

The role of feminist networks and organisations: Which ways forward?

Establishing priorities, agreeing on strategies, advancing action proposals for the post-2015 era

1. What is the added value of feminist networks in terms of their transformative potential?

The potential of the European feminist movement at the moment is very weak or at a low point. This is due to some aspects:

The predominant power and influence of patriarchal, neoliberal, imperialistic, fundamental, and newly increasing militaristic ideology is omnipresent in all aspects of societies.

As Paulo Freire already said, if the internalisation of patriarchal values is strongly embedded in the culture of societies and within the people, it hinders societies change. There is no point of return. Doing gender like doing patriarchal.

(1) I for my part can't see the added value of feminist networks so clearly, but there are some points which I see as important:

- To have a women's point of view to the patriarchal system itself as the core critique. Of course, there are different groups of women but women in patriarchal societies (in all areas of societies: politics, economics, social areas, culture, academic, education,..), share a common discrimination, such as no power in decision making, limited resources or access to resources, mostly responsible for care work, among others..
- To strengthen each other and to celebrate our strength in a political sense with passion.
- To become aware that we are not alone.
- To become more visible as we would it be as a single organization.
- To have more power acting in international agendas, like UN, FfD, SDGs and so on,
- and to bring the international agenda or global perspective also to grassroots' groups and local educational work, exchange of experience, encounter among different groups of women (geographical, professional,...)

(2) As an added value we must

- Be aware of and use the potential of the digital world, social media, web 2:0
We also need to be aware that seniors are so called “immigrant digitals” compared to the young “native digitals”. What do I mean with immigrant digitals? They are not so used to and certain with digital world.
- Use the diverse public spheres (there is no longer only one if it was ever)

2. Do you recognize any specific pitfalls of global feminist networks / movements that prevent us from realising transformative change? (e.g. link to the issue of fragmentation discussed in the workshops)

Some of these pitfalls, which exist in a high number, are:

- All the above mentioned patriarchal patterns in our mind
- Attributions or assignments of duties to gender roles
- to be engrossed (from mainstream, like the terms of sustainability, globalization, from other development organisations, social movements, ...)
- to lose energy at the wrong places – how useful is
 - writing project applications for getting resources (e.g., if 80% is lost work and if you loose all your energy in administration)
 - or on which topics (FfD, SDGs, Care-Work, AE,...)
 - or places (UNWomen/CSW,EU-level, national local, with grass roots,...)
 - which are the most effective ones, where are the priorities?
- Detracting of resources from other institutions or organizations used for their – non feminist – aims. The main financial resources go to the androcentric or so called normal (without gender aspect working) development organizations & institutions. Feminist organizations which have little money supporting them and their work in terms of the gender aspects.
 - e.g. Gender Studies: good paid male professor held the “normal” lecture (androcentric) and precarious working women add their know how, the same in
 - other examples can be found in the development policies, civil society, project work, academics, among others.
- Lack of solidarity among women among borders (such as class, race, gender, and nations)

“Unterdrückte sind nur in Sternstunden solidarisch. Die Mächtigen sind es aber immer.” Marie Sichteremann, German lawyer and educational worker:
“Suppressed show solidarity only in their finest hour. But those in power always do so.”

3. With whom can we, as representatives of feminist networks / movements, collaborate and how can we further improve / strengthen collaboration?

With other feminist movements, like-minded organizations, institutions, representatives

1. with other women movements
2. women and gender institutions, trade unions, representatives of gender desks in education, academics, administration, political parties
3. with feminist male and boys' organization

4. What can we do to counter/influence those that oppose our agenda?

Ignore them

- don't lose energy about their activities. Save your potential for work you find useful and be active there – do not waste potential for re-action
- provoke, if you like such a strategy and if you have enough energy (e.g. on a language level – use only female terms)

What we need:

Endurance and be aware of history: think in centuries

The bottom line is: where are we going in terms of financial needs where resources are restricted? How can we scope with this development by supporting each other?