women's movement in the 2018 elections

Context

Zimbabwe operates through patriarchal power structures, both at informal levels in the home and community and at formal levels in local government. These structures perpetuate severe gender injustice, including high prevalence of VAWG, lack of economic autonomy, and challenges for women to participate in politics and leadership.

The 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe[34] was heralded as a great success amongst the women's rights movement in Zimbabwe, as 80% of their demands were met.[35] However, these gains did not materialise in practice, and the lack of prioritisation of women's rights in a context of continued crisis has underscored the enduring need for a strong and resilient women's movement. The ability of the women's movement to identify and respond to unforeseen opportunities is key and the 2018 election provided scope for the Zimbabwean women's movement to organise and mobilise support for women's rights to be upheld in line with the progressive Constitution.

The Zimbabwe women's movement

Since 2013 when the women's movement achieved 80% of its demands during the Constitution process, the context of operation has shifted dramatically. Zimbabwe is affected by increasing socio-economic and political fragility combined with increasing competition for resources amongst WROs, contributing to a fragmentation of the women's movement. Together, these realities have severely weakened the ability of the women's movement to act collectively and uphold women's rights. However, WROs were active and aware of the challenges and opportunities of the 2018 election process.

The Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ) has been central to the women's movement in Zimbabwe for over a decade but had itself been negatively impacted by the changing context. WCoZ is a national network organisation with 16 years of experience, 116 member organisations and 10,000 individual members, whose emphasis is on the championing of women's activism in Zimbawe. They serve as a forum where women meet to engage in collective activism. The membership is structured across nine clusters, including economic empowerment, the Constitution and legal affairs, education, health, peacebuilding, VAWG, politics and decision making, media and the environment. Womankind has been working with WCoZ

for nearly a decade on a range of initiatives in addition to partnership with some of its members. Womankind's partnership with WCoZ is a core element of the Zimbabwe country strategy given the organisation's role and convening power in the women's movement. Womankind also has extensive experience supporting political participation of women in Zimbabwe and supported WCoZ and others in advocating for women's rights provisions in the 2013 Constitution.[36]

The initiative

In partnership with Womankind, WCoZ designed and delivered a project focused on preparations for women's movement positioning and collective action ahead of the elections in 2018. In so doing, the initiative offered an opportunity for WCoZ to reassert its role and position with its members and allies in the national context and to engage in collective strategising and action to build on the gains made with the 2013 Constitution.

For the first time, the women's movement developed a feminist analysis to ground and inform WROs preparing for the 2018 elections. This unpacked the context, framework and processes with a feminist perspective. The analysis was a tool used by the Zimbabwe women's movement when developing the women's election strategy, advocacy approach, and monitoring by women's rights pre, during and post-election. In the first phase of the project, WCoZ led the development of the women's election strategy in consultation with 120 participants drawn from different political parties, independent commissions, media houses, government departments, as well as women from various CSOs and women's organisations, WCoZ Chapter members and individual members. WCoZ successfully coordinated the Women's Manifesto, Women's Election Charter, and the 50/50 Advocacy Campaign under the theme, 'Constitutionalism, Gender Equality and the Future of Women's Leadership in Zimbabwe,' which also attracted additional support from other donors and institutions.[37] The campaign called for the implementation of constitutional provisions, such as Section 17 (Gender balance) and 56 (Equality and non-discrimination) and other policies and practices that advance women's empowerment and advancement of gender equality to ensure that women are represented in all sectors.

The initiative created spaces for Zimbabwean women to exercise both their own personal agency in articulating their priorities for the election, and their collective aspirations through women's organisations associated with WCoZ. It did this through a collectively designed feminist analysis of the pre-election monitoring environment and the development of an election strategy with members and key allies to address gaps through advocacy. The process of design was a collaborative effort, following feminist approaches to gathering and organising and included the creation of

Opposite: Women encourage voting in the 2018 elections
© Womankind / Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe

34. Constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe 2013. Available online at http://constitutions.unwomen.org/en/countries/africa/zimbabwe
35. UN Women (2013). Zimbabweans say yes to new Constitution strong on gender equality and women's rights. Available online at http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2013/4/zimbabweans-say-yes-to-new-constitution-strong-on-gender-equality-and-womens-rights
36. Wilson, P. et al. (2013), Women's successful struggle for equal rights in the Zimbabwe Draft Constitution: an internal evaluation of the advocacy work of Musasa, the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe, Women in Politics Support Unit and the Zimbabwe Women's Lawyers Association with support from Womankind Worldwide.
37. Katsande, N. (2018), Zimbabwe launches the 50/50 Advocacy Campaign. Available online at https://southern-africa.hivos.org/blog/zimbabwe-launches-the-50-50-advocacy-campaign

safe spaces, dialogue, and the subsequent development of a women's manifesto supported by all WCoZ members. The initiative also developed election monitoring and response mechanisms at grassroots levels, led by women, including mobile technology through a toll free phone line and WhatsApp platform, and a women's situation room mechanism.[38] Support systems were also created to enable women candidates to build strong and consistent campaigns, while negative media portrayals of women candidates were addressed and countered, including through a women's rights media campaign at grassroots levels to reach women in rural areas. Voting was promoted widely through various on and offline platforms, such as radio, adverts on buses and social media platforms.

As a result of the initiative there were many successes for the movement. These include the Gender Parity Pledge, which was signed by 14 political parties; training of 325 female candidates (nearly double the target); hosting the high-level women's election strategy dialogue, which surpassed targets by 140%; hosting of women's rights and gender election debates with political parties; and the successful launch of the 50/50 advocacy campaign. As a result, the women's movement improved election preparedness by strengthening capacity, developing strategy and working group mechanisms, recruiting community champions to support women's rights and gender responsive election advocacy, monitoring, civic education, and citizen mobilisation initiatives.

Women's 2018 Election Strategy and Women's Movement Election Manifesto 2018 from the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe
© Womankind /Coalition of Zimbabwe

How the initiative strengthened the women's movement in Zimbabwe

This section is organised under broad headings in relation to Womankind's movement pillars and includes additional learning and insight drawn from the initiative.

Strategies

Transformational feminist leadership: The design of the initiative followed feminist leadership principles ensuring a participatory and a non-hierarchical approach. After mapping members who were engaged in the election, WCoZ developed a working group with 17 members covering six thematic areas catered to their skills and experience. These members also contributed their skills in the development of the feminist analysis and the election strategy: 280 women at the community level also took up leadership positions as Community Champions to report on women's issues during the election, and 1600 women champions provided feedback to the

situation room initiative. Lastly, the initiative directly supported women candidates running for office by helping them to better understand the gendered discrimination they face as women and the role of the women's movement in addressing this.

Safe spaces: Through the initiative, both collective and personal spaces, such as working group and members meetings were created for women in Zimbabwe to exercise feminist agency, and prepare the ground to hold the government to account through collective mobilising and voice.

ICT and communications: Media and technology were successfully used as outreach tools to raise awareness of the election amongst women. Community radio, WhatsApp and SMS platforms were used to promote voter engagement and mobile technology was used to successfully engage grassroots activists in the monitoring of the pre-election period for women.

Intersectional approaches: Throughout the process, women were engaged across tribe, language, rural and urban spaces and political standing to ensure that the movement reflected diversity and understood that women's experiences differ according to the multiple identities they assumes. WCoZ adopted a holistic approach and understood, for example, that supporting a rural single mother with no formal education to assume a leadership position would require different tactics to those that support an urban, educated, single woman with a disability.

Feminist documentation and research: A clear feminist analysis of the pre-election monitoring environment was able to highlight political, legal, economic, social, cultural and psychological barriers affecting women's participation in political and electoral governance in Zimbabwe. This formed the evidence base for the development and validation of a clear women's election strategy, which underpinned the advocacy success of the project outlined above.

Movement building and learning: At regional and international levels, WCoZ is the focal point of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)[39] Gender Protocol Alliance and used this strategic role to further support the initiative and aims of the women's movement. The project included a regional conference with women participants from 10 SADC countries to amplify Zimbabwean women's election issues beyond the national context. This was an opportunity to share experience but also to understand successful approaches and strategies from other women's rights activists in the region, which then helps to inform and support the work being coordinated by WCoZ.

Building allies outside of the movement: In order to build more support for the election strategy, WCoZ engaged 120 participants from their own membership but also from political parties,

38. Drumond, P. (2015), Promoting Democracy in Preventing Electoral Violence: The Women's Situation Room. Available online at http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/150601-SDSN-Issue-Brief-WSR-1.pdf

39. For more information on the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) see https://www.sadc.int

independent commissions, media houses and government departments. In this way, they brought more allies into the initiative who could support the objectives of the strategy in their own spaces. The initiative was also a catalyst for additional engagement and support, including supplementary funding and resources from donors and agencies, such as Hivos, UN Women and UNDP.

Challenges

The initiative was not without challenges. WCoZ had to navigate their role carefully as the coordinating body of the initiative to address various issues raised by members. WcoZ had to be mindful to ensure full transparency regarding decision making between those involved, including validation and careful minute taking of meetings. They also had to use careful negotiation and strategies to navigate differences of opinion that arose regarding allocation of budgets, different feminist views on strategy and perceived misuse of power between different generations of women.

Sustained changes for the women's movement in Zimbabwe as a result of the initiative

Through this initiative and even with challenges faced, WCoZ has been able to reposition themselves at the heart of the women's movement in Zimbabwe and reposition the women's movement as a powerful collective voice for change. By building leadership amongst women so broadly in a respectful and non-hierarchical way, the

Women in Zimbabwe commit to voting in the 2018 elections
© Womankind / Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe

women's movement has been strengthened from the grassroots-level, which is critical in sustaining the movement's momentum. The initiative has also sought allies outside itself in various corners to build common cause, which will give the movement supporters in future initiatives.

Future support from INGOs like Womankind

The monitoring of elections with a women's rights focus requires continued investment throughout the election cycle and process, including for an election dispute resolution framework. Both state and non-state political and election actors require a long-term capacity development mechanism on gender and women's rights to transform the exercise of their election and political mandates in a manner that is responsive to constitution provisions on women and gender equality.

There is a continued need to ensure women at the grassroots remain supported to have the confidence, skills and knowledge to collectively navigate and understand local decision making spaces and demand change in their communities. This requires further support through systematic analysis of policies and legislation through a feminist and human rights framework to inform collective action and advocacy. Adaptive planning, negotiation and conflict resolution skills are also critical skills for the movement, as is the continued emphasis on transformative leadership, which seeks to realign diverse leadership styles with feminist values for the greater benefit of all women rather than individuals.

Lessons learned

The project-focused case studies included in this paper demonstrate that, with an understanding of the capacities women's movements need to function effectively and by turning these into deliberate programme approaches in work with WROS and activists, diverse women's movements can be stronger, more resilient and have collective power. Evident throughout each project are many of Womankind's pillars of movement strengthening and the variety of ways in which they have been effectively used according to partner, project and activities. "Importantly this confirms Womankind's aspiration that the pillars do not constrain partners from developing and implementing movement strengthening work according to their needs, priorities and contexts. The pillars were not intended to be a blueprint from which all initiatives would be similar or uniform and the experience of these three projects has confirmed this.

However, there are also points of synergy between case studies and with other strategies for movement strengthening that emerged during the development of this paper/report. This will inform adaptation of Womankind's programme approach in the future.

Key learning aligned with Womankind's movement strengthening pillars

Pillar 1: Women activists are supported and encouraged to understand the political importance of self-care and wellbeing

The case study from Kenya offered the strongest learning in this area. As the convening was being developed, the issue of how to support the wellbeing of activists in the venue was discussed by the organising committee. The physical space itself was chosen for its rural setting with fresh air, outside space and healthy food. Due to the nature of the sessions, there was discussion about having an onsite psychologist available but members of the committee had relevant experience in healing and wellbeing to offer to those who wanted support. Some activists were emotionally triggered as they discussed their personal experiences and the committee reacted quickly by adapting the programme to include a powerful healing session at the beginning of the second day, linking the personal to the political struggle of feminism. This example demonstrated the importance of integrating wellbeing into the planning of feminist events in order to sustain activism.

Pillar 2: Opportunities are provided to movement actors to connect with each other in safe spaces

Each case study created safe spaces for women to support the development of their organising. The Kenyan convening was a vibrant young feminist curated space that enabled women to talk about feminist politics in a safe environment, often for the first time. In Uganda, the FPAR process brought together women in weekly radio listening groups to talk openly about their issues on land and discuss solutions. In Zimbabwe, WCoZ also created working groups and members meetings to develop the election strategy. However, there remains the challenge of determining if, when and how to curate homogenous participation or to create spaces with diverse participation, taking into account the potential for multiple power imbalances. For example, in Kenya some women had the view that anyone over 30 years old should not have been invited to the convening, including the facilitators. In Zimbabwe, WCoZ aimed to address this issue in their initiative by creating working groups with shared leadership.

Pillar 3: Appropriate communications and ICT support is provided to facilitate network and alliance building and action

Various ICTs were used in the projects. In Uganda, an FPAR researcher took part in the Community Green Radio show to disseminate the results of the research and encourage its audience to engage with the eco-feminist movement and share their stories. In Zimbabwe, WCoZ also used community radio to raise awareness of the election amongst women and mobile technology to engage a cohort of women to monitor the pre-election period. In Kenya, the convening committee used WhatsApp platforms to hold online planning meetings, and used social media (particularly Twitter) to share application processes and live tweet about the event as it was happening, taking into account individual preferences about privacy and photography.

Pillar 4: Key actors in the women's movement are mapped and issues of intersectionality are raised, understood and addressed

Each case study addressed the issue of intersectionality in different ways. The Kenya convening deliberately had a session to ground participants in the HerStory of African feminism and connecting the struggle against patriarchy with other struggles, such as colonisation and capitalism. Deliberate attempts were made to invite women from across Kenya who experience multiple and intersecting discrimination to share their stories of struggle, which created a space of learning and consciousness raising of all participants. It also created new alliances among women who could see how their struggles were interdependent. Both the Uganda and Zimbabwe examples made deliberate attempts to understand how each area of focus, whether land grabs or barriers to political participation respectively, affect different women in different ways. This provides an opportunity to further consider for Womankind and partners, to deepen and broaden each movement's relevance to an ever increasing and diverse range of women.

Pillar 5: Feminist documentation and research form the core of umbrella initiatives to bring WROs together

The Uganda and Zimbabwe case studies offer the clearest examples of feminist documentation and research. The FPAR in itself is a movement building tool in the way that it opens up spaces that support women's organising. The process does not extract information, rather it creates space for collectively building knowledge and using it together to advance changes. In the Zimbabwe case study, WCoZ deliberately planned for a feminist analysis of the election framework in Zimbabwe. This had never been done before and set the groundwork for a deeper and richer understanding of the gaps and barriers to women's engagement in the pre-election period and led to the development of the election strategy, which had buy-in from a range of stakeholders.

Pillar 6: Women's movement actors are given the opportunity to connect to wider platforms for movement building and learning

The 'Digging Deep' report produced by the FPAR process in Uganda has been widely shared with influential stakeholders both in Uganda and beyond. Womankind supported partners to participate in launch and event that focused on the issues affecting rural women at the 62nd Commission on the Status of Women (2018).

Pillar 7: The women's movement is supported to access, and input into, sustainable and progressive funding and financing models

Resourcing from most donors remains predominantly project based. This can often serve to limit support available for the range and scope of movement strengthening and building initiatives, most of which are reactive and responsive to emerging situations or opportunities to strategise, resist, dissent and challenge unequal power. The focus on formalised projects with registered organisations has impacted negatively on women's movements by limiting the resources available for their core focus on collective action and organising in loose structures. Flexible and long-term funding for women's movements remains essential, especially when some aspects of movement building are harder to measure and quantify such as sharing knowledge, building awareness and organising.

The initiatives in this paper have been funded by Womankind drawing on her diverse income streams and sustained fundraising, which can take years to secure. In 2017, Womankind made a strategic decision to support the Uganda FPAR from unrestricted income to help evidence the reality for women affected by land grabs and potentially leverage subsequent funding from other sources. In this case, the approach was successful, leading to a subsequent project developed by Womankind, NAPE and NAWAD funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) through the UK Aid Match mechanism due to start in 2019.

The Zimbabwe project was funded by a longstanding supporter of Womankind with particular interest

in women's participation and leadership and this allowed a quick turnaround between project design and delivery. Womankind's ability to respond to the need identified by WCoZ would not have been possible through other fundraising channels, such as to an institutional donor with funding cycles that can take months to complete.

The Kenya convening was funded by a US based philanthropic donor with a commitment to supporting women's movements in Africa and readiness to support emerging initiatives that strengthen their abilities to function with very few funding restrictions. In this case, there was a formal application process although less bureaucratic than usual and with a quick approval turnaround time.

Womankind made strategic decisions about how and when to fund these initiatives due to her understanding of the importance of being reactive and responsive to the needs of partners, activists and the women's movements they are part of. There are challenges in fundraising for and funding work to strengthen and build women's movements when many of these projects and initiatives do not easily comply with standard project design standards, templates or expectations. Womankind's experience with these three projects alone underscores how funding for women's rights and movements sits within a wider ecosystem[40] where different types of funding can play their part.

Feminist transformative leadership: In the Zimbabwe case study, feminist leadership approaches were used by WCoZ in developing the election strategy via a working group mechanism, ensuring all representatives had a meaningful role to play that built on their respective strengths. In Kenya, the convening committee had a completely flat structure of leadership with each member also taking on specific roles. However, there was consideration of the role of Womankind in an oversight function, which also overlapped into some aspects of project delivery. In Uganda, the FPAR approach contributed to leadership in a variety of ways: by building the capacity of women researchers at grassroots level, focusing on women from within the movement as both experts and contributors, and supporting them to understand their rights and how to claim them.

Feminist leadership in and of itself will not stop the presence of power imbalances even as it seeks to transform it. The Zimbabwe case study reflected how WCoZ needed to practically address questions of their leadership style with members in an environment of scarce funding for women's movements and the competition and protectionism that this has fostered. WCoZ were proactive and created transparent governance systems to demonstrate their leadership approach, including explanation of how funds were allocated and how decisions were being made. In Kenya, the convening committee reflected that some meetings were dominated by particular individuals and went

40. Arutyunova, A. (2018), Why we need a feminist funding ecosystem. AWID. Available online at https://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/why-we-need-feminist-funding-ecosystem

unchallenged. In Uganda, NAPE and NAWAD applied a non-hierarchical and collective approach to decision making even though it prolonged the process at times, such as budgetary approvals. However, this was anticipated and accepted as part of the project to encourage peaceful, collective decisions and further strengthen the coherence and solidarity of the eco-feminist movement.

Therefore just a commitment to feminist leadership may not be enough to address power imbalances but an awareness of power dynamics and an open approach to discussing and addressing these are essential. In some cases, additional mechanisms may be considered or required to assist women to negotiate, reach consensus and deal with conflict within a feminist values framework.

Other learning from the initiatives

Feminist analysis: The women's movements in this learning paper seek transformation that would create new social orders that place women's rights at the heart, as well as seeking transformation of all oppressive and marginalising power relations, such as race, religion and age. Embedding feminist ideology into the movement's analytical and strategic framework is essential for collective knowledge building, sharing of personal stories and understanding the bigger picture of oppression, power relations and situating personal narratives into a wider movement. The personal is political is imperative to feminist movement building.

The Zimbabwe case study showed the importance of building political education amongst women thereby helping to situate their lived experience within a wider perspective of citizenship and human rights. The Uganda example also demonstrated that women's own experience of land grabs and violence is connected to systems of oppression, including capitalism. The emphasis on African feminist HerStory at the Kenya convening was well received and helped women to situate their struggle

in their context, often for the first time, and see how women's struggles under patriarchy and colonisation are interlinked. This aspect is also crucial for centrally placing politics in women's organising work and pushing back against attempts to depoliticise movements by external actors.

Cross movement building: All women's movements challenge unjust patriarchal power relations and bring about women's rights. Across different women's movements, there are many shared experiences of oppression and many shared goals of transformation. More cross movement alliances and networking will enable stronger, wider, larger movements to develop as evidenced in the Uganda eco-feminist movement where they found synergies with other women's rights movements including VAWG and with environmentalists, uniting when appropriate and amplifying their voices and demands. There was also tentative evidence to suggest that the Kenya convening created the seeds for cross movement building among young women in Kenya working on different issues.

Womankind's approach: Whilst Womankind makes every effort to use her power and privilege in ways that empower women's movements in line with its feminist values, there is room for improvement here. There are inherent tensions in being a charity based in the UK with specific legal requirements, and a Programmes team having an oversight and grant management role in projects with partners, and therefore being accountable for contracts and compliance with donors. For example, the Kenya convening in particular enabled Womankind to trial a different way of working to support women's movements beyond her usual partnership model and approach of working with WROs. As noted above, Womankind has gained additional experience and insight from this initiative with particular focus on transparency and inclusivity, and specifically on young women's organising and looks forward to further learning as the project continues.

Precious Naturinda, Assistant News Editor & Gender Officer for NAPE's Community Green Radio, Hoima
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Recommendations: Movement strengthening for women's rights practitioners and donors

Programme design

- Strengthen understanding of feminist principles and centre these in programmatic approaches
- Ensure women and WRO take the lead in all initiatives within women's movement initiatives
- Recognise and trust the expertise and experience of WROs and women's movements, including those representing marginalised women
- Only design initiatives that build on and respond to existing agendas and needs of WROs and women's movements
- Encourage WROs and women's movements to deliberately include strategies and approaches that contribute to movement strengthening in the development of new initiatives, and ensure they are appropriately resourced
- Encourage WROs to be specific about which women's movements they are aiming to contribute to and reach out to them to understand their existing agendas, strategies, priorities and dynamics
- Foster links to other social justice movements and link these with women's movements as appropriate

Evidence and learning

- Provide support for WROs and women's movements to carry out research and documentation to evidence the impact and value of their work
- Create opportunities and spaces to both learn and make mistakes about movement strengthening both on and offline

- Support the development of monitoring frameworks to measure how initiatives contribute to movement strengthening
- Encourage diverse approaches to movement strengthening with different management and oversight models for initiatives designed and delivered by a combination of formal WROs and informal structures and actors (usually members working together in their individual capacities)
- Document lessons learned wherever possible including intersectional stories to underscore the importance of intersectional programming

Funding

- Advocate for more flexible funding for women's movement strengthening that is designed with the involvement of women from those movements
- Share lessons learned with donors about what works to strengthen women's movements
- Increase devolved funding through women's funds and specialist intermediary organisations that have strong partnerships with southern WROs and women's movements
- Increase the accessibility of existing funding streams to WROs and women's movements, particularly funds targeted at human rights and civil society organisations
- Ensure adequate funding is allocated for monitoring, evaluation and learning and that chosen methodologies are suitable to the nature of the work women's movements undertake
- Place greater emphasis on core funding, where possible, based on WROs' plans and budgets, and provide sizable grants. Small amounts of money can stimulate innovation but do not enable vital expansion, scale-up and strengthening of organisational and operational capacity.

Pauline Ajok and Christine Ajok from NAWAD's Lagazi women's group, Nwoya
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About Womankind Worldwide

Womankind Worldwide is a global women's rights organisation working in solidarity and equal partnership with women's rights organisations and movements to transform the lives of women.

Our vision is of a just world where the rights of all women are respected, valued and realised.

Womankind supports women's movements to strengthen and grow by providing a range of tools, including technical support, communications, connectivity and shared learning, joint advocacy and fundraising.

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