

Transformative Change for Gender Equality Learning from Feminist Strategies

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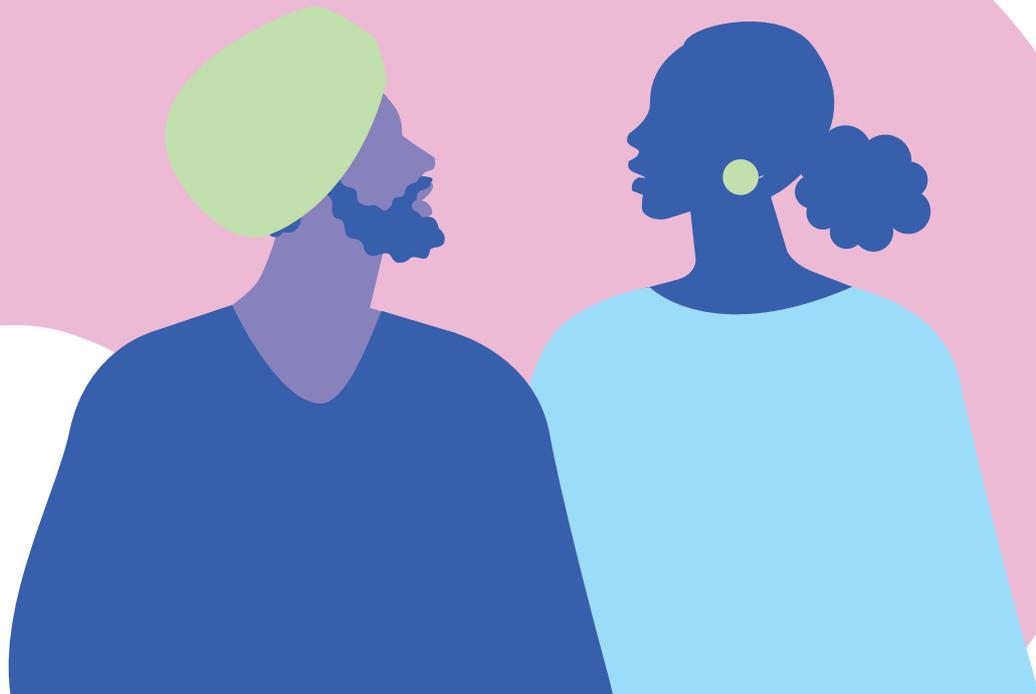


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PREFACE

For us at the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) it is a self-evident maxim that “There is no social justice without gender justice”. We continuously strive to improve our work on gender justice and to grow as an organization. In our international development work, a new gender mainstreaming strategy launched in 2018 became the foundation for our gender policy work. As a result of this strategy, the FES Gender Innovation Network was set up and now includes regional gender hubs in Africa, Asia and Pacific, the Middle East and North Africa as well as Latin America and the Caribbean. The network supports the implementation of gender mainstreaming in all our projects and provides country offices with a contact person in their region and at our headquarters in Berlin. The regular exchange within as well as between regions enables us to promote collective learning, evaluate the experiences of our office network and share good practices and innovations from feminists and women’s rights activists around the world with colleagues and partners. As an organization we want to become more feminist and transformative in our work with more than 100 country offices and projects worldwide.

In Asia and Pacific, we are deeply committed to support gender justice in the world’s most populous region. This work is coordinated through the Gender Justice Hub Asia (GEHA), hosted by FES Nepal in Kathmandu. At GEHA, we work together with colleagues, feminist activists, and partners to create spaces for mutual learning and develop strategies to support transformative change.

Gaining a deeper understanding of strategies to support gender justice is the idea behind this project. The idea was born during a regional conference on FES’s trade union work in Africa in 2018. Colleagues from all over the continent were discussing how our work approaches can support more gender equality in the African labour movement. We considered this equality to be of strategic importance for the trade unions to consolidate and build their power to further workers’ interests overall. It became clear that there was a representation gap between men and women in many places and that it was not a problem of lacking expertise and qualification, but one of power. Still, many of our activities with female unionists were focused on capacity building. While capacity building is important to support our partners, it seemed like our work approach was not fitting our analysis of the problem. A few months later I was involved in organizing a workshop in Berlin in context of the [FES project](#) titled *The Future is Feminist*. Once again I realized there is a lot to learn from feminists about how to change power structures: After all, it is what feminism is all about.

So, when I arrived in Kathmandu a few months later and started working with my colleagues Pabitra Raut and Priyanka Kapar on coordinating FES’s work on gender justice in the Asia and Pacific region, we decided to take a closer look at transformative feminist strategies. We want to learn from these strategies for our own work, but also make this knowledge available to partners in the region and beyond.

Therefore, this guide explores feminist works towards transformative change and tries to point out the strategies they apply. Feminism, of course, has many faces, which made the task a challenging one; even more so since we wanted to make the findings as accessible as possible. The authors Rowan Harvey and Chloe Safier took the task on with great enthusiasm and accomplished it with great success: Thank you for taking this journey with us!

I also want to thank our colleagues, partners and resource persons who shared their thoughts and knowledge with the authors: Farah Daibes, Gopika Bashi, Michelle Reddy, Sarah Herold, Tina Hennecken Andrade, Brenda Campos, Eva Nelles, Akshat Singhal, Misun Woo, Julie Thekkudan, Marieke Koning,

Natalia Figge, and Lisa Vettori. Without you this would not have been possible! Finally, a special thanks goes to Silke Steinhilber: Your comments – as always – were extremely valuable!

Given the many faces of feminism – it might be more fitting to speak of “feminisms” – it would be presumptuous to claim that we were able to cover all its facets. Moreover, we do not claim that this report holds all the answers. We rather understand it as a starting point for a conversation: a conversation about strategies for transformative change towards gender equality/gender justice, in which we might be able to learn from each other.

Our hope is that this report will prove useful to those who fight and strive for gender justice – by reflecting on their strategies to bring about change and make the future more equal and feminist!

Jonathan Menge
Director, FES Nepal and
Gender Justice Hub Asia



VISUAL SUMMARY

What strategies do feminist organizations adopt to make their work transformative?



PILLAR 1: **Empathy and self-reflection**

- Self-awareness
- Thoughtful, self-reflective leadership
- Self-Care
- Focus on joy, love and healing

They encourage us to **examine power**, where it is held and can be challenged

PILLAR 2: **Building solidarity**

- Intersectionality
- Intergenerationality
- Convening broad alliances



They ensure the **underlying causes of inequality**, not just its symptoms, are **addressed**

PILLAR 3: **Shifting power**

- Rights-based approaches
- Participatory approaches
- Naming and challenging patriarchy



Learn more about transformative feminist strategies on → page 28

Why are they transformative?

What do they help achieve?

They ensure **power can be shared** more evenly and by the most marginalized

They promote **collective action** by women, trans and non-binary people

→ **Gender Equality**

They ensure change is **long-term and sustainable**

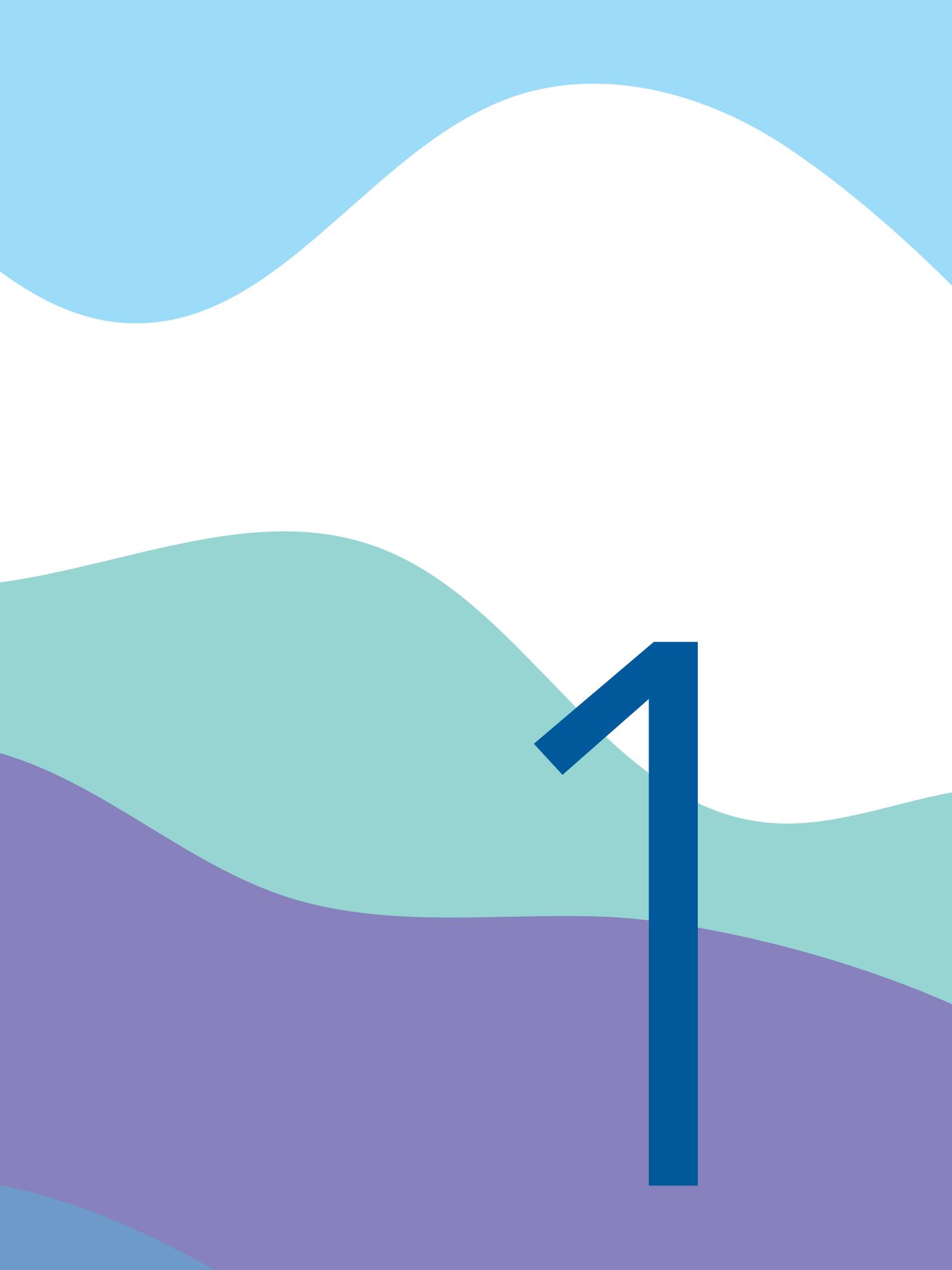
TRANSFORMATIVE FEMINIST STRATEGIES

For the purpose of this guide, when we talk about feminist strategies, we are talking about strategies for change that disrupt existing patriarchal structures and systems, challenge gender inequality and other intersecting inequalities, and are conscious of power.

Learn more about power on → page 14

Learn more about how transformative change happens on → page 20





INTRODUCTION

Around the world, activists, organisations and movements are taking bold steps to advance gender equality. There is much to be learned from the innovative, thoughtful ways with which they are shifting the status quo. This guide sets out to identify some of the feminist strategies used to propel long-lasting, sustainable change towards gender equality. **At its core, advancing gender equality requires support for sustained feminist movements while fostering collective power amongst those dedicated to change.**

By taking a closer look at feminist strategies, we hope to share learning and inspiration from those who are contributing to gender equality in creative and collaborative ways. **This guide intends to generate learning, conversation and inquiry, as part of ongoing collective efforts to make gender equality a reality for all.**

The guide was commissioned by the Gender Justice Hub Asia (GEHA) of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES). It is intended to encourage FES and its partner organisations to reflect on their work approaches, and to provide information for any other organisation or individual interested in learning more about feminist strategies for transformative change.

The guide has five sections, which include a mix of analysis, reflections and practical tools. Each section integrates **case studies** that demonstrate how the concepts can be applied.

- In the first section of the guide, **we define the concepts**: what do we mean by a *feminist* strategy for *transformative* change for *gender equality*? We explore how these terms can mean many things, and how they are used for the purposes of this guide.
- Inequality is about **power**: who has it, who does not, and who can access which resources. When we seek to create gender equality, we seek to remedy power imbalances. In the second section, the guide explores how power is at the root of understanding and creating change. The guide offers models for understanding where power lies and how it works, so that we can better understand how to shift power in the direction of equality.
- In the third section, we look at how **transformative change** happens. Power needs to shift to achieve gender equality, and to create the type of change we want to see. Now we ask: how does sustainable, long-lasting change happen? We take a close look at the *Gender at Work Framework*, an analytical framework that helps explain *how* change happens and *where* the opportunities and challenges are when it comes to achieving gender equality.
- In the fourth section, the guide explores *how* we will go about creating change. When it comes to gender equality, we care about the outcomes (how power shifts), but also how we get there: who is included and how are they included in the change process? In this section, we explore some of the **feminist strategies** that activists, movements, and organisations are using to ensure their work has reach and impact.
- The fifth section offers **tools** to help you start applying this learning to your work and practice. These tools are also referenced throughout the guide to help indicate how the concepts discussed can be understood in practical terms.

- Throughout the guide, we offer **case studies** that demonstrate how organisations and movements are thinking about how to shift power and contribute to gender equality. These case studies offer inspiring examples of what the strategies for change look like in practice.

To create this guide, we conducted interviews with 12 activists, advocates and organisers from five continents. The insights from these interviews were instrumental for the guide and we want to thank all interviewees taking the time to share these with us.

We also consulted a range of publications from feminist and women's rights organisations including CREA, JASS, Oxfam, Gender at Work, FRIDA the Young Feminist Fund and the African Feminist Forum which are referenced throughout as additional reading. A full overview of materials can be found in → **Annex 2**.

NOTE: we refer to 'women, trans and non-binary people' throughout the guide in an effort to steer away from gender binaries and be as inclusive as possible.

For sharing their time and insights, FES and the authors would like to thank: Farah Daibes, Gopika Bashi, Michelle Reddy, Sarah Herold, Tina Hennecken Andrade, Brenda Campos, Eva Nelles, Akshat Singhal, Misun Woo, Julie Thekkudan, Marieke Koning, Natalia Figge, and Lisa Vettori. Details of their roles and organisations can be found in → **Annex 1**.



WHAT IS A FEMINIST STRATEGY FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

Feminist strategies can mean many things because there is no one agreed definition of feminism; there are a pluralism and diversity of ‘feminisms’ that are defined and determined by those who claim the word. For the purpose of this guide, **when we talk about feminist strategies, we are talking about strategies for change that disrupt existing patriarchal structures and systems, challenge gender inequality and other intersecting inequalities, and are conscious of power.**

Today, feminist movements around the world are challenging the status quo and demanding gender equality. **Gender equality** means that all people, regardless of their gender identities, have equal access to resources, opportunities, voice, participation, decision-making and rights.

Understanding power is at the core of understanding how change happens and why. As we will explore in the following chapter, there are different kinds of power. **Feminist strategies use transformative power to foster equitable, inclusive relationships throughout the change-making process** which directly challenge patriarchy and all forms of inequalities (whether it be gender, race, class, ability, or other identities). Feminist strategies are also often holistic and intersectional, building connections to foster longer-term solidarity. Those concepts are also explained in greater depth later in this guide.

This guide should be understood as the *starting point* of a conversation; we do not cover the vast complexity of all feminist strategies in existence. Feminist strategies vary across context and communities, and the ones we have collected for this guide offer a diverse set of approaches from activists, movements and organisations.

The intention of feminist strategies is to achieve transformative change. **Transformative change is change that is sustainable and long-lasting, and which fundamentally challenges and shifts power as well as systemic and structural inequalities.** Transformative change ensures that those most impacted by an issue can exercise choice, access and agency to address it.

Feminist strategies for transformative change marry these elements – taking long-term, sustainable approaches to tackle the root causes of discrimination, including structural discrimination, inequality and unequal power dynamics in order to achieve gender equality. These strategies can look very different in practice. At their heart, feminist strategies for transformative change include the many ways that activists, movements, networks and organisations are contributing to the efforts of diverse people to collectively organise themselves. In doing so, they are working together to challenge and dismantle the barriers to justice and well-being for all.

Since **power** is the key to understanding and creating change, we will look into it in more detail in the next section.



UNDERSTANDING POWER

Case Study

Feminist Voices in the Middle East

The FES in Lebanon hosts the regional political feminism project, which works to integrate feminist strategies into socio-economic and political conversations in the region. One of their projects, started last year, was a podcast series called “Masaha” (meaning “space”) that tackles topical issues, such as economic rights and workplace discrimination from a feminist perspective. The platform has given feminists from across the region a space to be progressive and critical, because podcasts are not (as yet) strongly on governmental radars. Interestingly, roughly 40% of listeners are from Saudi Arabia, which indicates that there is a real appetite for in-depth feminist political discourse in places where governments are restricting speech involving such topics.

As Farah Daibes, the programme manager of the regional political feminism project, shared: “We didn’t invent anything; these conversations were already happening.” But by creating a platform and amplifying the voices of feminists specialising in gender equality issues, FES is bringing these conversations to the forefront - and shifting power by handing the microphone to those who might not otherwise be heard across the region.

SOURCE: Interview with Farah Daibes, FES in Lebanon

Because power is at the heart of feminist strategies for transformative change, understanding power – and how to change it – is fundamental to advancing gender equality. The case study above demonstrates how shifting power enables change to happen. When we talk about power, **we mean: the ability or capacity to perform an act in a particular way, or to direct or influence the actions or capacity of others.**

In this section, we introduce a few models for understanding power, power dynamics, and where power is held or accessed. These models underpin the rest of the guide: before we can talk about how to *change* power, we have to understand what power is.

One helpful model for understanding how power works is the [Power Cube](#), developed by the Participation, Power and Social Change team at the Institute of Development Studies. The power cube offers a way to understand the many forms and manifestations of power, so that activists, movements and organisations can better understand how power can be shifted and transformed to drive change.

The Power Cube helps us to understand the many layers of power.

VISIBLE POWER: is power that is publicly visible, clear or formal; for example, the power of the government.

Within the context of a network or movement, the organisation or group with the most resources or in a defined position of leadership holds a form of visible power.

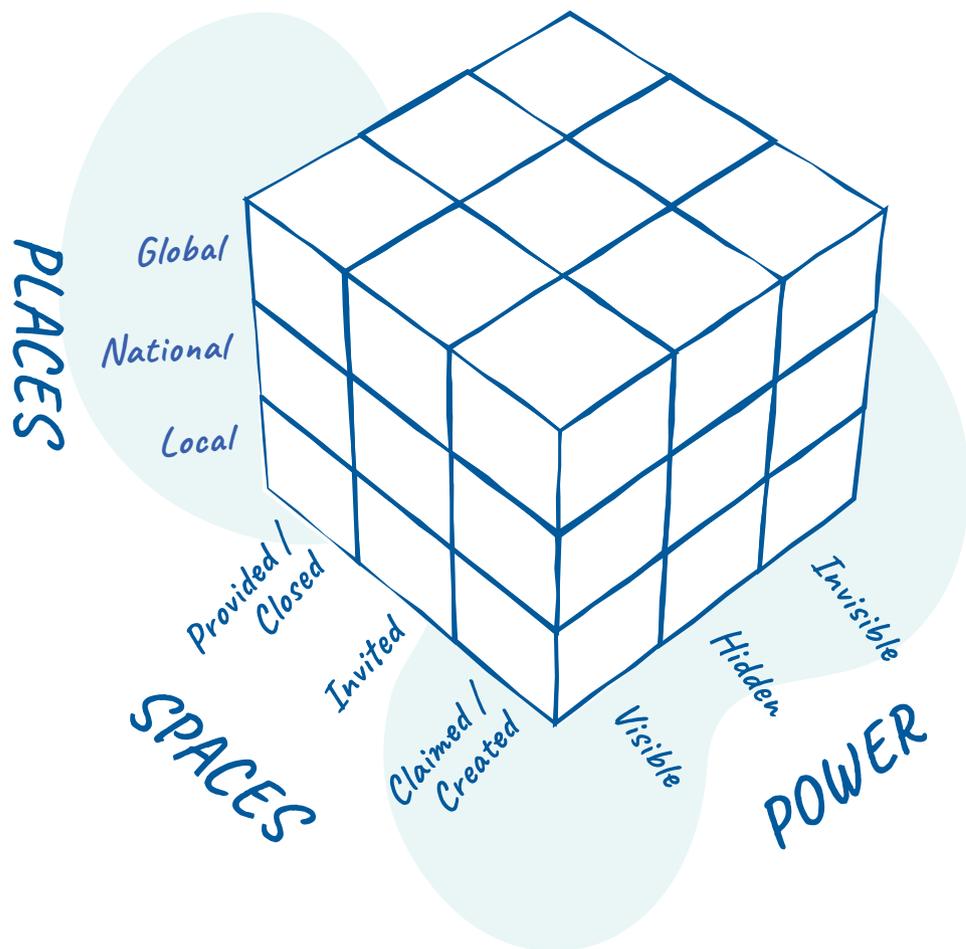
Example of visible power: the leader of an organisation has the power to make decisions, hire and fire staff, and set policies.

HIDDEN POWER: is power that exists in less visible spaces due to obstacles that make it challenging for some to participate. Within the context of an organisation, hidden power might look like conducting meetings in a language that not everyone understands, making it so some people can access information and opportunities while others cannot.

Example of hidden power: wealthy individual donors who advocate an organisation taking actions in line with their personal interests.

INVISIBLE POWER: While hidden power can be uncovered, invisible power is harder to identify. Invisible power operates through cultural norms, dominant belief systems, structures and systems that privilege one group’s interests over another, and which are difficult to name or identify.

Example of invisible power: amongst a network of organisations working to address the impact of climate change, the organisations that focus explicitly on women’s rights might receive less funding because of the deeply rooted patriarchal norms that exist amongst those allocating resources.



The Power Cube also shows us how power is held in different places and spaces: global, national, and local. Power exists in private (such as the home) and public spaces (such as school). Power can exist within closed groups, in spaces that people can join only by invitation, and in spaces that are either claimed or created (which movements often do).

Another way of looking at power, which is also explored in the Power Cube tool, is thinking through the different ways that [power is expressed](#). Understanding where power exists and how power is expressed are two key components of understanding how power shifts and can be used to advance gender equality.

Expressions of power:

Power over is when one group or individual exerts power over another. This kind of power can be problematic (for example, when the head of an organisation or movement uses their power to advance their personal interests rather than working in the interest of the collective). *Power over* is a very common way that power is abused.

Power under happens when one group or individual uses experiences of abuse, oppression and trauma to gain power and act destructively to themselves and others. **Power under and power over are examples of oppressive power.**

But power does not necessarily have to be oppressive! Activists, movements and organisations tend to focus on promoting more positive ways of using power. [Just Associates \[JASS\]](#) refers to this as transformative power, which contributes to sustainable, long-lasting shifts towards gender equality.

Case Study

Women's Organising in Southeast Asia and the Pacific

The International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) has worked in partnership with 18 women's rights organisations to deliver the Women's Action for Voice and Empowerment (WAVE) programme in five countries in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, funded by the Government of the Netherlands between 2016–2020. WAVE convenes and enhances spaces where women leaders and organisations can connect, build relationships, share, learn and organise together to strengthen and deepen the already strong and vibrant women's movements in Asia and the Pacific region.

IWDA believes a key element of a strong feminist movement is a deep connection to marginalised and socially excluded constituencies, and that movements are often the most effective way for marginalised groups of women to become visible and have their voices heard. WAVE has supported partners across the region to host forums for diverse women to build their consciousness, share experiences, undertake joint analysis of issues and coordinate collective responses. Since the beginning of WAVE, these women's forums have built a strong constituency base, strengthened their collective feminist analysis and are now building momentum on coordinated action for change. With regard to the initiative, WAVE partner Wide Bay Conservation Association (PNG) Director Elizabeth Tongne said "When people are provided space to learn and share information they become confident in moving into spaces that they were not confident to step in earlier."

SOURCE: Case studies provided by International Women's Development Agency, <https://iwda.org.au/>

Transformative power "offers positive ways of expressing power that create the possibility of forming more equitable relationships and structures and transforming *power over*. By affirming people's capacity to act creatively and collectively, they provide some basic principles for constructing empowering strategies."

↳ JASS Framework for Transformative Power:

- **Power within:** an individual realisation that one harbours power oneself. Power within is a person's sense of self-worth, dignity and self-knowledge, and capacity to think, imagine, question and have hope.
- **Power to:** personal agency. Power to is the willingness and capacity to take action (such as speaking out, making one's own choice, resisting repressive ideas or behaviour). The unique potential of every person to shape their life and world.
- **Power with:** the power of numbers in working for a common goal or shared purpose. Finding common ground among different interests as the basis for mutual support, solidarity, and collective strength and impact.
- **Power for:** identifying what we stand for, the desired change. Defining and working toward an alternative vision of the world.







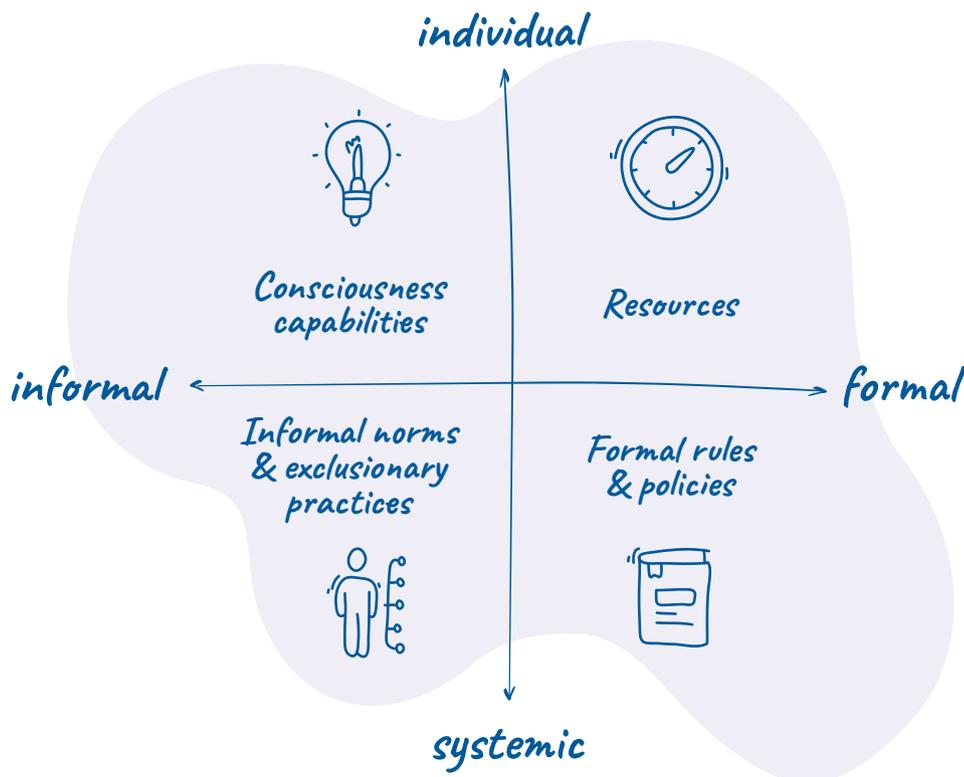
HOW TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE HAPPENS

Transformative change happens when the status quo of power is challenged. This section looks at how activists, organisations and movements contribute to change that is transformative – meaning that such change **shifts underlying power inequities and disrupts the systems and structures that distribute power unequally.** Transformative change focuses on the root causes of inequality, so when change does happen, it lasts longer and is more sustainable.

An Analytical Framework to Help Understand How Change Happens

One valuable analytical framework for understanding transformative change comes from [Gender at Work](#), an organisation that builds cultures of equality and inclusion. The framework **see figure below** highlights the interlinked dimensions of change required to make sustainable progress on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

This framework can be applied to many different contexts. It can be applied to organisations, to determine how organisational culture, rules, policies, resources and individual capacities and consciousness are enabling or restricting the organisation’s ability to be inclusive and equitable. It can also be applied to contexts such as households, communities, countries or regions, to help generate an understanding of where power imbalances exist, and what needs to be done to remedy them. **This framework is often used to create a ‘theory of change’**, which is an idea or set of assumptions about how change happens. See → **Tool #4** to identify how your work can contribute to gender equality, using the Gender at Work Framework.



The framework has four quadrants. **To contribute to lasting, sustained change, the dimensions of power in all four quadrants need to be understood and, ideally, addressed.** Power inequalities that exist must be transformed in each quadrant to make and sustain real change. This is not the responsibility of any one group, movement or organisation: often different actors work in different quadrants to achieve the shared goal of gender equality.

The quadrants also overlap and affect each other, as noted in the case studies below. This framework is used by feminist networks, movements, activists and organisations to develop a theory of how change happens to achieve gender equality.

*See → page 52 ff.
for Tool #4
and to learn more
about this feminist
strategy.*

The right-hand side of the framework refers to the ways that gender inequality exists in formal spaces.

The bottom right-hand quadrant refers to formal rules and policies, such as constitutions, laws, and institutional policies. If these rules and policies are unfair or unjust, meaning that they perpetuate unequal power dynamics between people of different genders, those fundamental structures and systems need to be addressed. For example, a law that says only men can inherit land is an example of a formal law that maintains gender inequality. To achieve gender equality, this law would need to be changed.

The questions that relate to this quadrant include:

- *Which laws and policies explicitly discriminate against women, girls and trans or non-binary people?*
- *What laws and policies exist to protect people of different genders from discrimination and harassment?*
- *Does the constitution or legal system ensure equal rights for everyone? If not, what is missing?*

The top right-hand quadrant of the framework refers to how people of different genders access resources. This includes any resources, opportunities, or material advantages that people of different genders might access differently. For example, in some communities, boys can go to school, but girls cannot.

The questions that relate to this quadrant include:

- *Who has access to more opportunities and why? Is there a difference between the ways that men, women, trans and non-binary people have access to professional, personal and educational opportunities?*
- *Is there a difference between how people of different genders access resources? Resources may include money, land, water, and other tangible benefits.*

The left-hand side of the framework focuses on informal elements of a society, organisation or culture. These elements are often hard to pin down; unlike laws and policies, they are often not written down on paper. Understanding the left-hand side of the framework often requires deep knowledge of a context.

The **top left-hand quadrant** looks at individual informal aspects of inequality, which includes individual consciousness (how people think about, and relate to, gender equality issues) and individual capacity (whether people have the ability to address the existing inequality).

Case Study

Fórum Mulher in Mozambique

In Mozambique, it can be difficult for survivors of gender-based violence to access legal justice and support. Oxfam provided support to Fórum Mulher to coordinate a network of women's organisations, including AMUDEIA, to lobby for a Domestic Violence Law. The network promoted debates at national level (leading a media campaign), conducted research, hosted marches and organised sit-ins at the National Assembly, where the law was under discussion. All of these actions contributed to the passing of a Domestic Violence Law in 2009, a landmark decision that gave survivors of domestic violence legal grounds for protection.

Despite the new law, the majority of Mozambicans live in rural areas, where formal justice mechanisms are difficult to access. Instead, survivors turn to an informal system of customary laws, presided over by traditional leaders and community courts, and which are often discriminatory to women and girls. In the years before (and after!) the passage of the law, Fórum Mulher, with support from Oxfam, worked together to generate resources and assist survivors in their communities, so that they could overcome cultural barriers to the law and access justice.

SOURCE: Oxfam "Changing Laws, Changing Lives: Supporting survivors of gender-based violence in Mozambique", <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/changing-laws-changing-lives-supporting-survivors-of-gender-based-violence-in-m-345994>

The questions that relate to this quadrant include:

- *Do individuals in the given context have a clear understanding of gender inequalities in that context as well as how those inequalities affect their lives?*
- *Do individuals have the capacity and skills they need to address gender inequality in their lives? Why or why not?*

The lower left-hand quadrant, which refers to systemic/informal change, is often the most difficult quadrant to understand or shift. This quadrant refers to the informal cultural norms, beliefs and practices that are discriminatory, and which are deeply rooted in societies, communities, organisations or households. The inequalities that operate in this quadrant are often not visible, but understanding this quadrant is critical to the big picture of how change happens towards gender equality. For example, if laws exist that promote and protect gender equality, but no one acts on or enforces those laws due to cultural norms, then those laws will not have much benefit.

The questions that relate to this quadrant include:

- *What are the social norms or cultural beliefs that exist around gender?*
- *How do those norms and beliefs advance gender equality? How do they prevent or perpetuate gender inequality?*
- *How do those norms and beliefs affect the other quadrants, including resources, laws and policies, and individual consciousness and capacities?*

Many organisations have done inspiring work to address issues in each of the four quadrants. The case studies below offer examples of how organisations, activists and movements are working across the quadrants to create transformative change for gender equality.

In the case study above, the organisations worked to address injustice in the lower right-hand quadrant (formal laws and policies) by passing the Domestic Violence Law. But they also found it necessary to work on the left-hand side of the framework, to address the deep cultural norms that prevented the laws from being implemented, and in the top right-hand side of the framework, to create resources that enabled the law to function as intended.


 Case Study

Fiji Women's Fund & the Naitasiri Women in Dairy Group

In Fiji, dairy farming has traditionally been dominated by men. In 2017, a small group of women dairy farmers applied for a grant from the Fiji Women's Fund, an organisation that supports women's groups, networks, and organisations within the country to advance gender equality. The women dairy farmers were interested in learning how to increase their income from dairy milk production, and in three years, with help from the Fiji Women's Fund, they were able to do just that.

One of the challenges they faced was a lack of **resources**, which limited their ability to grow their businesses. In response, they used a traditional practice called "solesolevaki": each Monday, the women in the group would meet and travel to one of the women-owned farms, where they would work the land and share farming tools. This enabled them to increase their production, but also built solidarity within the group, built relationships, and strengthened their sense of collective power. They shifted their **individual consciousness** and grew their sense of what was possible together. They also built **collective power** by sharing their challenges, learning together and supporting one another.

Just a few years ago, the Naitasiri Women in Dairy Group did not have much power or influence in the dairy farming sector. Now, their collective is recognised widely as having successfully increased their milk production and incomes. The group has been asked by the Ministry of Agriculture to sit on a task force which had previously been dominated by men, and they currently sit in two different decision-making bodies. They also won the "Farming Group of the Year" award in 2019. Their methods work so well that they are now expanding their business to growing mushrooms. The group was able to make a difference not only to their livelihoods, but to the perception of what women can do and accomplish in their local communities and in the dairy farming sector.

The Fiji Women's Fund was able to effectively support the work of the Women in Dairy Group because they provided support that was tailored, thoughtful, and feminist in its approach. When the group applied for a grant, they were an informal collective, and they had not handled a direct grant before. Rather than asking them to open a bank account, the Fiji Women's Fund offered to pay for equipment and came up with creative ways to financially support them, without asking the group to change their systems or procedures. As the group grew, and needed to set up systems to handle larger sums of money (a form of **resources**), Fiji Women's Fund supported them to do that through financial management training and guidance.

Fiji Women's Fund also created new **opportunities** for the women in dairy group to access people in power. The organisation created convening spaces where the women dairy farmers could meet with the Ministry of Agriculture and UN agencies supporting the agriculture sector. By creating spaces where women dairy farmers had access to those with power in the agricultural sector, the women dairy farmers were able to shift the status quo of power (in which they were not heard nor included) and create a new reality in which their voices had influence and impact.

Fiji Women's Fund also provided training on gender equality and social inclusion (to shift individual consciousness). These convenings brought together different groups, networks and organisations that Fiji Women

SOURCE: Interview with Michelle Reddy, Fiji Women's Fund, <https://fijiwomensfund.org/>

Mapped onto the Gender at Work framework, the Fiji Women’s Fund worked in three quadrants: they shifted individual consciousness and capacities (the top left-hand quadrant), they addressed informal cultural norms and beliefs in communities that were serving as barriers to women’s inclusion in the dairy farming sector, and they created new resources (the top right-hand quadrant), such as financial management systems, to enable women to participate. By working in the three quadrants, Fiji Women’s Fund was able to contribute to real, transformative change.

Case Study

Young Leadership Training in Mozambique

The FES office in Mozambique has created a Young Leadership Training programme that brings young activists together and uses creative, participatory approaches to support their learning and collective action. Over the course of a two-year programme, the group—which includes feminists, social activists, and those who work on a range of justice causes—is convened by facilitators who use innovative methods to inspire dialogues that would otherwise not occur. In each module, the young activists focus on a different social justice issue, and gender is embedded into each theme. The approach is intersectional, in that the youth activists come from multiple sectors and look at many dimensions of the issues they work on together.

For example, some of the young activists had not worked with members of the LGBTQ community. In a module on deconstructing attitudes and beliefs, the group visited an organisation called Lambda, and those young activists gained awareness and challenged stereotypes about the lived realities of LGBTQ people in Mozambique.

A key element of the programme was the methodology: instead of “teaching” the young activists, the facilitation focused on supporting individuals to generate their own learning, and then to take that learning back into their communities. The methodology used a mix of methods, such as open debates and bio-maps (where teams build 3D representations of their points as they talk in small groups) that rearranged power dynamics amongst young activists and speakers who would typically be considered experts, like academics. These methods made sure to pay attention to the mind-body connection and try to develop discussions on the basis of the participant’s own reality.

During the programme, the young activists also learn how to connect their causes with the political debate in their country. In 2017, they invited, for example, the Youth Minister to a dialogue about the economic crisis and its impact on young people. In preparation for the debate with the minister, the youth activists had organised an Open Space with other young activist to develop their ideas jointly and to ensure collective recommendation to politics from a youth perspective. In the meeting itself, it was clear that conventional, hierarchical power dynamics were shifted: the youth activists controlled the mics and the flow of conversation, and kept the focus on the issues that they cared about. This meant that the dialogue was not just business as usual; the youth activists transformed power, themselves, and their role in shaping the political future.

SOURCE: Interview with Tina Hennecken Andrade, Brenda Campos and Eva Nelles, FES in Mozambique

Case Study

Article 308 Campaign

The Article 308 campaign set out to change laws and policies that maintained the gender inequality status quo. But changing the laws (which would require working on the lower right hand side of the quadrant) was not necessarily going to have impact on its own. The campaign also had to shift deep-seated cultural norms in the lower left-hand side of the framework to create change.

As you can see from the examples above, there is a great deal of interaction between the quadrants.

There are many people, activists, movements and organisations working towards gender equality. It is critical that each actor understand their role, and that organisations, unions and movements understand their specific added value in this ecosystem. **Not everyone needs to work across all four quadrants all the time in every context.** Those of us working for gender equality are responsible for identifying where we can add the most value, and in which quadrants we want to address unequal power relations in a feminist way. This is why **effective change towards gender equality requires collaboration and collective action**, and the case studies exemplify how working coalitions, networks and movements have had invaluable impact and reach.

To summarise, the learning collected from feminist and women's rights campaigns, organisations and movements suggests that in order to foster transformative change towards gender equality, **there is a need to:**

- 1) **Understand how power works, who holds power and where there are opportunities to redistribute power more equally.**
- 2) **Work collaboratively and collectively with others, as part of an understanding that change for gender equality happens when people come together in strong, sustained collectives and movements for change.**
- 3) **Ensure that the way change happens is feminist in approach. The next section explores this in greater depth.**

In Jordan, the Sisterhood is Global Institute-Jordan (SIGI) led a multi-year, multi-targeted campaign to abolish Article 308 of the penal code, which granted impunity to rapists who married their victims. The campaign offers a strong example of feminist strategies in action, due to the strong sense of shared ownership amongst those who worked on the campaign, the way it brought together broad coalitions, and put women's rights and victim's rights at the centre. The campaign around Article 308 was unique in that it targeted not just the law itself, but the cultural norms related to it. In some countries, laws change, but the adjudication of, and adherence to, the law do not because those responsible for the law (such as the courts, police and communities) hold discriminatory cultural norms and beliefs.

The campaign was able to accomplish deep, transformative change by involving many stakeholders, including judges, religious leaders, funders, and communities. A coalition was formed between different women's rights organisations and other entities, and organisations used research to counter backlash (for example, they issued a study on perceptions of Article 308 to show that Jordanians were behind the abolishment of the law). The campaign also used many different platforms to convey its messages. These included TV interviews, conferences, seminars, protests, print and social media campaigns. On the part of organisations, this campaign required a long-term investment that targeted not just formal laws and policies, but also deeply rooted social norms. It required coalitions of organisations who worked together in many spaces, collaboratively. And as a result, the campaign shifted power: both for individual women who were no longer required to marry their rapists, and for women's rights organisations and movements who demonstrated their capacity for impact.

"This happens often—it's not enough to change the law if the social norms don't back it and if those implementing the law aren't trained or instructed to adapt their practices. You have to get people on board in order to get the impact you aim for." Farah Daibes

SOURCE: Fairah Daibes, FES in Libanon and Sisterhood is Global Institute-Jordan (SIGI) case study, https://www.newtactics.org/sites/default/files/resources/SIGI_CaseStudy.pdf





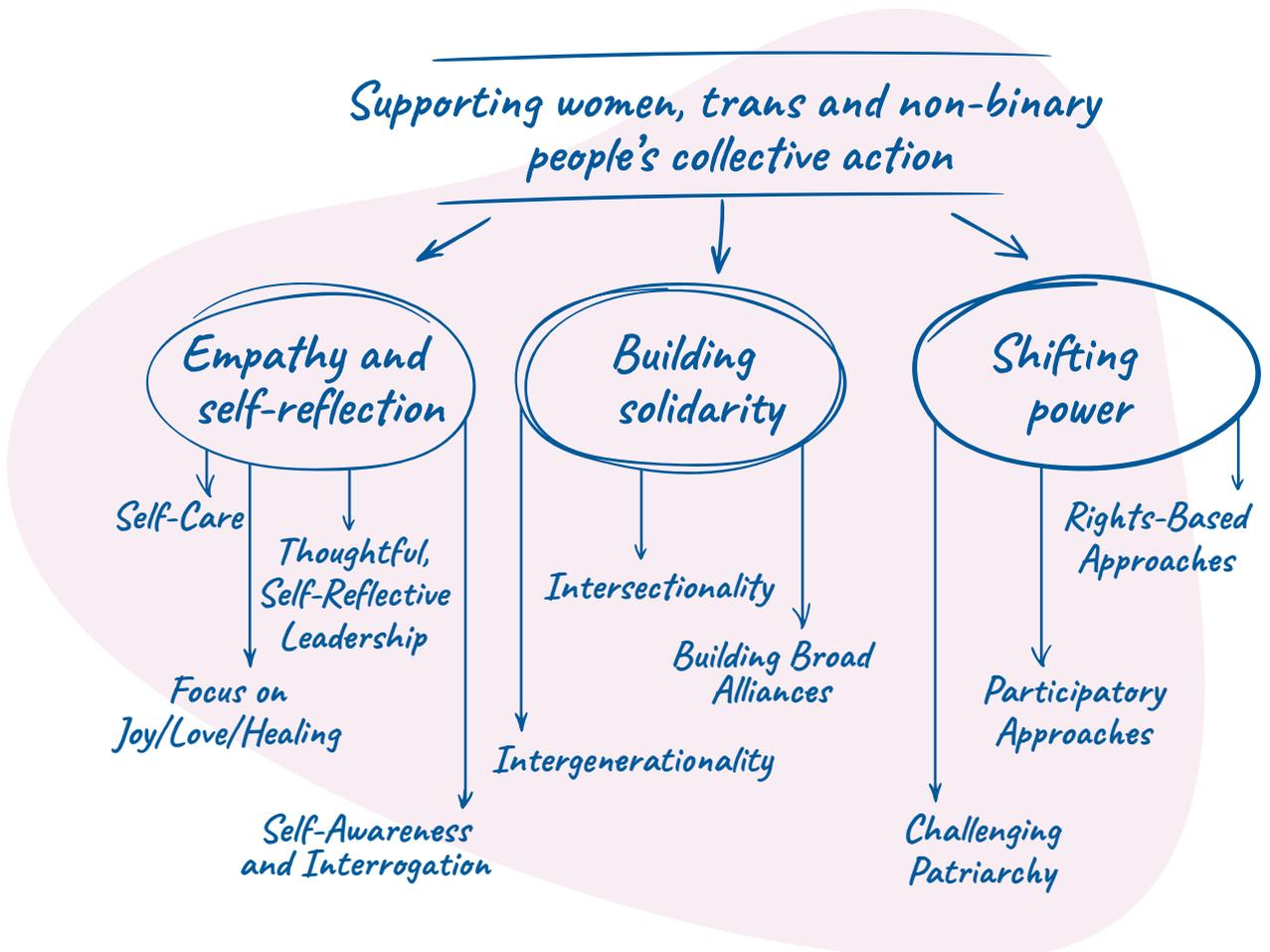
3

FEMINIST STRATEGIES IN PRACTICE

At the start of the guide, we determined that understanding where power lies and how it works is at the core of understanding how to contribute to transformative change towards gender equality. We explored the concept of power, then looked at the Gender at Work framework as an analytical framework to understand how gendered power inequalities are manifested and what needs to shift to achieve sustainable, long-lasting change. Now, we will **explore some of the feminist strategies that activists, organisations and movements are using to achieve transformative change.**

To explore the various strategies employed by feminist activists, organisations and movements, we asked activists and change-makers from five continents to share ideas, projects, programmes and activism that they have found inspiring or that have informed their efforts. From these, we set out to distil a list of common characteristics they share, and strategies they employ, which we share here.

There are a wide variety of approaches that feminist movements, activists and organisations have developed and which they use strategically, depending on various factors. Just as with feminism itself, these strategies may look different in practice across different contexts and communities. That said, through our interviews and case studies, **we have identified 10 practices that form a crucial part of transformative feminist strategies.** They all serve one key strategic goal: enabling women, trans and non-binary people’s collective organising, and building strong and resilient feminist organisations and movements to shift power.



Enabling women, trans and non-binary people to organise themselves around their priorities has long been held as a core goal of feminist programs and movements, and it is unsurprising that it came up in all of the inspiring evidence and case studies that our informants highlighted. **The three additional loose groupings of strategies we identified included empathy and self-reflection, building solidarity and shifting power.**

It is worth noting again here that multiple feminisms exist and not all feminist actors need to come together and decide on a single strategic approach to be effective. As a result, we are **not aiming here to suggest the forms that feminist strategies *should* take, but instead to draw learning from diverse feminisms, feminist and women’s movements and organisations.** Due to the close interrelation of the strategies we have identified, it is likely that they could be grouped in many different ways, and this list is by no means definitive or exhaustive.

We will begin this section by exploring why enabling collective organising is such a cornerstone of feminist approaches, before moving on to consider in more detail the strategies contained in the three pillars, their methods and methodologies. For donor or support organisations with an interest in supporting women’s collective action, it is worth deciding which of these strategies might be adopted to help make your own work more feminist, more sustainable and more transformative. Some may seem straightforward and familiar, while others will seem new or more complex, so to help you apply these in your work and practice, we have briefly summarised them here.

In the → Annex we have included additional reading on tools and guides that can be used to explore each pillar in more detail.

Supporting women’s collective action

Transformative change often stems from building broad alliances and networks that reflect the ways in which injustices are interrelated, commit to egalitarian methods of sharing and shifting power, and ensure those who have been historically marginalised have a voice. Central to this is the need for collective organising with an intersectional lens, that centres the leadership of feminist and women’s activists, organisations and movements.

Feminist movements are collectives of individuals or organisations that represent, organise and mobilise women, trans and non-binary people to collectively claim their rights and achieve gender equality goals. The activist and scholar Srilatha Batliwala, in research for [↳ AWID’s Building Feminist Movements and Organisations Initiative](#), outlined a number of characteristics essential to feminist organisations and movements, including the gender analysis that underpins their work; that women, trans and non-binary people form a critical mass of their membership and are the subjects, rather than the objects, of that work; that they build and centre women’s leadership; that their goals and objectives seek to further gender equality; and that they work consistently to transform themselves and follow feminist practice.

Research has shown that strong feminist movements are fundamental to securing transformative change for gender equality. For example, the Institute for Development Studies found that programming focused on helping women work together was more effective than interventions focused on individuals alone; the [↳ World Bank](#) found that women’s organisations are essential in securing policy and legal reform; and the [↳ UK Department for International Development](#) has concluded that “Women’s organising is critical to identify and challenge the patriarchal structures which prevent women and girls from enjoying and exercising their full human rights”.

How to contribute to and foster women’s collective organising provides both a challenge and an opportunity for potential allies. Supporting women’s collective organising is crucial, but needs to be done in such a way as to ensure that their work is not unduly influenced by the agendas of those who seek to partner with them, or that they are required to fit within the dominant ideologies of donors or more powerful allies.

*See → page 57
for additional tools
and resources to
learn more about
collective organising.*

Women’s movements do not necessarily identify as feminist, and feminist struggles can be advanced by those that are not women, but **all feminist strategies should seek to strengthen marginalised women’s, trans and non-binary peoples’ ability to organise themselves and work towards the realisation of their rights.** A feminist strategy for partnership ensures inclusion and promotes the leadership of those who have been historically marginalised by the leadership of social justice struggles. The support a given organisation or movement needs may vary, and allies need to ensure they are listening and responsive to their voices and willing to be directed by them and their priorities.

Pillar 1: Empathy and Self-Reflection

Feminist strategies recognise the importance of **empathy and self-awareness as methods of building collective action and shifting power.** We cannot claim to fully understand the lives and realities of others facing different structural oppressions and advantages from our own, but we can commit to bringing an open mind, a willingness to listen and a full heart when we seek to understand those who experience the world differently from us.

Central to feminist practice is a concern with ourselves – as individuals, organisations or movements. This concern requires us to **reflect on how we hold and use power, how we inhabit the spaces in which we act, and the impact we have on those around us.** Feminist movements centre empathetic care for others along with the need for a focus on the self and self-care.

Those who take on the responsibility of challenging structural inequalities and fighting for social justice are significantly impacted by burn-out and exhaustion, with serious implications for individuals as well as the wider collectives and movements they help to sustain. As the writer and activist Audre Lourde put it, **“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”** Framed in this way, self-care is not just about looking after oneself. Rather, it is part of a long-term and overtly political strategy.

Strategies employed by feminist organisations to support empathy and **self-reflection include: self-awareness and personal transformation; thoughtful, self-reflective leadership; self-care; and a focus on joy, love and/or healing.**

Self-Awareness and Self-Interrogation

As we have discussed, each of us has been raised and educated in a world informed by existing biases, norms and beliefs and these influence our ideas and work in ways we are not always able to recognise. **Feminist approaches require humility and a willingness to question our assumptions, learn, admit to mistakes, and grow.**

Long-term, sustainable efforts and action that have a positive impact on gender equality are not possible if we do not examine the ways that patriarchy and power operate in our own ways of working

*See → page 57
for additional tools
and to learn more
about pillar 1.*

and relationships. None of us works in a vacuum. **The act of transforming ourselves, and of transforming the movements and organisations we work within, is a vital feminist strategy.**

As Julie Thekkudan, Gender Equality Advisor for WorldWide Campaigns at Oxfam put it, “Doing transformational work in programmes is easier than self-reflecting and changing yourself internally. People are clear that power needs to be shared in the world around them, but less so in their own work and organisations. It is a long process, and one that can be uncomfortable. That discomfort has to be addressed, you can’t turn away from it halfway through. It can’t be a box-ticking exercise.”

Personal transformation is an ongoing, lifelong process which includes an examination of the structures and systems that serve as the scaffolding for our daily lives (including white supremacy, neo-colonialism and patriarchy). **We must constantly challenge our thinking and beliefs when it comes to our own identities and the identities of others.**

As Michelle Reddy from the Fiji Women’s Fund put it, “Every failure, for lack of a better term, is a step towards success. We’re learning by doing, as a fund team, and we’re really open about things that we’ve tried and failed at ... This shifts the dynamics between funder and grantee. It’s important to talk about what didn’t go well, and your role in it, and what you perceive is the learning, and then change it. You have to reflect, but then actually change. We openly talk about what we didn’t do well. We share that feedback to our grantees, we say: this is what you valued about our support, and this is what you didn’t find valuable. We say, we hear you.”

Thoughtful, self-reflective leadership

Often we see leaders as those who wield personal and institutional power and influence to ensure organisations achieve their goals. Lessons learned from feminist leaders can help us imagine alternative approaches to conventional, hierarchical forms of leadership. Feminist leaders work to transform power structures and build egalitarian processes within organisations or movements, which then strengthen their ability to challenge inequality and injustice in the wider world. One way to think about this is that if leadership is usually ‘power over’, feminist leadership utilises power with, within, to and for.

Feminist leaders examine *how* they bring about change, rather than focusing exclusively on achievements and end results. A focus on processes and ways of working requires investment and takes courage, but is likely to result in transformative change because it disrupts the power status quo. These concepts are not exclusive to feminism—**self-reflective leadership questions assumptions, reflects and changes course in response to new information; in essence, it is just good leadership.** Flexibility and the ability to bend in the face of new circumstances are a sign of strength, rather than weakness.



See → page 15 f.

See → page 46
for a tool to start
with self- and
organisational
reflection.

Self-Care

As already discussed, feminist organisations and movements have increasingly framed self-care as a core component of transformative approaches. Efforts to increase gender equality can be exhausting and often face strong passive and active resistance that can leave us exhausted, drained and unable to fully connect and empathise with those around us. **Unless addressed, a lack of self-care can result in burn-out that robs our collectives and alliances of strong, resilient members, and weakens our ability to continue working for change.**

Self-care can involve the supporting and sustaining of individuals; it can also involve collective self-care, or the steps an organisation, community or movement takes to encourage and support healthier, kinder, healing practices. **Collective self-care practices can range from encouraging individuals to share the burden of necessary tasks so no one person is overburdened, to building mindfulness practices into gatherings, or integrating wellness practices into shared spaces.**

Many collectives pay lip-service to concepts of self-care without actually integrating collective or self-care practices into their culture. Self-care cannot just be left to the individual to balance alongside competing demands on their time, but should be woven into ways of working, as well as the fabric of organisations, movements, alliances or unions.

A focus on joy, love and healing

For many women, trans and non-binary people, particularly those facing multiple intersecting oppressions, day-to-day life involves near-constant **experiences of devaluation, discrimination, domination, and exclusion which result in exhaustion, burn-out, and stress. These experiences combined can result in individual, intergenerational and community-wide trauma.** This trauma is held not just in the mind, but in the body, and healing work requires addressing the physical, personal, and spiritual remnants of trauma, amongst individuals and within communities.

Often, we seek to address injustices by focusing on women, trans and non-binary people's pain and victimhood. While it is critical to address and be honest about these, **we must be careful not to impose victimhood on the people we seek to support. Pain and trauma is only one aspect of a person's holistic self;** and women, trans and non-binary people's bodies and communities are also sources of pleasure and joy. This holistic understanding and approach to working with communities is part of redressing the power imbalances that result from seeing a specific group as a collective of victimised bodies (and nothing else).

Many feminist organisations and movements have responded by setting out to intentionally put joy, pleasure and healing at the centre of their work. Some have also delved into the mind-body connection in their healing and justice work. Just as with self-care, these efforts may be difficult for organisations with more traditional ways of working to understand. But just as with self-care, understanding a mind-body connection and focusing on joy and pleasure are an essential part of transforming the lived realities of people and building more resilient movements for change.

Pillar 2: Building Solidarity

Feminisms increasingly recognise that everyone has their own, individual experiences of inequality and oppression and also that everyone brings their own unique strengths and perspectives to the fight for social justice. As a result, feminist practice has evolved to explore the ways in which oppressions link and overlap and what this means for building feminist solidarity amongst actors working to end distinct, but interrelated, injustices.

When power and resources are treated as limited and finite, the end result is almost inevitably competition and conflict. Women's rights and feminist organisations in particular are often asked to compete for resources and space. Many women's rights and feminist organisations reject this, instead prioritising the building of 'power with' through the building of solidarity and alliances with radically greater transformative potential.

Strategies employed by feminist organisations to build solidarity include: intersectionality, intergenerationality; and the building of broad alliances.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a cornerstone of feminist strategies. Conceptualised by the lawyer and civil rights advocate Kimberlé Crenshaw, **intersectionality recognises that people face multiple structural oppressions based on a wide range of social characteristics such as class, caste, race, gender, and age. It also recognises that these identities overlap, creating a complex web of systems and structures of oppression, domination, or discrimination, constraining people's lives and choices.**

Women, trans and non-binary people are not homogenous groups, and individuals face vastly different barriers to realising their rights and sharing power. An intersectional approach enables us to better understand the structures and oppressions underlying the issues we work on, how people we work with experience these issues, and also how social movements can interact with, support and sustain each other. **It helps us understand which voices must be raised to ensure we hear those most impacted by injustice.**

In many ways, **intersectionality is both an underpinning principle and a strategy to ensure transformative change.** Given the fundamental importance of intersectionality to diverse feminist movements, we strongly recommend reading or watching the additional resources including those in which Kimberlé Crenshaw discusses these concepts and her work.

*See → page 57 f.
for additional tools
and to learn more
about pillar 2.*



Case Study

Roots Lab Lebanon

The Roots Lab in Lebanon was created in response to the need for strong, multi-generational feminist movements that include the voices of young activists who want to make change in their communities. During the pilot programme in Lebanon, the programme engaged young women from multiple sectors to identify the change needed in their communities and to trial and test innovative solutions. A core component of the programme was focused on bridging generations of women's rights and feminist activists: the participants received tailored support on their projects from established women's rights organisations and experts in various relevant sectors. The Roots Lab created space for everyone to be involved in a way that recognised their unique perspectives, insights and wisdom, regardless of their age or position.

SOURCE: Roots Lab: Social innovation incubator for young women's rights, <https://views-voices.oxfam.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/FINAL-Roots-Lab-Lebanon-Partners-Summary-Proposal.pdf>

Intergenerationality

Sustainable movements require intergenerational approaches to ensure the next generation of activists and movement-builders are encouraged and included.

Often organisations based in the Global North focus their resources and attention on civil society or community-based organisations which have robust leadership and a history of financial administration; but this sometimes means that only those local organisations who 'speak the language' of global organisations can access their resources. This makes it **difficult for new, emerging, or informal initiatives to access opportunities, funding, support, and political cover**. It also makes it difficult for younger generations of activists to have a seat at the table, and to be heard or included in decisions that impact their lives.

In its work to strengthen regional knowledge-sharing between feminists in Africa, for example, FES organised "Feminist Labs", which brought together women from different social movements, trade unions and political parties, who identify as feminists. The diversity of the group, which included a wide range of activists of different ages and education levels from different countries and cultural backgrounds, was essential for creating deeper and more inclusive conversations. The intersectional approach of this collective

work was challenging. The group had to first address and unlearn prejudices and pre-formed opinions that they held to be able to learn about and from each other. But ultimately, working together helped to build solidarity and a sense of collective ownership, and deepened their understanding of each other's struggles.¹

Taking an intergenerational approach means two things: it means ensuring that youth in the communities or spaces in which an organisation works are heard, counted, included and engaged, and valued as experts of their own experience. It also means that organisations can and should create space for activists and organisations of different ages and degrees of formality to connect, collaborate and share. By creating convening spaces where activists of different generations can dialogue and be heard and respected, and where people can learn from each other, organisations can support more sustainable movements.

Convening broad alliances

Building broad alliances ensures activists and organisations with different identities and backgrounds work together and share power as they work towards common goals. By focusing on the root causes of inequality and injustice, rather than their symptoms, transnational and cross-sectoral coalitions have been built with the capacity to challenge power and bring about gender equality at all levels.

¹ Interview with Tina Hennecken Andrade, Eva Nelles and Brenda Campos

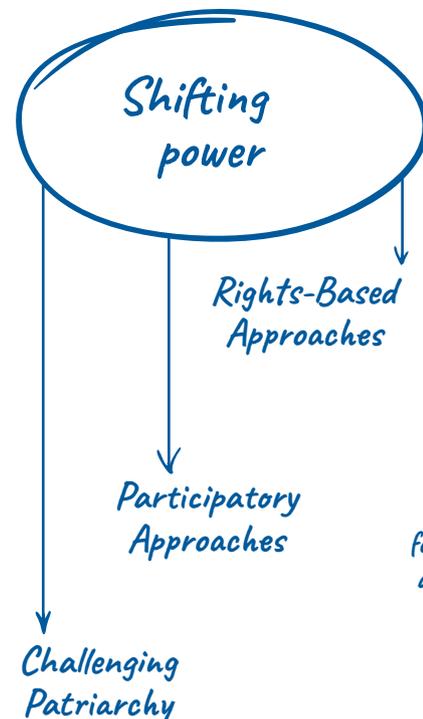
Such [coalitions build on the concept of feminist solidarity](#), defined broadly as the principle of mutual support between individuals, groups and organisations working on gender equality and women's rights. **Building broad alliances relies on fundamental principles of solidarity, "allyship" and partnership and requires all members to resist the temptation to try to harness the power of the alliance or direct it for their own ends, rather than recognising it as an evolving ecosystem capable of adapting to the needs of members and contributing simultaneously to multiple social justice struggles.** A feminist approach requires considering how best to support such ecosystems, recognise and enable their leadership, and share power and resources.

Pillar 3: Shifting Power

As we have already seen, feminist strategies are inherently political, and centred on an analysis and critique of power. It is this core element that also makes them profoundly transformative.

The feminist change-makers we interviewed indicated that power must be more evenly shared, but also built collaboratively through solidarity and collective action. Some also pointed out that any and all steps taken towards gender equality can easily be reversed if women, girls, trans and non-binary people are denied the power to ensure their rights are upheld. Aiming to 'help' marginalised people to gain access to resources, rather than challenging the distribution of those resources and shifting who decides how resources are allocated, are criticized as shallow, short-term and in some instances as attempts to simply paper over deep-seated structural inequalities.

Strategies used by feminist organisations to shift power include: participatory approaches, rights-based approaches and naming and challenging patriarchy.



Rights-based approaches

Feminist actors and movements have, through global efforts, managed to build and secure ground-breaking laws, policies and agreements that recognise a wide range of rights for women. At an international level, these have included the landmark Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1979, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) in 1995. However, many recognise that securing rights on paper is not enough, and that accountability for those rights is also critical in practice. **Rights-based approaches seek to translate human rights instruments into policies and practices that lead to genuine change.**

Rights-based approaches are a key method that feminist actors, organisations and movements employ to shift power and how it is understood. The strategic use of human rights instruments and discourse moves us away from viewing governments, corporations and other decision-makers with power over, and recasts them as 'duty-bearers' with a responsibility to ensure the rights and needs of everyone.

Adopting a rights-based approach means centring the importance of rights, raising awareness of existing laws and policies and ensuring everyone understands their rights as part of the process of building *power within*.

A rights-based approach can be contrasted with an instrumentalist one. For example, an instrumentalist approach may suggest that women should have equal rights to work because it is good for the economy, or that girls should be educated so they can contribute to the GDP. An instrumentalist approach suggests the lives and well-being of women, trans and non-binary people is secondary to what they can contribute to a system or structure that does not necessarily serve their interests or meet their basic needs.

Some feminists reject the use of instrumentalist approaches, suggesting that the impact they have on wider discourses is detrimental. Others feel these approaches can be deployed strategically, particularly when working with those who find rights-based arguments threatening or unconvincing. Many governments, corporations and other actors would prefer to move away from rights-based approaches that seek to hold them accountable to their past commitments.

Participatory approaches

A participatory approach ensures that those experiencing injustice are not passive subjects, but active agents in shaping responses to injustice. A participatory approach requires careful thinking about power and privilege, especially when it comes to facilitating, convening and shaping conversations and shared spaces. Practically speaking, a participatory approach involves the creation of spaces where everyone is safe and included, power dynamics are noticed and named, and action is taken so that everyone can be heard.

Participatory approaches do not just help improve decision-making, they help challenge ideas about where knowledge is held, and who gets to have a voice. The change that comes from being participatory is, in itself, part of the process of changing longer-term power dynamics and increasing individuals' and communities' awareness of their own rights and knowledge of how to demand those rights. As such, participatory approaches shift and transform power.

One of the most important places to integrate a participatory approach is in the monitoring and evaluating efforts that aim to contribute to change. Evaluation is inherently political: how information is collected, and who determines what success looks like, is in itself a form of power. A participatory approach to evaluating change requires methods that shift power into the hands of those experiencing injustice so they can decide what should be done about it (and how success and failure should be measured).

Naming and challenging patriarchy

Barriers to women, trans and non-binary people's rights are situated within larger patriarchal structures that have put power in the hands of men, and have ensured their dominance in every sphere of life.

Efforts towards gender equality sometimes address the *symptoms* of patriarchy, without seeking to identify or understand the underlying causes. One common example is giving women loans to start small businesses, while ignoring the other barriers beyond initial credit women face—from

discrimination in marketplaces, lack of say in household decision-making, to unequal access to ongoing credit and financial opportunities enjoyed by men in their communities. These types of initiatives are well-meaning but do not ultimately lead to transformative change.

Centring patriarchy in analysis enables a more holistic understanding of issues women, trans and non-binary people face, the root causes of those issues, and therefore the finding of better, more holistic, ways of addressing problems.

As the following case study shows, identifying patriarchal structures enables activists to ensure that they are addressing the root causes, rather than just the symptoms, of gender inequality.

Case Study

Pinjra Tod in India

A collective of young women in Delhi, concerned about the restrictions their university was putting on them in the name of safety, came together and started a movement that has gone on to have an impact on a range of human rights issues across India. It began in response to curfews and restrictions on movement for women students, which impacted their mobility and access to public spaces, for example preventing them from going to the library at night. While the university claimed that these rules were intended to keep young women safe, the students recognised that they were rooted in deep-seated patriarchal norms and expectations and the idea that young women are property – first of their parents, and then of their husbands – that must be protected. They recognised the need to shift the debate in terms of seeing women as autonomous human beings, rather than simply addressing any one rule or statute.

The students came together and founded Pinjra Tod, which means “Break the Cage”, employing a range of strategies—reclaiming public spaces in the university, calling for their rights, and petitioning university authorities and the government. They have had various levels of success, such as changing university rules about women’s mobility and access to public spaces, which then extended to issues such as sexual harassment on campuses. Pinjra Tod has since become a platform and voice for young women across India; showing solidarity with women in other universities, leading strikes and becoming involved in protests around the Citizenship Amendment Act.

SOURCE: Interview with Gopika Bashi, Oxfam, <https://www.oxfam.org/en>

Feminist strategies in action

The feminist strategies outlined in the above pillars have been distilled from interviews and case studies. While not intended to be an exhaustive list, they illustrate the ways in which women's organisations and movements organise themselves to model more equal ways of working that share power and bring the potential for more transformative and sustainable change.

It is worth noting that **it is unlikely – however desirable – that efforts to contribute to gender equality will integrate all of these approaches. Decisions will need to be made about when and how to use each strategy mentioned in this toolkit depending on the context and the issue at hand.** That said, promoting women's collective action and strengthening feminist organisations and movements should be considered an essential element of feminist efforts and programmes and mobilisation, and all our efforts should seek to contribute to it in ways large and small.

It is also worth noting what a feminist strategy is *not*. **Because feminism is inherently political and engaged with questions of power, feminist strategies should always seek to go beyond shallow rhetoric, depoliticised catchphrases or slogans.** The term 'feminist strategy' can mean many things, but **it must be grounded in a deep commitment to address patriarchy and shift and transform power. Feminism is not feminist when it's depoliticised or reduced solely to a media strategy.**

Some organisations brand their approaches as feminist without feeling the need to do the deeper work to transform **their own thinking and ways of approaching power. As a result, their efforts often address the *symptoms* of inequality while overlooking and leaving its *root causes* untouched.** Part of the reason that feminist approaches have the potential to be transformative is that they allow us to go deeper – undoing the social problems and power dynamics that cause inequality and marginalisation, rather than mitigating their effects.

As we have seen, strategies to address gender inequality can look very different and yet still be equally feminist. To demonstrate how that works, we have included three case studies below in which feminist approaches have been utilised to help different organisations achieve their particular goals. We have used blue arrows to identify the strategies within the text.

It's worth taking a moment to consider:

- 1) What makes each approach feminist and transformative?
- 2) How do the strategies employed in each case study interact with and reinforce each other?
- 3) Are there additional strategies from our three pillars that have not been highlighted?

Case Study

The Gender Lab

The Gender Lab in India harnesses the power of collective action through an evolving ecosystem of projects aimed at personal growth and social transformation. Girls in India are often "invisibilised" by social norms and systems that deny their voice and agency. The Gender Lab runs programmes to make girls aware of their potential and capacity for creating change.

The Gender Lab provides a space where girls can reflect on their experience, receive mentorship, and develop skills that they take into their communities to create their own projects that tackle the issues that impact their lives. Over time the programme has expanded to take an intergenerational approach and welcome older girls and young women, who mentor girls in schools and in their communities to complete their projects; one group mobilised funds to help families access electricity, another group advocated for better sanitation. Through the programme, the girls make a difference in their communities and gain an education on social issues. At the end of the fellowship they have built sisterhood, self-awareness, confidence, and skills that help them navigate their worlds. The programme has also expanded to welcome boys; engaging them in conversations around gender, sexuality, transgender rights, and masculinity.

The programme recognises the value of deep listening; ensuring the inputs of the girls engaged in the programme shape its evolution. As Akshat Singhal and Ayushi Banerji described it, "We need to be holders of space. We didn't approach the work thinking 'we know everything and this is what the programme will be.' Instead we deeply listened to our communities and evolved. If we don't listen, all our solutions will be narrow and not inclusive. Listening to everybody – the team, donors, the girls, boys, fellows – we listen and we improvise and get better."

Gender Lab members, fellows and staff are constantly engaged in questioning power structures, finding ways to better share power, and are challenged to put emphasis on self-examination and transformation. Through this process, for example, they came to realise that mental health was something that affected their members but was not being addressed. Now it is central to their efforts and improving mental well-being has become part of their vision – from employing a therapist as part of their team, to creating "magic Mondays" – time set aside to reflect on and process the issues they confront in their daily work.

SOURCE: Interview with Akshat Singhal and Ayushi Banerji, Blue Ribbon Movement (BRM), <https://brmworld.org>

*Thoughtful,
self-reflective
leadership*

*Focus on Joy/
Pleasure/
Healing*

Intergenerational

*Participatory
approach*

*Considers
dynamics of
and shares
power*

*Empathy
for self and
others*

Case Study

The 12 by 12 Campaign

Deep-seated norms and stereotypes, and a historic undervaluing of women’s work, have meant that domestic workers and their social and economic contribution are widely overlooked. The adoption of the International Labour Organisation’s Convention 189 in 2011 marked a historic change – ensuring domestic work was finally recognised as work alongside other professions and that countries include domestic workers in the rights and protections offered by their labour laws.

Securing the Convention, however, was only the first step. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), in cooperation with the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) and the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF), next launched the 12 by 12 Campaign – which pushed for twelve country ratifications of the convention by 2012. Joined by a broad community of feminist and human rights organisations, they rallied to the cause, and the campaign evolved into a network of alliances and cooperation at local, national and global levels. While the campaign did not meet its 2012 deadline, it passed 12 ratifications in 2013, and to date has helped secure 29 ratifications and related labour law reforms in more than 50 countries. It is estimated to have impacted the lives of millions of domestic workers, who now have access to the right to a minimum wage, social protection, written contracts, regulation of working hours, time off, and some redress for workplace violence and harassment.

The International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) was key to the success of the campaign and through it gained thousands of new members, growing to a network of over half a million strong, and eventually taking over leadership. In the past, it has been considered too difficult to organise domestic workers as they work in private spaces for private employers, and traditional methods of trade union organising have proven ineffective. As a result, the IDWF has had to invent new and innovative outreach methods. Equally, it has, from its inception, set out to ensure representation from marginalised communities and that diverse women occupy leadership roles.

Initially, given the marginalisation of domestic workers and their issues, twelve ratifications was considered by many a challenging goal to achieve, but success was secured through the lobbying and advocacy campaigns of unions, domestic workers and allies in dozens of countries across the world. Now an alliance of ITUC, IDWF, UNI Global Union, PSI, EI and WIEGO are building an agenda around a caring economy and building solidarity between the care and health sectors – focused on more and decent jobs and increased and sustained investments in quality public care and health services. As Marieke Koning of the ITUC told us, “Hope and determination are very important drivers for acknowledging that change can happen. When challenged for being too ambitious you have to be very bold and say ‘no, we are going to achieve this’. When you start to organise in partnership with a marginalised group, who have already made a courageous decision to stand up, organise and unite to make the change happen, it’s important to stand in solidarity in achieving that goal. And by doing so, change happened”.

SOURCE: Interview with Marieke Koning, International Trade Union Confederation, <https://www.ituc-csi.org/>

Strengthening of women's organisations and movements



Intersectionality



Broad alliance building



Rights-based



Considers dynamics of and shares power



Case Study

One Billion Rising

*Thoughtful,
self-reflective
leadership*

Two feminist organisations, Jagori and Sangat, launched and provide leadership to the Indian arm of the global One Billion Rising Campaign, which operates in 206 countries and aims to raise awareness through rallies, large-scale dance events and creative approaches. Jagori and Sangat are widely known as pioneers within the women's movement in South Asia and for their efforts to promote collective ownership of the campaign, intergenerational sharing of knowledge and ideas and motivational feminist leadership.

While the core of the 1 Billion Rising Campaign focuses on violence against women and girls, space has been made for an intersectional approach that gives space to groups working on a range of issues – from child rights to LGBTQI+ rights and the rights of domestic workers – under the umbrella of the campaign. Events attracting hundreds of thousands of people have taken place across the country, calling not just for an end to violence against women and girls, but for a wider de-escalation of violence within India, and the understanding that women and girls often bear the brunt of the fall-out from all forms of violence and militarism. Dance and artistic expression have become central to these events, aiming to promote cultural forms of resistance as an alternative to violence, while at the same time encouraging peace, joy and a celebration of women's resilience.

*Focus on Joy/
Pleasure/
Healing*

Jagori and Sangat are known for their efforts to ensure collaborative decision-making and power sharing amongst the organisations involved in the campaign. This has presented a challenge to larger non-governmental organisations, who are welcomed into the alliance, but asked to provide resources and support to smaller organisations without always promoting their own brands. These organisations are often used to their larger size, public voice and resources meaning that they have more of a say in decision-making. Some have found it difficult to engage with events and provide solidarity without also promoting their brands or fundraising, others have been willing to share resources, promote smaller organisations on their social media platforms and help them reach powerful decision-makers.

There is a healthy and ongoing debate about the strengths and weaknesses of the campaign, encouraged by a leadership that is willing to learn and listen to their members.

SOURCE: Interview with Julie Thekkudan

*Broad
alliance
building*

*Strengthening of
women's organisations
and movements*

*Considers
dynamics of
and shares
power*





4

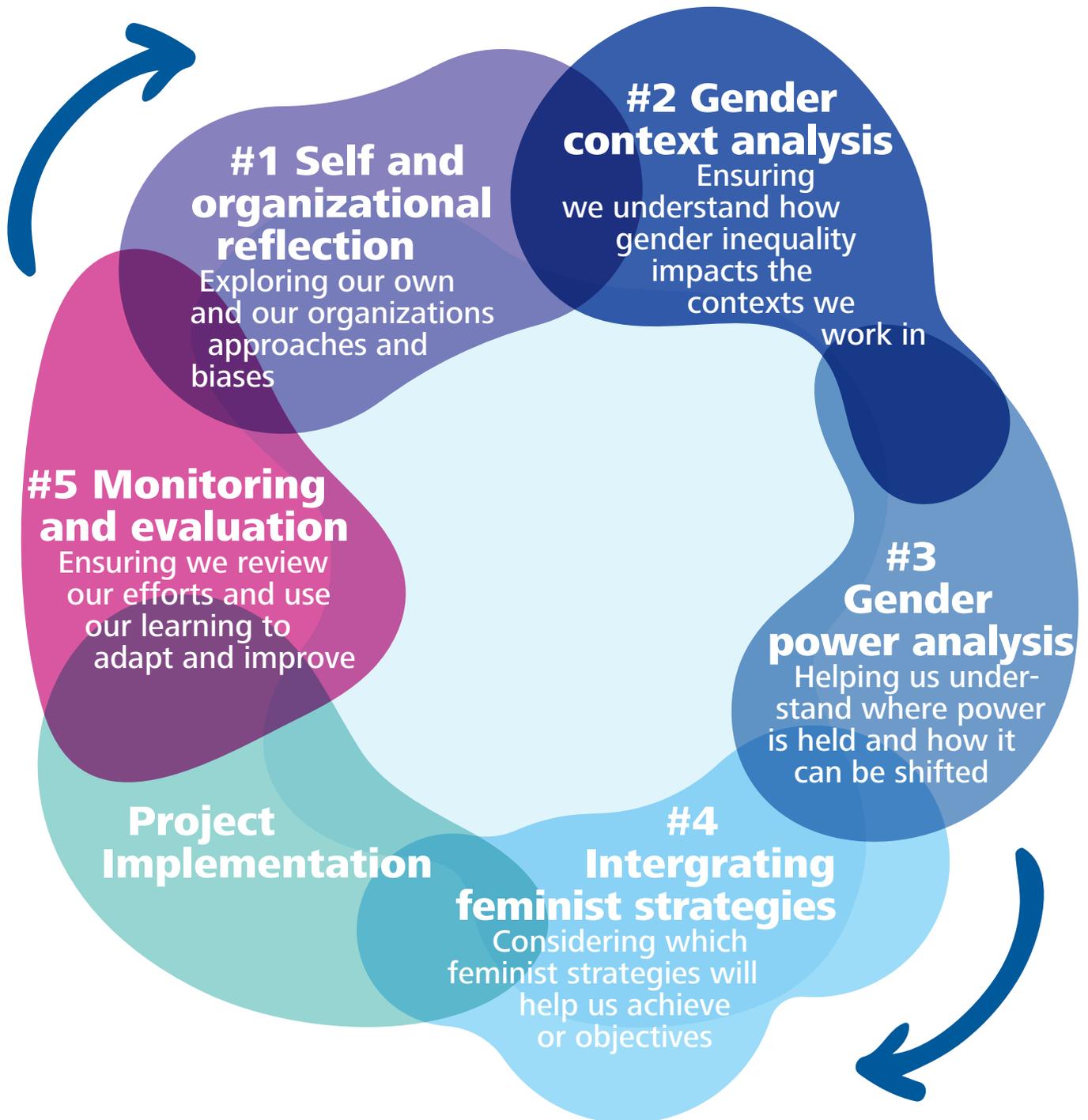
TOOLS FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Thus far, we have reviewed how to understand power and where it lies, an analytical framework to help understand where change needs to be made, and the ways that activists are using feminist strategies to address gendered power inequalities. Now, we provide a set of tools that may be useful in considering how to translate this guide into your day-to-day work.

These tools are not intended to be comprehensive and can be complemented with the further reading and tools linked to in the other sections, but they can provide a good **starting point for assessing your collective commitment, analysing your internal and external context, considering the impact of power inequalities on your work, and helping to monitor and evaluate your efforts.** Each of them can support the planning and development of projects and programmes, including through learning from past efforts as part of monitoring and evaluation of existing work.

- **Tool #1** provides support to critically assess what individual and organisational changes are necessary to enable us to address gender inequality and join the fight for change.
- **Tool #2** helps us understand how gender inequality impacts the context or situation in which we plan to work, so that we can make good decisions about where we can add value.
- **Tool #3** helps us to understand the impact gender inequality has on who holds power, where, and how that power can be accessed or re-distributed to remedy injustice.
- **Tool #4** can be used as part of planning and review processes to outline shared commitments to integrating feminist strategies for transformational change into projects and programmes.
- **Tool #5** can help us assess and demonstrate our impact and engage in ongoing learning.

These tools can be used to assess your approach on an individual basis, but are even more effective when deployed in teams as part of the planning, implementation and evaluation cycle of a project or programme.



Tool #1: Starting with Self and Organisational Reflection

To be able to address gender inequalities and join the fight for change, we must start with ourselves and our own organisations. This requires a thoughtful reflection on who we are, and what attitudes, biases, and deeply rooted beliefs we bring to our interactions and the work we do. If this reflection does not happen, we risk replicating and perpetuating inequalities and power imbalances.

This kind of reflection does not happen in one day, or one worksheet. **This tool provides a few questions to help you to start thinking about where you are on your reflection journey, but note that this is an ongoing process that requires deep self-awareness and care.**

Take a moment to think about your own background, identities and experiences you have. Then use a journal to collect your thoughts on the following questions:

- *Privilege is when certain people or groups have power, resources or advantages due to their identities or associations. It is often invisible to the people who have it. Discrimination is when certain people or groups are denied power, resources or advantages due to their identities or associations. Discrimination is often bolstered by social norms, laws or rules. What do those words mean to you?*
- *What is your experience of privilege? What identities do you possess that grant you privilege? Does that privilege change in different spaces, such as at work or in your community?*
- *What is your experience of discrimination? How has this shaped your mindset and ways of understanding the world? How does it shape your approach to your work?*
- *In your work to advance gender equality, what kind of power do you hold in relation to the individuals, groups and organisations you work with? What kind of power do they have? What grants you this power, and what grants them the power that they hold?*
- *How do you respond to instances where power is violated?*
- *How do you hold and share power within your organisation? Does your personal power come at the expense of others, or do you collaborate to share power?*

Now take a moment to reflect on your team or organisation. Write your responses in a journal or notebook.

- *What proportion of the people who hold decision-making and cultural power in our organisation have direct experience of, and have been deeply affected by, the issues we work on?*
- *When it comes time to convene or make decisions, is everyone's voice heard and respected – regardless of their gender, race, age, ability, nationality, and social background?*
- *How do the people we claim to work for influence our organisation's decisions and allocation of resources?*
- *Do we share power and platforms with our partners and allies? Are we open to being challenged and hearing opinions of those who disagree with us?*

Next, summarise your thoughts into five key points that respond to the questions: ***How do my biases, deeply held beliefs and personal convictions shape the work that I do and how will I seek to be more equal, inclusive, and fair? What is my role in tackling structural inequalities within my organisation and in partnerships and alliances?***

Take your three points and pin them to the wall. Let them serve as a reminder, regular self-reflection and organisational reflection is critical to creating long-lasting, transformative change for gender equality!

Tool #2: Gender Context Analysis

A gender context analysis sets the stage for any project, programme, campaign, or study. **It enables us to understand the context or situation in which we plan to work, so that we can make good decisions about where we can add value.** A gender context analysis can be conducted at the outset of working on a programme, campaign, or project, and/or it can be conducted throughout to ensure that the work is responsive to current conditions and needs.

Any strong context analysis includes a gender analysis which explains how power and resources are distributed, accessed and impacted by different identity factors like gender, race, class, ability and others. Gender inequalities are often at the root of systemic and structural inequalities, so by going through the process of creating a gender context analysis, you will be better able to contribute to effective remedies of injustice.

Creating a gender context analysis requires research. It means finding out what laws, policies, informal social norms, and deeply held beliefs operate in the context in which you plan to work. You can do this by looking up laws and policies online, and by consulting with women's rights and feminist organisations' websites and reports. In some cases, you may want to set up informational interviews with those who know the gender issues well.

Here are some sample questions to think about as you conduct your gender context analysis²:

- *What gender roles exist in this context or situation? How do men, women, trans and non-binary people experience this context differently?*
- *What other forms of discrimination exist in this context?*
- *How might those forms of discrimination or prescribed roles impact the work you intend to do?*
- *How does gender impact someone's ability to access or control resources?*
- *Who has a voice already and whose voices might need support to be heard?*

These questions will point you in the direction of the research needed to complete your gender context analysis. To complete your gender analysis, complete the following worksheet:

² Adapted from Oxfam's Guide to Feminist Influencing

1. What significant information have you learned about gender in the context in which you plan to work? What gaps exist in the available data or research?

[Example: in country X, women only own 25% of the land. Laws state that men can inherit land but women cannot. There is no data about how often women informally manage land without owning it.]

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2. How do people experience injustice differently as a result of their gender? How might they experience the solutions to that problem differently?

[Example: In country X, the economy is weak and government corruption means that only the ruling elite and their friends can find work. Due to cultural norms, women can often only find work in care industries (as nurses, cleaners, cooks). Trans and non-binary people face extreme discrimination in finding work. Creating job opportunities, training and unionising must account for – and transform – these cultural norms to achieve lasting equality and opportunities for all.]

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3. Which people are most marginalised and vulnerable, due to their class, caste, race, age, or ability? How are these groups thinking about the injustices, and what solutions are they proposing or thinking about?

[Example: In country X, people from the Y tribe face discrimination due to their minority status. They are persecuted, cannot find work, and their children are not able to access education in state schools. In conversations with members of the Y tribe and their leaders, we understand that they have proposed an equal opportunities law. They need support to ensure it passes and public pressure to ensure that cultural discrimination against their tribe ends.]

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4. How do women’s rights and feminist organisations understand the problem? How are they already working on addressing it?

[Example: In country X, workplace discrimination is a big problem. Feminist groups have brought attention to the reality that trans and non-binary people do not have non-discrimination protections in the workplace. In response, these organisations are mobilising a campaign to ensure these protections exist, and creating a hotline where people can report incidents for documentation and follow up. They are seeking funding support and organisations to join their coalition.]

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5. How do the policies/structures/institutions relevant to this issue treat women, men and trans or non-binary people differently? Does everyone have a seat in formal structures that determine these policies/structures/institutions? Who is represented in formal spaces and who is not?

[Example: In country X, our organisation wants to work on education reform. Our analysis found that the existing laws and policies do not guarantee equal education for youths of all genders. Further, the Ministry of Education is made up of only men and one woman.]

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6. How do cultural norms and practices relevant to this issue treat people differently based on gender?

[Example: In country X, our analysis found that there are strong human rights laws that protect people from discrimination on the basis of gender. But in practice, due to cultural norms, people who are trans, non-binary or gender non-conforming do not have equal access to housing, education, work, land, or other resources and opportunities.]

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Tool #3: Gender Power Mapping

Creating a power map³ enables you to understand who holds power, where, and how that power can be accessed or re-distributed to remedy injustice. Creating a *gender* power mapping adapts the concepts explained in this guide and provides a means to put those concepts into practice.

Power mapping is often used as a tool to determine who holds power, and how those people can be influenced or shifted. Applying a feminist lens will help you to understand the role that gender and other identities play in determining how and where power is held. The key questions in a gender power mapping are:

- *Who holds power when it comes to creating gender equality, and what are the main barriers/access points?*
- *What power do women, trans and non-binary people already have, and how can they access that to bring about change?*
- *Who needs to be influenced, convinced, or brought into "allyship"? How can those people or groups be most effectively engaged?*

Note that your gender power mapping builds on your gender context analysis, and should help determine the basis of your project, campaign, programme or initiative. **It will help tell you how change happens, and the steps you need to take to get there. Remember to engage with your feminist allies in this process, and to work closely to identify where and how power is held.**

First, revisit the section on power (14ff.). Remember that power can look different in different spaces. For example, someone might have political power in a government office, but limited power in their community. The experience of power is heavily dependent on one's intersectional identities, which can serve as a barrier or an amplifier of power, as well as the context.

Now review the forms of oppressive power (*power over* and *power under*) and compare that with transformative power (*power with*, *power to*, *power within* and *power for*) as explained earlier (15 f.)

Next, use the chart below to identify who holds power and what kind of power they hold:

³ Adapted from Oxfam's Guide to Feminist Influencing.

The injustice we wish to address:

Power Holders (identified in gender context mapping)	Is this power held in public or private spaces?	Is this power visible, hidden or invisible?	Is this power transformative (power with, to, within or for) or oppressive (over and under)?
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Given what you have determined, you can now determine how to affect change. Use the information on the worksheet to brainstorm the following questions:

- *When it comes to addressing gender equality, who holds power? Where are decisions made?*
- *Where are the opportunities to transform existing power imbalances?*
- *Where does transformative power already exist, and how can we build on it?*
- *How do we ensure that women, trans and non-binary people are central to addressing power imbalances?*
- *How do we support women, trans and non-binary people to claim and utilise the power they already have for positive, transformative change?*

Identify potential strategies for change and transformation in the chart below:

Strategies to challenge and resist power over: Strategies to build and amplify transformative power:

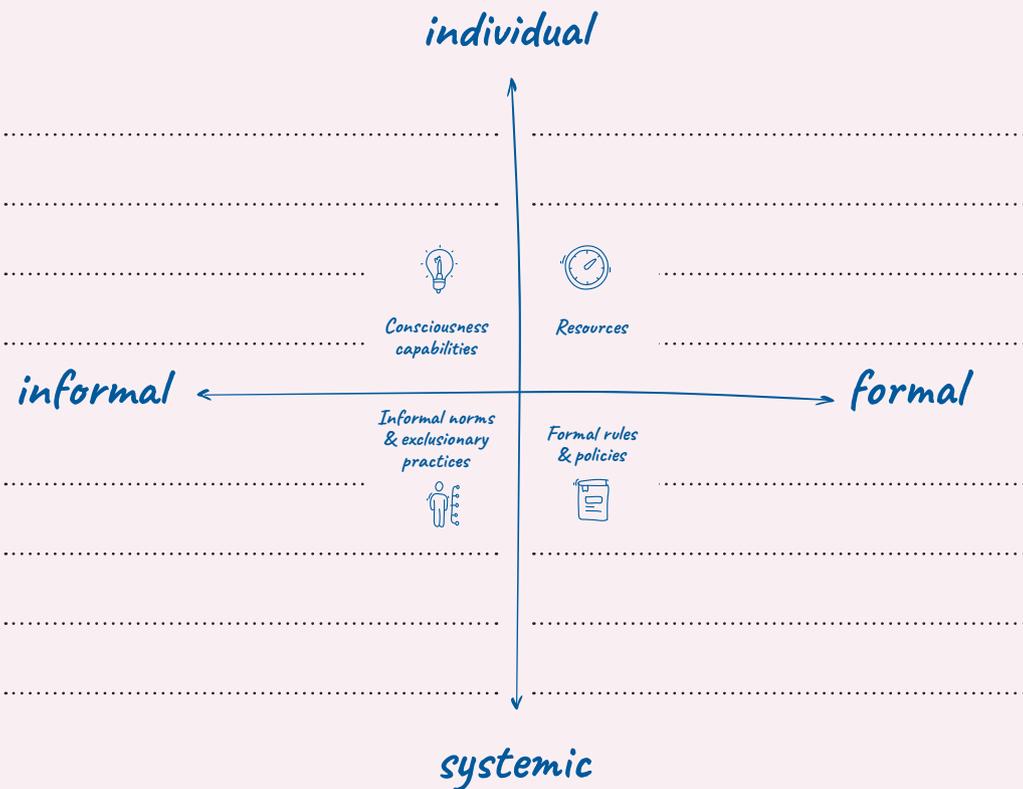
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Remember that gender contexts and power analyses shift over time! They are variable and heavily dependent on political, economic and social changes. In coalition and collaboration with feminist allies, be sure to regularly discuss and update your understanding of power and how to help transform it.

Tool #4: Integrating Feminist Strategies

This tool can be used as part of your planning and review processes to outline your commitment to integrating feminist strategies for transformational change into your projects and programmes. We suggest using it with your teams and colleagues to create a shared commitment to integrating transformative feminist strategies in your work.

Mark on this copy of the Gender at Work Framework where you expect your programme or intervention to sit:



Why have you chosen to work in this quadrant or quadrants? How will your work compliment that of organisations working in other quadrants?

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How will your work contribute to strengthening women’s collective action, women’s organisations and/or movements?

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**Which feminist strategies do you plan to integrate in your programme or project?
Tick all that apply.**

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intersectionality | <input type="checkbox"/> Rights-based approaches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intergenerationality | <input type="checkbox"/> Participatory approaches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-awareness and Interrogation | <input type="checkbox"/> Naming and challenging patriarchy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-care | <input type="checkbox"/> A focus on joy, love and/or healing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thoughtful, self-reflective leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Convening broad alliances |

How will adopting these strategies help your project or programme to be transformative and lead to long-term, sustainable change? How will it help shift unequal power dynamics?

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Who in your team will be responsible for regularly reviewing this commitment and communicating progress against it?

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When will it next be reviewed?

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Tool #5: Monitoring and Evaluation

It is essential that we continuously monitor our own efforts to ensure our approaches are having the impact we are aiming for, that we are sharing and building power with our partners and allies, and that we can adapt or change course in response to new information or changes in our context. Monitoring and evaluation not only helps us demonstrate our impact and learn from our efforts, carried out correctly – it is, in and of itself, capable of shifting power imbalances; making it both feminist and transformative.

Evaluations of a project or programme are commonly carried out by those ‘in charge’, or those who wield the most power and resources. It is worth recognising that evaluation is a political activity, the contexts in which it takes place are politicised, and so are the personal experiences, perspectives, and characteristics evaluators bring to their work. As a result, it is important that we think carefully about how we conduct our evaluations and actively work to mitigate the effects of power imbalances and how they might influence our results.

We have suggested additional resources to help explore feminist evaluation below, but we can start by asking ourselves the following questions:

- a) *Why are we conducting this evaluation? Whose benefit is it for?*
- b) *Who is carrying out the evaluation? What particular perspectives do they bring that may influence their perception of the work?*
- c) *Does our monitoring and evaluation assess the impact we are having in securing progress towards gender equality? How are we assessing our ability to shift power into the hands of marginalised people?*
- d) *How are we analysing which intersecting identities impact who has benefited from our work and who has not?*
- e) *How will the voices of women, trans and non-binary people be raised through our evaluation?*
- f) *How might power dynamics affect the likelihood of our partners and allies providing honest feedback – positive or negative – on our efforts? How can we mitigate this?*
- g) *How will we monitor unexpected change or negative change, including reversals or backlash?*
- h) *How will we ensure the learning from our evaluations will be shared with, and owned by, those who have contributed to it?*
- i) *How will we use the information gathered through our evaluation to inform future efforts?*

These are a number of helpful tools and guides that you can use to help answer these questions and explore how to make your evaluations more feminist:

- [↪ Oxfam's discussion paper](#) on Applying Feminist Principles To Program Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability And Learning contains useful advice and case studies.
- [↪ Better Evaluation](#) have compiled these resources on feminist evaluation.
- [↪ AWID's guide to Capturing Change](#) in Women's Realities contains a comprehensive analysis of different methodologies and approaches.



Annex

Glossary of Terms

A helpful glossary of terms can be found at this link:

<https://justassociates.org/sites/justassociates.org/files/feminist-movement-builders-dictionary-jass.pdf>

Interview Subjects

Farah Daibes, Programme Manager of Regional Political Feminism Project, FES Lebanon

Gopika Bashi, Asia Campaigner Enough Campaign, Oxfam

Michelle Reddy, Fund Manager, Fiji Women's Fund

Sarah Herold, Project Coordinator, FES Chile

Tina Hennecken Andrade, Resident Representative of FES Mozambique, Brenda Campos, Coordinator of Fender and Feminist Projects, and Eva Nelles, Junior Expert on Gender, FES Mozambique

Akshat Singhal, Co-Founder, and Ayushi Banerji, CEO The Gender Lab, Blue Ribbon Movement

Misun Woo, Regional Coordinator, Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law & Development (APWLD)

Julie Thekkudan, Gender Equality Advisor, Worldwide Campaigns, Oxfam International

Marieke Koning, Policy Advisor, International Trade Union Confederation

Natalia Figge, Gender Equity Expert, FES

Additional information provided via email by:

Lisa Vettori, Senior Programme Manager, International Women's Development Agency

Additional Reading

This guide has touched on a number of important feminist strategies, which all deserve exploration in more detail. In this annex we have collected articles, papers, tools, videos and other media which we hope will provide further information and inspiration.

Supporting women's collective action

- This resource from Zohra Moosa and the Gender and Development Network on supporting change where it happens lays out more information on the importance of strong women's movements and actors. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aoA7UMT2rNCMePFsZR_ge0wgHwTEIgnU/view
- This paper from Srilatha Batliwala and AWID's Building Feminist Movements and Organizations Initiative helps define feminist movements and sets out their essential principles. https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/changing_their_world_2ed_full_eng.pdf
- This guide from ActionAid sets out ways to better integrate women's rights actors in social movements. https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/guidance_note_good_practice_approaches_2016_0.pdf
- This FES research explores issues faced by women in the trade union movement in Brazil and how they can be supported to achieve change. <https://www.fes-connect.org/reading-picks/cut-brazil-a-trade-union-centre-at-the-forefront-of-the-feminist-struggle/>

Pillar 1: Empathy and Self-Reflection

- Raising Voices' guide to Creating an Organizational Culture for Social Justice Activism is a great starting point for personal reflection. <http://raisingvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/LP1.OrgCulture.FINALredesign.dec2015.pdf>
- The Feminist Organizational Development Tool from the African Feminist Forum is also well worth working through to consider your organisation's approach and your role in it. <https://awdf.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Feminist-Organisational-Development-Tool-English.pdf>
- Module five of Women's Health West's Toolkit for Working in a Feminist Organization also includes some useful checklists to start thinking about personal and organisational responsibility. https://whwest.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Feminist-Audit-Toolkit_FULL.pdf
- Srilatha Batliwala, through her work with CREA, has laid the foundations for understanding what feminist leadership is and helping others achieve it. <https://www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/ucwc/docs/CREA.pdf>
https://themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Guidelines_Achieving_Transformative_Feminist_Leadership_CREA.pdf

- Equally, Hope Chigudu and Rudo Chigudu's guide to Building an Organization with Soul is widely respected as an important entry point. <http://airforafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Strategies-for-Building-an-Organisation-with-Soul-for-web1.pdf>
- Oxfam's Guide to Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights considers why such feminist leadership is important, and how to promote it. <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/transformative-leadership-womens-rights-oxfam-guide>
- This article from AWID sets out the case for self-care in more detail. <https://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/wellness-self-care-and-security-why-important-feminism>
- Emergent strategy by adrienne maree brown brings valuable perspectives on self-care from an organiser on the frontlines of social and climate justice struggles. <https://www.akpress.org/emergentstrategy.html>
- CREA's Self-Care and Self-Defence Manual for Feminist Activists can be used either to implement your own self-care or to build an understanding of why it is important for those with whom you wish to stand in solidarity. <https://creaworld.org/resource/self-care-and-self-defence-manual/>
- You can also sign up to Move to End Violence's 21 Day Self-Care Challenge here <https://movetoendviolence.org/lp/21day-evergreen-challenge/>
- Deva Woody's exploration of healing in the context of the Movement for Black Lives contains important reflections for social justice movements. https://www.uvic.ca/victoria-colloquium/assets/docs/colloquium_presentation_deva_woodly.pdf
- Join the Healing Solidarity Collective and explore their conference resources. <https://healingsolidarity.org>
- Read Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good by adrienne maree brown <https://www.akpress.org/pleasure-activism.html>
- Or register to download a copy of AWID's guide to Reimagining Fearless Feminist Futures to explore your own approach to these issues. <https://www.awid.org/download-fearless-futures-toolkit>

Pillar 2: Building Solidarity

- This paper from Kimberlé Crenshaw introduces the theory of intersectionality, and this one sets out her later reflections. You can also watch her Ted Talk on the Urgency of Intersectionality. <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1052&context=ucf>
<https://www.law.columbia.edu/news/archive/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality-more-two-decades-later>
https://www.ted.com/speakers/kimberle_crenshaw

- ActionAid’s Feminist Discussion Toolkit can help guide conversations with colleagues on how to take an intersectional approach
<https://actionaid.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/FeministDiscussionTOOLKIT-FINAL2018-2.pdf>
- This case study from the FRIDA Fund – Mariam’s story – shows the importance of an intergenerational approach.
<https://youngfeministfund.org/mariams-story/>
- This collection of case studies – Girls to the Front – from Mama Cash and Frida, demonstrate the power of young women’s activism.
<https://www.mamacash.org/en/girls-to-the-front-case-studies>
- This Feminist Toolkit for Youth Organizations has been specifically developed to support youth activism towards gender equality.
<http://iusy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Final-Last-Version-LQ-Toolkit-A-struggle-for-equality-illus-work-in-progress-1-4.pdf>
- For a deep dive into feminist solidarity and collective action, check out the Gender and Development Journal issue on the topic.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13552074.2013.819176>
- One aspect of strong feminist ecosystems is resource-sharing. AWID has a great deal of resources on feminist movement-building, including this practical guide on a feminist funding ecosystem.
<https://www.awid.org/publications/toward-feminist-funding-ecosystem-framework-and-practical-guide>
- JASS offers a number of resources on alliance building, including this guide on What Collective Power Looks Like, which highlights four networks of activists that the organisation has helped build, accompany and sustain.
<https://justassociates.org/>
https://justassociates.org/sites/justassociates.org/files/db8110_jass_collective_report_feb2019_eversion.pdf
- This discussion paper from Andrea Cornwall of the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) dives deep into what participation really means and can look like.
<https://www.participatorymethods.org/sites/participatorymethods.org/files/Dp378.pdf>
- This case study gathers lessons from participatory methods used by Col·lectiu Punt 6, a feminist organisation in Barcelona, to increase women’s participation in urban planning.
<https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/planning-from-below-using-feminist-participatory-methods-to-increase-womens-par-347217/>
- This facilitation guide from JASS walks participants through a consideration of structural patriarchy.
<https://werise-toolkit.org/en/system/tdf/pdf/tools/Case-Studies-on-Patriarchy.pdf?file=1&force=>

Pillar 3: Shifting Power

- This summary from the office of the UN High Commissioner on Human rights sets out a summary of key women’s rights instruments, commitments and UN monitoring bodies.
<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Events/WHRD/WomenRightsAreHR.pdf>
- And this paper provides a discussion of their importance from Professor Savitri Goonesekere.
<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/news/savitri.htm>
- The Oxfam Guide to Feminist Influencing contains a section on feminist monitoring, evaluation and learning which looks at how it can be used to increase participation.
<https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/oxfams-guide-to-feminist-influencing-620723/>
- This website from the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development sets out the principles of Feminist Participatory Action Research.
<https://apwld.org/feminist-participatory-action-research-fpar/>

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