

Feminists Organising – Strategy, Voice, Power

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The focus of *Feminist Africa 22* – “Feminists Organising” – implies a vision, a sense of alternative possibilities of greater social justice alongside the liberation of women from all sources of oppression, and collective feminist energies being mobilised to bring about change in this direction. How have feminists in Africa organised and what are the ends to which feminist organising is directed? What strategies are used to pursue which goals and what trajectories of change are envisaged? How do we effect change within ourselves, even as we strive to change relations and conditions at local, national, regional, and/or global levels? Whose voices are privileged, heard or silenced in the course of feminist organising and in what contexts?

Across the African continent, and from pre-colonial times to the contemporary era, women have organised to further their interests in social, cultural, political and economic domains (see e.g. Daymond et al., 2003; Sutherland-Addy and Diaw, 2005). The fact of women’s organising is one of the many motifs featuring in the vast panorama of the *Women Writing Africa* project, a project that set out to retrieve the buried voices of women in their varied responses to the social and political forces in their lives. Such retrievals entail considerable organising and imagination in themselves, involving multiple planes of thought and collective action.

How has contemporary feminist organising in Africa addressed the nexus of strategy, voice and power? A longstanding focus of activism has been feminist engagement with political parties and the state, with a view to increasing women’s political participation.¹ Political power is privileged as a zone for amplifying women’s access to voice and decision-making. The extent to which women – elected on the platform of political parties very often hostile to women’s presence – are able to address feminist priorities in their political careers, is a recurring question. Strategies such as affirmative action for women have been championed with varying degrees of success, pointing to the limits of political representation. Inclusionary, reformist strategies

that target women's political inclusion have been differentiated from radical transformational strategies that challenge power more broadly (Hassim, 2005). Elaine Salo (2005) argues that both inclusionary and transformational strategies are necessary, given the complex character of the struggles involved and the varied texture of gendered movements.

A particularly prominent focus of feminist organising has been the violence targeted at women, including the impact of traditional rites and practices that are deemed harmful. This has gone hand in hand with efforts to promote women's sexual and reproductive health. Mobilising has taken the form of service provision as well as calls for women-centred changes in laws and policies. Whilst violence against women occurs across multiple sites – the home, the office, the street – violence in educational institutions has been a particular focus of mobilising, especially in South Africa and neighbouring countries, with legal and institutional policy reform being the main goals. Research on sexual harassment and sexual violence in higher education institutions has generated new understandings of the complex gender dynamics in the institutions and various forms of abuse.² The research process itself has been designed to be a powerful “tool of advocacy, solidarity-building and communication with key members of the university community” (Bennett et al., 2007: 90). Whilst research is often viewed as distinct from activism, the use of participatory action research points to a distinction that is more apparent than real. Activism can only be strengthened by a deeper understanding of the problems with which it grapples.

The widespread social acceptance of gendered and sexual violations is predicated on the prescription of rigid roles concerning gender and sexuality, for women as well as men. This acceptance is manifest in both the normalisation of abuse of women who do not fit accepted constructions of femininity and in the contempt and violence faced by men whose masculinities are considered suspect. Misogyny and homophobia share common foundations. The first organisation to address homophobia and misogyny as interlinked zones for feminist activism was Sister Namibia, beginning in the 1990s. Urgent Action Fund, in Kenya, and more recently, the Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL), have also operated from the same premise. These struggles point to activist recognition of intricate, contextually shaped ties in the relations between gender and sexuality as social categories – sexualities are necessarily gendered, and gender derives much of its force through relations that are sexualised.

The diverse contexts within which feminist organising across the African continent takes place today are still shaped by multiple layers of domination – imperial, colonial, military and/or authoritarian civilian rule. The particular configuration of inequality that manifests in any given context is conditioned by the specificities of historical, political and economic processes embedded in that context. Relations of gender and sexuality are both not only configured by relations with the state but their meanings for women’s lives are folded into diverse structures of inequality, particularly class but also race, ethnicity, religion, among others, and not necessarily in similar ways.

Because the resulting social and other divisions exist within as well as beyond movements, building solidarity requires modes of organising that go beyond the representation of multiple constituencies and/or groups defined by identity. The challenge of negotiating diverse and sometimes competing interests demands an engagement with *practice*, such as: What would it mean to create shared visions and agendas? How should we go about collaborating to formulate strategies and plans of action? Negotiating which strategies to adopt in achieving shared objectives is no straightforward matter – those with the loudest voices tend not to even notice which ones have been silenced.

Whether the aim of feminist organising on the continent is to create new possibilities for women and society or to dismantle existing relations of domination,³ feminist organising inevitably involves engaging with gendered power relations. The Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) is one of the few networks on the continent explicitly “committed to a struggle against patriarchy *and* neoliberal globalisation”; their focus is on understanding the operation of gender, class and imperial/race relationships as a prelude to their transformation (Mbilinyi, 2017). In an incisive and illuminating interview, Marjorie Mbilinyi (op. cit.) details the multiple struggles since the late 1970s, out of which the TGNP was eventually forged in 1993. Mbilinyi highlights the significance of a culture of collective decision-making in strengthening the process of collective struggle:

TGNP Mtandao adopted multiple strategies, including training and consciousness-raising using animation⁴ approaches; knowledge generation, dissemination and information through participatory action research, multi-media platforms and policy analysis; advocacy work on strategic issues with strategic government actors/departments, local government authorities, and members of Parliament; and media

engagement at all levels. Of particular importance is the intensive Movement Building Cycle, combining participatory action research, support for local knowledge centres and linkages with investigative journalists. (Mbilinyi, op. cit.)

Feminist struggles on the continent have often addressed the operations of power in arenas that seem quite distinct from one another. Explicit contestations over resource constraints and unequal global relations, on the one hand, tend to be partitioned from discursive interventions subverting dominant modes of representation in language or visual imagery. The latter appear to share an understanding of power in which “systems of representation that include seeing, speaking and writing are often more sinister, insidious and difficult to dislodge than economic and political forms of oppression” (Lewis, 2007: 24). Yet questions of class are often refracted through representational axes of power to position poor women disadvantageously in current political and economic systems. How, for example, are we to unravel the assumptions underlying notions such as women’s sexuality being necessarily/“naturally” bound up with “morality”, assumptions often acted upon to legitimate the oppression of women in general and poor women in particular? Relations of power not only structure the material but are embedded in discursive constructions of normativity, whether these are norms around heterosexuality, religion, “culture” or “tradition”, too often imposed as the only possible “identity” – or the reinforcing character of these normative constructions when working in concert with one another.

The intellectual and activist work of organising across boundaries of multiple structures of inequality has a long history (see Mama and Abbas, 2015; Boyce Davies, 2014), considerably predating the current use of the term “intersectional” by student protesters in South Africa (and elsewhere on the continent) to articulate identities as “radical, intersectional African feminists” (Gouws, 2017). The descriptive use of “intersectional” as a form of identity may appear to be distinctive but it does not, in itself, provide an analysis of critical questions such as which structural divisions are significant in specific contexts or how these sources of social division are intertwined with one another and exert their effects. Although the term “intersectionality” is generally attributed to Kimberlé Crenshaw, in 1989 in the USA, work on multiple structures of domination was evident much earlier in the transnational and pan-African mobilising of women like Claudia Jones (from the late 1940s) and Funmilayo

Ransome-Kuti (since the early 1960s). This work involved analysis of the operations of multiple dimensions of domination such as class, race and imperialism alongside gender; in the process, it made “connections between nationalism, feminism and earlier communist positions” (Boyce Davies, 2014: 80). The Combahee River Collective (1977), in the USA, added sexual and heterosexual dimensions of oppression in addition to class and race, in their Black Feminist Statement on interlocking systems of oppression.

In the contemporary era, much feminist activism takes place beyond the boundaries of nation-states (cf. Mohanty, 2003). Feminists in Africa have organised on a range of issues within several regional networks. These include the African Women’s Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), *Femmes Africa Solidarité* (FAS), Akina Mama wa Africa (AMwA), ABANTU for Development, The Association of African Women for Research and Development/*Association des Femmes Africaines pour la Recherche et le Développement* (AAWORD/AFARD), all of which put pressure on agencies of continental governance to take gender equality seriously through activities such as training, policy advocacy, documentation and publication (Mama and Abbas, 2015). Isis–Women’s International Cross–Cultural Exchange (Isis–WICCE) has worked on questions of conflict and the impact on women for decades. Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) and Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) work to promote respect for women’s rights on the continent; WLSA has carried out legal research across the sub-region, which it maintains in an archive. Women in several African countries have organised under the umbrella of the international solidarity network Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML), which operates in countries where laws said to be derived from Islam shape women’s lives. WLUML mobilises around struggles to promote women’s rights within Islam, and against the political use of religion. The Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL), one of the newer groupings (formed in 2003), is a feminist pan-African network engaging with issues of sexuality and gender, in order to advance freedom, justice and bodily autonomy for all women on the continent.

Deliberate efforts at feminist movement building at the continental level have culminated in the formation of the African Feminist Forum (AFF). The AFF is a regional platform formed by a working group of independent feminist activists. The first meeting was held in Accra, Ghana in November 2006. The aims were: to create an autonomous space for African feminists by organising

Africa-wide meetings on a biennial basis; to agree on a charter of principles for feminist organising in Africa; to produce a body of feminist knowledge; and to engage with other social movements (AFF, 2006: 2). The AFF is run by a secretariat based at the African Women's Development Fund in Ghana, in partnership with whichever national feminist organisation is hosting the biennial regional meeting. As an explicitly feminist formation, all participants at AFF meetings are those who identify publicly as feminists and have committed to the Charter of Feminist Principles. The Charter is a landmark document which "spells out a framework for feminist engagement based on principles of human rights, choice, non-discrimination, and individual and collective accountability" (Horn, 2008).

Since 2006, three other AFF meetings have been convened. In 2008, the second AFF meeting was held in Kampala, Uganda, on the theme of "Feminist Power, Agency and Resistance: New Visions for a Revitalised Continent". The third AFF meeting was held in Dakar, Senegal in 2010. The theme then was "Feminist Connections: Reconnecting with Ourselves and Our Communities". Discussions covered the state of the continent, its gender politics and struggles, whilst participants shared examples of feminist resistance across a range of domains – academic, policy, and the society at large. The fourth AFF meeting, the most recent, was held in Harare in April 2016, on the theme of "African Feminism: Voice, Power and Soul". The meeting aimed to contextualise broad strategic areas of concern around how power could be built as well as destabilised in the arenas of resources and bodily rights. Also addressed were the questions of building feminist capacities and agency with a view to creating a more just Africa.⁵ National feminist forums have been formed in Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Congo Brazzaville, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Liberia.⁶

The use of e-technology is now more likely than ever to accompany face-to-face feminist organising across the continent.⁷ The Internet and social media enable greater access to voice and flows of multiple kinds marked by potentially unprecedented speed and spread, to the extent allowed by ability and access to the material conditions underlying connectivity. E-technology shapes new ways of *being* and *doing*, generating change through new forms of connection (online), space (cyberspace) and reality (virtual). In the process, existential border-crossings take place across old and new ways, producing multiple worlds in oscillation with one another, overlapping and diverging

at different points in time. Does the complication of “location” inherent in the inhabiting of multiple worlds inform the gender politics underlying the uses of diverse forms of e-technology, and if so, in which contexts and how? What are the implications of the various border-crossings for the meanings of relationship and action in imagining and crafting feminist strategies for transformation?

The emergence of a younger generation of activists, whose trajectories into feminism emanate from beyond the academy, is a striking feature of contemporary feminism on the continent. The AFF meetings have intentionally brought young women into the fold and worked across generations to strengthen feminist movement-building. Over two decades, the African Women’s Leadership Institute (AWLI) has played a transformative role in shaping feminist consciousness among younger activists. The success of publishers such as Cassava Republic Press, and the rise of African literary icons such as Chimamanda Adichie, have contributed to infusing feminism into popular culture and providing new avenues for combining emotional expression and creativity with the articulation of feminist questions and concerns. Moreover, a culture of greater engagement with diverse social media and varied digital platforms among younger women has generated new ways of doing things and connecting with one another, as we see from a number of the contributions to FA22.

This issue of *Feminist Africa* focuses on women who have organised as feminists in a broad range of domains, which spans organisation- and movement-building, policy engagement with the state, social and economic interventions, and destabilising discursive practices. Whilst earlier versions of several of the contributions in this issue were first presented at the fourth AFF meeting, FA22 also includes new writings that were not part of that event.

It is our pleasure to include a range of artwork in this special issue. The cover is a photograph of women displaced from Northern Nigeria, due to the Boko Haram insurgency.⁸ The women were working on an art project organised by the Centre for Women and Adolescent Empowerment (CWAE), a feminist organisation based in Yola, Adamawa State, one of the three Northern states hit by the insurgency.⁹ Additional artwork appears between the sections of FA22. The first piece, a perspective on feminist organising on the continent, was produced by Kehinde Awofeso. Maku Azu painted several images for the AFF’s mural project of visual representations of the social movements within which African feminists have mobilised. These include

movements for sex workers' rights, the rights of women with disabilities, the LGBTQ¹⁰ movement and the peace-building movement. FA22 also includes the poem "the revolution is a woman", compiled and written by Toni Stuart at the fourth AFF meeting.

Âurea Mouzinho and Sizaltina Cutaia's feature article draws attention to the significance of context in shaping the power relations which situate feminist organising in Angola and the formation of the *Ondjango Feminista* (Feminist Gathering). The violence of Portuguese colonialism, a protracted civil war after independence and the government's history of repression of dissent have produced political polarisation within the country and isolation from other African countries. The overall climate is one in which CSOs,¹¹ including women's rights organisations, are reluctant to challenge power structures. *Ondjango Feminista's* commitment to a transformative feminist agenda is all the more inspiring in view of the numerous challenges they face, including gaining access to feminist resources and threats to their security.

Prompted by Stella Nyanzi's naked protest at Makerere University, Sylvia Tamale's inaugural lecture addresses the nexus of nakedness, law and protest. Tamale does not explore Nyanzi's protest specifically but examines instead a number of broad questions, such as the extent to which naked women's bodies are a source of power, the historical role of African women's collective naked protests, and the role of law in producing negative constructions of such bodies. Drawing on Foucault, Tamale argues that the body is "both a material and a political entity" with multiple and contested inscriptions that have been historically and socially produced by institutions such as law, culture and religion. Distinguishing between nudity, which "presupposes display and sexual connotations", and nakedness, which "asserts agency in the shedding of clothes", Tamale contrasts the power inherent in naked women's protests with its lack in the sexual objectification of nude women. In view of the debates¹² surrounding the lecture, we include the full text, audaciously delivered at the School of Law, Makerere University on 28 October 2016.

The global neoliberal order has given rise to struggles of various kinds on the African continent, very often refracted through the politics of identity in the context of growing militarism, conflict and fundamentalisms. Historical experiences of economic injustice are often transmuted during times of political transition into a reification of singular, static and essentialised

identities, contrary to lived realities marked by pluralism and flux. Exclusivist/fundamentalist interpretations of religion delineate boundaries of different kinds, not only within and among groups, but on and around the bodies of women. Our Conversation section includes a panel discussion convened at the fourth AFF on “Faith, Feminism and Fundamentalisms”. The panelists outline the interweaving of religion, culture and politics through the values and norms inherent in laws. They also discuss strategic considerations, such as when or whether to operate within or outside a religious discourse; the need to protect and maintain secular spaces; and the necessity of building feminist solidarity in struggles against fundamentalism/s.

In a world marked by an accelerating pace of change and increasing levels of existential insecurity, the question of what kind of public education is provided by the state and how well it equips its learners to understand and act to transform their contexts becomes ever more pertinent. The need to take Africa’s public universities seriously, as key sites of knowledge production and the formation of “cultural norms... which condition the kinds of questions that are asked and the kinds of answers that are then elicited” (Mama and Barnes, 2007: 2), has been a key feature of *Feminist Africa*’s engagement with intellectual politics.¹³ Although the ideological import of education is its potential to be emancipatory, our independent states have generally **not** treated education as the practice of liberation. The student protest movements in South Africa – initially against the symbols and practices connoting the living legacies of apartheid and, subsequently, against financial exclusion in the context of a neoliberal economy – are manifestations of the deep revolt triggered by this failure of promise. Kealeboga Ramaru’s Standpoint article presents her perspective on the Rhodes Must Fall (#RMF) movement, which began at the University of Cape Town and quickly spread to other universities across South Africa. Within #RMF, the hostility towards Black women in general, and Black feminists and Black queers in particular, showed the depth of the ideological splits regarding gender and sexual politics, and the depth of struggle needed to organise towards feminist transformation of the university.

We also pay tribute to three outstanding feminists, whose work and lives have inspired so many of us. Fatou Sow honours the memory of Aminata Diaw, a scholar-activist whose intellectual work on epistemology, gendered constructions of public space and public order, and the gendering of politics were organically connected to her political activism. Terri Barnes celebrates

the life and work of Elaine Salo, a scholar-activist whose insightful analyses – of women’s activism, gendered lives in working-class communities, and the performance of femininities and masculinities – were grounded in political experience and multiple social networks. Vicensia Shule brings to our attention the iconic singer and drummer, Bi Kidude. Not only was she the first woman in Zanzibar to lift the veil while singing in public but Bi Kidude celebrated sexuality and pleasure, rendering both central to her music. May the beacons of these women’s lives continue to light our ways.

Feminist Africa 22 includes a new section, Critical Reflections, which is intended to provide greater space for exploring subjectivity in feminists’ efforts to change varying configurations of power and knowledge in a range of domains. Through critical, personal reflections, the writer appears overtly within the frame of change – as a subject who is involved in change-making actions. Going beyond a conception of change that locates it predominantly in the external, the aim is to engage with the complexity of feminist efforts to transform conditions and structures whose contradictions live on within us, with all the challenges that such recognition brings.

The essay by Namanzi Choongo Mweene Chinyama takes the remaking of the self as its focus, a transformation that the writer undertakes in the process of building community with Black women within and beyond South Africa. Chinyama recounts her efforts to change her/self, whilst practising feminism in the discursive context of a traditional African religion. The journey towards becoming a Sangoma, or traditional healer, is discussed as one of enabling the integration of healing, or spiritual work, with the political work of advancing the broader transformation that is sought collectively. Given the ubiquitous use of patriarchal interpretations of “tradition” to repress women’s mobility and sexuality, Chinyama’s feminist reworking of the role of a traditional healer represents an important effort to change accepted norms and practice from within the discourse.

Violent conflict invariably ruptures the prevailing nexus of culture, gender, and sexuality in a given context. In Liberia, armed conflict has bequeathed multiple, iniquitous legacies which pose deep-seated challenges for feminist organising. Korto Williams grapples with these in her discussion of the formation of the Liberian Feminist Forum (LFF). Contemporary Liberia is scarred by the persistence of old social cleavages as well as new, more vitriolic expressions of misogyny. Although the physical checkpoints of the civil conflict may have

disappeared, their symbolic persistence is all the more painful in Liberia's political context, distinguished by the election of the first female president in Africa and the appointment of several women in high public office. The formation of the LFF represents an alternative political project, Williams points out, one that requires a feminist analysis of the inequalities and complexities marking Liberia's contemporary gender politics alongside the use of feminist strategy and collective organising in struggles for change.

If increased female political representation is not synonymous with social transformation, we may well ask what such representation might mean for economic development. The enormous difficulties of trying to disrupt orthodoxies in neoliberal market-oriented thought and practice, from a feminist perspective, are the subject of Fatimah Kelleher's reflections. The current, predatory interest in Africa, on the part of international public and private sector players, is predicated on a conception of the continent as a source of vast natural resources as well as potential markets. This, Kelleher points out, should alert us to the urgency of feminist organising to destabilise economic dogma and neoliberal globalisation.

The potential of e-technology has inspired the formation of new digital platforms, such as *The Wide Margin* (TWM). Varyanne Sika discusses TWM's impetus to create a forum for sharing and discussing critical feminist thought, pointing out that the desire to connect feminists and support the creation of feminist community is underpinned by an imperative to generate new writing. TWM utilised multiple modes of communication – images alongside texts – to create synergetic forms of engagement. Social media supported the impact of the online publication of TWM while physical encounters amplified the scope of virtual conversations. These approaches were used consciously in engaging the politics of writing and of building feminist community.

The truism that technology, in itself, is not sufficient for feminist goals to be realised is clear from the contrasting trajectories of the two online forms of activism discussed in this issue. E-technology was used to different effect in setting up the online community Female in Nigeria (FIN). Ayodele Olofintuade recounts her initial experience of elation when FIN came into being as a space for self-identified feminists to discuss their lived experiences of gender inequality and to connect to resources for potential recovery from trauma. Physical meetings punctuated FIN's exponentially expanding Facebook engagement. Olofintuade's discussion raises the thorny question of how to

create and pursue a coherent feminist vision within a large and dispersed community. Key challenges included ideological divides among members, the tensions of power sharing, and competing perspectives on e-activism.

Feminist organising in the arts has also used diverse strategic approaches. Sionne Neely focuses on solidarity-building and the amplification of voice among women creatives in Ghana today. Historically, cultural workers were central to the anti-colonial struggle and pan-African solidarity and organisation. Today's cultural producers face a general challenge of declining support and isolation. Neely "traces the mark" left by feminist creatives and shows how they have been active in countering a lack of support by developing a sharing economy, drawing on each other's capabilities, and expanding the reach of feminist ideas through writing and digital activism. In the process, feminist creatives enhance the possibilities for innovative and inclusive cultural expression.

At the national level in Ghana and Senegal, feminists have organised around material resources, such as access to land, using strategies that emphasise the creation of synergy among different domains of activism and levels of networking. Akua Britwum's profile describes the formation of NETRIGHT in Ghana, a network of individuals and organisations committed to promoting women's rights and gender justice. One of NETRIGHT's distinctive features is its organisational presence in all ten regions of the country. The network focuses on three key themes: economic justice for women; gender and natural resources; and movement building. Codou Bop, in conversation with Charmaine Pereira, discusses the formation and activities of the *Groupe de Recherche sur les Femmes et les Lois au Senegal*/Research Group on Women and Laws in Senegal (GREFELS), a member organisation of the international solidarity network Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML). GREFELS is a feminist group working on economic issues such as women's access to land; participation in politics; relations to the state, in terms of access to citizenship; violence against women; and religion. Both GREFELS and Ghana's network for women's rights (NETRIGHT) are strategically positioned at the conjuncture of local, national, regional and international feminist organising; in each case, they work to strengthen the links among these different levels of struggle in the pursuit of gender justice.

Internationally, the material conditions of women's labour have been a longstanding focus of feminist organising around women's work and its

relations to production and social reproduction. The insights from this history underpin the conceptualisation of the exchange of sexual services for money as “sex work”. In Africa, the oldest sex workers’ movements are in South Africa and Kenya, dating back to the 1990s (Mgbako, 2016). In this issue, Ntokozo Yingwana profiles the activism of a group of sex workers in Cape Town, called *AWAKE! Women of Africa*, which grew out of the national movement of sex workers, Sisonke.¹⁴ Yingwana points to the complexities of sex workers’ lived realities, involving harms as well as gains. From a position that posits sex workers as facing exclusion from feminism, Yingwana explores *AWAKE!’s* “collective journey of self-exploration to discover what it means for them to be African sex worker feminists, in order to be able to assert their agency in volatile feminist spaces”. The essay raises the question of the extent to which such a schism exists, in the context of the need to build solidarity across movements.

Our review section addresses several key themes embedded in feminist organising. The failure of the state and society in South Africa to take the normalisation of rape seriously is discussed in Pumla Gqola’s book, *Rape: A South African Nightmare*. In *Your Fatwa Does Not Apply Here*, Karima Bennoune focuses on struggles against Muslim fundamentalism that take place *within* Muslim majority societies, stressing the critical need for transnational solidarity in supporting such struggles. Zubeida Jaffer’s book, *Beauty of the Heart: The Life and Times of Charlotte Mannya Mareke*, points to the possibilities that herstories provide of “starting anew” from a perspective that acknowledges the role of women’s leadership in the past. Koleka Putuma’s poetry collection, *Collective Amnesia*, puts the spotlight on memory and its relationship to the historical and contemporary violence that invades the bodies of black women, particularly lesbians.

The present conjuncture is marked by crises of various kinds: deepening existential insecurity arises from intensified capitalist relations of extraction and exploitation that have left devastation in their wake. Facing the challenges ahead requires renewed determination to craft the theoretical frameworks for deepening our understanding of our varied contexts in order to dismantle existing relations of oppression and domination. As the contributors to this special issue show, creating more liberatory possibilities for African women and societies will necessarily be work-in-progress, drawing on and amplifying the possibilities for inspiration and strength through the building of feminist solidarity and collective action.

Endnotes

- 1 See *Feminist Africa* 4. Available at <http://agi.ac.za/journal/feminist-africa-issue-4-2005-women-mobilised>.
- 2 See *Feminist Africa* 8 (<http://agi.ac.za/journal/feminist-africa-issue-8-2007-rethinking-universities>) and FA9 (<http://agi.ac.za/journal/feminist-africa-issue-9-2007-rethinking-universities-ii>).
- 3 These aims are inter-related and overlap but concrete struggles may vary in their relative emphases.
- 4 Participatory action research.
- 5 See <http://www.africanfeministforum.com/4th-regional-african-feminist-forum-harare-zimbabwe>.
- 6 See <http://www.africanfeministforum.com/national-forum>.
- 7 See *Feminist Africa* 18. Available at <http://agi.ac.za/journal/feminist-africa-18-2013-e-spaces-e-politics>.
- 8 “Boko Haram”, from a Hausa phrase meaning “education is prohibited”, is the name given to an insurgent group that, since 2009, has been engaged in violent conflict against the state and all social groups who do not support them, Muslim and Christian. Whilst Boko Haram came into being as a radical Salafist group, they have since been denounced by several Muslim authority structures (in Nigeria and beyond) on the grounds that their general approach and violence are incompatible with Islam.
- 9 CWAE engages in a range of projects with displaced women to support their need to recover from the trauma of displacement as well as to generate money for themselves.
- 10 LBQT stands for lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer.
- 11 Civil society organisations.
- 12 https://misr.mak.ac.ug/sites/default/files/publications/MISR%20WP%2028%20Bezabeh%20some%20Mamdani_0.pdf.
- 13 See *Feminist Africa* 1 (<http://agi.ac.za/feminist-africa-issue-1-2002-intellectual-politics>), FA8 (<http://agi.ac.za/journal/feminist-africa-issue-8-2007-rethinking-universities>) and FA9 (<http://agi.ac.za/journal/feminist-africa-issue-9-2007-rethinking-universities-ii>).
- 14 Sisonke – isiZulu for “we are together”.

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