

FEMINIST ORGANISATIONAL
CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

LEADING,
GOVERNING AND
BEING ACCOUNTABLE



IWDA INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S
DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY

The Feminist Organisational Capacity Strengthening (FOCS) Toolkits were written by Carol Miller, Shawna Wakefield, Joanne Sandler, David Kelleher and Virisila Buadromo in deep consultation with International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) staff and partner organisations across Asia and the Pacific. Artwork concepts and illustrations by Viola Design.

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INTRODUCTION

This is a resource to support your organisation on its journey for greater alignment with feminist purpose and practice. This module focuses on feminist leadership, governance and accountability – with an emphasis on power, intergenerational issues, and succession planning. We offer ideas for individual and group reflection. We hope this resource helps make your organisation a healthier, happier place – where shared values, purpose and politics are reflected internally and externally.

PURPOSE OF THIS MODULE

TO LEARN ABOUT FEMINIST LEADERSHIP,¹ GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS;

TO LEARN ABOUT POWER DYNAMICS, AND HOW THEY CAN CREATE OBSTACLES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ORGANISATIONAL SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES;

TO KNOW MORE ABOUT SYSTEMS, STRUCTURE AND PRACTICES THAT SUPPORT FEMINIST LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY – THEN DEVELOP PERSONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL PLANS.

¹ In this module we use the term 'feminist leadership' to include transformative approaches and outcomes, with leadership for significant and lasting change. More detailed discussions of the conceptual underpinnings of these terms can be found in the resources listed at the end of the module.

The resource will help you consider questions that you, your teams and your organisation may have about how to support better alignment between feminist principles, feminist values, and feminist practices. Such questions may include:

*HOW IS POWER EXERCISED
IN YOUR ORGANISATION,
ESPECIALLY UNDER
PRESSURE?*

*HOW DOES YOUR
ORGANISATION SHOW
ITS ACCOUNTABILITY
TO THE WOMEN IT'S
WORKING FOR?*

*WHAT KINDS OF
LEADERSHIP DOES YOUR
ORGANISATION CELEBRATE
AND FOSTER?*

*HOW IS YOUR ORGANISATION
MAKING ROOM FOR AND PREPARING
EMERGING LEADERS TO EXERCISE
LEADERSHIP AND TO SUCCEED
EXISTING LEADERS?*

*HOW WELL DOES THE
GOVERNANCE OF YOUR
ORGANISATION SUPPORT
ACCOUNTABILITY, COMMUNICATION,
INFORMATION SHARING,
TRANSPARENCY AND
RESPONSIBILITY FOR RESULTS?*

HOW TO USE THIS MODULE

You may have picked up this module because your organisation is ready to begin or deepen its journey into strengthening feminist leadership, governance and accountability. Or you may have been pointed here after using the **FOCS Organisation Self-Assessment module**. Before using this module, it may also be helpful to:

1.

Review the **FOCS Facilitation Guide** – which outlines feminist facilitation principles, ideas for workshop planning and evaluation, and tips for using the reflective practices included throughout this module.

2.

Decide whether to use an internal or external / independent facilitator. The latter can be extremely helpful if you decide on deeper work on this topic, or amongst very sensitive internal organisational dynamics.

3.

Familiarise yourself with the ideas presented in Part One of this module, around feminist leadership, governance and accountability. One suggestion in the **FOCS Facilitation Guide** is that excerpts from Part One could be shared as background reading for participants prior to the workshop, or as short handouts during the workshop.

THE EXERCISES IN PART TWO AND THREE CAN BE PULLED OUT AND USED SEPARATELY IN MEETINGS OR WORKSHOPS, USED AS A PACKAGE, OR COMBINED WITH IDEAS AND EXERCISES PRESENTED IN OTHER FOCS RESOURCE MODULES. THROUGHOUT THE MODULE YOU'LL FIND SHORT REFLECTION QUESTIONS. THESE QUESTIONS CAN BE CONSIDERED INDIVIDUALLY, IN SMALL GROUPS, OR AS AN ORGANISATION DURING INFORMAL LUNCHEAS, TEAS OR OTHER INFORMAL SESSIONS.



PART ONE: **INTRODUCING KEY IDEAS**

The following section discusses different concepts and practices of leadership – including transitions, governance, accountability, and how these relate to strengthening your organisation and its culture. It can be shared with participants and offered as a basis for discussion for exercises that follow in Parts Two and Three.



TAKE NOTE!
THIS MODULE FOCUSES
PRIMARILY ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS
ORGANISATIONS, HOWEVER MANY
OF THE FOLLOWING IDEAS AND
ACTIVITIES ALSO APPLY TO
MORE INFORMAL GROUPS
AND NETWORKS.

WHY DOES FEMINIST LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY MATTER?

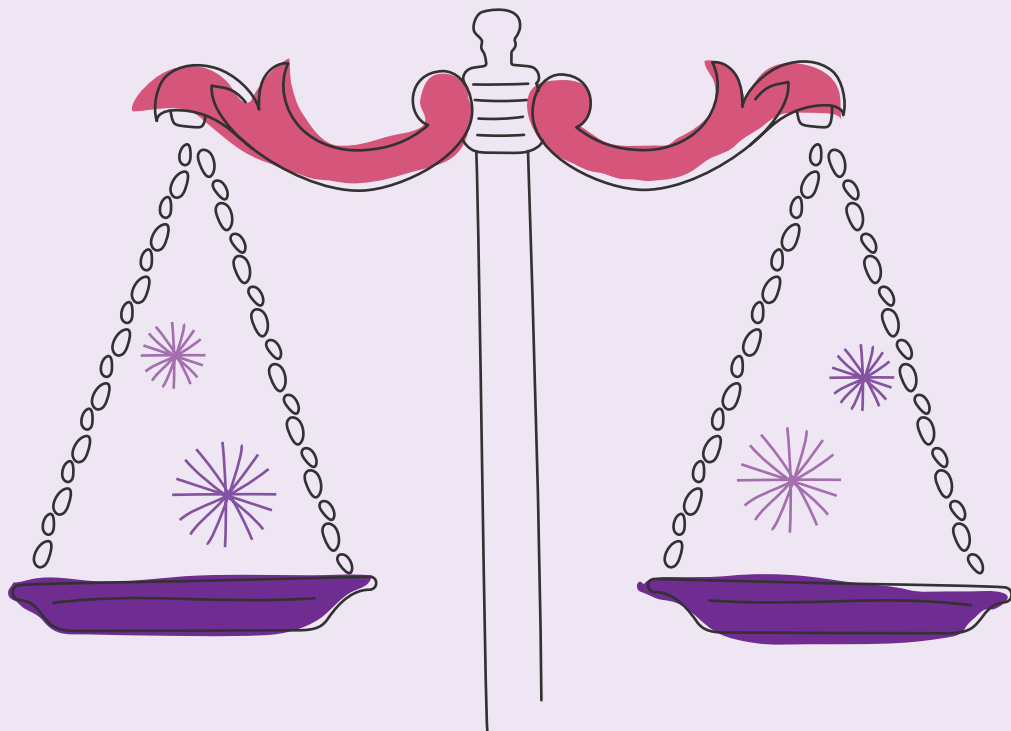
Some of the **positive impacts** documented among women's rights organisations include:²

- each person's point of view is included and everyone contributes to the solution-making process in some way
- opportunities are created for second-tier leadership development and younger women to diversify and distribute responsibilities, inject new thinking into organisational and movement-building efforts, and ensure smoother leadership transitions
- co-workers are committed to and motivate each other by sharing information and ideas
- staff work together to create common principles and vision
- good communication and transparency is supported by oversight bodies
- responsibilities and relationships between staff are clarified
- governance bodies understand the vision and mission of the organisation and can better support the work
- staff have stronger relationships, and trust each other more
- workplaces have less of the separations between work and life that often contribute to stress and burnout
- seeing leadership exercised in non-oppressive empowering ways inspires staff to promote the same in communities
- disagreements are handled respectfully, with clear boundaries, and can actually strengthen relationships
- collaboration within and across teams improves, as well as with other stakeholders

² This list draws on S. Wakefield, *Transformative and Feminist Leadership for Women's Rights*, AWDF

A PARTNER PERSPECTIVE: IWDA

PARTNER, ALFELA, RAISED SEVERAL IDEAS ABOUT HOW THIS CAPABILITY RELATES TO THEIR ABILITY TO FULFIL ITS MISSION TO SUPPORT WOMEN AND CHILDREN FROM TIMOR-LESTE TO ACCESS A FORMAL JUSTICE SYSTEM WHICH IS FAIR. THESE INCLUDED: A MANAGEABLE AND FAIRLY DISTRIBUTED WORKLOAD, RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT, ADEQUATE RESOURCING, CEDAW AND NATIONAL LAWS, NEW LAWS, POLITICAL CHANGES AND RESOURCING, AND GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES TO SUPPORT EQUALITY.



***AN ORGANISATIONAL SOUL IS A POWERFUL ENTITY
THAT LONGS TO RECOGNISE ITS TRUE AUTHENTICITY,
TAP INTO ITS TRUE POTENTIAL, STRETCH, LEARN
AND CONTINUE TO GROW.***

HOPE AND RUDO CHIDUDU, ORGANISATIONS WITH SOUL

If organisations don't pay attention to how they lead, govern and hold themselves accountable to women, they can become places that 'lack soul' and lack the capability to 'commit and engage'.

People may not feel welcome, valued or seen in their whole humanity in such organisations. They may not trust each other, and the communities they aim to serve may not trust in them. Internal processes and systems – and the very culture of the organisation – may be so weak that staff don't know how to handle conflict or define responsibilities and reporting. There may be no clear process for leaders to leave the organisation in a way that builds up the next generation of leaders. The

board may overstep its boundaries, or may do very little to support the organisation achieve its mission. Any of these issues may reduce organisational resources – of both time and human input – which might otherwise inspire and challenge work that advances women's rights. A problem in one area – for example, oppressive leadership – can impact negatively on staff willingness to hold formal leaders to account.

An organisation that 'lacks soul' has problems in its deep culture – the behaviours and norms that are unspoken, but impact on how organisations operate.³

***IF THERE'S A GOOD SYSTEM IN PLACE,
EVERYTHING FALLS IN LINE. LEADERSHIP BECOMES
NOT JUST FOR ONE PERSON BUT THE WHOLE
ORGANISATION. SO, IF THE SENIOR LEADERS ARE
NOT THERE, THE ORGANISATION STILL RUNS AND
BECOMES SUSTAINABLE. IT'S NOT LINKED TO JUST
ONE PERSON. LEADERSHIP IS NOT ALL ABOUT YOU
ALWAYS TAKING THE LEAD. OTHERS CAN HELP TO
MAKE SURE THAT THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
YOU SET OUT ARE ACHIEVED.***

AMINA ALHASSAN BIN SALIH, AWDF

³ See more on 'deep culture' in *Gender at Work: Theory and Practice for 21st Century Organisations*.

HOW ARE FEMINIST LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY CONNECTED?

Feminist leadership, governance and accountability depend on each other to function well. A feminist governance system creates conditions for decision makers within an organisation to take responsibility – and to be held accountable – for commitments. A feminist lens on accountability ensures that the organisation answers to women first and foremost, and that the organisation’s actions, results, decisions, and policies are aligned. Feminist leadership (within organisations and their boards) ensures that these systems work, and these principles are upheld. At the same time a good governance and accountability system provides the framework for feminist leadership to thrive, engaging and empowering the right stakeholders to make and be responsible for decisions. Some of the core functions of feminist leadership, accountability and governance are outlined in the chart opposite.



LEADERSHIP

Models feminist principles and purpose

Inspires shared vision

Empowers/enables others to act, including through mentoring and supporting emerging leadership

Challenges patriarchal norms and oppressive power, including with clear decision making and conflict resolution processes

Encourages integration of heart, mind and body in work and relationships

ACCOUNTABILITY

Clear responsibilities for actions, results, decisions, and policies including governance and administration

A primary focus on systems ensures decision-makers answer to women who are most affected by decisions

Systems of mutual accountability between managers, staff and other stakeholders

GOVERNANCE

Provides strategic guidance

Oversees organisational policies

Oversees clarity of roles

Ensures learning, development and performance management of staff

Ensures accountability to the community/constituency

Ensures financial viability of the organisation

Engages and empowers stakeholders

Challenges gender and other identity-based oppressions in the organisation

Identifies and manages risk

A feminist system of governance, accountability and leadership can take many different forms (see the Feminist Governance section below). Once the functions of each aspect of the system are agreed, its structures and mechanisms can develop to fit the culture and capacities identified as priorities.

FOR REFLECTION...
IN WHAT WAYS DO OUR PRACTICES OF LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY SUPPORT US TO BE AN EFFECTIVE FEMINIST ORGANISATION?

FEMINIST LEADERSHIP

Feminist leadership is about people with a feminist vision working together to transform systemic oppression – in organisations, movements and society alike – to achieve women’s rights and social justice for all. It’s a process that depends on relationships, working with marginalised groups and mobilising others towards shared goals. Feminist leadership energises others and inspires them to act in relationship and solidarity – across identities and generations, while creating space and support for new leaders to emerge and existing leaders to transition roles. Feminist leadership advances international human rights standards – especially women’s rights.

The handout on the following page offers strategies for building feminist leadership in organisations, based on research into practices of innovative women’s rights organisations from around the world.

REFLECTING ON STRATEGIES TO BUILD FEMINIST LEADERSHIP

The chart on the following page is included as **Handout 1** at the end of the module, and can be shared with participants in a meeting or workshop (e.g. as part of the exercises below, or in identifying ingredients for fostering feminist leadership in your organisation). You might use this with a group by:

- Breaking up into small groups (3-4 people)
- Asking yourselves what kinds of leadership your organisation celebrates and fosters
- Reviewing the handout
- Discussing which core strategies (boxes on the left) and related practices (boxes on the right) you see in your organisation. Which ones might you like to strengthen? What’s missing?

FOR REFLECTION...
HOW DO YOU DEFINE FEMINIST LEADERSHIP? HOW CAN YOU HOLD YOURSELVES ACCOUNTABLE TO THIS OVER TIME? WHAT ARE THE PRACTICES AND BEHAVIOURS YOUR MANAGER AND COLLEAGUES EXHIBIT THAT ARE MOST CONSISTENT WITH FEMINIST LEADERSHIP?

HANDOUT #1 STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS TO BUILD FEMINIST LEADERSHIP

	STRATEGY	SAMPLE ACTIONS
MODELLING FEMINIST PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES	Engaging in ongoing processes of self and interpersonal reflection	All staff, managers, formal leaders:
	Signalling the feminist purpose and principles of a group through small initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · prepare personal leadership statements on purpose (see Activity 2: the Leader I Want to Be)
	Creating specific opportunities for younger leaders to emerge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · check in weekly on personal practices of self-care (see Activity 1 in Care Module: Reflecting on Self and Collective Care)
	Engaging in an intersectional analysis and approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · incorporate opportunities to distribute leadership among younger, newer and older staff (see Handout #2: The Generational Leadership Tasks) · build skills in looking at program issues with a variety of lenses (e.g. gender, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation)
INSPIRING SHARED VISION BASED ON PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE REFLEXIVITY	Providing reflection space to help people connect on a personal level to a collective political vision	All staff, managers, formal leaders:
	Enabling people to unlearn harmful habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · share brief information about their personal history, culture, experiences and talents during introductions rather than job title in formal meetings
	Using body work to enhance personal awareness and inter-personal connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · hold quarterly all-staff reflections on collective purpose, power, principles and practice (e.g. see Activity 3: My Purpose, Power, Principles and Practice)
	Providing space for groups to engage in collective practices to cultivate different qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · celebrate staff when they openly share when they have learned from their mistakes
EMPOWERING AND ENABLING OTHERS TO ACT	Sharing knowledge about how just organisational cultures are developing	
	Recognising and valuing the different contributions people make	All staff, managers, formal leaders:
	Incorporating collective leadership where individual's safety is at risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · create opportunities to involve grassroots women in organisational strategy making, planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning processes
	Fostering interpersonal openness and trust in groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · are placed in public roles at different times to distribute leadership and decrease any one individual's risk
	Clarifying expectations for responsibilities and conflict resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · create a ritual to acknowledge staff members for practicing feminist principles e.g. during staff emails, meetings, in newsletters
	Prioritising development of skills in collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · include performance goals on collaboration, provide training and assess how managers relate to and collaborate with others in performance reviews
	Facilitating connections between women in positional power and constituents	
Developing trust with stakeholders by linking personal struggles to political action		

HANDOUT #1 STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS TO BUILD FEMINIST LEADERSHIP

	STRATEGY	SAMPLE ACTIONS
CHALLENGING PATRIARCHAL NORMS AND OPPRESSIVE POWER	<p>Using tools and processes to surface harmful expressions of power embedded in institutions</p> <p>Collectively identifying positive forms of power</p> <p>Investing in structures, processes and collective practices that disable patriarchal norms</p> <p>Replicating values-based organising principles when moving from organisational change to collaboration and movement building work.</p> <p>Enabling multiple team members to benefit from training programs so they may better establish and hold each other accountable for new norms</p>	<p>All staff, managers, formal leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · build awareness of personal power (see Activity 1) and agree intervals to regularly reflect on progress · formal leaders should provide opportunities to decentralise decision making where possible and make decisions collectively · create a plan for changing power dynamics in leadership, accountability and governance (See Worksheet #1: Organisational Commitments)
ENCOURAGING INTEGRATION OF HEART, MIND AND BODY	<p>Encouraging interpersonal relationship building of teams reduces artificial separations between work and life that contribute to stress and burnout</p> <p>Coaching and mentorship to help individuals work through ongoing challenges</p> <p>Recognising the direct and vicarious trauma women activists may experience</p> <p>Valuing and providing opportunities to develop self- and collective -care strategies</p>	<p>Begin every staff meeting with a brief mood check</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · incorporate physical movement into team meetings to strengthen different qualities (e.g. calmness, creativity, individual and group awareness, conflict resolution, collaboration) · imagine as a group what it will take to build a culture of care (see Activity 5: Imagining our organisation having a culture of care)

Credit: chart adapted from "Feminist and Transformational Leadership for Women's Rights", by Shawna Wakefield for Oxfam America.

**TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERS DON'T SEPARATE
WHO THEY ARE AND THE CHANGE THEY WANT
TO CREATE IN THE WORLD.**

SHEREEN ESSOF OF JASS, SOUTH AFRICA

FEMINIST GOVERNANCE

A feminist governance system ensures that processes and rules for making organisational decisions are primarily accountable to the constituencies of your organisation. It includes processes and rules (e.g. consultation policies and practices) for making organisational decisions, as well as meeting procedures, program quality protocols, staff and management conduct, role clarification and good working relationships.⁴ Feminist governance systems aim to be democratic, to promote participation, human rights and social justice, and to address gender and other power inequalities that may prevent staff participating in decision making.

Women's rights organisations may find it helpful to put in place a good governance system that includes a single mechanism or multiple mechanisms. This could take the form of a board of directors, an advisory board, a congress, a governing board, or some other structure. It could also take a more distributed form – as seen in several IWDA partners – and might include:

- Multiple advisory groups guiding different areas of policy or strategy.
- Collective governance mechanisms linked to different areas of work.
- Network governance mechanisms in which organisational representatives and/or constituencies meet and collectively make decisions on policy and strategy, or monitor and hold each other accountable.

Networks can have similar functions and mechanisms to organisations, but are more complex. They balance a need for individual organisational autonomy with collective action and accountability, while also managing power dynamics between members, and accountabilities to different constituencies.

Governance systems can help ensure organisations are sustainable and on track by providing strategic oversight, high-level monitoring of work completed by management and staff, and risk management – amounting to protecting the vision, mission and mandate of the organisation. The systems can play an important role in holding directors responsible for hiring and in supporting emerging leadership among younger staff, or may be more simply a body that provides strategic advice.

⁴ From the *Good Governance Guide*.

⁵ This definition draws on and adapts the definition of 'good governance' included in *UN Women, Progress of the World's Women (2009)*.

WRAM BOARD

I HAVE TO DETACH THE NINE-MEMBER BOARD FROM THE OFFICE TEAM. I KNOW IT'S KIND OF ORGANISATIONAL, BUT THERE ARE TIMES WHEN AS A PROGRAM MANAGER I HAVE TO LOOK AT WHAT IS IN THE SPACE IN THE FOUR CORNERS OF OUR ROOM AND WHAT IS OUT THERE WITH THE NINE BOARD MEMBERS WHO ARE COMMITTED, PASSIONATE AND ALWAYS SUPPORTIVE.

WE'RE STILL TRAVELING AS AN ORGANISATION, AND I'M GRATEFUL EVERY DAY FOR THE NINE BOARD MEMBERS, AND THE GOOD MAJORITY OF THEM COMMITTED TO THE CAUSE. THEY'VE SAT WITH US AT THE LAST RETREAT, EXPLORED WHERE WE WANT TO SEE WRAM IN TEN YEARS, AND HOW WE WANT THE ORGANISATION TO FUNCTION WITH HUMAN RESOURCES IN TEN YEARS. WE'RE VISUALISING ALL THAT TO TAKE US TO A PLACE WHERE WE'RE EFFECTIVE, WHERE I'M NOT WORKING FIFTEEN HOURS A DAY, AND WHERE STAFF CAN TAKE ALL FOUR WEEKS LEAVE AND NOT BREAK IT — BECAUSE THIS IS WHAT WE ARE DOING, YEAR IN AND YEAR OUT. THAT'S THE BEAUTY OF HAVING A PASSIONATE AND COMMITTED BOARD.

— WRAM STAFF MEMBER

AN EXAMPLE OF NETWORK GOVERNANCE

Rede Feto Secretariat is governed by a 'commission' made up of representatives of its member organisations, selected by the membership via the Annual General Meeting (AGM). This governance function is also served via the mechanism of the National Women's Congress held every 4-5 years, which brings together women from all over Timor Leste to establish a Platform of Action for the next 5 years. The Platform of Action then guides both network member organisations and the Secretariat. Funding may come directly to member organisations individually or to the Secretariat. The Secretariat coordinates and manages some of the collective action of members (e.g.

CEDAW monitoring, advocacy campaigns, some organisation development activity) and works as a 'facilitator' for outside entities wanting to engage with its membership and constituents. It also takes on work that may be too risky for any single member to take on (e.g. research with the lesbian community in Timor Leste). Member groups represent different sub-constituencies (e.g. rural women, women of a particular political ideology, women with disabilities, LGBTIQ women) and represent and hold the Secretariat and network accountable to the specific agendas of these groups.

FOR REFLECTION...

WHAT KIND OF GOVERNANCE BODY WOULD BENEFIT YOUR ORGANISATION?

WHAT DOES FEMINIST GOVERNANCE MEAN OR LOOK LIKE FOR YOUR ORGANISATION?

WHAT DOES YOUR ORGANISATION LOOK FOR IN THE SELECTION/ELECTION OF YOUR GOVERNANCE BOARD MEMBERS OR TRUSTEES?

HOW DOES YOUR ORGANISATION SHOW ITS ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE WOMEN FOR WHOM IT'S WORKING?

WHAT SYSTEMS DO YOU HAVE IN PLACE TO ENSURE THAT YOUR VALUES ARE INTERNALISED BY GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS?

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is about being responsible for and answerable **internally** to commitments made within organisations, and **externally** to women and other constituencies in communities that your organisation serves, responds to, or seeks to represent.

According to UN Women's *Who is Accountable to Women, 2009*, accountability includes two main factors:

1. **Advancement of women's rights is the measure of success:** promoting gender equality is a key goal.
2. **Women are included in oversight processes:** they ask for explanations and justification; they are legitimate participants in debates, and in assessment of organisational performance.

Within organisations, accountability requires clarity of purpose, and transparency in decision-making. Accountability means that staff and volunteers have space to contribute to decisions that affect the whole, space to ask questions, space to contribute to solutions, and space to engage in debates about decisions made. Change for women's rights has advanced, in part, because of women's demands for accountability to norms and standards (CEDAW, laws/policies, etc.). This highlights how important it is to reflect on how we exercise and evolve accountability within women's organisations.

Both internally and externally, through formal and informal systems alike, mechanisms and practices are required to ensure that governance arrangements are followed, and that organisational purpose, values and mission are in line with practice. Mechanisms for accountability to beneficiaries, for instance, can include:

- Forums to discuss and debate organisational priorities with women your organisation serves, as well as other civil society organisations or others that have a stake in your success.
- External monitoring systems that include the women an organisation serves.
- Ensuring respect for international human rights standards, including women's rights.

There is no single set of standards or structures of accountability that work for all women's organisations or networks – because all are different, originating and operating from different contexts. CIVICUS points out the importance of implementing the accountability system gradually, putting in place components that can complement each other rather than be burdensome, and making sure that systems involve multiple stakeholders and adapt to context.⁶

⁶ See CIVICUS, *Accountability for Civil Society*, by Civil Society: A Guide to Self Regulation Initiatives (April 2014)

I CANNOT IMAGINE DOING ANYTHING ELSE AS I LOVE WHAT I DO, BUT AT SOME POINT, THE ORGANISATION WILL BE BETTER SERVED BY A YOUNGER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. IT IS DIFFICULT FOR ME HOW DOES AN OLDER WOMAN FIND ANOTHER JOB? AND TO FURTHER COMPLICATE THINGS, THE PEOPLE (STAFF AND BOARD) DO NOT WANT ME TO LEAVE.

from the Leadership in Leaving, Frances Kunreuther,
Phyllis Segal, Stephanie Clohesy



FOR REFLECTION...

HOW IS YOUR ORGANISATION MAKING ROOM FOR AND PREPARING YOUNG AND/OR EMERGING LEADERS TO EXERCISE LEADERSHIP AND TO SUCCEED EXISTING LEADERS? DOES EVERYONE FEEL SEEN AND VALUED?

SUPPORTING EMERGING AND EXISTING (OR DEPARTING) LEADERS

An important aspect of leadership, governance and accountability is to nurture, develop and create space for younger women and women from marginalised groups to grow into leadership roles within women's rights organisations – as well as create viable ways for leaders, often founders of organisations, to leave their roles. Succession planning organises key leadership changes in organisations and makes explicit the means by which an organisation will work on its goals and vision during changes of staff, governance, and leadership. The **FOCS Self-Assessment module** – along with other feminist organisational strengthening tools – can help you prioritise actions towards this goal.

Challenges for emerging and younger leaders include under-recognition and under-valuing of their contributions, lack of professional development, and paths to formal leadership in organisations. They may see existing leaders working long hours and risking the health of themselves and those around them. They may therefore be deterred from taking on more responsibility, or staying with the organisation over longer terms. The overall structure and culture of the organisation may reflect older, founding leaders, but not include newer or different perspectives, styles, visions and ideas. Often younger staff are consulted for advice on technical issues (accounting, finance, technology) but not program content or strategic decisions. Emerging leaders from marginalised groups (based on class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability) are often at particular risk of being sidelined (See **Exercise to Engage with Succession Planning** in Part Two).

FORMS OF POWER

Feminism challenges oppressive and discriminatory power that upholds gender inequality. Feminist leadership and organisations will address power openly. They actively seek to create change when power abuse happens, and shift towards more transformative forms of power that lead to significant and lasting change.

Organisational spaces are immersed in cultures, societies, households and histories in which patriarchal abuse of power is often the norm. We're shaped by our contexts, which include our different experiences with power (see Exercise 1: Power and Powerlessness). Some of us grow up in households where fathers make decisions that cannot be questioned, enter a new marriage under the control of mother-in-laws, or experience physical or emotional abuse. Others experience power positively, where opinions as children, sisters, wives or co-workers have been respected and valued, and ideas heard and taken forward. Since we're all influenced by our histories, social contexts and more, it's important to understand how to shift power within spheres of direct influence (for example, personal lives, home lives, and organisational lives). There are many ways to understand power. The following chart shows a way of understanding how power can be oppressive (power over, power under) or transformative (power with, power to, power within):⁷

⁷ Drawn from Batliwala, Srilatha, *Feminist Leadership for Social Transformation: Clearing the Conceptual Cloud*, CREA, 2011

FOR REFLECTION...
**WHAT FORMS OF POWER ARE EXERCISED
 IN YOUR ORGANISATION, ESPECIALLY
 UNDER PRESSURE?**

OPPRESSIVE POWER...

TRANSFORMATIVE POWER...

POWER OVER

POWER UNDER

POWER WITH

POWER TO

POWER WITHIN

Refers to most of what we think of as power. This derives from formal authority and / or control over resources and decisions, and can be a very harmful, dominating form of power

Emerges when people who have experienced abuse, oppression and trauma gain power and use it in ways that are destructive to themselves and others, such as through sabotage and subversion

Effective empowerment and enabling of others to create solidarity, mutual support systems, safety nets, etc. for transformation

Agency and capacity used to create change, mobilising people towards a transformative agenda which recognises what change-makers bring to the table

A source of sustainability in individuals related to their inherent power, and capacity for resilience in response to challenges and reversals in social change

EXAMPLES...

- Parents have power over their children
- Dictators abuse power over other people

- Survivors of domestic violence may abuse children or partners
- Leaders who've experienced war and conflict, may emotionally abuse others to get their way

- Joint advocacy campaigns
- Leaders who initiate and sustain collective processes with peers/ colleagues

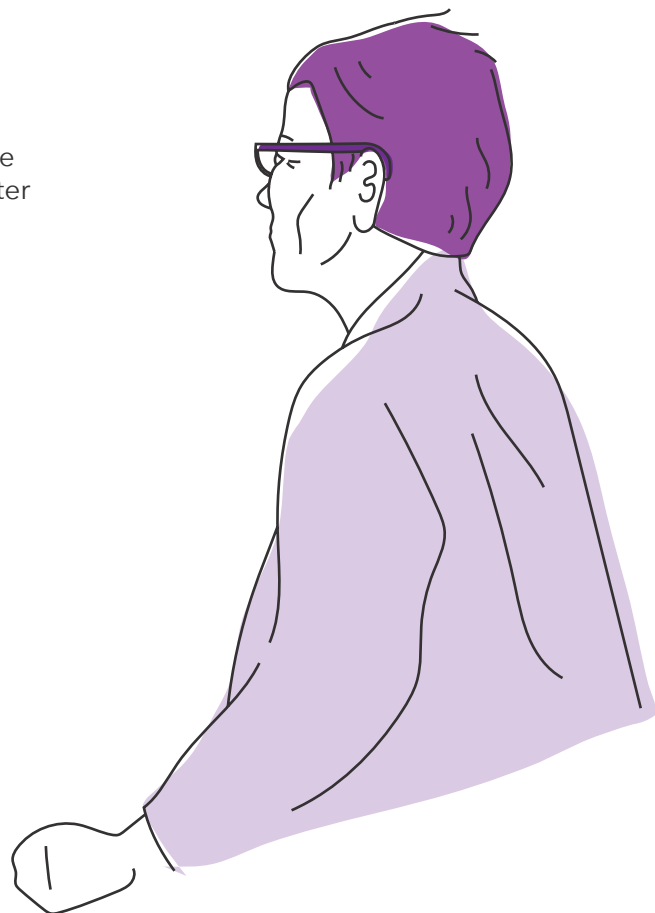
- Coalitions to end violence against women
- Community members recognising their ability to influence village leadership

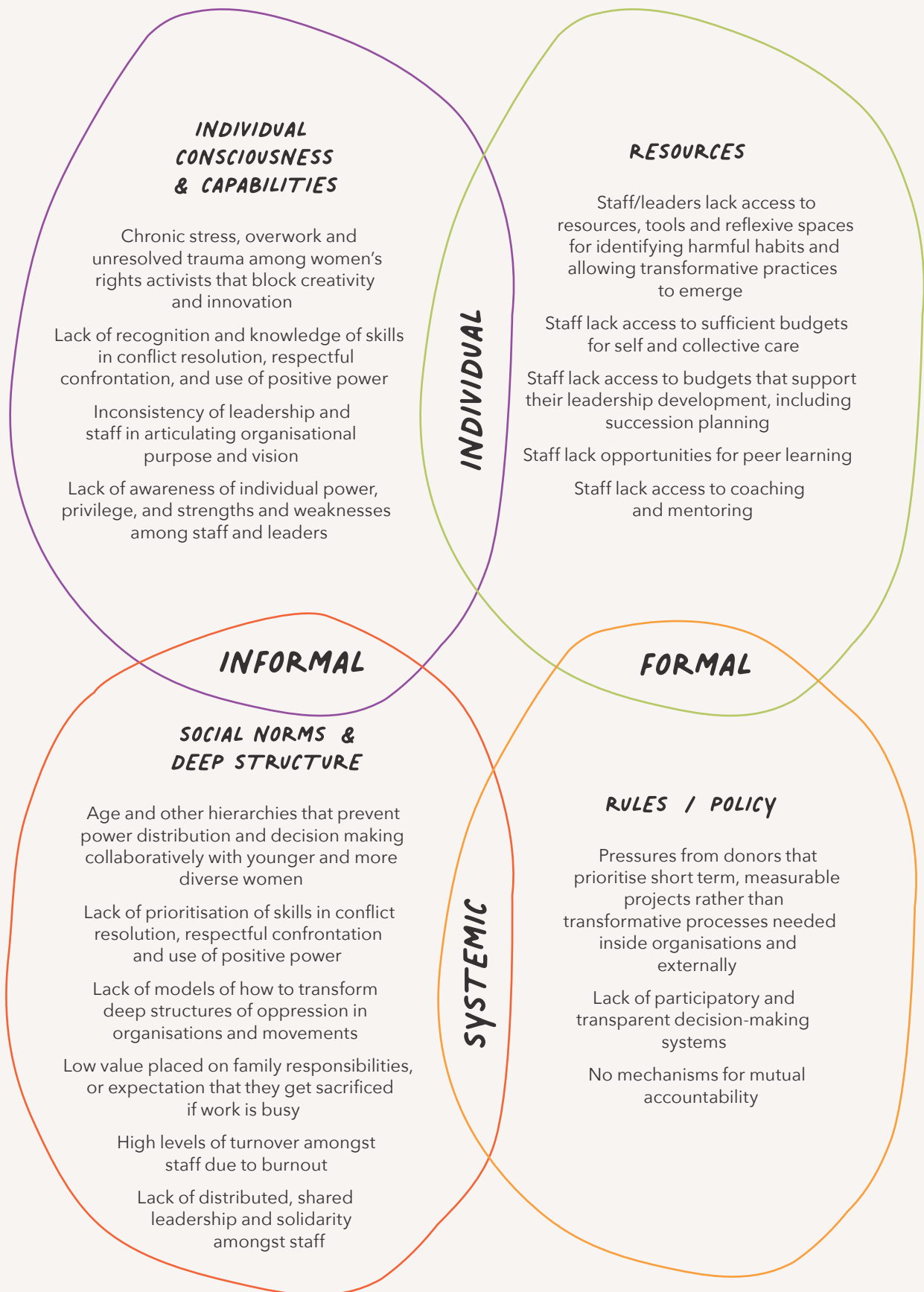
- Women human rights defenders who are resilient in the face of backlash

WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT?

As noted by Srilatha Batliwala, some of the **challenges** to organisations practicing feminist leadership, governance and accountability at personal levels include:

- Our conditioning in the use of power occurs before we become feminist and can be difficult to change, or even recognise.
 - We're surrounded by patriarchal structures of power and leadership.
 - We may embrace the theory, but our own histories, experiences, identities, and personalities often get in the way!
 - This is a painful journey of exploration and experimentation – there are no templates on offer!
 - Shifting the way we lead can make people feel very vulnerable and unsafe (on the plus side, vulnerability can foster trust and respect).
- It can be hard for many leaders to leave organisations they founded and led – and sometimes devoted their entire lives to.
 - Using the Gender at Work Analytical Framework (described in greater detail in the **FOCS Facilitation Guide**), in the chart opposite we map things that **need to change** within organisations when trying to create feminist leadership, governance and accountability systems. The specific situations in your own organisation are explored in activities in Part Two.

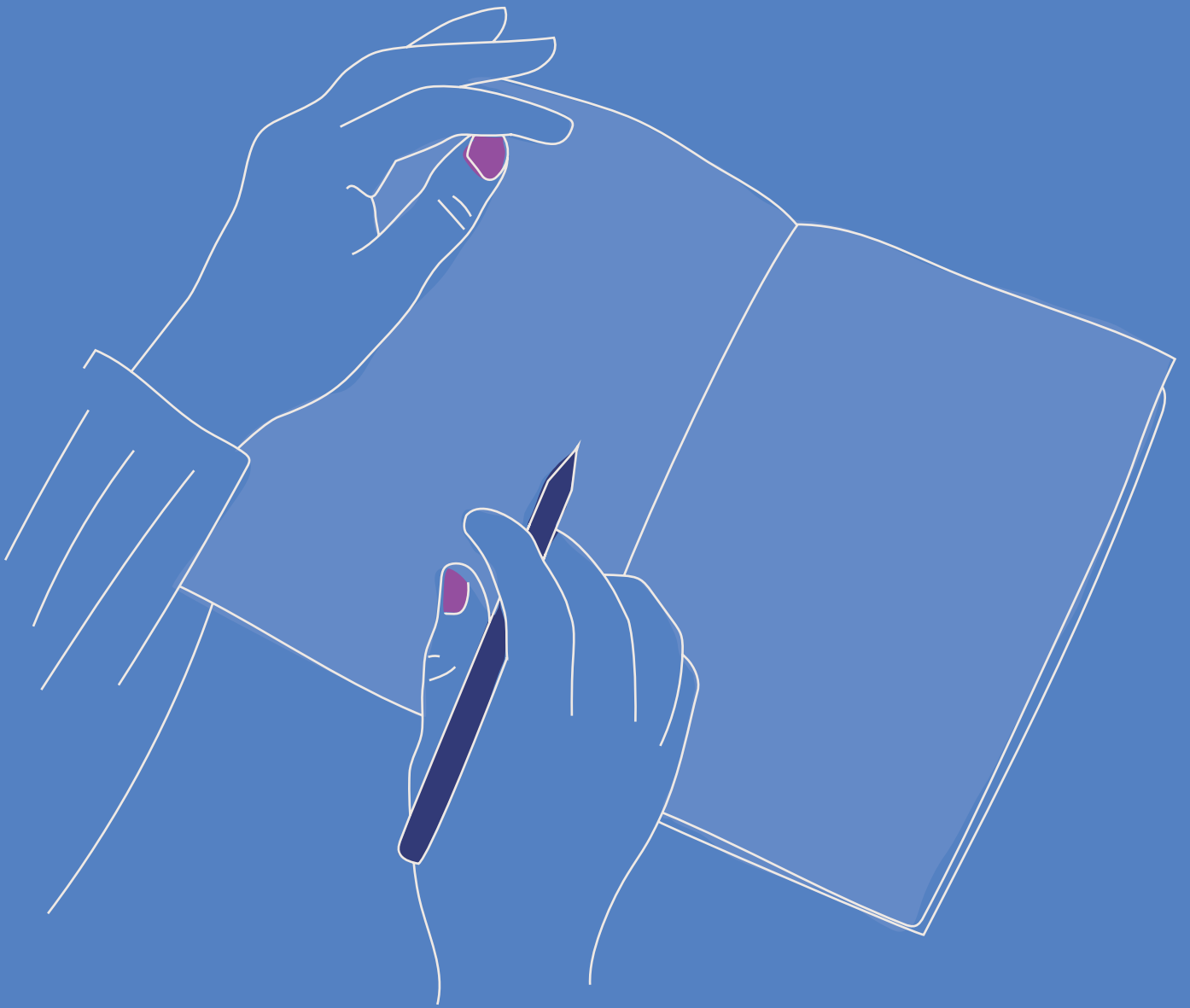




PART TWO: INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE EXERCISES

This section will help you to reflect on and define what feminist leadership, accountability and governance mean for you and your organisation. It will offer some practices that may support you, and indicate policies/processes/resources that may be required to support shifts in the overall organisational culture.

The exercises here can be used alone, with others from the FOCS Facilitation Guide or with activities offered in the Additional Resources section. Many of the activities indicate that participants should write in their 'participant journals'. While it's not necessary to have notebooks for participants to use, this is a good opportunity for participants to keep track of their reflections and commitments, and take these journals away after the sessions.



ACTIVITY 1:

POWER AND POWERLESSNESS

This activity is designed to begin a discussion of power by exploring people's experiences of power and powerlessness. It serves as an introduction to 'power over', or oppressive power, and the sources of our own power to transform our lives and make change.

PURPOSE:

In order to create change, we need to understand the power we are up against, how it affects us in different ways, and the ways in which we have power. This activity helps participants examine their experiences of different manifestations of power and powerlessness in their lives. From this foundation, the activity builds an understanding of both power over and the capacities and sources of power we can cultivate to make change.

TIME REQUIRED:

1 hour

MATERIALS:

5-6 different colours of paper cut in half or cards (a few for each participant)

Flip chart

Markers

Descriptions of forms of power (above)

NOTE TO FACILITATOR(S): IT'S NOT NECESSARY TO DEFINE THESE CONCEPTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE ACTIVITY, AS IT BEGINS WITH PEOPLE'S LIVED EXPERIENCES.

PROCESS:

Begin by introducing the topic of power and powerlessness. Mention that everyone experiences both at different points and in different ways in their lives. This activity will allow us to understand power more deeply and begin to uncover aspects of our own power.

IN SMALL GROUPS:

(10 -15 minutes)

1. Give everyone a sheet of paper.
Ask each person to draw a line down the middle. On one side they'll draw a situation that made them feel powerful, on the other side a situation that made them feel powerless. Encourage them to draw something they're willing to share with others.
2. In their small groups have people explain their drawings, answering the questions:
What made you feel powerless? How was power used to control your life or suppress your voice?
What made you feel powerful and why? How did you use your power individually or with others to enhance your life, make your voice heard or change a situation?
3. Each group should identify a few examples of each.

Credit: Developed by JASS over many years

IN PLENARY:

Ask for a sample of examples for each category – powerful and powerless.

Ask: What do these tell us about negative uses of and positive uses of power?

Note that we are looking at two very different kinds of power: Oppressive Power and Transformative Power.

OPPRESSIVE/HARMFUL POWER:

Have someone read the definition of 'power over' and 'power under' out loud (see definitions in the 'Forms of Power' section above). How do these match with what they described with their drawings?

Note that 'power over' affects us in all aspects of our lives, and 'power under' often occurs as a response to abuse of 'power over': In the 'private' sphere of the home and family, in the 'public' sphere of the community, institutions, government and other places outside the home and also, inside us - the 'personal' realm.

Reviewing the drawings and thinking about their experiences, ask them to name ways that 'power over' is exercised in each of these spheres.

NOTE TO FACILITATOR(S): THE PERSONAL REALM IS OFTEN WHERE WE'RE IMPACTED BY AND FEEL FEAR, SHAME, LACK OF CONFIDENCE, AND SELF-DOUBT. AFFIRM THAT WHILE WE ALL EXPERIENCED POWER OVER, NONE OF US IS COMPLETELY POWERLESS.

NOTE TO FACILITATOR(S): MANY PEOPLE DO NOT FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT DRAWING. EXPLAIN THAT THE QUALITY OF ARTWORK IS NOT IMPORTANT, BUT THAT EVEN VERY SIMPLE DRAWING HELPS US THINK ABOUT AND COMMUNICATE OUR EXPERIENCES WITH FRESH EYES.

TRANSFORMATIONAL/POSITIVE POWER:

See definition in the 'Forms of Power' section above.

Make connections with the examples of positive and transformational power they drew (for example, participants might have described feeling powerful by: speaking up, refusing or resisting, problem-solving, getting information, doing something ethical, organising with others, confronting someone, working with others to get something done, etc.).

Also notice that these kinds of power also help us in our private, public and personal realms.

Synthesise some of the key points made. Affirm that power is complex and dynamic, can be positive and negative, oppressive or liberating, and is both individual and collective.

ACTIVITY 2:

THE LEADER I AM AND WANT TO BE

In this exercise, participants reflect on the kind of leadership they want to cultivate personally, or as a collective within their organisation. In preparation, the facilitator will need to prepare a collection of images – it should include enough images reflecting positive and negative expressions of leadership, possibly including a single word that captures the image. There should be enough images to allow each participant to choose two cards.

PURPOSE:

To enable participants to consider and discuss amongst themselves their existing and future leadership, and what the journey might look like.

MATERIALS:

Set of cards or visuals with a selection of positive and negative images related to leadership (facilitator or your organisation can collect and provide)

TIME REQUIRED:

45 – 70 minutes depending on size of the group and how much group discussion is encouraged

PROCESS:

Place cards on the floor or desk, face up, in front of all participants.

Invite them to choose two cards – one that represents their current leadership and another that represents their future leadership.

Have them turn to someone next to them and each person discusses (5 minutes each):

- Why they've chosen the card for their current leadership?
- Why they've chosen the card for their future leadership?
- Three ways they'd like to transform their leadership.

Each pair opens up to the whole group and shares one insight about how they can achieve their future leadership.

Have the group place their cards in two piles on the floor, so all can see (one pile that is their current leadership, another that is their future leadership).

Facilitator invites participants to share insights about what they're seeing.

This exercise could be followed by the commitment planning exercise below.

Credit: Joanne Sandler and Aruna Rao

NOTE TO FACILITATOR(S):
THIS EXERCISE CAN BE VERY LIVELY,
WITH PEOPLE MOVING ABOUT TO FIND
THEIR CARDS, POTENTIALLY TALKING AND
NEGOTIATING WITH OTHERS AS THEY DO.
IT'S IMPORTANT THAT THE GROUP KNOWS
THERE ARE NO RIGHT ANSWERS —
ENCOURAGE THEM TO CHOOSE BASED
ON THEIR FIRST INSTINCT RATHER
THAN OVERTHINK THEIR CHOICES.



ACTIVITY 3:

MY PURPOSE IN LEADING FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

In this exercise, participants reflect individually on the vision or purpose that they want to achieve in leading for women's rights, and then have time to share and receive feedback.

PURPOSE:

At the end of this activity, participants will begin to develop their personal vision statement ('purpose statement') about their leadership for women's rights, and learn about the kinds of purpose statements their colleagues are developing.

TIME REQUIRED:

70 minutes

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

Participant journals

Examples of 'purpose statements' (if the facilitator feels they want to share)

Active listening guidelines (see <http://www.buildingpeace.org/sites/default/files/Core%20Principles%20of%20Active%20Listening%20Handout.pdf>)

OTHER RESOURCES FOR THIS SESSION INCLUDE:

S. Batliwala, Feminist Leadership: Clearing the Conceptual Cloud article (see Additional Resources below).

Background from Part One above on leadership, accountability and governance.

Credit: Adapted from: Batliwala, S. and Friedman, M. (2015) Achieving Transformative Feminist Leadership: A Toolkit for Organisations and Movements, CREA (Delhi), p. 32

NOTE TO FACILITATOR(S): PRIOR TO STARTING THE EXERCISE, IT MIGHT BE WORTHWHILE TO HAVE A SHORT EXERCISE THAT ENABLES PARTICIPANTS TO CENTRE THEIR THINKING/FEELING AND SHIFT THEIR ATTENTION TO THEMSELVES (SEE CREATING CULTURES OF CARE MODULE AND FOCS FACILITATION GUIDE FOR IDEAS ON MOVING AND BREATHING EXERCISES AND RESOURCES). IN SOME SITUATIONS, IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO PLAY SOFT INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC WHILE PARTICIPANTS ARE WRITING.



PROCESS:

STEP ONE

1. If in a large group, ask participants to sit in small groups (specify number).
2. Distribute a graphic of the Four P's of Leadership (Power, Principles, Politics/ Purpose, Practices).
3. Explain the graphic, building on the points made in Batliwala, Clearing the Conceptual Cloud.
4. Take 5 minutes for comments and questions on the Four P's of Leadership.
5. Clarify that this is an opportunity to share and get/give feedback on participant 'purpose statements'. The intention is for each participant to leave with a clear purpose that drives their application of learnings.

Some guidance for the Purpose Statement:

- It should be short (no more than 3 sentences).
- It should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound).
- It should be related to the opportunities and challenges that participants articulated in Session 1.5.
- Where possible, it should be relevant to multiple quadrants of the Gender at Work Framework and particularly touch on the bottom left-hand quadrant on systemic change.
- It should identify an area of work about which the participant is passionate, and which the participant strongly believes will be a linchpin issue.
- Finally, it should be a 'living' purpose statement; as participants return to work and 'test' their efforts, they may need to tweak their purpose.

STEP TWO

1. Ask participants to spend 10 minutes drafting a personal 'purpose statement' –what purpose do they want to achieve in their leadership for gender equality in the work of their organisation? They might first summarise points that resonated with them regarding power and privilege, then the kinds of leader they want to be, and might finally think about their purpose.
2. After 15 minutes have passed, tell participants that they'll have about 45 minutes to share and give/get feedback on their initial drafts. Participants will spend 5 to 7 minutes giving and then receiving feedback with 6-8 other people using the principles of Active Listening.
3. Remind participants that this workshop is an opportunity to be 'powerfully heard'. That means that when not reading statements, participants should be listening actively. Share ideas about Active Listening, and stress that this is not a time for 'critique', but rather for paraphrasing, reflecting, clarifying and encouraging.
4. After 45 minutes (or sooner if you feel reduced energy in the room), do a quick scan to get feedback on the experience. Did people get valuable insights? Was there anything difficult about the exercise? How did it feel to be powerfully heard? How did it feel to listen actively? Are participants revising their personal purpose statements?
5. Give participants 3 minutes to return to their statements and make notes on revisions.
6. Close by acknowledging that participants may want to continue to work on these statements over time.

The purpose statements can be an important input into developing collective workplans, as teams define the actions they will take to promote feminist leadership, accountability and governance in their organisations. See Handout 1 for ideas for practicing feminist leadership, as well as handouts and worksheets in Section 3 for ideas to incorporate into your workplan below.

ACTIVITY 4:

SUCCESSION PLANNING

This exercise can be done by executive directors to create an individual action plan, but is also useful to do in small groups of staff and board members.

PURPOSE:

To help executive directors or staff members assess and plan for future leadership transitions, and develop a shared understanding of what needs to be done in the organisation. Hoped for outcomes include:

To help executive directors and staff members assess current strengths.

To identify next steps needed to prepare for leadership transitions.

To set individual and communal goals for moving forward.

TIME REQUIRED:

45 minutes to 1 hour

MATERIALS:

Handout 2: Table 1 on Generational Leadership Tasks

PROCESS:

Ensure all participants have a copy of Handout 2 included at the end of the module.

STEP ONE

The first column of Table 1 lists some concrete changes that organisations can make now to help with future transitions. Identify how well your organisation is doing in each area, and what the next steps might be. You can do this on your own, in pairs or small groups.

STEP TWO

Once you've filled in the table, use your answers to guide a larger discussion with others in your organisation. You can use the following questions to help shape discussion:

WHERE DO YOU AGREE?

ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN YOUR ANSWERS? ARE THESE DIFFERENCES SIGNIFICANT?

WHERE SHOULD YOUR FIRST STEPS BE?

WHO WANTS TO CONTINUE TO WORK ON AND LEAD THESE ISSUES?

Credit: Building Movements Project, 'Thinking Five Years Ahead'

ACTIVITY 5:

COMBINING INTENTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

PURPOSE:

Participants are accountable to themselves, their teams and their workshop colleagues for moving their ideas forward. What does this mean? This session provides the opportunity to explore the idea of accountability and generate ideas for how participants increase their accountability for action.

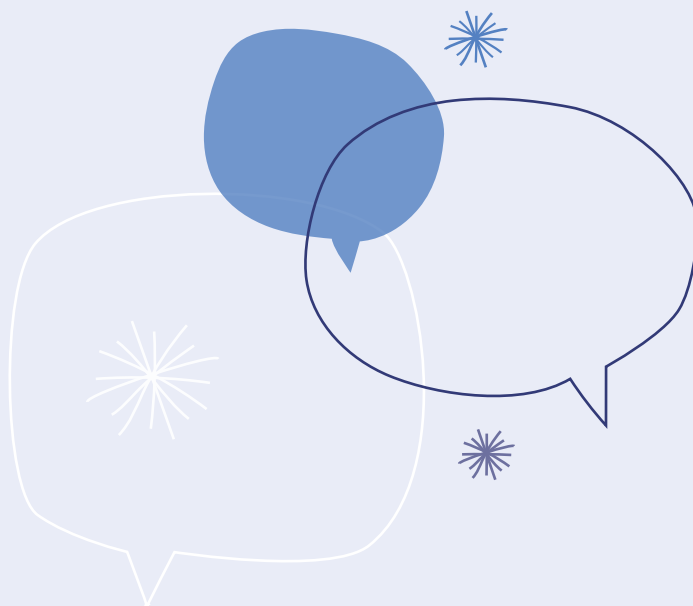
Credit: Aruna Rao and Joanne Sandler, 'Transformative Leadership for Gender Equality and Women's Rights', for UN Women

TIME REQUIREMENT:

30 minutes

PROCESS:

1. Have participants discuss in groups of 3. Ask each group to think of a time that they saw accountability in action (10 minutes).
2. Poll the group. What examples were articulated? What do they say about the principles and practice of accountability?
3. Summarise information on accountability from Part One to support discussion on accountability.
4. End by asking participants to write in their journals 3 to 5 actions they can take to ensure their own accountability for acting on the intentions they've articulated on leading for gender equality.



PART THREE: **DIFFERENT PATHWAYS**

The chart on the following page (also at the end of the module) **Handout 3: Practices, systems and support** can be shared with participants in a meeting or workshop as part of the exercises above, or in identifying ingredients of feminist leadership, accountability and governance. The chart includes a menu of individual and collective practices, and specific organisational processes and resources needed to support them. Each quadrant represents different spheres of influence. For instance, activities in the informal quadrants may be undertaken by staff at an individual level, or collectively with all levels of staff and management. Activities in the formal quadrants will require support or leadership from organisational leaders/managers. This menu provides ideas for commitments made in the next section – you'll have your own ideas as well.



HANDOUT 3: PRACTICES, SYSTEMS AND SUPPORT



Finally, **Worksheet #1** on the following page provides the basis of a discussion by participants to consider and agree on organisational commitments.

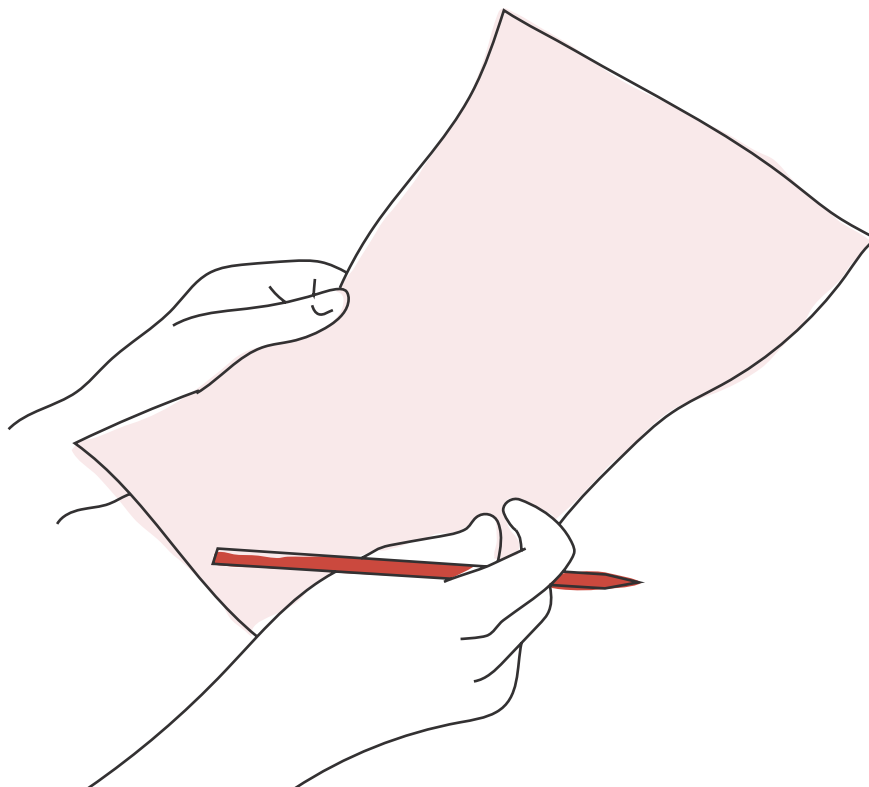
WORKSHEET 1:

ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENTS

The following worksheet helps staff, teams and organisational leaders to prepare a simple action plan for putting in place systems and practices of feminist leadership, governance and accountability. The process of filling out the worksheet should be collectively developed and owned, and may be done either within a specific group or team, or with the organisation as a whole. Facilitators should be clear about which

actions require shifts in informal practices and processes, and which require formal approval and institutional shifts. Some activities may require additional resources, and others may be implemented with those already in place. This should be indicated.

For more ideas about how to self-assess progress over time, review the **FOCS Self-Assessment module**.



STRENGTHENING FEMINIST LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

A COMMITMENT WORKSHEET		Worksheet 1
<p>What organisational commitment to self and collective care can we make in our organisation? We are committed to...</p>		
<p>How will we know we are successful? These should be easily measured outcomes that will let us know if we are living our commitments. You may include answers to: How will we feel? How will we relate to each other? What will we accomplish?</p>		Completion date
1)		
2)		
3)		
What actions will we take?	Timeframe	What resources/approvals we need? What resources do we have?
1)		
2)		
3)		
<p>What will we practice collectively, as a team or organisation? What practices and policies will our organisation undertake to promote self and collective care and resilience?</p>		
1)		
2)		
3)		
<p>Support / Accountability. How will we hold each other accountable?</p>		
1)		
2)		
3)		

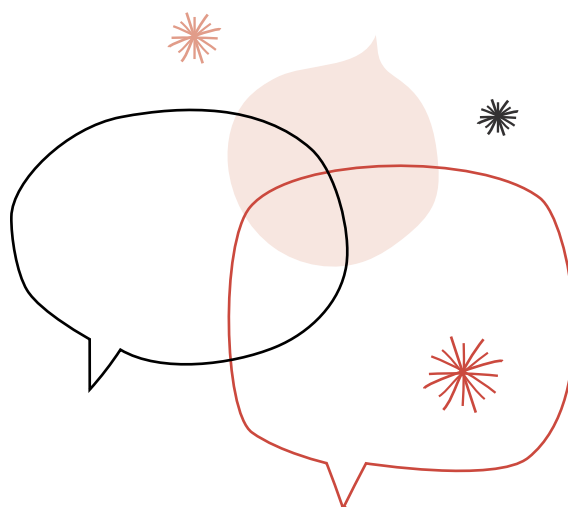
FOLLOW UP

After agreement of your plan, it's important to schedule regular 'check-ins' to assess how you're doing as a team and organisation – at least for a time. It's important to ask yourselves whether these practices are having effects personally, or in terms of the relationships and performance in your organisation. You could include such a 'check-in' in staff meetings or away days in order to keep it alive, and ensure that useful practices increasingly become part of organisational culture.

The **FOCS Self-Assessment module** provides further ideas on how these commitments can be reviewed as part of an annual FOCS reflection on capacity strengthening.

CLOSING THE WORKSHOP

The **FOCS Facilitation Guide** suggests ideas for wrapping up the workshop and workshop evaluation. Remember that providing participants with an opportunity to give feedback on the workshop process is an important responsibility of the facilitators – it can help consolidate learning, reaffirm commitments, and offer ideas about how to improve the process for next time.



STORY OF CHANGE 1:

FEMINIST IDEALS AND LEADERSHIP PRACTICE

Change happens in many ways. This story provides just one example of some of the ways one organisation – led by women workers in South Africa – moved to being a consciously feminist organisation. Consider what difference these changes may make to the workers the organisation represents, to the staff within the organisation, and to the organisation itself. Consider what you could put into place to align with feminist purposes, principles, politics and practices in your own context.

Women on Farms (WFP) in South Africa works with women who live and work on commercial farms or in the agro-processing industry. For many years, the organisation has worked to bring its feminist ideals of leadership into practice. A seminal moment in WFP history occurred in June 2003 when a decision was made to build an independent membership organisation of women farm workers.

WFP had represented the voice of women farm workers but believed the time had come for leadership and agency to be taken up by the women farm workers themselves. A strong organisation of women farm workers, led by women farm workers, was seen as vital to bringing about change in the sector. The outcome was the women farm workers organisation Sikhula Sonke, which came into being in August 2004.

In 2009, WFP made another important decision: to identify itself as a feminist organisation and to explore what feminism meant for its organisational structure and practice. One of the structures reviewed, in part with support from Oxfam Canada, was the WFP Board. A participatory feminist board development process addressed both Board membership as well as Board processes. One desired outcome was that women farm workers would be directly represented on the WFP Board. In practice, this posed some challenges, including the creation of a very diverse Board – in terms of education level, language skills and experience. In response, WFP fundamentally restructured Board meetings: where they're held, agendas, and meeting organisation.

WFP committed to Board members' participation being meaningful and valuable to themselves and the organisation alike, rather than merely notional. Board meeting environments and processes were sought to enable participants. WFP contracted external facilitators to work with the Board during the quarterly Board meetings to build a feminist Board that could function in a 'non-traditional' way. Many creative and participatory methodologies were used to maximise and equalise the participation amongst such a diverse group: using 'buzz' pairs; free writing; drawing and collage-making; employing a bilingual facilitator;

and translating Board pack materials such as minutes into Afrikaans. The nature and quality of Board meetings greatly improved, especially in relation to the participation of farm women. With the recruitment of four new Board members in 2011, including a young farm woman, the Board has continued working with a feminist facilitator in order to enhance the participation and ownership of farm women, as well as to create an enabling and participatory context which reflects WFP's feminist ideals.

When asked whether the work on Women's Transformative Leadership strengthened the organisation, one Board member gave this response: "Absolutely... I think that although it is a work in progress, our Board is much better in terms of the quality of the representation of farm women, in terms of the ethos of the way we work, the manner in which we work. There is a respect for each other, there is an acknowledgement of the different roles and backgrounds that people bring... And it is a learning board, a self-reflective board, not complacent."



Credit: Oxfam Canada, Power of Gender Just Organisations

PART FOUR:

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability for Civil Society by Civil Society: A Guide to Self-Regulation Initiatives

The purpose of this guide is to help civil society organisations' regulate their practices and operations with respect to a variety of governance issues. It includes research and more than 20 case studies from around the world, lessons learnt, innovations, and practical advice. <https://www.civicus.org/images/stories/CIVICUS%20Self-regulation%20Guide%20Eng%202014.pdf>

FEMINIST LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Clearing the Conceptual Cloud, by S. Batliwala

This concept paper is part of a broader process launched by CREA to analyse and evaluate the impact of its leadership development strategies, and to explore how to strengthen these. The main goal of this exploration was not merely to create new theory - although that's also valuable - but to advance our mission of bridging theory and practice to build feminist leadership for transformative social justice. <https://justassociates.org/sites/justassociates.org/files/feminist-leadership-clearing-conceptual-cloud-srilatha-batliwala.pdf>

Transformative and Feminist Leadership for Women's Rights, by Shawna Wakefield.

This text provides case studies and frameworks for supporting feminist transformative leadership that integrate heart, mind and body in organisational culture in women's movement building organisations. https://www.oxfamamerica.org/static/media/files/Transformative_and_Feminist_Leadership_for_Womens_Rights_1.24.17.pdf

FEMINIST ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Gender at Work: Theory and Practice for 21st Century Organisations, Aruna Rao, Joanne Sandler, David Kelleher, Carol Miller

This book puts the spotlight on the deep structures of organisational culture that hold gender inequality in place. It shows how transforming the unspoken, informal institutional norms that perpetuate gender inequality in organisations is key to achieving gender equitable outcomes for all, based on interviews with 30 leaders who broke new ground on gender equality, international case studies crafted from consultations and organisational evaluations, and lessons from nearly fifteen years of experience of Gender at Work. <http://genderatwork.org/reflections/new-book/>

Feminist Organisational Development Tool

This is a toolkit designed to operationalise the African Feminist Charter through organisational development and learning, training, staff and board development, monitoring and evaluation, and peer review and exchange. It's also a tool for self-improvement and reflection. Although developed primarily for women's rights organisations, the Organisational Development Tool is a useful resource for all activists and those interested in extending their knowledge and understanding of feminist theory and practice in Africa. <http://www.africanfeministforum.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/The-Feminist-Organisational-Development-Tool-English.pdf?x55323>

AWDF 7th CEO Forum Report - Leadership and Governance for WROs

A summary of the discussions and outcomes

of the AWDF Capacity Building Program, this text looks at developing and strengthening grantees' work to ensure their sustainability.

Strategies for Building an Organisation with Soul, by Hope Chigudu and Rudo Chigudu

A feminist organisational development guide that beautifully discusses and provides practices for strengthening organisational leadership focused on the heart of our visions and missions for thriving organisations. <http://airforafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Strategies-for-Building-an-Organisation-with-Soul-for-web1.pdf>

Toolkit for Working in a Feminist Organisations (Women's Health West)

The tool outlines the principles and features of contemporary feminist organisations that differentiate them from mainstream services, as well as the process that WHW undertook to develop and implement a feminist workplace audit. The audit tool allows us to measure where we're succeeding, as well as assessing areas of feminist theory, practice and behaviour we need to strengthen. <http://whwest.org.au/resource/tool-kit/>

The Power of Gender Just Organisations: Toolkit for Transformative Organisational Capacity Building.

Provides a set of practical tools piloted by Canada to support the implementation of its global capacity building program for women's rights and gender justice with a diverse set of local civil society partners. https://www.oxfam.ca/sites/default/files/Ox-Gender-Toolkit_web-final_0.pdf

CONFLICT RESOLUTION RESOURCES

Conflict Resolution Meeting Handout

Provides a set of steps to do with another individual when you're committed to resolving a conflict. It's simply a series of steps, many of which we might already commonly do with the individual with whom we are in conflict. <http://www.creativeconflictresolution.org/bhr/10%20-%20CR%20meeting.pdf>

Tools for Organisations and Alliances in Conflict and Negotiation

These resources deal with building agreements and working through conflict inside our groups and within alliances, as well as negotiating relationships with different kinds of political actors who influence issues we care about. <https://werise-toolkit.org/en/system/tdf/pdf/tools/Using-The-Onion-as-a-Tool-of-Analysis.pdf?file=1&force=>

<https://werise-toolkit.org/en/cycles/standing-up>

Mastering Respectful Confrontation, by Joe Weston

This summary of a longer guidebook provides practical tools and exercises to support respectful confrontation, enabling people to solve problems, overcome personal challenges and feel mutually empowered when engaging with others. <https://respectfulconfrontation.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/MRC.excerpt.pdf>

Getting our Act Together

A practical guide focused on situations where problems most often arise, providing the 'nuts and bolts' of how to overcome them. Insights can be applied in community, workplace, therapy, lobbying – wherever people come together to work collaboratively. <https://groupwork.com.au/product/getting-our-act-together-how-to-harness-the-power-of-groups/?v=3a1ed7090bfa>

SUCCESSION PLANNING

Navigating Leadership Transitions, Building Movements Project

The tools listed in this section of BMP's website are designed to help you apply learning about how to work across generations and build leadership for social change in your organisation and in the non-profit sector. <https://buildingmovement.org>

The Long Goodbye: Advice, How-To's and Cautionary Tales for Extended Leadership Exits, Frances Kunreuther Stephanie Clohesy

This report is designed to help organisations and their leaders take practical steps to reflect on their assumptions, motives and needs in order to create workable solutions for choosing

and managing an extended executive exit. The insights, advice and tools are all designed from a fundamental recognition that there are three sets of interests that need to be balanced in any solution: the Board representing the organisation; the exiting leader; and the incoming leader. These interests are key decision-makers regarding whether a departing director will stay in the organisation after they leave positional power. <https://buildingmovement.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/The-Long-Goodbye-Advice-How-Tos-and-Cautionary-Tales-for-Extended-Leadership-Exits.pdf>

Fostering Diverse & Emerging Leadership in the Anti-Violence Against Women Movement, Women of Color Network

A paper that discusses and provides suggestions for how to promote leadership of young women of colour. <https://h7w.2dd.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Chapter-5-Leadership.pdf>

Succession Planning Toolkit for Nonprofit Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Organisations.

This toolkit addresses succession planning beyond key leadership positions (e.g., executive director, associate director, or key management positions) by looking at succession planning for all staff and board of directors, as each of these positions are essential to the leadership and sustainability of the organisation. It includes a helpful checklist for planning purposes. https://resourcesharingproject.org/sites/default/files/NSTA_Succession_Planning_Toolkit.pdf

LEADING, GOVERNING AND BEING ACCOUNTABLE FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS, LIKE OTHER MODULES IN THE FOCUS RESOURCES SERIES, IS PRESENTED IN THE SPIRIT OF CO-CREATION. WE WANT TO ADD TO THE RESOURCES AND REDESIGN PROCESSES AS WE LEARN FROM EACH OTHER ABOUT WHAT WORKS BEST IN OUR CONTEXTS. PLEASE EMAIL IWDA@IWDA.ORG.AU TO GIVE YOUR FEEDBACK AND SHARE IDEAS OR RESOURCES THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE ADDED.



HANDOUT 1: REFLECTING ON STRATEGIES TO BUILD FEMINIST LEADERSHIP

	<i>STRATEGY</i>	<i>SAMPLE ACTIONS</i>
MODELLING FEMINIST PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES	<p>Engaging in ongoing processes of self and interpersonal reflection</p> <p>Signalling the feminist purpose and principles of a group through small initiatives</p> <p>Creating specific opportunities for younger leaders to emerge</p> <p>Engaging in an intersectional analysis and approaches</p>	<p>All staff, managers, formal leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · prepare personal leadership statements on purpose (see Activity 2: the Leader I Want to Be) · check in weekly on personal practices of self-care (see Activity 1 in Care Module: Reflecting on Self and Collective Care) · incorporate opportunities to distribute leadership among younger, newer and older staff (see Handout #2: The Generational Leadership Tasks) · build skills in looking at program issues with a variety of lenses (e.g. gender, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation)
INSPIRING SHARED VISION BASED ON PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE REFLEXIVITY	<p>Providing reflection space to help people connect on a personal level to a collective political vision</p> <p>Enabling people to unlearn harmful habits</p> <p>Using body work to enhance personal awareness and inter-personal connection</p> <p>Providing space for groups to engage in collective practices to cultivate different qualities</p> <p>Sharing knowledge about how just organisational cultures are developing</p>	<p>All staff, managers, formal leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · share brief information about their personal history, culture, experiences and talents during introductions rather than job title in formal meetings · hold quarterly all-staff reflections on collective purpose, power, principles and practice (e.g. see Activity 3: My Purpose, Power, Principles and Practice) · celebrate staff when they openly share when they have learned from their mistakes
EMPOWERING AND ENABLING OTHERS TO ACT	<p>Recognising and valuing the different contributions people make</p> <p>Incorporating collective leadership where individual's safety is at risk</p> <p>Fostering interpersonal openness and trust in groups</p> <p>Clarifying expectations for responsibilities and conflict resolution</p> <p>Prioritising development of skills in collaboration</p> <p>Facilitating connections between women in positional power and constituents</p> <p>Developing trust with stakeholders by linking personal struggles to political action</p>	<p>All staff, managers, formal leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · create opportunities to involve grassroots women in organisational strategy making, planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning processes · are placed in public roles at different times to distribute leadership and decrease any one individuals' risk · create a ritual to acknowledge staff members for practicing feminist principles e.g. during staff emails, meetings, in newsletters · include performance goals on collaboration, provide training and assess how managers relate to and collaborate with others in performance reviews

	<i>STRATEGY</i>	<i>SAMPLE ACTIONS</i>
CHALLENGING PATRIARCHAL NORMS AND OPPRESSIVE POWER	<p>Using tools and processes to surface harmful expressions of power embedded in institutions</p> <p>Collectively identifying positive forms of power</p> <p>Investing in structures, processes and collective practices that disable patriarchal norms ritual</p> <p>Replicating values based organising principles when moving from organisational change to collaboration and movement building work.</p> <p>Enabling multiple team members to benefit from training programs so they may better establish and hold each other accountable for new norms</p>	<p>All staff, managers, formal leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Build awareness of personal power (see Activity 1) and agree intervals to regularly reflect on progress · Formal leaders should provide opportunities to decentralise decision making where possible and make decisions collectively · Create a plan for changing power dynamics in leadership, accountability and governance (See Worksheet #1: Organisational Commitments)
ENCOURAGING INTEGRATION OF HEART, MIND AND BODY	<p>Encouraging interpersonal relationship building of teams reduces artificial separations between work and life that contribute to stress and burnout</p> <p>Coaching and mentorship to help individuals work through ongoing challenges</p> <p>Recognising the direct and vicarious trauma women activists may experience</p> <p>Valuing and providing opportunities to develop self- and collective -care strategies</p>	<p>Begin every staff meeting with a brief mood check</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Incorporate physical movement into team meetings to strengthen different qualities (e.g. calmness, creativity, individual and group awareness, conflict resolution, collaboration) · Imagine as a group what it will take to build a culture of care (see Activity 5: Imagining our organisation having a culture of care)

Credit: chart adapted from "Feminist and Transformational Leadership for Women's Rights", by Shawna Wakefield for Oxfam America.

HANDOUT 2: THE GENERATIONAL LEADERSHIP TASKS

TASKS

WHAT ARE WE DOING NOW?

WHAT ARE SOME PRIORITY NEXT STEPS?

STAFF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Recruit and support younger staff.

Make commitment to staff leadership plan.

Create opportunities for younger staff to take greater responsibilities.

Develop pathways to increased organisational leadership roles for staff members.

Encourage governance bodies, funders, and supporters to get to know younger leaders.

GOVERNANCE BODY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Recruit and develop younger governance body members.

Provide opportunities for governance body members to participate in the daily work of the organisation.

Involve younger governance body members in fundraising and meetings with donors and other supporters.

TASKS

WHAT ARE WE DOING NOW?

WHAT ARE SOME PRIORITY NEXT STEPS?

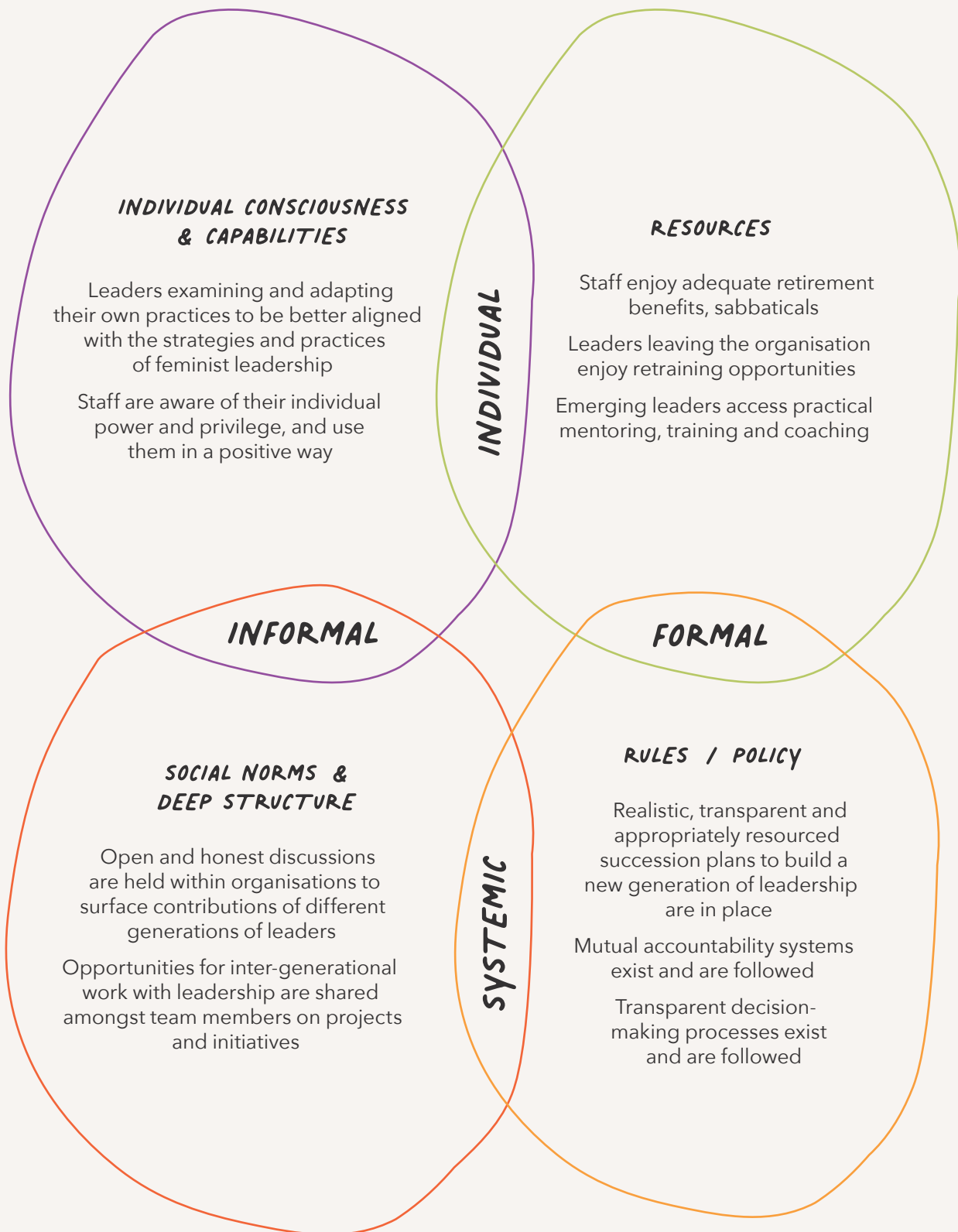
**GETTING READY TO
PLAN THE TRANSITION**

Identify resources – peers, reading, workshops, and consultants – to prepare all levels of the organisation.

Look for retreat or sabbatical opportunities for the executive director to step back and think about how and when to leave the organisation.

Support older leaders to talk with peers about future work and movement contribution possibilities, and to explore potential future options.

HANDOUT 3: PRACTICES, SYSTEMS AND SUPPORT



WORKSHEET 1: ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENTS

This worksheet helps your organisation to think about commitments to feminist leadership, governance and accountability that it is prepared to make along with the timeframe and resources needed to act on those commitments. The **FOCS Self-Assessment Module** provides further ideas on how these commitments can be reviewed as part of an annual FOCS reflection on capacity strengthening.



STRENGTHENING FEMINIST LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

A COMMITMENT WORKSHEET		Worksheet 1
<p>Organisational commitment to feminist leadership, governance and accountability that we can make in our organisation?</p> <p>We are committed to...</p>		
<p>How will we know we are successful?</p> <p>These should be easily measured outcomes that will let us know if we are living our commitments. You may include answers to: How will we feel? How will we relate to each other? What will we accomplish?</p>		<p>Completion date</p>
1)		
2)		
3)		
<p>What actions will we take?</p>	<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>What resources/approvals we need? What resources do we have?</p>
1)		
2)		
3)		
<p>What will we practice collectively, as a team or organisation? What practices and policies will your organisation undertake to promote self and collective care and resilience?</p> <p>1)</p> <p>2)</p> <p>3)</p>		

